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‘Woke’ Whiteness at Johannesburg Pride Events:
Negotiating White Queer and Trans Subjectivity at the Centre and Margins of Pride Parades

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Johannesburg

This research is submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the field of Diversity Studies.

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that this research report is my original work. Any ideas in this report that are not my own are acknowledged through proper references and citations. This report is being submitted for a Master of Art in the field of Diversity Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, and no part of this report has been submitted in the past, or is being submitted, or will be submitted in the future for any degree or examination at any other university.

Jamie Martin

Date

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Abstract

This study examines the discourse of wokeness which white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks are using to inform their subjectivity at Johannesburg pride events. Queer and trans pride parades and marches in Johannesburg have long been sites of tension and conflict over meanings of queer and trans individual and collective identity; as well as asymmetrical power dynamics within the queer and trans 'community'. To interrogate the networks of power operating at pride events in Johannesburg, this research unpacks how white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks are making sense of themselves at the centre and margins of both the queer and trans 'community' and broader South African society. Through an analysis of discourses participants are using to construct their subjectivity, this study reveals the ways in which power is being furthered and resisted by these intersectional subjects. In particular, discourses and sense-making are situated through a lens of wokeness and consciousness, providing a specific analysis of how white queer and/or trans subjects are negotiating themselves through such political awareness. Utilising critical whiteness theory, an intersectional lens and discourse analysis, this research is a critical reflection on conflicts and tensions surrounding pride events in South Africa and how subjects at the centre and margins come into being in this particular time and space.

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Chapter One: Introduction

> The challenge, in future [lgbtqia+ pride] marches, will be to be as inclusive as possible of all gays and lesbians while at the same time addressing the political demands of gay men and lesbians without separating these demands from the broader struggle for democracy and human rights in South Africa. Ultimately, a pride march divorced from the realities of South African society would divorce our own future from the future of other oppressed groups in the country. This would be morally indefensible, as well as strategically shortsighted.
>
> *Mark Gevisser and Graeme Reid, 1995*[1]

Mark Gevisser and Graeme Reid's statement, written twenty-two years ago at the dawn of democracy in South Africa, offers both a point of reflection and a point of entry for this research. This thesis, in part, takes up the challenges Gevisser and Reid point to— challenges surrounding the contested nature and space of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual, + (lgbtqia+)[2] Pride events in Johannesburg, how inclusion is understood in subjective and discursive ways, the various meanings of queer and trans identity, and how such contestations within the queer and trans 'community'[3] exist in relation to broader social divisions within South Africa. Through analysing the ways white, queer[4] and trans[5] womxn[6] and non-binary[7] folks are negotiating themselves in relation to, and at, Pride events in Johannesburg, this research is both a reflection on this very statement and offers new points of departure for the queer and trans 'community' and Pride events in the future.

The "realities of South African society," which Gevisser and Reid are referring to, are the established, unequal systems of power resulting from centuries of European colonial rule and apartheid. Currently, in post-colonial, post-apartheid, democratic South Africa, social divisions along various axes of difference remain characteristic of life here. Race, gender, class, sexuality and ability are defining, and deeply rooted, fault lines which operate within hierarchal

[1] Taken from Mark Gevisser and Graeme Reid's chapter, "Pride or Protest? Drag queens, comrades, and the Lesbian and Gay Pride March," in *Defiant Desire* (1995), Edited by: Gevisser, M. & Cameron, E. (p. 283).
[2] See Key Terms on page 9.
[3] See Key Terms on page 9.
[4] See Key Terms on page 9.
[5] See Key Terms on page 9.
[6] See Key Terms on page 9.
[7] See Key Terms on page 9.

structures to organise social life. Payne (2000) describes social divisions as "those substantial differences between people that run throughout society" (p. 2) and are constructed to benefit those in privileged and dominant positions. It must be noted though that these differences should not be read in the dominant/normative way which suggests that all differences are natural and equal. Rather, social differences— which are used to create social divisions— operate in relation to inequitable power dynamics. As Steyn (2015) argues, "apolitical, individualized conceptualizations of differences serve the interests of those who are already centred economically, socially and organizationally" (p. 380), and centring unequal power relations in our conception of social differences allows one to critique such structures and relations. These asymmetrical power dynamics sustain and perpetuate privilege and oppression along multiple axes— affecting access to material, social, political, economic and symbolic resources depending on one's social position and subjectivity.

Although progress has been made since the fall of the apartheid regime— including democracy and human rights enshrined in the Constitution, an emerging black[8] elite (Van Zyl & Steyn, 2005), black political power, and increased cross-racial interaction compared to under apartheid (Durrheim et al., 2011)— there still remain stark inequalities on the basis of race, class, gender, sexuality and ability. White people, as a small minority of the population, still earn more than half the country's income (Van Zyl, 2005, p. 27), have the privilege and mobility of leaving the country at higher rates than people of colour (Steyn & Foster, 2008), and are less likely to live in poverty compared with black South Africans (Durrheim et al., 2011). Furthermore, residential neighbourhoods and public spaces remain noticeably segregated along axes of race and class (Durrheim et al., 2011; Steyn & Foster, 2008). Beyond race and class, womxn, despite having legal protections in the Constitution, face some of the highest rates of sexual violence and are subjected to a highly patriarchal society. Queer and trans people, while also having rights decreed in the Constitution and marriage equality, often face marginalisation in a cis[9]-hetero-patriarchal society. This is exemplified in the recent Gauteng City-Region *Quality of Life Survey* which indicates that only 56% of Gauteng residents believe "gay and lesbian people deserve equal rights with all South Africans" (p. 25) and 14% think it is acceptable to be violent toward gay and lesbian people (Joseph & Culwick, 2015). Although transformations over the past two decades have symbolised "new possibilities" and "ushered in forms of liberation" (Gqola, 2001, p. 94), the legacies and deeply

[8] See Key Terms on page 9.
[9] See Key Terms on page 9.

entrenched inequities, from centuries of skewed policies, discourses and institutions, remain to this day.

Much in the ways that South African life is characterised by these social divisions, the queer and trans 'community' is also shaped by fault lines across other intersecting social positions. As Beverly Ditsie, one of the founding organisers of Johannesburg Pride in 1990, states: "the queer community is really just a tiny microcosm of the entire South Africa—and the entire world really" (interviewed in Collison, 2016). What she is describing is the ways in which power relations across various axes of social difference are replicated from broader society into the queer and trans 'community'. McLean (2013) adds that "the points of contestation within the LGBTIAQ community are parallel to some of the tensions that have existed and continue to exist in South Africa" (p. 25). These tensions and divisions can be noted in inequitable access to: queer spaces such as bars and clubs (Leap, 2005; Reygan, 2016); mobility in cities (Matebeni, 2011); access to rights granted through the South African Constitution and legal frameworks (Lind, 2005; Mkhize et. al., 2010; Muholi, 2011; Phillips, 2005); and senses of belonging within both society and the queer and trans 'community' (Craven, 2011; de Waal & Manion, 2006; Gevisser, 1995; Leap, 2005). The inequitable access to representations, resources, spaces, experiences and emotional support within the queer and trans 'community' symbolises the ways in which collective groups based on a single-identity and/or social position, are prone to replicating unequal power dynamics from broader society. The queer and trans 'community' has upheld the dominance of whiteness, affluence, able-bodiedness and cis-masculinity which mimics broader South African society. This dominance comes at a cost for womxn, poor people, people of colour, people living with disabilities, trans folks and feminine-presenting people—and when such subjectivities intersect in a single subject, the potential for the full inclusion within queer and trans spaces, including Pride events, are compromised, if not completely diminished.

These divisions become especially visible and heightened at annual Pride marches or parades in major urban areas (Craven, 2011; de Waal & Manion, 2006). Because of this exposure, Pride parades and marches are an important site for exploration into how these divisions are playing out and being made sense of by queer and trans folks in South Africa. Craven (2011) argues that Pride is a critical site for understanding differences within the queer and trans 'community' in South Africa:

> [Pride parades] staged in major urban centres such as Johannesburg and Cape Town are

> possibly the most mixed spaces in terms of race, class and gender. It is for this reason that they inevitably become spaces of conflict around the needs and interests of gay and lesbian people and indeed around the very definitions of what it means to be gay and lesbian in South Africa (p. 2).

This reflects what Gevisser and Reid point to above—the meanings of queer and trans, and the negotiation of difference within the 'community,' become visibly exacerbated and practiced through Pride events. Pride is a unique moment in time and space, which has the ability to bring together a diverse collective of people. The act of reclaiming public space as an oppressed group of people has potentially profound effects on both the individuals and collective participating, as well as shaping broader public discourse on sexuality and gender (Bell & Valentine, 1995; McFarland Bruce, 2013; McFarland, 2012; Milani, 2015). The cultural and political motivations for Pride emphasise queer and trans resistance to a cis-hetero-patriarchal society which often silences, erases and physically violates queer and trans existence. The possibilities of Pride as a space for protest, celebration, community-building and sharing have long been central to the continued prominence of Pride parades and marches across the world. In South Africa, Pride parades and marches remain critical sites in the face of rising tides of anti-queer/trans discourses and policies across the continent, and act as symbols of solidarity with other African queer and trans people whom do not have the legal protections that South Africans do.

The positive and potentially radical motivations for the continuation of Pride events in South Africa also work as the very challenges which Gevisser and Reid highlight. The meanings, experiences and demands of queer and trans people are as diverse as the collective itself, meaning contestations and power struggles over Pride are inherent in the event itself. These tensions have existed in the organising of Pride events in South Africa from its inception in Johannesburg in 1990. De Waal and Manion's (2006) book, *Pride: Protest and Celebration*, is a narrative illustration of how these divisions and challenges have been negotiated throughout the years. Womxn, people of colour, poor people, people living with disabilities and trans folks have largely been left out of the organising process, resulting in what many have claimed to be 'exclusive' Pride parades—the very thing that Gevisser and Reid warned against. In the past five years, these tensions have been extremely prominent and visibly demonstrated through increased protest action at the dominant Pride parades in Johannesburg and Cape Town, the creation of alternative Pride marches in the city and neighbouring townships, and discourses, both in organising spaces and online, within the queer and trans 'community.' The One in

Nine[10] protest of the Joburg Pride Parade[11] in 2012 was a critical moment which exposed the deeply fractured state of the queer and trans 'community'. One in Nine activists, who were predominantly black queer womxn, disrupted the annual parade by lying on the ground in front of the oncoming parade and called for a minute of silence for queer and trans people who have been violently attacked and murdered because of their gender and/or sexual identity. This moment of disruption within Joburg Pride caused the eventual closure of the Joburg Pride company in charge of organising the parade, and intensified conversations over the meaning of Pride: who could claim the space as their own; how queerness and transness intersects with race, gender and class; and exposed how power operates at this annual moment. Although the historical and current meanings over Pride itself have many intersecting layers, the calls of main Pride parades like Joburg Pride and Johannesburg LGBT Pride[12] being exclusionary, highlight how white, able-bodied, affluent and cis-masculine subjectivities are dominant within such spaces.

