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Black, White and Rainbow all Over: The Segregation present among Cape Town's Pride Festival

Lucy Stockdale
SIT Study Abroad

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Black, White and Rainbow all Over:
The Segregation present among Cape Town's Pride Festival

Lucy Stockdale

Advisor: Shifra Jacobson

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for South Africa; Multiculturalism and Human Rights.

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Cape Town

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Abstract

My ISP works to illuminate the racial segregation that is still present within Cape Town's LGBT community, particularly during the celebration of gay and lesbian rights, known as the Pride festival that takes place annually in the end of February. I do this through discussing the privilege that comes with access to both information about Pride and the location of the events that take place. By looking at Pride as a parade for the white gay man to celebrate the rights he was granted twenty years ago, I work to openly discuss how a history of exclusion has lived on in Cape Town's gay community and kept the black (inclusive of African, Coloured, Indian and Asian) gay and lesbian members of this city on the outskirts of celebration, ultimately establishing an "other" mentality towards this population.

In order to grasp different racial opinions of Pride and its purpose within the gay community, I used academic research, participant observation in events throughout Pride week and a discussion on how to improve Pride's equality in future celebrations, and informal interviews with four South Africans who identify as LGBT and participate in Pride. With my expansion of Pride on a former SIT student, Mollie Beebe's, concept of the white dominance of the LGBT population of Cape Town, I conclude that Cape Town's Pride festival is currently used primarily for the purpose of the white middle-class gay man's celebration. This is affected by the economic segregation and lack of mobilization throughout the week of Pride. Because most, if not all, Pride events leading up to the parade and the parade itself is centrally located in Greenpoint and Sea Point, also known as the gay communities of Cape Town, it establishes a divide between the white upper and middle classes that have easy access to these areas and those of the

LGBT community that are located in townships and aren't supported or even feel welcomed at such events. In addition, there exists a disjunction in Pride's purpose among its participants, which continues to establish the division of Cape Town's LGBT population.

Introduction

Through South Africa's history of discrimination, gay rights have found its way into today's Constitution. After homosexuality was decriminalized in 1998, it was added to the new Constitution once apartheid was abolished in 1994. In Chapter Two, Section Nine, known as the Equality Clause, of South Africa's Bill of Rights, it affirms that "[t]he state may not unfairly discriminate directly or indirectly against anyone on one or more grounds, including race, gender, sex, pregnancy, marital status, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience, belief, culture, language and birth." However, while South Africa sits as the most revolutionary country in the world in terms of the equality established within its constitution, there still exists a disconnect between the different races of people that live in this rainbow nation. This separation is seen often in the gay community, as many locations within the gay village are monopolized by the white gay population. As stated by Mollie Beebe (2012) in her ISP project, "to privilege gayness at the expense of race or class is to deny the factors, which perpetuate oppression, exclusion, and invisibility, and to allow for the continuation of exclusionary practices." This type of exclusion is made very apparent during an eventful time of year for the gay population – the Pride festival.

This hidden segregation that is present at Pride, such a celebratory time of year, is what brings me to study LGBT access based on one's racial background. I argue that even while South Africa is democratically advancing faster than any other country in the world, there still exists a noticeable exclusion at Pride, as it seems to serve as the white gay male's party. I study, more specifically, the influence of one's access to various events and celebrations, along location, economic, and racial boundaries. By focusing on

the geography and economic privilege that is present in the marketed queer spaces during Pride, I look at how this festival is occupied by a rather distinct demographic, most commonly seen as the white gay male. The objectives of this study are to enter into a discussion about the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of people based on gender identity and race in Cape Town's Pride and the events leading up to the parade and to examine the power of privilege by delving into the access primarily owned by white gay men in contrast to other LGBT members of Cape Town's gay community. Ultimately, I argue for the inclusion of a variety of LGBT communities in Pride that will better represent the diversity of Cape Town.

After expanding on the historical impact of gay rights and the Pride march that began in Johannesburg in 1990, I move into my analysis of my participant observation and interviews. I structure my analysis of my primary sources through the power of access in which I argue for the need to dismantle privilege and emphasize inclusion through mobility and financial support. The body of this paper is centered on four themes. The first section is focused on the impact of the location of Cape Town's Pride in the gay district (De Waterkant). I focus on the division that is physically implemented between those that live in close proximity to Cape Town's gay village and the individuals located in townships on the outskirts of town. In contrast to physical location, I expand on this division through economic boundaries that limit some to access of various events during Pride week. I then move into a closer examination of my site of study – MISS Butch/Femme, Anything Goes Friday, and the actual Pride march – focusing, specifically, on how these spaces are accessed by particular racial groups. I then explore the dichotomy between what Pride means to different racial groups, contrasting the party

concept primarily held by white individuals to that of a continued protest, seen more by black groups. Finally, I wrap up my study by the progressive actions that would like to be seen, if not already structured, in future Pride weeks and throughout the year among the gay communities around Cape Town. These ideas work to expose the racial diversity that is still not present during times of the year in Cape Town that are expected to bring the entirety of the LGBT community together.

Methodology

My ISP is centered around academic research, participant observation, and interviews I carried out with LGBT individuals who participate in Pride. Through these three modes of research I was able to gain intimate access into the lives and perspectives of LGBT individuals who live in Cape Town and surrounding areas and attend some events that make up Pride week. My information was collected throughout the semester, as it began with participant observation in the final week of February, when the events of Pride took place. During this week, I attended two events that occurred prior to the march, which was the final event of this week of celebration. I attended the MISS Butch/Femme competition (a beauty pageant of sorts geared towards the lesbian population) and Anything Goes Friday (a celebration that follows the Pride march, which targets a predominantly black and Coloured population), as well as all I experienced and interacted with when walking in the Pride march on 1 March 2014. Following this week of participant observation, I began to conduct research on the history of gay rights in South Africa, as well as the racialization that has been present during Pride marches throughout South Africa.