With the ongoing contestations surrounding Pride events and the hyper-visibility of such moments, Pride then becomes an interesting site in relation to individual and collective subjectivity. Womxn and trans folks have largely been excluded from positions of power and visibility at dominant Pride events, whiteness and white identities have been constructed as the dominant image and culture of 'queerness', and spatial politics surrounding where the parades are and go have impacted how differently positioned queer and trans people experience Pride in Johannesburg. Because of these ongoing challenges to inclusion, unity and intersectionality, individual and collective subjectivity become contested terrain as well. Subjectivity refers to the socially constructed nature of identity formation, meaning that the options one has to construct their identity are subjected to factors shaped by relations of power. This is explained by Phillips' (2005) argument that subjectivity is "contextually contingent" (p. 137) and constantly shifting in relation to the spatial, political and social climate of the world around us. The contingent nature of how subjectivity is formed manifests through possibilities and impossibilities dictated by relations of power operating in broader society. Peace Kiguwa (2014) states:

[10] One in Nine is an organisation of networks and individuals driven by feminist principles and frameworks and engages in solidarity, activism, direct action, research and legal transformation. For more information visit their website: http://oneinnine.org.za/home/.
[11] See Key Terms on page 9.
[12] See Key Terms on page 8.

> Given the relations of power within any society, access to some subjectivity resources is not always equal. In this sense, subjectivity may be seen as embodying forms of capital that is both a *reflection of* the relations of power within the society as well as *reinforcing* those relations of power. In the same vein, practices of resistance and agency take place within these networks of power relations. Some cultural practices and articulations of subjectivity are therefore never neutral but rather reflections of broader sociohistorical factors that are related to cultural dominance. Resistances to these networks of power reflect these sociohistorical and cultural dynamics of power (p. 15).

Drawing on Bourdieu's theorisation of "socialised subjectivity" (cited in Kiguwa, 2014), Kiguwa deepens the understanding of subjectivity in relation to networks of power. She describes how both formation and resistances to subjectivity always operate in relation to historical and societal norms, culture and power dynamics. Through this understanding, power can then be made sense of through analyses of subjectivity—either being reinforced through dominant subject performances, and/or how subjects resist power through alternative constructions.

Subjectivity is arguably a critical point of reflection and meaning for how we, queer and trans people, negotiate contestations and divisions at Pride events. Because Pride parades and marches are social, cultural and political formations within a particular time and space, the meanings and discourses surrounding Pride are subject to broader discourses about identity, oppression, collectivity and resistance in South Africa. Furthermore, individuals negotiate and construct their own subjectivity in relation to meanings and contestations around Pride, as well as drawing upon broader socio-historical meanings in South African society. Through focusing on subject formation, one can begin to see the relations of power working, as well as how the personal/psychological is implicated in the political/social. Sullivan (2014) adds that

> the personal and the institutional are not divorced from one another. Institutional commitments and effects operate through personal actions and choices all the time, and certainly it is true in the case of white privilege. Thus, how individual people experience—resist? embrace? ignore?— those effects is an important question if they want to try to change them (p. 19).

This understanding of subjectivity, particularly in relation to race, gender and sexuality at Pride events, understands that we are born into a social order of unequal power relations which pre-exist us, however, the ways in which we position ourselves in relation to these realities is both a choice (Phillips, 2005) and a potential for resistance and social change (Van Zyl, 2005). Socialised subjectivity then becomes an important component of discussions on contestations

and challenges at Pride events, opening up possibilities for re-thinking how dominance is persisting and resistance is possible.

When considering challenges and divisions surrounding Pride events, analysing subjectivity formation is arguably an essential site for exploring how queer and trans folks are making sense of themselves through, and in relation to, discourses. Particularly, because of the claims of exclusion on the basis of race and gender, this research interrogates the subject formation of white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks. Critically analysing the ways in which white queer and/or trans folks construct themselves is an attempt to understand how whiteness is operating in relation to broader South African discourses of race, privilege and oppression, and racial justice. Intersecting whiteness with a marginal subject position of being trans, womxn and/or non-binary further complicates this subject position due the enmeshed experiences and constructions of dominance and marginality. By foregrounding the intersectional subjectivity of white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks, how they are making sense of themselves and constructing their identity at Pride events in Johannesburg opens up ways of understanding how meaning is made, how broader relations of power are playing out in queer and trans spaces, and what discourses are offered for these folks to construct their subjectivity in dominant and/or resistant ways.

This research attempts to fill a gap in available research which particularly engages with whiteness in relation to marginal gender and sexual identities and expressions. Furthermore, there is limited research on Pride events in South Africa outside of the scope of its historical genealogy and the protest action by One in Nine in 2012. Craven (2011) does provide both a historical and contemporary analysis of racial identities and racism at Johannesburg Pride events; however, overall there is a lack of research specifically about subjective experiences and formations at Pride events in South Africa, as well as how whiteness is operating within Pride marches and parades. This study seeks to fill these gaps, as well as offer new readings and interpretations of how dominance and marginality are resisted by white queer and/or trans folks. By foregrounding the experiences and discourses of those whose subjectivity is at both the centre (due to their whiteness, class and/or able-bodiedness) and the margins (due to their gender, sexuality and/or disability), attempts to discover new ways in which both dominance and subordination within the queer and trans ‘community’ is resisted through how they construct themselves.

Furthermore, this research directly emerges from my own experiences of holding this positionality. As a white queer cisgender womxn, the questions and ideas this research grapples with are intimately linked to my own subjectivity. Having first attended Pride parades in Seattle, Bellingham and San Francisco in the United States, I was drawn to such events for the ability to connect with other queer folks, to see myself and my identity reflected in a collective, to visibly reclaim space in society, and to celebrate 'coming out'. However, over time I began to feel disillusioned by Pride, concerned that it largely ignored the realities and experiences of many queer and trans folks—sometimes myself included as a womxn. I found myself questioning the meaning of Pride, and questioning myself—both at the centre and margins of these debates—and how I could negotiate these concerns while still believing Pride to be an important time and space for queer and trans folks. My journey to this point and doing this research also included other, ongoing processes of un/learning internalised misogyny/patriarchy, my complicity and development of resistance strategies to the power of whiteness and western hegemony, and challenging my own internalised dominance and oppression. It is through such personal experiences that this research emerges as a dialogue. I see this study and writing as a collaborative project amongst myself and fellow white queer and trans folks to address pertinent issues within the broader queer and trans 'community'. My positionality in some instances infers an 'insider' status with participants, as we hold similar social positions. Yet, I am also an 'outsider' due to being American and cisgender. This insider/outsider status, however, is not a dualism which provides corresponding positives/negatives. Rather, through this research, my own positionality has allowed me a perspective which moves within and without, both equally generating usefulness and limitations.

1.1 Research Objectives & Questions

The objectives of this research are:

- To understand how white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks are constructing their subjectivity at the intersections of privilege and marginality;
- To reveal how power is operating in Johannesburg Pride events through an analysis of how subjectivity is constructed at the intersections of gender, sexuality and whiteness;
- To contribute to dialogues and theorisations about whiteness both within the South African queer and trans 'community' and Pride events.

With the above overview of the context and objectives for this research, the questions guiding this study are:

- How are white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks making sense of themselves within Pride events in Johannesburg?

With the sub-questions:

- How do these individuals negotiate and construct their subjectivity in relation to power and marginality at Pride in Johannesburg?
- What discourses are these individuals drawing on to make sense of themselves and contestations over Pride in South Africa?
- How are these individuals upholding and/or resisting their own positions of privilege and oppression in the context of Pride in Johannesburg?
- What do the subjectivity constructions say about divisions within the queer and trans 'community' and broader South African society?

1.2 Key Terms

'Womxn'

The "x" in "womxn" is a visual indicator of the oppression, institutional discrimination and prejudice which womxn have historically and currently endured, as well as acts as a form of resistance to such positioning. Originally, a "y" was used to signal readers to such injustices and to denote that womxn are not extensions of men; however, over time the use of "womyn" was seen as excluding trans womxn and womxn of colour (although it must be noted in this research that a non-binary, trans womyn participant uses "womyn" to identify herself and I do so accordingly). The "x" acts as a progressive and linguistic tool to remind readers of the positioning of differently bodied womxn and also disrupts the normative and dominant conceptions of womxnhood and language. Sampaguita Girl (n.d.) emphasises the ambiguity of the "x" which can then be read as inclusive of all womxn-of centre-folks and liberatory in its connotations to intersectional struggles for social justice. They also go on to say that the letter "x" is made up of two intersecting lines which symbolises intersectionality—something which is critical when discussing womxn who hold multiple social positions and must negotiate their

gendered oppression along other axes of difference. I use "womxn" in this thesis to remind readers of the above, as well as because the "x" has come to symbolise inclusion of all womxn in diverse and varied forms, identities and expressions—including trans womxn, womxn of colour and womxn-of-centre folks. This research is guided by principles of inclusion, which can often be hard when faced with language and terminology that is limiting. Although I hope that the "x" alerts readers to the ongoing injustice womxn face in all its diverse and multi-faceted forms, I also recognise that spelling cannot inherently grasp all of these entanglements.[13]

Queer

"Queer" is a highly contested term both in South Africa and across various contexts in the world. Once used a derogatory slur toward folks whom engage in and/or identify with non-dominant sexualities—akin to faggot, homo, moffie or stabane—the term was reclaimed during the gay and lesbian liberation movement in the 1970s in the United States (Epprecht, 2008). Because the terms reclamation and emergence as an identifier occurred in the U.S., the meanings and use are precarious in South Africa and across the African continent. Furthermore, the development and proliferation of Queer Theory has implications for the meanings and uses of "queer" in South Africa. Queer Theory also emerged from the West as an attempt to radically reveal the normativity of heterosexuality and its consequences for gender and sexual minorities. The uncritical application of Queer Theory within African contexts arguably overlooks the intricate and local meanings of sexuality, gender and identity (Epprecht, 2008; McEwen & Milani, 2014; Msibi, 2014)—and uncritically applying the term "queer" may pose similar problems.

When thinking about what terminology I would use in this thesis, I was often confronted with the very problem of language itself. Judith Butler (cited in Olson & Worsham, 2000) regularly grapples with the difficulty of language in relation to power and individual subjectivity, and argues that naming is a "necessary violence" (p. 729) for the sake of coherent argument. While I recognise that not all naming is equally violent—in that some terms may inflict more violence than others—I do surrender to the fact that for the sake of coherence in this thesis, I must name using particular terms. I do so while holding that such terms and language are highly contested

[13] For more information about the use of 'x' in 'womxn', see A. Flores (2015) and Sampaguita Girl (n.d.).

and the meanings and groupings of such terms are, as Butler states, in some ways "false" (cited in Olson & Worsham, 2000).

I use "queer" in a similar way as Epprecht (2008):

> *Queer* serving as convenient shorthand to describe an antiessentialist approach to researching gender and sexuality that is open to the whole range of human sexual diversity; that underscores sexuality as a critical component in the construction of class, race, national, ethnic and other identities; that analyses language and silences in relation to material conditions and struggles; and that engages with current debates about global economic and other inequalities coming out of African feminist, subaltern, and critical masculinity studies (p. 13).