Participant observation was also present on 12 April 2014, when I sat in on a discussion of Pride's successes and faults, called Ikasipride. This meeting was open to anyone who wanted to input their voice and opinion of the workings of Pride. This discussion looked at the issues behind the lack of openness to all members of the LGBT community in Cape Town due to distance, economic steepness, and racial influences. This conversation was very helpful to my study, as it offered ideas as to how to improve Pride in the future, stemming it from current issues experienced by participants. The

racial makeup of this group was mixed, holding black, white, and coloured men and women who all participated this year and possibly years back. I also interviewed four South Africans, who identify as LGBT, about their experiences with Cape Town's Pride. These men and women came from different racial backgrounds and played very different roles within Pride's community, some being on the Pride committee, others simply participating in the march, and others still helping to improve the workings of the festival in future years. These interviews were conducted between the days of 15 to 22 April 2014. These interviews were structured around questions concerning their personal experiences with Pride and the events that lead up to the march. Although some had differing points of view in terms of topics of inclusion and diversity, they all discussed that the racial makeup of the Pride march is not representative of Cape Town's gay community as a whole, as the march is primarily dominated by white gay men. They were all willing to discuss their own participation in Pride and the ideas and opinions they have as to how it works now and how it can be changed in the future.

All of these interviews were conducted formally at local coffee shops around Cape Town, in spaces that made the informant feel comfortable and at ease, which helped to allow them to be more willing to discuss the more controversial topic of the segregation of Pride. Prior to our interviews, I ensured that my informant was aware of my intentions of this study and the anonymity that I would use to ensure the protection of their identity in my research. They each signed a consent form indicating that they understood this all before I began asking them questions. These interviews lasted anywhere from one to two and a half hours per correspondent. However, while these meetings were rather formal, the public location prevented from voice recording to help

much, because it was clouded by others' conversations around us, so most information I gained from these interviews was written down from what I heard directly from my informant, rather than from a recording. All names of my correspondents have been changed, and they are not linked with any associations that could identify who they are, in order to honor their anonymity.

I use my secondary sources in order to contextualize my interviews and set up a historical framework through which one can make sense of these interviews and my observations. By looking at the segregation that was present between the gay population and the rest of South Africa before the abolishment of apartheid in 1994 and comparing it to the segregation that now appears to be present between different groups that make up the gay community, I demonstrate the roots of difference that builds up the racialization that is observed in Pride today.

Limitations of Study

Although my research allowed me the time to talk with individuals who participate in the Pride festival in Cape Town, attend Pride myself, sit in on a constructive conversation about progressing Pride further, and do extensive research, the four week time constraint did not allow for the number of interviews or further research I would have liked to conduct. The more correspondents I talked to and the more articles I discovered about the politics of Pride, the more I wished I could further this study with even more information. While the interviews that I did conduct were extensive, I wish I could have talked to a larger variety of individuals. Seeing as most of my interviews were with women, which was due to my primary contact's connections with the lesbian community of Cape Town, I would have liked to broaden the backgrounds of interviewees by asking more men about their experiences with Pride. If I could be granted more time, I would also have liked to delve deeper into the Coloured population's experiences with Pride and contrast that with black and white; but, again, because of the short period of time, I was unable to extensively research each aspect of South Africa's culture.

Another limitation of my research is that although I was studying the experiences of Pride among the LGBT community in Cape Town, I was only able to gain access to people who had connection to the woman I initially met at the beginning of my research. Should I be given more time to find more informants, I would have networked in more detail at Pride and would have re-visited the sites that I participated in during the Pride festival to gain more points of access to this series of events. However, the people I did interview were incredibly valuable for my research because they were very open with

their experiences and opinions of Pride, offering me insight into outlooks from different racial, gender, and sexual orientation backgrounds.

In addition to interviews, I had hoped to use a survey that asked nine questions about Cape Townians' experiences with Pride. I had sent this out to a Facebook group dedicated to Cape Town Pride that I had joined for the festival, attaching with it a description of my project and asking anyone who wished to participate to take a few minutes to answer the questions. Unfortunately, this did not receive as strong of a response as I had hoped, and so I was unable to use the survey for valuable information towards my research. If I had more time and access to various groups within the LGBT community, I would have been able to distribute this survey more extensively, which would have most likely given me more responses that could help demonstrate to me individuals' perspectives who I didn't have an opportunity to interview.

Finally, I would have benefitted from more articles and research that I had issues accessing, whether that was due to my not being a university student or because of my lack of time spent in Cape Town and exposure to various journals and newspapers. Thanks to my advisor, I was able to gain access to articles that I mostly likely would not have been able to find on my own that are central to my argument. With a longer time frame, I would hope to have contextualized my findings more and devote more time and space to history and political struggle, which I believe is at the center of my arguments.

Literature Review

South Africa's history has been drastically clouded by the segregation that was woven into the apartheid that was present for so long, until its abolishment in 1994. Prior to the establishment of the new Constitution, everyone was sectionalized into a category based on the characteristics that was their racial makeup. Beyond race, discrimination existed among the homosexual population. It was highly rejected throughout society, as homosexuals were regarded as "sinners or sick people. Same-sex relationships were viewed as 'deviant.'" (du Pisani, 2012, p. 184) Yet, this radical thinking was legally corrected on 9 May 1996, when the sexual orientation clause was approved by Parliament, and President Nelson Mandela signed it into effect in the Bill of Rights on 10 May, making South Africa the first country to do so. (Kovac, 2002) In a celebration of the new nation, Archbishop Desmond Tutu introduced South Africa as a rainbow nation, serving as "a symbol of reconciliation and unity among all the diverse people in the nation. This spirit of unity is captured in the new identity adopted by South Africa as the nation of the 'rainbow people'." (Møller, Dickow, Harris, 1999) South Africa was seen as a revolutionary country, promoting equality to all of its residents, regardless of race and sexual orientation.

For the LGBT population of South Africa, strides are being made – literally. The Gay and Lesbian Organization of the Witwatersrand (also known as GLOW), started by activists in reaction against the Gay Association of South Africa, launched the first-ever Pride event in Johannesburg in 1990. As the first gay and lesbian parade to take place on the African continent, some marched with paper bags over their heads to hide their identity and avoid retaliations for their participation. Speaking at the event, Simon Nkoli,

one of the founders of GLOW, stated, “I am black and I am gay...In South Africa I am oppressed because I am a black man, and I am oppressed because I am gay. So when I fight for my freedom I must fight against both oppressions.” (Davis, 2012) The “apolitical” gay movements of the 1980’s had now shifted into the liberationist gay movement of the 1990’s. (Cameron & Gevisser, 1995, p. 10) As the Pride march began, it was fairly inward looking, reflecting on Johannesburg’s gay population. In the following years the themes of the marches were more of an outward projection. In 1991, the theme was “March for Equality,” and in 1992 it was “Marching for our Rights.” (Craven, 2011, p. 55) As Pride transitioned through the years, the protest march that was designed to fight for the rights that the LGBT population of South Africa wasn’t granted began to turn into a celebration of their equality that was established in the new constitution. As the organizers of Pride, GLOW focused on fusing two concepts together in order to make one successful parade: “there is the carnivalesque tradition of the annual New York Pride March or Sydney Gay Mardi Gras, but there is also South Africa’s own tradition of the anti-apartheid protest march.” (Cameron & Geviesser, 1995, p. 64)

Pride was widely celebrated, as it offered visibility of the gay and lesbian communities. “A pride march, as a moment of public expression, is the perfect analogy for coming out of the closet: out of those dark bars and dark corners of dark parks into the full glare of sunlight and television cameras.” (Cameron & Gevisser, 1995, p. 63) It began to form in different communities in various locations around South Africa. African Pride, created because individuals argued that Johannesburg Pride did not cater to black gays and lesbians, “was the first suggested alternative Pride event born out of a dissatisfaction with the increasingly commercial and depoliticized nature of

Johannesburg Pride” in 2001. (Craven, 2011, p. 58) This alteration of Johannesburg’s Pride began to form elsewhere, as Pride made its way to Cape Town in 1993, where it “has also taken the form of a night-time Mardi Gras.” (de Waal & Manion, 2006, 6) Pride has transformed from the initial unequivocal protest march of the early 1990’s, demanding the recognition of rights, to a parade celebrating the achievement of those rights.

Yet, this equality has not been as prominent as would be desired 20 years down the road. Exclusion in the gay community has been consistent, particularly in the club scene, as various individuals have witnessed denial of access to blacks, which “led some to suggest a racist undercurrent dictating who is and who is not allowed access.” (Tuckker, 2008, 188) This exclusion is drawn from past assumptions that tie race to economic status and privilege, and it creates a gap in the inclusion that is supposed to be present throughout South Africa. This issue of economic exclusion has existed since the initial ideas of revenue came into play with Pride’s festival. Donations were the primary source of income for Pride in the mid 1990’s, which are still used today, specifically to fund outreach programs associated with Pride, such as transportation to and from townships. However, as Pride evolved and grew through the years, organizers looked for different ways to make revenue, which was found in sponsorships and in the wallets of participants of Pride. This was done through an official party held after the parade and the selling of food and drink at the end of the parade venue. (Craven, 2011, p. 50) These parties that took place brought in much economic growth of this festival, as it was aggressively marketed in 1995 as an integral part of the day’s festivities in Johannesburg, so as to create a profit from this celebration. (Craven, 2011, p. 49) This party aspect Pride

was also received negatively by some groups, and it still experiences issues around it to this day. In 2012, One in Nine, an organization whose name is derived from the statistic that only one in nine rape survivors reports the attack, lay down in the middle of the street to bring Johannesburg's Pride to a halt, claiming that "Joburg Pride has now relinquished all pretense of a political function, being focused exclusively on a slick, money-making party spectacle." (Davis, 2012) Economic exclusion continues to divide the LGBT community of South Africa, influencing the participation of some in Pride's parades.

Location of Pride marches also constantly exists in the annual discussions of this festival. "Debates around the route of Pride have constantly been racialized." (Craven, 2011, p. 48) It's been a topic of high priority, because the location of the Pride march impacts both involvement of different groups and the visibility it will receive. When discussing the debate of moving Pride to a predominantly white suburb of Johannesburg, Richard Holden, the secretary of Pride, stated,

"A perception could be created that the parade has been moved to a predominantly white 'turf'. Now that the gender discrimination clause has been included in the Constitution, it could appear as if the black gay community has been utilized in a somewhat cynical manner for the attainment of a political objective, only to be 'dumped' thereafter."

(Holden, Personal correspondence, 12 June 1996, in Craven, 2011, p. 46)

These issues also exist in Cape Town, as recently the Pride march has taken place around De Waterkant, a primarily middle-class gay area of Cape Town, which casts restrictions of access to those who live in townships and further away from the center of town. It is also seen as less of a statement of a march, as it takes place in an area where it is already mostly occupied by gay individuals. "The arguments around the push for a change of venue have always gone hand in hand with the debates around whether Pride is supposed

to be a political march or a celebratory parade,” writes Craven; “the choice to walk in areas that are generally gay-friendly and non-threatening contrasts with the notion of Pride as an attempt to claim contested space”. (Craven, 2011)

There aren't only issues behind economic gain and location of Pride, but there also still exists exclusion among the categories of race and gender. “The linking of racial oppression and sexual oppression has been a common perception and strategy of lesbian and gay liberation groups in South Africa.” (Cameron & Gevisser, 1995, p. 10) These distances established between individuals of varying identities are what greatly influence the politics of Pride, as Craven states, “Issues around race, gender, class, gender identity, sexual orientation and the multiple intersections between these identities are all key to understanding the contestations around Pride.” (Craven, 2011) This segregation was even noticeable in the appearance of Pride's title. By the late 1990's, what was originally the “Lesbian and Gay Pride March” had become the “Gay and Lesbian Pride Parade,” listing prominence given to gays rather than lesbians, and the distinctly political-sounding “march” replaced with the much more fun-loving “parade.” (Craven, 2011) Protest to Pride marches is a recurring theme every year, as there continues to be this segregation of peoples present. Funeka Soldaat, chairman of Khayelitsha's Free Gender organization, implemented a boycott of this year's Pride festival in Cape Town, claiming that it is both racist and sexist. “Cape Town Pride is run by white men and they are excluding women and the black community. The festival is seen as a place to go to drink and have fun. It has become meaningless.” (Davids, 2014) There is a strong disconnect both in the meaning participants see Pride holding, but also in the access and acceptance they feel in this time of supposed celebration. These are the issues that Pride is currently trying to

conquer, but there appears to be trouble in finding a place to fit everyone's needs in this sole week dedicated to the LGBT community. In Davis's article about protest of Johannesburg Pride, his informant explains that the gay community is not really a community at all.