One point of contrast I have with Epprecht is that I have not chosen to use "queer" out of convenience. Rather, I have critically considered many options and come the resolution that "queer" most closely embraces: the critical nature of this research; the wishes of participants; and provides many possibilities for readers to interpret and define for themselves. In line with Epprecht, I see the use of "queer" as one which not only encompasses the "whole range of human sexual diversity," but also one which provides a radical departure from separating sexual and gender struggles from other struggles for social justice. In my own interpretation, guided by Epprecht (2008, see pages 12-16) McEwen & Milani (2014, see p. 6), Msibi (2014) and Tamale (2011, see p. 641), queer in this research symbolises the diversity of expressions, performances and identities of gender and sexuality, and can be read as a simultaneously coherent and ambiguous term.

Transgender & Cisgender

It has likely been noticed that I refer to participants in this study as "queer and/or trans womxn" which attempts to recognise that not all queer womxn are trans and not all trans womxn are queer. However, often times there can be overlap in how one self-identifies, and because "queer" is used as an umbrella term to encompass all non-dominant genders and sexualities, it does include trans folks within that. I distinctly reference "transgender womxn" as separate, yet related to, queer womxn and non-binary folks to recognise the different positioning they have in relation to cisgender womxn and non-binary folks. This is meant to acknowledge that trans womxn may share certain experiences with queer womxn and non-binary folks, yet their

experience is also unique and has a particular relation to the queer and trans 'community' and broader society.

"Transgender" (or shortened to "trans"), as a term, refers to a person whose gender identity, expression and/or presentation differs from their assigned sex at birth (*Transgender terminology*, 2014). The prefix "trans" is derived from meanings of going beyond, crossing over or changing—and when coupled with gender it references those whom defy the binary and established sex/gender construct. "Trans" is also an umbrella term which is inclusive of all folks who do not identify, express or present themselves according to their assigned sex at birth. This is inclusive of non-binary, genderqueer, bigender, agender and/or any person who does not have a gender or their gender does not identify with either end of the binary (i.e. masculine/male or feminine/female). In this research, I do make a distinction between trans womxn and non-binary folks because, similar to the relationship between queer and trans, non-binary folks are trans, yet their experience and positioning within the queer and trans 'community' and broader society is also differently constructed and experienced. I also must make this distinction because in this research, participants are specifically trans womxn, and I have opted to exclude trans men which will be discussed in *Chapter Three*.

"Cisgender" (or shortened to "cis") refers, in a normative and purely scientific way, to those whom their gender identity aligns with their assigned sex at birth. Through this understanding, I am cisgender because I was assigned female at birth—due to my hormones, biology and physical traits—and I identify as a womxn. However, being cisgender, and the corresponding understandings of such identity, are also socially constructed. Meaning, performing and identifying with a gender which is normatively understood in society to correspond to one's sex is a social process, guided by common societal understandings of the relationship between sex and gender. While many participants in this research are womxn, it is important to make clear those who are transgender and those who are cisgender because of the ways they have been differently positioned in society—often being that cis people are unfairly privileged.[14]

[14] For more about transgender terminology see: *LGBTQ+ definitions* (n.d.) and *Transgender terminology* (2014).

Non-binary

"Non-binary", in this research, is used as an umbrella term for genders other than male/female or man/womxn. This then refers to folks who identify outside, between or not at all with the gender binary of masculine/feminine, male/female. Once again, I distinctly use "non-binary" to acknowledge that not all queer and/or trans folks are non-binary and not all non-binary folks identify as queer and/or trans. While non-binary genders do fall under the umbrella identification of trans, non-binary people are often differently positioned within the queer and trans 'community' and society; and particularly differently from trans folks who identify with, express or present themselves along the binary (i.e. as masculine/man or feminine/womxn).

In this research, three participants identify and/or express themselves somewhere within the non-binary umbrella. While they each identify differently—genderfluid, non-binary genderqueer, and non-binary trans womyn— "non-binary" is meant to include each of them. It is also important to note that terminology and language within the queer and trans 'community' is constantly developing and evolving, meaning terms and meanings are constantly shifting and being re-signified and rearranged. At the time of writing this thesis, the terms and language I use are arguably appropriate and attempt to be as inclusive as possible. However, as language continues to develop, these terms may, in the future, no longer be appropriate nor reflective of the experiences and identities which participants in this study, and the broader queer and trans population, would use.

Lgbtqia+

The acronym, "lgbtqia+" represents lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, asexual/aromantic and (+) the multitude of diverse non-dominant gender and sexual identities and expressions. The use of the acronym is highly contested, both in South Africa and globally. I specifically use lowercase letters to destabilise the homogenisation which the acronym typically asserts, yet the use of the acronym itself often erases and silences the diversity of expressions, language, meanings and experiences of queer and trans folks. One of the contestations about the use of the acronym is the successive ordering of different identities. In early Johannesburg Pride marches, the organising committee purposefully decided to name it "Lesbian and Gay Pride", positioning lesbian first to indicate their attempt at challenging the dominance of gay men. And Judith Butler (1990/1999), in *Gender Trouble*, argues that the

'etc.' attached on the end of lists of social positions "strive[s] to encompass a situated subject but fails to be complete" (p. 182). What these examples demonstrate is that the horizontal and successive ordering of identities within the acronym, coupled with the + at the end, reinforces unequal power dynamics and fails to recognise the multiple and diverse subjectivities which non-dominant gender and sexual identities encompass. Throughout this thesis I tend to use "queer and trans" when speaking about the broader population of people who occupy marginal genders and/or sexualities (which is explained above), however, if "lgbtqia+" or another form of the acronym (i.e. lgbt, lgbtq) is used, it is either because another author uses this language/term, or there is an expressed motivation for using it in that specific context. Although some may disagree with my use of "queer and trans," and rather identify with or argue "lgbtqia+" is a more inclusive term, I personally believe that the acronym creates and reinforces a hierarchy through its expressed inclusion of only a few gender/sexual identities and the successive ordering. This research intentionally tries to challenge power imbalances within the queer and trans 'community' and using the acronym, I believe, reinforces some of the existing power inequities. While queer and trans folks, both as individuals and as a collective, must decide for themselves what language they identify with, these tensions over language and terminology also point to major challenges within the queer and trans 'community' which cannot fully be unpacked in this research.[15]

'Community'

Although I reference the queer and trans 'community', it must be noted that I do so from a stance which recognises that there are, in reality, multiple queer and trans 'communities' in South Africa. However, it is important to use 'community' in the singular to point to the power imbalances which exist, and sustain inequalities in accessing resources (both material and social) and representations within such a heterogeneous population (Teunis, 2007, p. 264). I purposefully use the singular in inverted quotes to destabilise the assumed equitable nature of community and to constantly question what queer and trans community means for different people. The reality is that queer and trans folks find (or do not find) sense of belonging with other queer and trans people in different ways and spaces. To homogenise the entire

[15] For further reflection on the contestations of using this acronym and the need for destabilising it see: Preface of M. Van Zyl & M. Steyn, (2005); footnote 1 in M. Epprecht (2012, p. 223); and Endnote 5 in J. Bennett (2010, p. 6).

population's meanings of community and how they see themselves within that, would ignore the fact that many queer and trans people identify differently, if at all, with the broader collective of queer and trans folks. To convey a coherent written text however, requires me to speak about the broader queer and trans 'community', while simultaneously recognising the inherent inequities and power imbalances which exist. Through this research, I also hope to reflect on what the queer and trans 'community' means for differently positioned folks in the attempt to address some of the divisions within. In this thesis, the notion and meaning of 'community' will be most notably addressed in relation to belonging/non-belonging and inclusion/exclusion.

Black/People of colour

Throughout this thesis I interchangeably use "black" and "people of colour." I draw upon Steve Biko's (1971/2005) theorisation of Black Consciousness and use the term "black" to refer to any person of colour whom has historically and currently been oppressed because of of their racialisation as "non-white." Biko states: "We have… defined blacks as those who are by law or tradition politically, economically and socially discriminated against as a group in the South African society and identifying themselves as a unit in the struggle towards the realisation of their aspirations" (p. 48). Therefore, in this thesis, when I use the term "black" and "people of colour," it is inclusive of any person whom is subject to oppressive forces by whiteness and white supremacy. This is meant to be inclusive of coloured, Indian and indigenous peoples, Africans from across the continent, and those of mixed origins and ethnicities whom would be considered "non-white."

Joburg Gay and Lesbian Pride

Joburg Gay and Lesbian Pride (Joburg Pride) refers to the original pride march which began in 1990 in Johannesburg. It operated under this name from 1990 until 2012, although it was constantly transforming and changing throughout the years. In 1995, organising of the march changed hands from the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW, a predominantly black organisation) to a committee predominantly occupied by white gay men. With this shift, Joburg Pride moved from a political march to a celebratory parade, invited in corporate sponsorships, and ultimately led to the parade being moved from the central business

district (CBD) to the northern suburbs of Zoo Lake. Following the One in Nine protest action of Joburg Pride in 2012, and mounting controversy over the meanings and organising of the parade, the registered company formally closed. Joburg Pride was attended by three participants in this study and is largely considered one of the dominant Pride marches/parades in Johannesburg history.[16]

Johannesburg Pride

Following the closure of the organising company of Joburg Pride in 2012, Johannesburg Pride was established to carry on the running of the Pride parade. With tensions over racism, exclusion and commercialisation of the parade, the committee sought to redress many of these issues. However, the parade largely follows the same celebratory, commercialised and dominant form which Joburg Pride had established. The first Johannesburg Pride parade took place in Sandton, with backlash for being in a white, wealthy and inaccessible area. Johannesburg Pride is now considered to be the dominant Pride parade in Johannesburg, with the largest number of attendants and corporate sponsorships. Joburg Pride and Johannesburg Pride, while distinctly different organising committees and companies, are considered to be synonymous in many ways. They both uphold the celebratory, commoditised and parade style of Pride which is commonly seen in North America and Europe.[17]

Johannesburg People's Pride

Johannesburg People's Pride (JPP) was established in response to the One in Nine protest of Joburg Pride in 2012 and sought to create an alternative pride space which reinvigorated the political roots and demands of Pride in Johannesburg. Taking the march back to the CBD along its original route in the early 1990s, JPP attempts to address the intersectional demands of queer and trans people. The organising of JPP also takes on a different form in that community members and organisations are encouraged to attend planning meetings in which there is not elected nor distinct leadership. The formation of JPP is a direct response to Joburg and Johannesburg Pride in that their mission clearly asserts that JPP is operating against the dominance of whiteness, cis-masculinity, affluence, capitalism and able-bodiedness which

[16] For more on Joburg Pride and how it came to be the dominant pride parade, see de Waal & Manion (2006), Craven (2011), Milani (2015) and McLean (2013).
[17] See the Johannesburg LGBT Pride website at: http://johannesburgpride.co.za.

they argue is prioritised at Johannesburg Pride. JPP has been attended by one participant in this study, although another participant was involved in the organising and planning meetings. JPP can arguably be considered an 'alternative' Pride march in relation to the dominant and main Johannesburg Pride.[18]

Soweto Pride

Soweto Pride was officially established in 2004 also out of discontent with the dominant Joburg Pride parade, as well as a desire to bring the march to the neighbourhood of Soweto. Organised by the Forum for the Empowerment of Women (FEW), Soweto Pride is an anti-capitalist, activist based and community-led march. Soweto Pride is also considered an 'alternative' pride march in relation to the dominant Johannesburg Pride parade and arguably operates on the margins of the queer and trans 'community' and outside of the gaze of whiteness and capitalism. Two participants in this study have attended Soweto Pride.