“The travails of a rich white gay man are unlikely to match the struggles faced by a black lesbian in an informal settlement. In South Africa, race and class are far more significant determiners of social standing than sexual orientation. To even speak of a gay “community” here, though it may be politically expedient to imply unity, is probably misleading. An event like Pride, which must ostensibly aim to represent all facets of alternative sexuality in South Africa, faces a hell of a job.”

(Davis, 2012)

This gap between the end goals of Pride for black gay and lesbian individuals compared to those of whites appears to be broadening through the years. This is also made so through the disjuncture between the protest that some believe should still exist and the party, celebratory atmosphere that many want Pride to hold.

There continues to be an implemented segregation among the participants of Cape Town's Pride, as black individuals remark in their lives the hierarchy that still exists. In Graziano's study conducted on the oppression of black gay men and lesbians in post-apartheid South Africa, he explains, “all of the participants agreed that they sometimes conform their race, values, and beliefs to their oppressor and explained that they are aware of moments when they surrender their Black identity to be accepted by Whites.” (Graziano, 2004, p. 308) There still subsists this hierarchy that is present among different societies within South Africa, and it is greatly demonstrated by the domination of white gay and lesbian participants in Pride. Through the years, Pride has changed, due to both the population it has attracted, as well as its dependency to continue to hold interest to the LGBT population. “It may be that the commercialization of Pride ensured its survival as

an annual event, but it also contributed to its depoliticization and estrangement from black gay and lesbian people.” (de Waal & Manion, 2006, p. 8) As Pride continues to transform, it is losing the significance to some that it stood for in the early 1990’s, distancing the role it plays to individuals identifying with different races.

This loss of the political influence of Pride is another disjointed view of the festival and has resulted in multiple conflicting opinions. In 1992, Gevisser wrote that many white gay men didn’t want to take part in Johannesburg’s annual parade because they found it “too political, too closely aligned to the ANC and put plainly, too black,” which Gevisser noted as being interesting, since at least 75% of attendants were white. (Craven, 2011, p. 56) This contradiction is present when one looks at Pride, even today, as there appears to be a correlation in white participants wanting to stray away from Pride’s political roots, while black individuals don’t think there is enough emphasis on this issue. Many even felt great discomfort by the political militancy of the march, as it correlated with the larger South African liberation struggle. Questions arose among some of South Africa’s gay population such as, “Why can’t gay Pride live up to its name and be pride? Who needs the political sloganeering? Let’s just be Proud.” (Gevisser, 1992, in Craven, 2011, p. 54)

This difference between being proud through celebration and being proud through the constant struggle is truly what appears to be pulling the gay community apart when it comes to Pride. This alteration from protest to celebration is visible in many contexts of Cape Town’s current Pride. One of the most profound changes of Pride was the change brought in by Stobbs of the name of the event from a “march” to a “parade,” as he saw this event as being perceived too politically and believed that with the change of

terminology will also bring about more accessibility of Pride to others. This change angered many GLOW activists. Stobbs explained, “The march at the time was too political and this was preventing people from coming. White gay boys want to have fun, they want to drink. This is what GLOW didn’t understand.” (De Waal and Manion, 2006, in Craven, 2011, p. 55) This, in fact, was one of the most prominent issues and led to constant disconnect in points of importance that lay in the name of Pride. Following Stobbs’s comment about the political nature of the march preventing people from wanting to join, Craven makes an interesting comment about his quote:

The fact that Stobbs states that people were not coming and then relates this directly to what would attract white gay men implies clearly that “people” in this instance means white gay men and that the indicator of the success or failure of Pride is the attendance of this specific demographic.

(Craven, 2011, p. 56)

South Africa is still molded into this idea of pleasing the white man, as it is prominent in all large events in Cape Town, such as Pride.

As the meaning of Pride separates between races within Cape Town, individuals are seeing less of a connection between those that make up the gay community.

“Frequently, the only thing the people of this ‘community’ have in common is their difference from the heterosexual norm, and often the differences within the ‘community’ feel stronger than the commonalities.” (de Waal, Manion, 2006, p. 9) What strides can be taken to move away from segregation and back to unity? Subsequently, this ISP hopes to contribute a debate about the segregation that still exists at Cape Town’s Pride events. Moreover, it works to dismantle the “community” that appears to be nearly non-existent among Cape Town’s LGBT individuals. Ultimately, the history of exclusion is still

prominent in today's culture, as this study explores a time of celebration among a group of people that isn't necessarily accepted worldwide.

Glossary

GASA: Gay Association of South Africa

GLOW: Gay and Lesbian Organization of Witwatersrand

Greenpoint: Cape Town's gay village, located near the heart of downtown

LGBT: Individuals who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered

SIT: School of International Training

Location, location, location!:

Exclusion implemented through the geographical placing of Pride's events

Findings and Analysis

Pride was expanded throughout Africa, as it moved from Johannesburg to Cape Town in 1993. Yet, this movement was not as successful as could be, as Cape Town's Pride is located primarily in its gay village of De Waterkant and Greenpoint. By limiting the mobility of this festival and anchoring it in an area that is largely monopolized by the white, middle-class gay population of Cape Town, the location of Pride serves as a barricade, making it difficult for individuals to fully access the events of this week.

In order to address the overarching question of this study, how is the segregation between black and white individuals still present in Cape Town's present Pride festival, it is essential to look at the barriers that prevent certain participants from full exposure that Pride's events have to offer. An important aspect of Pride is that it is about claiming space and that, in itself, serves as a political act, explains George¹ at the Ikasipride discussion. Yet, while Pride serves the purpose to some of claiming this space, a space that is believed to be dominated by Cape Town's heterosexual population during the rest of the year, it does not seem to hold as much significance now to some gay and lesbian participants of Pride. Veronica, a black lesbian woman who also attended the Ikasipride discussion, explained her first Pride experience and the importance it held to her.