University Pride

Five participants in this study have attended a university Pride parade/event on campus, four of which were involved in varying capacities of the organising, planning or execution of the Pride week. University Prides are often week-long events which incorporate more than a parade/march; including public talks, informative stalls for students and staff, and educational and awareness events. They are also usually funded by donors and university offices rather than corporate sponsors.[19]

1.3 Chapter Outline

Chapter Two: Literature Review provides further background and context for this research through a discussion of relevant literature and theory. Expanding upon *Chapter One's* context of Pride in Johannesburg and South Africa, *Chapter Two* includes academic uses and theories about the importance of Pride spaces for research, as well as provides more depth on the historical and contemporary significance of such events in South Africa. Critical Whiteness

[18] For more information, see JPP's website at: http://peoplespride.blogspot.co.za.
[19] See Milani & Kapa (2015) for an analysis of a university Pride event.

Theory is then reviewed, both in its global significance, as well as considerations for undertaking critical whiteness studies in South Africa. From there, *Chapter Two* moves on to discuss intersectionality as both a theory and epistemological positioning for this study and concludes with a section on the intersections of race, gender and sexuality as historically and currently theorised.

Chapter Three: Methodology outlines the qualitative and critical nature of this research and the practices which I used to direct the study. The first section describes the process of recruiting participants, challenges to such a process and demographic information about participants. The next section, *Data Collection Techniques*, discusses how a focus group and individual interviews were used to record conversations with participants and align with the aims of this research. This *Chapter* then goes on to describe the process of discourse analysis used. This is broken down into two sub-sections: the first discusses discourse as a theory in relation to the aims and questions of this research; the second describes how discourse analysis was used to find meaning in the data collected. Finally, *Chapter Three* concludes with ethical considerations within the study and my positioning and reflexivity as researcher and implicated subject in the questions of this research.

Chapter Four: Analysis is the analysis of participant's discussions with me in interviews and in the focus group. Through a discourse analysis, this *Chapter* reveals the meaning behind how participants are constructing their subjectivity and making sense of themselves in relation to contestations over Pride events in Johannesburg. The first section, *I'm so Woke*!, analyses how the participants use a particular discourse of consciousness and 'wokeness' to position themselves as subjects in relation to broader issues of intersectional forms of privilege and oppression. *Boundaries: Disrupting and reinforcing the lines between 'us' and 'them'* analyses the discursive practice participants use to establish themselves in relation to other queer and trans folks. This includes two sub-sections: (1) *White cis gay men… and me* and (2) *Queer and trans people of colour… and me* which finds meaning in the ways that participants position themselves in relation to two distinct groups of queer and trans folks. This sections explores both how participants construct their subjectivity relationally, and how such a practice reveals power relations which are either reinforced or disrupted. The final section in *Chapter Four*, *Practices at Pride*, analyses the discursive dimensions of declarations and narratives of actions. This is broken down into three sub-sections: *Intersectionality: Helping or hurting the movement*, which is also a lens through which participants make sense of themselves and the

actions they engage in. This section unpacks different meanings and engagements with intersectionality and how participants believe it to be important or hurtful for Pride spaces; *Affective experiences at pride*, focuses on the emotional experiences of participants and reveals how meaning is made through affective experiences; and *Direct action: experiences of engagement*, analyses the participants descriptions of actions they take and the implications these have for challenging unequal power relations within the queer and trans 'community'.

Chapter Five: Conclusions is the final section of the thesis and brings together the objectives and analysis to provide a holistic argument and suggestions for further research and action surrounding Pride events in Johannesburg.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

This *Chapter* highlights some of the relevant literature which provides both a theoretical framework and contextually grounded rationale for the broader research study. This provides an intersectional approach to understand what knowledge and discourses are already circulating in relation to this research and the context in which the research was undertaken. The theoretical frameworks outlined provide a foundation for guiding the research, as well as offering discourses which will be used to analyse how participants are constructing their own subjectivity in relation to whiteness, Pride events, gender, and sexuality in South Africa.

2.1 lgbt Pride

Pride is a unique event and space in both broader society and the queer and trans 'community'. Emerging from the Stonewall uprising in New York in 1969 – which erupted following a police raid of a popular queer bar and was led by trans womxn of colour – the first Pride march was held in 1970 in commemoration of the event. Since its inception, Pride marches and parades have become a fixture of the queer and trans 'community' in cities across the world. In South Africa, the history of Pride "runs alongside the history of the transition to democracy" (Craven, 2011, p. 111) and early marches were characterized as traditional human rights protests as seen throughout the anti-apartheid struggle (Gevisser & Reid, 1995). The first Pride march in South Africa took place in Johannesburg in 1990 and was organized by GLOW with prominent leaders such as Beverly Ditsie, Simon Nkoli and Edwin Cameron. These early Pride marches in South Africa were some of the first times when public mobilising and connecting across race and class lines were possible[20] within the queer and trans 'community' (Craven, 2011). Although South African Pride is unique to the queer and trans communities in the country and local contexts, it is also important to acknowledge that they are imported and modelled from the Pride marches which began in North America and Europe (de Waal & Manion, 2006).

[20] This is not to say that under apartheid there was not any cross-racial interaction amongst queer and trans individuals; there were bars, cruising spots and relationships formed which defied the apartheid regime's policies against cross-racial and same-sex loving interaction (see Gevisser & Cameron, 1995, Defiant Desire: Gay and lesbian lives in South Africa for more on the history of such interactions throughout the apartheid era).

Arguably, Pride remains an important event within the queer and trans 'community' because it is the one event a year when queer and trans bodies and expressions are allowed, safely in public. Furthermore, the very public-ness the event provides calls attention to the cis-heteronormativity of spaces and societies which police and marginalise queer and trans bodies and expressions (Bell & Valentine, 1995; McFarland Bruce, 2013; Milani, 2015). Pride represents a collective coming out (McFarland Bruce, 2013) in which queer and trans people in the thousands visibly enter and reclaim public space (Bell & Valentine, 1995). Queer and trans people may participate for: the ability to connect with others (Craven, 2011; de Waal & Manion, 2006; Gevisser & Reid, 1995; McFarland, 2012); a shared sense of community and self (McFarland Bruce, 2013; de Waal & Manion, 2006; Gevisser & Reid, 1995; McFarland, 2012); to commemorate the history of queer and trans struggles and triumphs (Enguix, 2009); and the ability to address the issues that queer and trans people face in cis-hetero-patriarchal societies (McFarland Bruce, 2013; Craven, 2011; Gevisser & Reid, 1995).

Although Pride is a central and important part of the queer and trans 'community' and individual's sexual citizenship, there is also much contestation about, and within, Pride. In many cities, Pride becomes a visible paradox (Enguix, 2009), highlighting both the political and festive, or as Gevisser and Reid (1995) state, "simultaneously angry and carnivalesque" (p. 278). This paradox is also extended to arguments surrounding the visibility which Pride events provide. Many argue that Pride is an important site for queer and trans visibly which then works to develop human rights and societal respect for non-dominant gender and sexual identities. Phelan (1997) argues however, that visibility is also contested and not all expressions and representations are equally visible in Pride events. Such can be seen in media representations of Pride which often fetishize and promote singular narratives of queer- and trans-ness (Gevisser & Reid, 1995; Phelan, 1997). Within South Africa, Pride has been the source of much conflict over the transition from a political march in the early 1990s, to a more commercialized, celebratory parade as is currently seen (Craven, 2011; de Waal & Manion, 2006; Gevisser & Reid, 1995; McLean, 2013). Although this conflict is important for Pride organisers and participants to address, Pride parades which seem apolitical and solely celebratory still act as an important political demonstration of queer and trans collectivity. And, as McFarland (2012) argues, Pride parades are an important site for protest as they target and speak back to the dominant cis-heteronormative culture rather than taking on more traditional human rights actions which target the state or legal systems. Milani (2015) suggests that the Johannesburg Pride is a form of "sexual cityzenship" despite arguments citing its

commercialization, lifestylization and apolitical-ness. However, he further argues that it promotes "an ordered form of political engagement" (Milani, 2015, p. 439) which chooses to work within dominant systems and culture, and adopts a form of respectability politics which has classist undertones. This form of politics within Pride then becomes imbued with a culture which is also dominated by certain forms of whiteness, cis-masculinity and upper-class biases.

Pride parades in Johannesburg and Cape Town have recently generated a lot of commentary and criticism for being exclusive and further marginalising people of colour, low-income people, people living with disabilities, and trans and gender non-conforming people. Although the tensions seem to be heightened in recent years, de Waal and Manion's (2006) book, *Pride: Protest and Celebration*, uses narratives from participants in Johannesburg Pride from 1990-2005 to illustrate that these conflicts have long been present. Throughout the years and different permutations of Pride in Johannesburg, there have been tensions over the route of the march/parade, entrance fees to the official after-party, transport for people living outside of the city centre, the politicization and commercialization of the parade, and the in/visibility of womxn and lesbians in the organising and culture of Pride (Craven, 2011; de Waal & Manion, 2006). The social hierarchies along differences such as race, gender and class which permeate South African society have become a challenge to creating a unified sense of community or a Pride which is reflective and accommodating to diverse queer and trans identities in South Africa.

2.2 Critical Whiteness Theory

Whiteness, as a theory and field of study, emerges from the field of Critical Race Theory which acknowledges race as a social construct and operating in relation to power, history, context, economics, and self—and group—interests (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). The argument that race is a social construct points to the understanding that race is in no way inherent nor fixed, but rather a product of social, cultural, historical, economic and political processes (Delgado & Stefancic, 2001). Although understanding race as a social construct may arouse desires to shift away from studies of race, Steyn (2001b) argues:

> The construction of race has been used to skew [South African] society over centuries. If we prematurely banish it from our analytical framework, we serve the narrow interests of those previously advantaged, by concealing the enduring need for redress. To deal with the expressions of power, we have to call it by its name (p. xxxii).

Therefore, there remains a need to address race, and particularly whiteness, in order to grapple with the discursive and subjective realities which the constructs of race dictate in our material and everyday lives. It must also be understood in relation to de Kock's (2010) argument that "the term 'whiteness' as a sign should be seen as a trace and not an essence" (p. 15). This points to the understanding that white subjectivity has no pure nor uniform essence, but rather comes in a multitude of forms depending on context, history, culture, dominant interests and temporality. This further points to the understanding that while whiteness does produce common experiences and expressions, it is also not a singular monolith which has only one articulation. Despite the subjective dependence on the above mentioned factors, whiteness does hold global dominance and has historically been constructed to afford unearned advantages and entitlements to white people. It is with this in mind that the material, social and political privileges which whiteness affords to white people must be read as neither natural nor biological markers of white superiority (Frankenberg, 1993; Giroux, 1997).