I remember my first Pride about four years ago, as it went around the big streets in Cape Town, but each year it is getting further and further away from the city. I see Pride as being about the visibility of the LGBT community – they need to see we're here and we're people just like you. But now it's moving further and further away into the Pink Strip where we don't need to protest. This year it was like fifteen minutes of walking and it was over.

¹ Names of all informants have been changed to protect their identities.

There exists an issue to some about the importance that Pride is losing as it only appears to be making a statement in a space that has been seen as already being claimed by Cape Town's LGBT community. To some Pride participants, that is the significance this parade holds to them – the power to show that they are gay, they are proud, and they aren't the "other," as Denise explained in her interview.

In addition to issues around the route of Pride, there also exists the problem of the Pride festival being located primarily in Cape Town proper, making it difficult to access for people far from the center of town, such as in townships. Beth, a member of the Pride committee who devotes much of her time to planning the events that take place during Pride week, explains the frustration she experiences with some, in terms of location. "There are complaints that Pride is held in the privileged area of Greenpoint," she extrapolates, "and they want the festival to take place closer to townships because people in those areas don't feel comfortable unless they are participating in actual events that celebrate the LGBT community." Yet, they feel restricted because they have limited access to these events, because of difficulties arriving in town for the day and returning home. This year, strides were made to attempt to help this population feel more included, as they funded busses to carry individuals to the parade from the townships and back home when the events were through.

But, with these attempts to promote inclusion among all residents around Cape Town, there is still this sense of discomfort and a feeling of being an observer of someone else's party to those who don't constantly occupy those spaces. Denise, who is a black lesbian, explained to me that she doesn't feel that she is part of that space but

instead is invited to someone else's party. "I just go until 6 PM and then I go back to my space. I don't feel that it's as comfortable or inviting or open as Pride needs to be."

Because the location of Pride makes it only accessible to a select group of Cape Town – primarily the white, middle-classed gay community – there is a feeling of exclusion present in many individuals that come from townships and have limited resources to easily bring them into town. With this comes a vision of those living in townships as the "other" within this community. Denise remarked on this, explaining the importance of moving Pride around, so as to move away from the idea that there's a special area that's the good area and other areas from which people need to travel.

An attempt has been constructed to mend the distance between individuals in the townships and the Pride that takes place in Greenpoint, and that is Khumbulani Pride, which is a march and celebration that is specifically located in different townships on the outskirts of Cape Town. However, this has also been received negatively by some, as Jane, another woman who participated in the IkaSipride discussion, comments, "I think that making Pride a point of celebration in a white area and only a remembrance in a black area is casting Pride as political." While Khumbulani Pride was created with the intention to support those individuals whose homes are in townships, some perceive this as another form of separation between the centrally located and those on the outskirts. Denise again states it as the townships being perceived as the "other," due to the township Pride march being politicized, which is not really encouraged in Cape Town's Pride. "I feel that it drives or perpetuates the notion that there's the 'other' that has issues and is melancholic and sad, and the spectacle that happens in town is for people who don't necessarily want to deal with those issues in their space." This battle over space

strengthens the political issues that exist among Pride's events. With minimal accessible celebration to those individuals located outside of town, Pride becomes a large spectacle for those within close proximity of Pride's events.

Conclusion

Ultimately, Pride is wanted to be accessible to all, which serves as a problem when the parade and all events are located in one area of the city, dominated mostly by the upwardly mobile and economically accessible. Mark, when he positioned his opinion at Ikaipride, put it wisely:

Pride should be accessible for everyone, in a sense of where it's being held, what events, what it's costing. This is supposed to be a celebration that no matter who you are, whether you've got two beans [dollars] or a hundred beans, you should have access to that Pride. And it's Pride's responsibility to have a public facility to try for one day to make it inclusive.

Pride holds importance to all participants, yet it is not as easily accessed by some due to the location of this week's events. This division over space becomes racialized, as most Pride participants who hold most access are those that live in close proximity to Greenpoint, who are primarily white and middle-class. This then leaves black lower-class individuals in the townships to feel as if they're excluded from this celebration and ultimately from this community. By mobilizing Pride every year or spacing out events to make them accessible to a larger population, Pride could continue to work towards its geographical equality.

Is Money really everything?:

Exclusion implemented through the steep economic demand of Pride events

Findings and Analysis

When asked the question of what the demographic of the participants of Pride is made up of, most informants responded that it is mostly white gay males who primarily come from middle- to upper-class economic backgrounds. This, as argued by many, has to do with the funds generated from the events that take place throughout the week of festivities. When after-parties were fully established post-Pride march in Johannesburg in 1995, there became a strong focus on using the participants' admittance fees to those parties as a large part of Pride's revenue. "The decision that the organizers of Pride should get involved directly with the organization of an income generating event changed profoundly the nature of Pride and the mandate of its organizers" (Craven, 2011, p. 50) From that moment on, parties became part of Pride, and as it moved to Cape Town, so did the need to make money from events. This section examines the way in which economic access is as limited – if not more so – to a certain demographic: the middle- and upper-class, again reinstating the segregation due to the gearing of Pride events to those that can easily afford it.

"If you go into Pride, you'll see that it's mostly white people that attend. And sadly, they're mostly middle classed and they're privileged and they're mostly sheltered from what happens in the townships and outside suburbia," explained Mary in her interview. Unfortunately, this is a noticeable phenomenon among many. In his interview, Andrew, a photographer of Pride, remarked about this as well. "If you look at the gate between the parties at Pride, it's the white people on one side that could pay to

get in and the black and Coloured people on the other side just listening to the music because they couldn't pay." This disparity between economic access to these events continues to divide the LGBT community that attends Pride.

"Discrimination is very obvious when it comes to money and access – it's catered to the city vibe," Mary expands. This high price value for all events throughout the week of Pride has a lot to do with the demographic of the Pride committee, which is very small, very white, and very middle class. Beth explained to me, "It's white people that are reasonably well off, because those are the people who can go out and drop R200 in a night. Most people go to Pride for the parties after the march, so these are the kind of people it attracts." She expands on this notion, as she extrapolates on the minds of the creators of such of events. She said to me, "the committee is mostly white – well off – so we cater to what we know. So when we're planning events, we think R50 is cheap but to others that's really expensive." This ties directly into the issue with location of Pride, as one who has to pay more to transport themselves to and from the festival will have to add on costs to pay for admittance into different venues. This makes it extremely difficult for some to access all they'd like to, due to insufficient funds. By being located in a low-income area outside of the city, one is less likely to participate in the events that are taking place in Cape Town proper because of high cost and little benefit.