Emerging from the field of Critical Race Theory, whiteness studies began to ascend within academic theorising throughout the 1990s (Davy, 1997; Delgado & Stefancic, 2001; Giroux, 1997; Hill, 1997; Low, 2004; Steyn, 2001b). Initial research on whiteness intended to "name it as an issue" (Steyn, 2001b, p. xxvi) and to disrupt the pervasive nature of whiteness as unseen, unremarkable and normal (Giroux, 1997; Hill, 1997; Hurtado & Stewart, 2004; Steyn, 2001b; Ward, 2008). This normalisation of whiteness has led to white people being unmarked by race and hesitant to recognise their subjectivity as racialised (Frankenberg, 1993; Hill, 1997; Hurtado & Stewart, 2004). The intent of these early forms of theorising was to shift the academic gaze from the margins to the centre; not in an attempt to overlook people of colour's experiences of racism, but rather to interrogate dominance and privilege as one facet for addressing racism (Green, Sonn, & Matsebula, 2007). Critical to whiteness studies is uncovering and challenging the dominance of such systems and subjectivities which have become so normalised as to appear natural. Through such research, scholars have pointed to the racial privilege whiteness grants (Frankenberg, 1993; Logie & Rwigema, 2014) which often results in adopted ignorance (Steyn, 2012), denial (Steyn, 2001a), claims of "reverse racism" and disadvantage (Probyn, 2004; Winant, 2004), and an inability to recognize whiteness as an identity or group marker by white people (Frankenberg, 1993; Hurtado & Stewart, 2004). Therefore, white subjectivity is central to explore the workings of such systems which continue to confer dominance to whiteness and white people.

Although the above description highlights the global move toward incorporating whiteness studies within disciplines of race and cultural studies, much of this work has remained within the "heartlands of whiteness" such as North America and Europe (Steyn, 2007, p. 422). Because this research is located within the South African context and in a current time of movements toward decolonisation in various institutions and inter-racial interactions, there is a need to situate critical whiteness theory within this particular time and context. Steyn (2007) notes:

> If whiteness is all about power, an analysis of whiteness in any context has to start from examining the power base that whiteness wields in that particular context. All the analysis has to develop organically from this understanding. For example, even in apartheid South Africa, whiteness never had the quality of invisibility that is implied in the 'standard' whiteness literature, which is made possible by the comfort of being comfortably in the majority, demographically, economically, and politically (p. 421).

This highlights that although literature and theory developed globally does have pertinence in South Africa due to its' family resemblance to whiteness globally, there is a need to situate critical whiteness studies within this particular context. South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid constructed and secured white supremacy through a relationally dependent formation of blackness and whiteness. As Morrison (1992) conceptualised and Kilomba (2013) reiterates: "blackness serves as the primary form of Otherness by which whiteness is constructed" (p. 17). It is through this relationality which whiteness both constructs and usurps its power from, and provided the ideological and moral foundations for European colonialism and apartheid. Steyn (2001b) also argues that although whiteness provided the ideological basis for colonialism and apartheid, being a small minority in Southern Africa meant that white identity "was constituted around the marginalized" (p. 43). The visible nature of whiteness in South Africa throughout colonialism and apartheid was rife with 'colonial schizophrenia' (Prasad, 2006) in which white dominance was made to appear normal while the underlying threat of overthrow and disruption by the black majority was ever present. There was an ever-present fragility and precarity to white supremacy in South Africa which had to balance the construction of whiteness as unmarked, while being clearly visible. So, despite the aims of normalising white dominance while being vastly outnumbered demographically, white South Africans have, and still do, recognise their whiteness in ways different to their white counterparts in places such as North America, Europe and Australia where white people hold both positions of power and demographic majority. It is this reality in the South African context which constitutes the assertion that "white people's racialization was not as distant from consciousness as described in the mainstream whiteness literature" (Steyn, 2007, p. 422). This

consciousness offers a unique context for analysing and understanding how whiteness is then reinforced and reimagined by white people in South Africa.

Along with the historical construction of whiteness in South Africa, the new dispensation and transition to democracy ushered in the need for white people in South Africa to negotiate their subjectivity in new ways. With black political and demographic power in South Africa, whites must contend, everyday, with the loss of colonial and apartheid power. And rather than being confronted with this realisation through formal education, it is part of everyday existence in South Africa (Steyn, 2007). Although the 'new' South Africa provides a unique moment for white people in South Africa to challenge their inherent privilege and develop new ways of being white, there still remain strands of colonial—and apartheid—era discourses which have converged with non-racialism, reconciliation, and Rainbow Nation discourses to conceal the dominance of whiteness (Green et al., 2007; Griffiths & Prozesky, 2010; Steyn, 2001b; Steyn & Foster, 2008). Furthermore, the social imaginary has shifted since the transition to democracy, offering mixed responses from white South Africans. A growing number of white South Africans are choosing to migrate out of the country (Griffiths & Prozesky, 2010; Steyn & Foster, 2008), showing both the economic privilege of leaving the country, as well as the psychological state of whiteness in South Africa. Studies have shown that currently in South Africa, white people are feeling a lack of belonging, a growing dissonance between themselves and those in positions of political power, and feelings of loss as their privilege and power begins to dissipate (Griffiths & Prozesky, 2010; Steyn, 2001a; Steyn & Foster, 2008). While the emotional responses of white South Africans shows a common symptom of those historically privileged who now feel 'oppressed' by equality (Freire, 1968/2000), it also elucidates white subject's attachments to discourses of reconciliation, minority rights and colourblindness as a means for safety and securing their advantages. These attachments and use of reconciliatory discourses on the surface appear as respectable and not warranting critique (Steyn & Foster, 2008); however, underlying this approach is a mode of self—and privilege—preservation, and aligns whiteness in South Africa with the broader family of whiteness globally.

Along with grasping for "prolonging the shelf life" (Steyn, 2007, p. 422) of white privilege and dominance in South Africa, there has also been significant scholarly—and social—commentary on progressive and anti-racist white subjectivity (de Vos, 2011; Matthews, 2011; McKaiser, 2011; Steyn, 2001b; Vice, 2010, 2011). There remains uncertainty of how this can be achieved; however, the impetus which whiteness studies more broadly serves does recognise

the need for further theorising. As Green et al. (2007) suggest, "anti-racism needs to move beyond simply addressing material conditions of inequality and begin to question the positions and discourses of privilege and dominance that stem from an ideology of white superiority and hegemony" (p. 389). This also points to the need to theorise not only the material, political and economic dominance whiteness is expressed through, but also the discursive and subjective formations which lead to white subjectivity being complicit within, or challenging, whiteness as dominant. Despite whether white people are adopting more "hybrid subjectivities" (Steyn, 2001b, see Chapter 8), or are remaining compliant in white supremacy, what this shows more generally is that white subjectivity is currently being differently negotiated and understood in South Africa. Whiteness studies provides an important framework for critically examining how "'whiteness' might be renegotiated as a productive force in a politics of difference linked to a radical democratic project" (Giroux, 1997, p. 295). Theorising white subjectivity is critical to developing new forms of being white which contribute to broader struggles for social justice and equity—however, such theorising cannot be done in isolation as no one is solely white and theorising white subjectivity must be done in relation to individuals intersectional subject positions.

2.3 Intersectionality: Theory and Epistemology

Intersectionality provides a necessary framework and analytic tool for this study as it offers a lens through which to unpack and analyse how subjects who occupy multiple, and differently positioned, identities come to discourse and make sense of themselves. Hailed as "the most important theoretical contribution that women's studies… has made so far" (McCall cited in Nash, 2008, p. 5), intersectionality has altered how social science research and theorising is carried out. As a theory, intersectionality offers a way of exploring and analysing the ways in which multiple subject locations: mutually constitute one another; are enmeshed to produce specific experiences and knowledges; and work together to re/produce inequality, privilege, dominance and oppression (Collins, 1990, 1998; Crenshaw, 1989; Ferber, 2012; May, 2012, 2015; Nash, 2008; Shields, 2008). Originating from black feminist and womxnist writing, intersectionality was first termed by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, yet May (2012, 2015) reminds us that black womxn/feminists have been engaged in intersectional theorising for over a century. It is important to acknowledge that intersectionality emerges particularly from black feminist and womxn of colour theoretical and political movements because this lays the

foundation for intersectionality as an anti-subordination and liberatory project (May, 2012, 2015). It is also through this genealogy that May (2012) argues:

> As an epistemological approach, intersectionality offers tools to examine the politics of everyday life (e.g., the lived experiences of privilege and oppression, the implications and structures of marginalization, and the phenomenological and political meanings of identity) (p. 156).

Therefore, intersectionality must not only be understood as a theory, but an epistemological tool to discover hidden silences, erasures, and knowledge which have been concealed by dominant, single-axis thinking (May, 2012, 2015). As an epistemological tool, intersectionality links the subjective and everyday lived experiences to the structural, institutional and systematic; and vice versa.

Intersectionality is a useful tool for analysing situated knowledges which emerge out of intersections of different social identities, positions and factors. May (2015) refers to this as a "'matrix' worldview [which] contests 'single-axis' forms of thinking about subjectivity and power and rejects hierarchies of identity or oppression" (p. 3). The dominance of 'single-axis' thinking enables dominance, privilege and inequitable power to be furthered in society, and works to hide the ways in which experiences are constituted by multiple factors, intersectional subject positions, and matrices of domination (Collins, 1990/2014). It is through this matrix orientation that intersectionality gains it's radical, anti-subordination/hegemonic and social justice emphasis.

In recent years, intersectionality has become both more widely used and critiqued. Many scholars, activists and individuals are choosing to move away from intersectionality as a theory, practice and guiding principle for movement building. May (2012, 214, 2015) suggests many reasons for such critiques and offers important rebuttals in defense of intersectionality. One important development in the past decade is the co-optation of intersectionality into neo-liberal and diluted meanings which rarely engage with its radical roots and trajectory. Sullivan (2014) also critiques "intersectional approaches to race, gender, and class… in some contexts [for] instead of illuminating the ways in which race operates in interlocking ways with gender and class, insisting on intersectionality can cover over the significance of race" (p. 15). While the argument by Sullivan (2014) is understandable, it also lacks belief in intersectionality's ability to both centre racial experiences and justice, and work alongside developing understandings in relation to other social positions. Despite such critiques of intersectionality, May (2012, 2015)

argues for the ongoing and persistent use and development of intersectionality in studies and activism which strives for social justice. She argues:

> Intersectionality is a form of resistant knowledge developed to unsettle conventional mindsets, challenge oppressive power, think through the full architecture of structural inequalities and asymmetrical life opportunities, and seek a more just world. It has been forged in the context of struggles for social justice as a means to challenge dominance, foster critical imaginaries, and craft collective models for change (p. XI).

In situating intersectionality within its historical roots and future possibilities, it takes on a much more progressive, critical and radical approach to how we create knowledge and form coalitions for social justice. Inherent in the knowledge produced through an intersectional lens is the everyday, lived experience of those whom occupy spaces between and across multiple social positions.

It is also through this conception of intersectionality which May (2015) argues that it must not be used in a superficial way; merely listing intersectionality without truly engaging with its history, tenets and possibilities. Rather, she argues that we must engage with intersectionality thoroughly, letting the complexity and nuance of intersectionality as a theory open up questions and explorations into where these multiple facets "hinge or touch" (p. 3). It is in the complexity of these moments of hinging and touching which critiques of power networks and institutional domination can be named, resisted and challenged. So not only does intersectionality provide a framework to reveal the workings of multiple subject positions, but it further allows for interrogating how multiple and enmeshed power relations operate in a given context, time and space. She furthers this by stating:

> Intersectionality contests conventional ways of thinking about domination, subordination, and resistance: it approaches privilege and oppression as concurrent and relational and attends to within-group difference and inequities, not just between-group power asymmetries. This matric, relational model underscores how we can participate in forms of dominance, harm, and subordination even as we also fight hegemonic relations and pursue justice (May, 2015, p. 4).

Even in this description it is evident how an intersectional approach to analysis can be applied. Rather than merely dichotomising the experience/embodiment of domination and subordination, May illustrates how subjects and power relations are always operating relationally through multiple networks of social, political and material factors. More so, this

also demonstrates the power which an intersectional lens can provide for critical analyses which seek to uncover and critique power asymmetries.

2.4 Race, Gender and Sexuality

The intersections of race, gender and sexuality have been widely discussed and through such dialogues, understandings of how these social identities intersect and mutually constitute one another informs individual's lived experiences (Davis, 2008; McCall, 2005; Shields, 2008). Particularly, much scholarship on these intersections emerged from feminist theorising and womxn of colour's contributions which problematized white, western feminism's commitments to a universalised womxnhood and patriarchy (Crenshaw, 1989; hooks, 1982; Lorde, 1979/1981; Mohanty, 1986, 2003). More broadly, what this research shows is a consideration of intra-group differences within groups formed around a single axis of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989). Much of the same discussions which occurred within the feminist movement have also been applied to the queer and trans 'community' (Lewis, 2011; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Teunis, 2007) and point to the ways in which within a marginalized collective, there still remain further margins (Hill, 1997).

In South Africa, the apartheid regime not only strictly enforced a racial hierarchy, but also enforced strict notions of gender and sexuality (Craven, 2011; Gevisser, 1995; Ratele, 2009). Through the apartheid regime's harsh application of racial segregation, as well as explicit legislation such as the Immorality Act which dictated against interracial relationships and homosexual acts, the ability for diverse queer and trans organising and social interaction was limited until the early 1990s (Craven, 2011; Gevisser, 1995; Lind, 2005). Lesbians and womxn often remained invisible within gay organising under apartheid (Gevisser, 1995) and such mobilising was often fractured along racial lines (Lind, 2005). Lind (2005) elaborates stating:

> White lesbian and gay politics seemed geared towards the protection of lesbian and gay sexual practice, but within the segregated communities 'protected' by apartheid. Black activism was much more integrationist, founded, as it was, on the concept of freedom that the struggle against apartheid had instigated (p. 341).

Furthermore, the very meanings of same-sex desire are differentiated between white and black communities in South Africa. Although no essentialist claims can be made about 'African

sexualities' or 'white/western sexualities', there are important differences which have been constructed throughout colonialism, apartheid and democratic South Africa.

Throughout colonial rule and apartheid, African sexuality was constructed as 'other' (Van Zyl & Steyn, 2005), hypersexual, and deviant in opposition to white purity (Lewis, 2011). The implications of such constructions have had lasting effects on sexuality and gender in relation to race in South Africa. Furthermore, as Msibi (2014) notes, much theorising about sexuality in Africa has neglected to take on colonialism's psychological impact on how sexuality is now understood and experienced in relation to race. One way in which this is displayed is by the high numbers of sexual assault and violence perpetrated particularly against black lesbians (Gqola, 2011; Mkhize et al., 2010; Muholi, 2011) which points to the ways in which patriarchy, racism and heteronormativity are operating in relation to one another and in relation to colonialism's effects on understandings of same-sex desire (Msibi, 2014). This also points to ways in which same-sex sexuality has been constructed as white (Berube, 2001; Holmes, 1995; Logie & Rwigema, 2014). Winnie Mandela's defence in her trial against charges of kidnapping, argued that her rationale for the kidnapping was out of concern for the youth being targeted by Reverend Paul Verryn who was accused by Mandela of raping them (Holmes, 1995). The trial, and Mandela's defence, constructed homosexuality as a colonial import, sexual perversion and white (Holmes, 1995). As a placard on display at the trial read, "Homosex [sic] is not in black culture," points to the ways in which same-sex desire was constructed as not part of African sexuality and aligns with other discourses of homosexuality as unAfrican (Gevisser, 1995; Hoad, 1999; Holmes, 1995; Van Zyl & Steyn, 2005). This is not to say though that African communities are essentially (more) homophobic in comparison to white communities, rather, the effects of colonialism which dictated homosexuality as deviant has had lasting implications in various African contexts and understandings of gender and sexuality. While the complexities of these arguments cannot be sufficiently unpacked in this research, this overview does show important implications for understanding how sexualities and gender are understood and experienced differently dependent on race.

In South Africa, and more broadly across the world, differences within the queer and trans 'community' have had severe consequences on how differences of race, class and gender are negotiated in relation to sexuality. Often, queer is imagined as white and cis-male (Berube, 2001; Logie & Rwigema, 2014; Teunis, 2007). This representative image of queer as white has had implications for: queer and trans organising and activism (Berube, 2001; Gevisser, 1995;

Leatt & Hendricks, 2005; Lind, 2005); mobility and spatial negotiations (Leap, 2005; Matebeni, 2011; Reygan, 2016); representations in media and popular culture (Gqola, 2011; Lewis, 2011; Teunis, 2007); feelings of belonging within the queer and trans 'community' (Gevisser, 1995; Leap, 2005; Reygan, 2016; Ward, 2008); and access to state-sponsored rights and legal recourse (Crenshaw, 1989; Hoad, 1999; Lind, 2005; Mkhize et al., 2010). Furthermore, patriarchy within the queer and trans 'community' has led to further marginalisation of womxn and trans people (de Waal & Manion, 2006; Gevisser, 1995; Logie & Rwigema, 2014) and organising has often relied on a form of respectability politics which often excludes and ignores low-income communities (which are often racialised) (Berube, 2001; Gevisser, 1995; Milani, 2015; Ward, 2008). The intersections of race, gender and sexuality have worked simultaneously to co-construct one another in ways which continue to position diverse subjectivities within the queer and trans collective differently.

Chapter Three: Methodology

As stated in *Chapter One*, the aim of this research is to analyse the ways white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks make sense of and negotiate their subjectivity at Johannesburg Pride events in relation to questions of exclusivity, and racial, gender and class differences. The underlying intention of this emerges both from my own personal implication in this question, as well as the necessity for a critical interrogation of how power is operating in the subject's lives through discursive practices. Through such theoretical grounding, interrogating the ways in which subjectivity is constructed by white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks at Johannesburg Pride events is best explored through qualitative research methods.

The last chapter provided a theoretical framework within critical and social constructivist paradigms which inform the ways this study has been designed and implemented. Exploring how white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks discursively construct their subjectivity – at both the centre and margins of Johannesburg Pride events – emerges from an objective which seeks to unmask and make visible the ways power and marginality are operating in this particular queer and trans space. Therefore, this research has been crafted within a qualitative and critical diversity model, in line with theories which find meaning and power in discourses. This research draws on critical whiteness theory and discourse analysis to situate respondents' sense-making within broader theoretical frameworks, as well as discourses particular to the queer and trans 'community' and Pride events in South Africa. The progression from a critical and constructivist theoretical framework, to qualitative research principles, and finally to utilising discourse analysis, will be unpacked in this Chapter.

Qualitative research in its broadest sense is defined as "reflexive and process driven, ultimately producing culturally situated and theory-enmeshed knowledge through an ongoing interplay between theory and methods, researcher and researched" (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006, p. 5). The terrain of qualitative research is however, diverse, interdisciplinary and encompasses multiple forms of theory, epistemology and methods (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The specific qualitative methods of this research, including data collection techniques and analysis, will be discussed below and are informed by the theoretical and

epistemological positioning of myself and the subject being researched. In a general sense, qualitative principles are aligned to this study through what Willig (2001) describes below:

> Qualitative researchers tend to be concerned with *meaning*. That is, they are interested in how people make sense of the world and how they experience events… the objective of qualitative research is to describe and possibly explain events and experiences, but never predict (p. 9).

Because this study in interested in finding out how white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks are making sense of themselves in relation to other forms of oppression and exclusion within Johannesburg Pride spaces, the qualitative process of finding meaning in subject's discursive practices allows for a more value-laden and descriptively rich analysis, as opposed to a detached and universalist quantitative and/or positivist approach. Furthermore, the intentions of this research are informed by the qualitative principle of social reality being constructed (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 8) and the objective of producing knowledge which imagines and enacts a more socially just world.

Although Willig's (2001) statement above is a general indication of qualitative research principles, I must note that because this study draws on critical whiteness and critical diversity theories, as well as discourse analysis, the analysis in *Chapter Four* does not merely "describe" and "explain" events and experiences. Denzin and Lincoln (2011) develop the understanding of qualitative researchers' aims to not just explain nor describe experiences, but to "seek answers to questions that stress *how* social experience is created and given meaning" (p. 8). In line with Denzin and Lincoln, the critical foundation and analysis of this study provides a critique of the social context and exposes how power is operating in order to offer an alternative vision for how white queer and trans people can engage across multiple differences both within the queer and trans 'community' and broader South African society.

3.1 Data Sources

Participants were contacted and selected through personal networks and snowball techniques. A letter (Appendix A) was drafted which included a brief overview of the research project, expectations of participants, their rights to remain anonymous and end participation without repercussion at any time, and contact details for myself and my supervisor. The original intention of the study was to have participants from both Johannesburg and Cape Town. I sent

the letters to personal contacts, organisations working within the queer and trans sector, and posted on two online forums in both cities. There was a strong response from individuals in Johannesburg, and after commitments to participate I then asked those individuals to share amongst their own networks, colleagues and friends. The response from Cape Town-based individuals was lacking and I only made contact with two potential participants. After continuously following up with my own networks and individuals who I had sent the letter to in Cape Town, interest in participating was not generated. I decided after over a month of attempts to gain interest by potential participants in Cape Town that two participants were not enough to balance that of the number of participants based in Johannesburg. I then decided to move along with solely focusing on participants based in the greater Johannesburg area who have attended Pride events in, and around, the city.