Denise expanded on this concept of lack of diversity due to economic barriers. She states:

I think that there are so many events that are catered towards a certain type of person that black Cape Townians don't feel part of it and it's not communicated in such a way that invited them to this process. So people show up to Pride and it's not as dominated by blacks because the 9,000 people in the townships don't have the access. It's again this idea that it's someone's party. When you look at the numbers that make up Khumblani Pride, it shows that there's an

interest in joining pride. But at events, when you have an event that costs R30 and you have people who had to pay for a train or a taxi, you are already excluding people from events at a time that's supposed to be all-inclusive.

This desire by Cape Town's Pride to gain revenue from its participants works against many who don't have sufficient funds to finance expenses such as the events that take place during this week. Because of this, many just attend the parade, which is free, and are left out of events that take place post-march. Segregation is again implemented because of Pride's requirements of what you need to "have a good time."

Conclusion

Again, this economic access, or lack thereof to some, establishes the segregation and lack of diversity that is currently present within Pride. As with location, individuals from low economic status and backgrounds are prevented from full participation in events that require a cover fee. This caters to the upper- and middle-classes of Cape Town, which are prominently dominated by white residents. This continues to whiten the racial makeup of Pride.

Beth, in her interview, discussed a hope to work towards reducing this economic deficit by reserving tickets for a group of participants from townships, so as to help them divulge in the events of the week. This, along with more free or cheaper events, could help equalize this balance.

Joining the Rainbow Nation:

Observing discrepancies within events during Pride week

Findings and Analysis

I walked towards Greenpoint feeling excited and curious as to what exactly I was about to participate in. Sure, I had heard about many Pride parades to take place, primarily in the United States, but I had never actually walked in one, especially doing so for a project I knew I would be using this information for later on in the semester. I arrived at a large group of people, covered in color, glitter, and upbeat music. Everyone was smiling and excited to begin the walk; floats were being touched up before their big debut; people were dancing, hugging one another, and laughing in celebration of this frivolous time. People began to walk and I made my way to the main road, surrounded by individuals in paired shirts that read, “I’m His” and “He’s Mine” and groups dancing to music on the beds of trucks decorated in balloons and banners. Yet, as I walked, passing different floats and watched as other groups just walked collectively, I began to pick up on patterns. I began to understand what others talked about, observing that this event was predominantly white. In this section, I use my participant observation to expand on the groups of people that feel comfortable and accepted in different spaces during Pride week, looking at the parade, MISS Butch/Femme, an event directly geared towards the lesbian population, and Anything Goes Friday, an after-party that took place post-march. I hope to expose the perceptions of the separate nature of Pride’s events from the viewpoint of an outsider, dissecting what makes it this way.

“Cape Town Pride is primarily gay white male,” says Denise. “That’s how it comes across and is centered around. When it’s six people involved [on the committee]

and they're all enclosed in their group, their view or understanding of the community is so closed in themselves." This was made fairly clear in the march, as most, if not all, of the floats were occupied by white men and women, dancing in decently revealing clothing, to demonstrate that they are in public and proud of who they are. Granted, there is nothing wrong with this – this is the importance of Pride to some, to be gay, celebratory, and visible for all to see. But, for others, the purpose of Pride resides in other messages. Among the few black and Coloured groups that attended Pride that I saw, most of those groups were marching on the ground with the majority of participants. One of the parties that strongly stood out to me was a group of primarily black and Coloured individuals, who all wore thick bands of black tape across their mouths. They held signs that read things such as, "Free the Queens of Africa," "Respect Black Gay Lives," "Stop Sexist, Racist CT Pride," and "Cape Town Pride needs REAL Representation!" This suggested to me that these types of groups – those that didn't stand on floats and dance, but instead marched with political messages written on signs – saw Pride as a continued protest, as a fight for rights they still aren't granted. The same type of demographic is observed in the meetings and discussions that try to help change Pride for the better. In workshops for Pride's constitution, Beth explained that black lesbians mostly dominate them. When asked why she thinks this is, she said it could be affected by them seeing Pride as not inclusive enough. "They see it on the front lines; I don't see it because it doesn't affect me as much."

However, the parade isn't the only site where this racial discrepancy is observed. When attending MISS Butch/Femme, the first event ever geared specifically towards lesbians, I noticed the same type of demographic. Predominantly white, this beauty

pageant of sorts was located in the heart of Greenpoint, at a bar that had a R50 cover fee and served drinks that cost an upward of R40. While this event was extremely fun and successful for being the first lesbian-g geared event, there was less diversity among the group than I anticipated seeing. “You can’t control who wants to come to what events,” Mary told me, “but it seems that the white girls liked to come to MISS more because they like to get drunk and have a good time and meet other lesbians like that.”

In contrast to this event, Anything Goes Friday, which took place after the Pride parade, located further away from Greenpoint on Loop Street (next to Long Street), held a different demographic. This after party contained very few white individuals (myself and my two friends being some of the only ones). The predominantly black and Coloured population, as explained by Mary, didn’t hold the same atmosphere as other parties that were closer to Greenpoint. “It wasn’t like the typical gay and lesbian party vibe; it wasn’t picky. Everybody got up and met one another. Cape Townians tend to stick to their groups only, but at Anything Goes Friday, everyone just wants to party with everyone.” When Mary said this, it made myself more aware of what I had witnessed at both MISS and Anything Goes Friday. When at MISS Butch/Femme, most clusters of women that stood around the stage seemed to be established prior to the event, as if they came with their set of friends and didn’t tend to branch out as much as I experienced at Anything Goes Friday, where many more participants appeared to attend individually.

Conclusion

Pride exposed to me the racial makeup that I heard of so much in the interviews I conducted; by observing the predominantly white participants in the parade, I began to understand the party that Pride is understood to be by many of its marchers. Everyone I

saw on floats were dancing, having a good time, throwing beads and water bottles into the crowd, waving and blowing kisses. This type of activity is what emits Pride as the celebration that it has rightly earned. However, when looking deeper into the crowd, I began to see the protest that still continues to exist, even among the laughs and joy. As has been made clear from the previous sections, the party scene appears to be more reserved for the white middle-class individuals of the LGBT community, while the majority of the black and Coloured population continues to see Pride as an opportunity to fight for those who still don't experience equality.

One way that is working towards expanding the events to different groups within Cape Town's LGBT community is Pride Shabbat, which was geared towards the Jewish population. During Iksaipride, Beatrice, explained how important Shabbat was to her this year:

The march wasn't in my space, but instead it was in my Synagogue with my friends and family and people who could recognize me. This conversation that is happening here is representative of the conversations happening in South Africa. I think the answer is going back to our history – what about the downfall of apartheid was a movement where people were focused on a particular group and vision. Whether it's sanctions or boycotts or marching or educating, you know, just being out in the street and dancing and burning crosses, whatever the case may be. Each of us can express in a particular manner that we're comfortable with who we are. And then how can we support the next person to do the same. That's the key thing we need to look at.

This is the importance that Pride holds – the fight and celebration that is constant through the events that take place throughout this week. Yet, there still exists a sense of discomfort from some in certain spaces, which also contributes to the differing views of what Pride means to its participants.

Party vs. Protest:

The contradicting viewpoints behind Pride's meaning

Findings and Analysis

As the meaning of Pride separates between races within Cape Town, individuals are seeing less of a connection between those that make up the gay community. These differing motives behind Pride are deeply influenced by various communities' reflections on gay and lesbian members. To some, this is a direct reflection of South Africa's confrontation with the discrepancies that exist within this county. In her interview, Beth explained, "As much as South Africa is a democracy, it's one of the least democratic countries in the world." Could this be? Pride's political issues among varying racial backgrounds could serve as evidence of the lack of connect between different individuals that make up this rainbow nation. This final section examines the differing beliefs of the meaning that Pride holds, as the contrast between party and protest pulls apart the group that attends these events.

Pride is used as a safe space for people to relate to one another, as Denise depicted the importance of this parade to her. "It's a space to experience people like me who have the same challenges and experiences and stereotypes and discrimination. It's okay to be lesbian without being an inconvenience or an 'other.'" Yet, while Pride is meant to hold this level of equality among all its participants, there are still some that don't see it this way. Adam, another member of the Pride committee, talked about this during the Ikasipride discussion. He explained, "The challenges ahead that we are facing are apathy within the gay community and also how to actually bring together all of our separate facets again. So the key point is communication and coming together as one

united force.” While this is a goal for future Pride events, this isn’t observed to be existent in current day Cape Town.

The issue of exclusion and segregation lies heavily in participants’ views of Pride as either a party or a protest. “Everybody has their politics and things they feel need to happen, but it is supposed to be all-inclusive. It feels like a gay, white, male Pride. That’s what it feels like,” states Mark at Ikasipride. There tends to be an automatic association of the party scene with the white gay male, which leads to many associating Pride with that demographic almost entirely. This excludes the many individuals who are struggling in townships and in areas where they aren’t fully accepted by the people around them. This is largely blamed on the media coverage of the event. “When people think Pride, they think a big drag show, perfect bodies with a six-pack. This is what the media covers, and so this is what we see on the news and on covers of papers. When they think Pride, they don’t think our lesbian sister is brutally being raped because she’s a lesbian.” The commercialization of Pride has promoted it as a huge party, but others still continue to see it as a march, instead of the parade that it has been titled.

“For me, there have been a lot of experiences where I come back from Pride and feel like there’s no value in Pride and asked, what did I go there for?” Denise told me. While Pride is meant to be celebratory, there seems to be an element of disappointment to some who want to see Pride more meaningful than is emitted at this point. This idea of the party, which is associated primarily to the white middle-class, leads to exclusion even within the event, among those who choose to attend. Denise extrapolated:

I think it’s assumed that it seems like someone’s party and they are *their* friends in their little speedos, having this party and “you guys can come because we know you and we’re giving you an invitation.” It seems like people separate, but the environment itself gets people to stick to their little corners. There doesn’t

appear to be a collective unit of people coming together. So there are the groups of white men and then the small groups of black people that are on the side who congregate together because they don't necessarily feel welcome.

This unwelcoming feeling that is associated with Pride to some makes the celebration not so celebratory for those who don't feel included. By regarding Pride as catering solely to the party desires of the white majority, the LGBT community is observed as being split up, mostly into their respective racial groups, come time of this week of festivities.

Conclusion

Pride's party identity that it has accumulated through the years has grown strictly around the appeal of it to gay white men, as Craven explained in her article. (2011) This has greatly influenced others' perspectives of Pride and has altered their appreciation or distaste for what the original protest march has transformed into. Denise expands on this:

The problem that is dominant in Cape Town Pride is that the party element of it dominates the whole definition of pride. People have the right to party if they want, but there shouldn't be one umbrella where everyone has to party. So I want to have different events to engage those different definitions of Pride. So we can have a party and then we can have a workshop. So it's not that others see Pride as unfit but they're taking Pride and shoving it into one corner of how you see fit and make everyone experience it that way.

This, again, relates back to the geographical and economic restrictions Pride places on its access to certain individuals. By gearing Pride towards a particular demographic – the upwardly mobile, middle-class patrons who value the party scene over the march for rights – Pride begins to appeal to a very narrow population of the LGBT community. There becomes a sense of lost meaning behind what this week of pride really means.

Conclusion:

Advancing Pride in Future Years

While there appear to exist many setbacks that Pride holds currently, my informants offered me many ideas for how to improve the festival in the future in order to promote equality and inclusion. One detriment that both members of the Pride committee who served as informants discussed was the lack of volunteers available at their disposal. An increased number of volunteers, coming from different LGBT non-government organizations could help give the Pride committee a wider range of opinions and needs to satisfy, offering a broader array of events and celebrations throughout the week. This way, Pride could lose some of its identity as just a huge party and actually delve into issues that individuals hold throughout the year and create events and workshops that identify those issues and work to reduce or eliminate them.