The process to recruit participants for this study was more difficult then I originally thought it would be. One explanation for this could be that I had recently moved to Johannesburg, and South Africa, and had a limited pool of contacts within the area. This may also explain why many of the participants were studying or had attained higher education degrees—my networks within the city were largely based around the university community. Furthermore, I have a feeling that the language I used in the letter to request participation may have resulted in participants who all, in varying ways, acknowledge their privileges as white people. In the letter, I expressly state that I limit participation to white people with the intent to interrogate what it means for this group of people to have both privilege and oppression. This explicit language of white privilege in the letter to potential participants may have resulted in attracting people who already believe this to be true. Perhaps had I not directly stated this in the letter, I would have attracted participants who do not believe white privilege exists. I explicitly stated this in the letter though because I was reaching out to organisations and communities of people which most likely also included people of colour. I felt I needed to make it clear why I was only including white people as to address any concerns which may have been raised by people of colour reading the invitation. These factors, I believe, aided in producing the smaller group of participants, as well as participants who identify as aware of their privileges. Furthermore, my pool of participants may also have been limited by the methods used to reach out to potential participants. The fact that the letter was written and sent out primarily via e-mail restricted access to persons who have access to internet and are literate. This may have, unintentionally, excluded potential participants who are working class and/or cannot read

English. These limitations are important to acknowledge as they most likely did effect the final sample of participants in this study.

Four of the participants I knew of through interactions in a queer and trans organisation which we are all members of. Our interactions previous to their participation in this study was limited and consisted entirely of engagements within the organisation. Two other participants were results of a snowball technique in which participants sent them the letter and they contacted me expressing interest in participating. I contacted one other individual directly with the letter and they agreed to participate. A focus group was set up to include five participants, yet one was not able to attend which resulted in a focus group of four people. Following the focus group, five one-on-one interviews were conducted, two of which were also participants in the focus group.

Once individuals agreed to participate, they were given a demographic (Appendix B) and separate consent form (Appendix C) to complete. The consent form included necessary ethical commitments by me as the researcher. The consent form, as well as verbal conversations with each participant, confirmed confidentiality of their identity, transcripts and audio recordings collected. Participants were assured that they would be given pseudonyms in this report, all data collected including audio recordings and transcripts are saved on password-locked computers, and their identity will not be shared. This research is funded by the NRF-DST SARChI Chair in Critical Diversity Studies in which a requirement is that all data be submitted to the Chair, Professor Melissa Steyn, at the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies. This was included in the consent form and verbally explained to each participant in which they agreed. Furthermore, this report will be made available electronically via the Wits Wired-space upon submission to the University of the Witwatersrand, and each participant agreed to participate fully knowing this. I was also asked to submit this report to the Gay and Lesbian Memory in Action (GALA) archive to which all participants also agreed too. Participants were assured that all identifying information would be anonymized in this report through the use of pseudonyms and concealing of identifying information. Informed consent was attained by all participants to participate and to use direct quotes from the focus group and interviews. Prior to sending the letters to potential participants and gaining informed consent, I received ethical

clearance by the Non-Medical Ethics board through the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand.[21]

Participants were expected to identify as womxn, inclusive of cisgender and transgender womxn, or non-binary and anywhere on the broader queer spectrum. Although each participant was expected to self-identify their gender and sexuality on the demographic form and in the interview, many expressed difficulties in identifying solely with one category or label. The participants' gender identities include three cisgender womxn, one trans womxn, one genderfluid person, one non-binary genderqueer person, and a non-binary trans womyn. The participants' sexualities also ranged from queer/asexual/aromantic, bisexual, lesbian, polysexual(?), gynesexual, hella queer! and homosexual/pansexual in corresponding order as the previous sentence. With the diversity of identifications along the gender and sexuality spectrums, and as stated in *Chapter One*, reducing the various identities and expressions to "queer", "womxn", "trans" and "non-binary" does run the risk of erasing such identifications and experiences. In the analysis, I do particularly reference how each participant has chosen to self-identify which is an attempt to affirm their choice of language, terms and how they self-identify. However, when speaking more broadly about the group of participants, I do use more general terms.

Furthermore, participants were to identify themselves, and be identified as, white. This included five white South African participants, two of which are Afrikaans and one Jewish South African. The other two participants are of European descent and identified their ethnicity and nationality in correspondence with their ancestral and native born countries; although both have lived in South Africa for a number of years. Four of the participants are currently students, three of whom are pursuing undergraduate degrees and one who is enrolled in postgraduate studies. Two other participants have earned Masters degrees and are working as professionals in their respective fields. One participant's highest level of education is Grade 12 and works as an assistant administrator and make-up artist. The ages of participants range from 18 to 34 years old.

[21] The ethics protocol number for this study is DIV/16/06/12.

3.2 Data Collection Techniques

Once participants consented and agreed to participate, data was collected through one focus group and multiple one-on-one interviews. Wilkinson (1998) describes focus groups as "group discussions in which participants focus collectively upon a topic selected by the researcher" (p. 112) and involve various numbers of individuals and methods within the discussion. Wilkinson (1998) argues that focus groups provide a data generating space which challenges the power dynamics present in one-on-one interviews and allows for respondents to collectively interrogate their positioning with others in the group. The use of a focus group in this research was important to making visible how individuals construct their own subjectivity in relation to others in the queer and trans 'community' and potentially mould their identities around discourses which they had prior knowledge of, or new discourses which may have been presented to them during the focus group. The focus group consisted of four individuals and was successful in allowing them to steer the conversation toward topics that they believe are important to themselves and the broader topic of discussion. Although the structure was quite loose and allowed participants to guide the conversation, there was a set of questions and topics which I used to frame the discussion (Appendix D). As the first method of data collection, this method was important for me to understand how they collectively make sense of themselves and the topic of pride, and what points are particularly salient for them.

Despite the theoretical arguments for the use of focus groups, it was challenging and had some limitations. I audio recorded the focus group, opting not for video recording in order to further protect the participants' identities. However, audio recordings of group discussions can be challenging when transcribing and knowing who is speaking. I asked each person to state their name before they spoke which many forgot as it is irregular in conversation. However, because the focus group only included four participants, I was easily able to discern who was speaking in the recording after a few rounds of them talking. Furthermore, the focus group was also limited by their ability to go into personal depth when answering the questions. Because there were multiple people engaged in the discussion, participants may have been less willing to go into personal details of their experiences rather than in a one-on-one interview. Responses were also limited by time, as there was a two-hour limit to the focus group and having multiple people answering questions and discussing constrained the length and depth of responses. Confidentiality also becomes compromised due to its nature of having multiple people sharing and hearing what other participants are saying. I opened the focus group by asking that all the

participants agree to not share the names or identities of other participants outside of the group and to uphold the privacy of one another, to which they all agreed.

Following the focus group, five one-on-one interviews were conducted, two of which were participants in the focus group. Most qualitative research utilises interviewing as a method to capture the subjects point of view through "detailed interviewing" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011, p. 9). This can take shape in different forms, however, for the purposes of this research, in-depth, semi-structured interviews were crucial for "gaining insight into the world of [the] respondents" (Hesse-Biber, 2007, p. 114). The structure of interviews conducted for this research included roughly ten questions (Appendix E) which were open-ended so participants were able to answer in whatever ways they felt most suited their sense-making of the topic. Although I designed particular questions and topics to give the interviews guidance and a purpose, I also allowed the interviews to flow freely, moving from topics as the participants answered. Furthermore, I practiced active listening and tuned in to particular phrases, topics or subjects which participants spoke about frequently. Probing was then used to gain depth into the participants' insights in what they expressed as important to their experiences and sense-making about their positionality at Pride events. Furthermore, because this research uses discourse analysis, I tried to hone in on the links participants were making in their discussions about their experiences at, and in relation to, Pride. This required follow-up questions to try and trace participants sense-making, providing depth and chains of meaning through their own discourses.

Interviews were audio recorded and lasted roughly between one and two hours. In contrast to the focus group, the interviews allowed for much more depth within participant's responses and provided more time for them to reflect on the questions presented. The process of interviewing two people who were also participants in the focus group proved to be useful. There were many unanswered questions left after the focus group and interviewing the two individuals afterward allowed for me to follow-up and seek clarification. These interviews were shorter than interviews with individuals who had not been part of the focus group, however, I believe there was a similar level of depth attained. Although greater depth was achieved in this process, I was also much more aware of my positionality as the researcher in these interactions. Hesse-Biber (2007) describes interviews as an important tool for excavating "subjugated knowledge" which may "often lie hidden and unarticulated" (p. 113). This became challenging for me to manoeuvre as I was engaging with participants who, like myself, occupy

both marginal and dominant positions in society and the queer and trans 'community'. This 'insider' status I held with the participants, as I am a white, queer womxn, allowed a certain level of comfort between us and I was able to resonate with certain responses from participants. However, the use of a dominant group also forced me to consider the ethics of affirming and giving more space for harmful expressions and discourses. The relationship between the researcher and participants requires a certain level of trust which is often developed through the researcher affirming what the participant is saying. I found myself saying "yes", "yeah" or "I understand" when participants were saying things which I knew to be against my own beliefs or counter to how I understand the process toward racial justice. I believe that these affirmations allowed the respondents to feel safe to continue sharing their views with me, even if I then followed-up with a question which challenged their line of thinking. This was a difficult process for me to navigate, as I did not want to perpetuate the harm of racist discourses, yet also wanted participants to freely share how they make sense of themselves and the broader social and queer context of South Africa. This ethical complexity is further discussed below in relation to the analysis of such discourses.

3.3 Data Analysis

As explained in *Chapter Two*, this research is grounded in social constructivist theory which understands subjectivity and reality as shaped through discourses, interactions and processes of socialisation. Furthermore, this research takes on a critical framework which seeks to not only critique the dominant and unjust structures of society, but to also provide alternative possibilities for a more socially just world. Jørgensen & Phillips (2002) explain that critical research aims to "investigate and analyse power relations in society and to formulate normative perspectives from which a critique of such relations can be made with an eye on the possibilities for social change" (p. 2). Discourse, as both a theory and method of analysis, was used for excavating meaning out of the data and to deconstruct normative understandings and constitutes the process for how the following *Chapter* came into being. This section outlines some of the central tenants of discourse theory which relates to the theoretical frameworks of this research as described in *Chapter Two*. The second portion of this section describes the method of discourse analysis which draws upon the theory and was applied to the data to produce *Chapter Four*.

3.3.1 Discourse Theory

My use of discourse analysis draws on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory which was developed in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (1985/2001). Discourse, as a theory, rejects "the realist notion that language is simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world" and upholds "a conviction in the central importance of discourse in constructing social life" (Gill, 2000, p. 172). Therefore, social life is understood as constituted through discourse, with language operating as the vehicle for producing subjects, materials, representations and relations. This indicates that language is not neutral and discourse produces meaning. Our understanding of representations, images and interactions with others and institutions, is only understood through our understanding of meanings which are available to us through discursive processes (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Discourse theory, as developed by Laclau and Mouffe, has four main principles which Gill (2000) states as:

> (1) A critical stance towards taken-for-granted knowledge, and a scepticism towards the view that our observations of the world unproblematically yield its true nature to us;
>
> (2) recognizes that the ways we commonly understand the world are historically and culturally specific and relative;
>
> (3) knowledge is socially constructed— our current ways of understanding the world are determined not by the nature of the world itself, but by social processes;
>
> (4) exploring the ways that knowledges are linked to actions/practices (p. 173).[22]

Discourse analysis strives to reveal the ways in which meaning and subjects are produced in a given context and time, as well as in relation to factors such as power, competing discourses and history. This comes with an understanding that the subject is also socially produced through discourse, and identity is constituted through identification with particular discourses and in relation to the discursive construction of 'others' (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 41).