Trying to expand Pride has been made apparent in the formation of Khumbulani Pride. By either promoting it more so that it attracts more participants, or combining it with Pride so that it doesn't feel like a tug between the two parades, Khumbulani Pride could become a strong movement that helps to support the LGBT men and women in townships. Along those same lines, the Ikaipride discussion that took place this April, workshopping the different faults of Pride and debating ways to improve it in the future, is a productive way to hear the voices of the people in an organized manner. Denise explained to me the positive feedback she received with this discussion and hopes to implement various ideas in next year's Pride. This will be expanded on this May, as there will be a workshop held to discuss and re-write Pride's constitution. This will give

members of the community another opportunity to voice their opinions and help to re-work the way Pride is currently run.

Finally, there are various educational aspects that Pride does not fully cover now that would like to be seen in the future. A big fear present within the South African LGBT community is that of HIV and Aids. Beth talked about how she wanted to get more HIV awareness throughout Pride. “As a community, I feel like we’re not doing enough to educate ourselves and our peers about safe sex and how to prevent yourself from contracting the sickness. I want to have HIV awareness at Pride – who do you speak to without judgment, how is it contracted, etcetera.” Education goes further, as it bleeds into other facets of life too. Denise expanded on this, as she discussed with me how she wants more art and literature to be incorporated into this time. “We aren’t exposed enough to arts and literature of LGBT in Africa. We don’t know who’s telling these stories, where we can get these forms. How do we tell those other stories besides the brutal killings and rapes in the townships.”

As discussed in previous sections, other smaller steps can be taken to work to mend the gap of racialized Cape Town Pride. By expanding the locations of events that take place during Pride week to different areas around Cape Town and moving the parade to different locations each year, Pride can work to expand the access to all its participants. This can also be done throughout the year, as many of my informants voiced their dislike for their gay pride only being celebrated this one week out of the year. To help include more individuals in terms of economic access, more events, like picnics and free gatherings, can be held to take away the barrier that money holds against some South Africans. Finally, by promoting both the celebration but also the political

power of Pride through the media and through various events, Pride's meaning can expand to fulfill everyone's visions of what it should symbolize.

Ultimately, Pride is evidence that South Africa's democratic movements are still working their way to equality across all boards. However, strides are being made to continue to promote equality and a sense of belonging. Pride serves as a beacon of hope for members of the LGBT community, reflecting on the hardships they have endured and celebrating the rights and parity they have received. Yet, Pride also serves as a point of progress, continuing to work towards that democratic ideology.

Recommendations for Further Study

Given the short timeframe of this research I was not able to conduct as many interviews as I would have liked to. I hope I have set up for someone else a good starting place for further research on the racialization of Cape Town's Pride festival. I also think it would have been impactful to sit in on the meeting planned in late May to workshop Pride's constitution, in order to expose one to the true political sides of Pride. I also think that it could have been informing to interview the bartenders of various events during the Pride week to get their point of view on the racial makeup of each party or gathering. Finally, as my intentions with a survey were not as successful as I'd hoped, I think that further study would be greatly impacted by such a thing because it would help to understand a larger portion of the gay community's opinions of and experiences with Pride. I believe that this topic could be progressed further by a future SIT student, because it looks at the racial backgrounds that continue to influence various events of Cape Town, even when it is celebrating the rights that were supposedly given to an entire group with the creation of the new Bill of Rights.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. How do you identify yourself (gender, sexual orientation, race)?
2. How many years have you participated in Pride?
3. What made you decide to join in Pride?
4. What is the importance of Pride to you?
5. How involved are you in the Pride week?
6. Who do you typically attend Pride with?
7. What is your favorite thing about Pride?
8. Can you describe to me the demographic that typically attends Pride?
9. Do you help to make a float?
 - a. If yes, how do you design it?
 - b. Why?
10. Is there a certain type of person that tends to control the parade scene(i.e. gender, race, age)?
11. Aside from the Pride march, what other activities through the week do you like going to?
12. What are your favorite events during the week?
13. What events or locations of Pride festivities do you feel comfortable and accepted?
14. If you had the power to do so, would there be anything you'd want to change with the way Pride is done?
15. Have you ever had a negative experience with Pride?
 - a. If yes, what happened?
16. Do you ever notice any segregation in events related to Pride?
 - a. If yes, why do you think that is?
17. How do you think Pride could progress in the future?
18. How do you feel you are received within the mainstream queer spaces, like Pride?
19. Do you feel included in Pride?
20. What roles have your identities played in the way you are received at Pride?
21. Do you think the racial mix of Pride is representative of Cape Town's gay community?
22. There appears to be a lot of separation between Cape Town and townships when it comes to Pride. How do you think this could be changed?

Appendix B: Interview Consent Form



CONSENT FORM

1. Brief description of the purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to examine different individuals' experiences of the Pride Festival that takes place around the last week of February. Through participant observation, literary research, interviews, and a survey, I hope to grasp an understanding of what Pride means to Cape Town residents.

If you agree to participate, you will be interviewed about your experiences with Pride and the events that take place throughout the week of Pride (around the last week of February). Even if you consent to this study, you may refuse to participate to participate in this interview at any time during or before the interview process. You may skip any questions that you feel uncomfortable with or end the interview at any time. You must be 18 years old to participate in this study.

2. Rights Notice

In an endeavor to uphold the ethical standards of all SIT ISP proposals, this study has been reviewed and approved by a Local Review Board or SIT Institutional Review Board. If at any time, you feel that you are at risk or exposed to unreasonable harm, you may terminate and stop the interview. Please take some time to carefully read the statements provided below.

- a. **Privacy** - all information you present in this interview may be recorded and safeguarded. If you do not want the information recorded, you need to let the interviewer know.
- b. **Anonymity** - all names in this study will be kept anonymous unless the participant chooses otherwise.
- c. **Confidentiality** - all names will remain completely confidential and fully protected by the interviewer. By signing below, you give the interviewer full responsibility to uphold this contract and its contents. The interviewer will also sign a copy of this contract and give it to the participant.

Participant's name printed

Participant's signature and date

Interviewer's name printed

Interviewer's signature and date

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