It is important to note that central to each of the above criteria, and discourse theory as a whole, is a particular understanding of power. Discourse theory draws on Foucault's theorisation of power as not possessed by actors, but rather moving across, and through, discursive terrains. It is the relational nature of power, and its link with knowledge, which describes how "power is productive in that it produces the social in particular ways" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 37).

[22] Each of the above points are also expanded upon in Jørgensen & Phillips (2002, see pages 5-6).

Discursive practices must be analysed in relation to power, through which it can be seen how certain discourses achieve dominance when they serve the interests of powerful groups. The power for discourses to shape subjectivity and social life also comes with the power to perpetuate oppression, injustice and inequity.

Discourses must also be understood as relational to other, competing discourses. Although certain discourses in a particular context and time may gain dominance and become hegemonic forms of social control, there are always multiple, alternative and resistant discourses operating simultaneously. This dialectic relationship of competing discourses is a struggle to "promote different ways of organising society" (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 36). Therefore, discourses are understood as always in flux and never fixed. Time, power struggles and context all shape what competing discourses are offered and which discourse becomes dominant and therefore hegemonic. This instability is the critical point for discourse theory and analysis; it offers a point for disrupting the hegemony of particular oppressive discourses and offers alternative possibilities for imagining and constructing a more just society.

A final note on discourse theory which is applicable to this research is the relation between discourse and subjectivity. A subject comes into being through discourse. Who one is, is constituted through the available discursive options in a given context and time. We identify ourselves in relation to particular discourses which reflect our social realities, as well as identify ourselves in relation to the construction of others. However, as humans, we occupy multiple and diverse identifications across lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, nationality, ability, age and so on. Therefore, our subjectivity is not informed by a single discourse nor a single identification with one aspect of our social identity.

> The subject is also *fragmented:* it is not positioned in only one way and by only one discourse, but, rather, is ascribed many different positions by different discourses... But if conflicting discourses strive simultaneously to organise the same social space, the individual is interpellated in different positions at the same time (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 41).

This process of the 'fragmented subject' is critical when working with individuals who occupy positions at both the centre and margins. White queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks must interface and negotiate with competing discourses; some which allow complicity with white dominance, and others which offer alternative options as gender and sexual minorities. Subjectivity constructed through discourses must then not be interpreted as a linear process,

but rather as a negotiation through available discourses to the multiple experiences and identifications a single individual holds. Similarly, group and collective identities are constructed through discursive means and hold the same fragmentation within the collective. Although the main crux of collective identity is based on a relation to oppositional group formations (i.e. queer collective identification is in opposition to heterosexual, sexual and romantic, and cisgender collective identities), it becomes common to overlook the fragmented intra-group differences and discursive constructions.

3.3.2 Discourse Analysis

Guided by discourse as a theory, the analysis then emerges as a way of examining how meaning is produced through discursive practices. Although there is no set method for using or conducting a discourse analysis, this research relied heavily on Laclau and Mouffe's theory to aid in deconstructing meaning from the recorded data. This required an understanding of how discourses are formed through patterns of meaning making in language, expressions and spatial arrangements. Therefore, the object of analysis is not the individuals themselves, but the discourses they make use of to construct a sense of self (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). The critical analysis within this research is not a critique of the person, but rather their investments, whether conscious or unconscious, in particular discourses. Furthermore, the aim of discourse analysis is to find the function and consequences of language which become embedded in the subject and social life.

Because there is not a set guideline or rubric for undertaking a discourse analysis, I relied on Laclau and Mouffe's theorisations about how discourses are formed. At the root, discourses are formed through patterns and chains of meaning and as a method, discourse analysis seeks to deconstruct these links to reveal how we have come to think about 'this' in 'this' particular way. Discourses are constructed through key signifiers, signs and nodal points which then construct chains of significance and the broader field of discursivity (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002). Key signifiers and signs are relatively empty and meaningless until they come into connection with one another to produce meaning. This point of connection and coming together creates a chain of significance; a pattern of meaning is produced. Simply, this is a pattern of bringing different words, concepts, expressions and statements together which then, once operating together, create a broader meaning. A nodal point is a particular point which holds

space and time to then construct a string of multiple discourses under it. It is these shoots of various smaller discourses which then prop up and hold in place a broader discourse. Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) argue that it is the work of the analyst to then investigate how such signs and signifiers come into relation to form chains of significance and nodal points. It is also the role of the analyst to then interrogate how meaning is produced through these connections, relations and formations.

The methods for the analysis I undertook in this research largely relied upon the above patterns which Laclau and Mouffe propose. Once the focus group and all interviews were transcribed, I began to code mainly thematically, looking for words, language and phrases which were prominent within the individual interviews and across the data sources. This provided me with main concepts that were used across participants to begin to analyse how they were being differently used and interpreted. I also stayed attune to how the participants were constructing themselves in relation to the spatial arrangements of the various Pride events they attended and particularly to others within the queer and trans 'community'. Central to this analysis were questions of: what function does this particular speech serve? What are the consequences and opportunities of this language and ways of making sense of themselves in this particular context? Whose interest does this particular way of sense-making serve, and who does it disserve? With these questions in mind, the analysis was rather loosely structured, yet maintained the tenets of discourse analysis which tries to find patterns which create particular discourses; in order to further deconstruct them to reveal how power and marginality may be operating.

As stated above, the goal of discourse analysis is to analyse the discourse itself. However, as a researcher, there are many challenges when analysing a field which I am intimately bound within and familiar with.

> Because analysts are often part of the culture under study, they share many of the taken-for-granted, common-sense understandings expressed in the material. The difficulty is that it is precisely the common-sense understandings that are to be investigated: analysis focuses on how some statements are accepted as true or 'naturalised', and others are not. Consequently, it is fruitful to try to distance oneself from one's material and, for instance, imagine oneself as an anthropologist who is exploring a foreign universe of meaning in order to find out what makes sense there (Jørgensen & Phillips, 2002, p. 21).

Jørgensen and Phillips (2002) suggest a distancing of oneself as the researcher from the material being analysed, which is much easier said than done. As a white, queer, womxn, I am

also personally invested in the subject of this study and intimately familiar with some of the experiences and language expressed by participants. It was challenging to critically interrogate and analyse the discourses in the data as I am also produced through and within them myself. I am also a subject of the social world and particularly aware of the competing and dominant discourses concerning race, gender and sexuality in relation to Pride events in Johannesburg. This distancing proved difficult, however, it was also useful to interrogate my own investments, assumptions and predispositions in relation to the topic at hand. This required a genuine reflexive practice which was constantly asking questions of my data, as well as asking questions of myself and my interpretations. Therefore, I did not necessarily distance myself, but rather critically implicated myself, my own beliefs and assumptions, and investments in the topics being analysed. As a result, I also had to face certain things I have taken for granted as common sense, and challenge not only the discourses within my data, but discourses which I have also been complicit in and committed to as well. And finally, because I am an 'insider' and have investments within this topic, there remains a limitation to the ability for me to completely or wholly recognise some of the "common sense understandings in the material." This limitation was attempted to be reduced to the smallest chance through my use of theory, analysis and reflexivity.

A final ethical consideration I grappled with throughout the analysis and writing of this report was the use of a dominant group. Hurtado and Stewart (2004) argue that when researching whiteness and using white participants, there is a potential consequence of "eliciting, recording—and not challenging—the participants' racist views" (p. 326). This can lead to an "ethically complex" situation for the researcher and lead to giving these views more air time than they already have in society (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004). The authors then suggest that in order to overcome this complexity, the researcher must opt "not for 'thick' description or empowerment and giving voice, but for 'thick analysis'" (Hurtado & Stewart, 2004, p. 316). I took this to heart when writing the next chapter as I am very aware of the potential consequence of critical whiteness research re-centring whiteness and dominance.

Chapter Four: Analysis

Participants are making sense of themselves and contestations at Johannesburg Pride events in a number of complex and multifaceted ways. Their sense making demonstrates a process of negotiation—negotiating debates around the meaning of Pride, negotiating their own subjectivity which positions themselves at both the centre and margins, and the relation of themselves to other queer and trans people. Because this research seeks to find, and deconstruct, meaning in the ways in which participants are making sense of their intersectional subjectivities at Pride spaces in Johannesburg, this *Chapter* critically examines the ways different sense making strategies are employed. The questions I use to guide this analysis are: How are participants imagining and negotiating difference at Pride events? What concepts are participants using to make sense of themselves in relation to Pride and the queer and trans 'community'? And how does such sense-making function in relation to power? Through the guidance of these questions, I utilised discourse analysis to find the deeper meaning in the participant's expressions and to develop a critical exploration into how they are negotiating, resisting and remaining complicit within dominant and unequal power dynamics at Johannesburg Pride events.

The recurring themes and concepts which emerged from the interviews are: *'I'm so woke!'*- which interrogates what the participants mean when they employ the rhetoric of "wokeness" and consciousness in relation to privilege and oppression. This section describes the main nodal point of the discourse which participants are engaging through. This section unpacks how folks whom see themselves as conscious of issues of white, cis, able-bodied and class privilege, are using such states as a lens for forming their subjectivity amongst social divisions. *Boundaries: Disrupting and reinforcing the lines between 'us' and 'them'*- focuses on the particular discursive practice of establishing the self in relation to 'others' and is a smaller discourse which flows from wokeness. The two sub-sections are: *White, cis gay men… and me* and *Queer and trans people of colour… and me*. *Practices at Pride*- the final section and off-shoot from the nodal point, analyses how participants are making sense of themselves through their actions and engagements in Pride spaces. The three sub-sections include: *Intersectionality: Helping or hurting the movement?; Affective experiences at Pride;* and *Direct action: experiences of engagement*.

4.1 'I'm so woke!'

The term "woke" is relatively new to mainstream rhetoric and its definition largely rests on understandings within social justice movements and younger generations. However, its roots can be traced to black American vernacular which surfaced on twitter in the form of the hashtag 'staywoke."[23] In light of ongoing police brutality against communities of colour in the United States, the hashtag was used within black communities to remind folks to stay aware of their positionality, safety and the dominant systems which oppress people of colour. Following the hashtag's rise to prominence through the #blacklivesmatter movement, staying woke has come to be understood as the state of being aware— particularly aware of social justice issues and hegemonic forms of social control. Being woke is often considered synonymous with being aware of social issues and one's own privileges and oppression— and being critically conscious of the systems which structure society in unjust and inequitable ways. This particular discourse and its meanings have largely developed recently through the use of social media and online content which provides subjects with information, resources and representations of wokeness.

Three participants in this study used the word woke to describe themselves or others they see as allies to queer/trans and black struggles. Although the meaning and use of woke is contested—particularly when used by white folks (see M. Binyam, 2016)—I am not able to go into depth about my participants self-identifying using this particular term.[24] I am, however, interested in how all of the participants are positioning themselves using a multitude of expressions including woke, aware and conscious. By declaring and positioning themselves as attuned to their privileges and oppression within the broader structures of society, participants are constructing their subjectivity and making sense of themselves through such a lens. It is this lens which provides them with a sense-making strategy for dealing with issues of racism,

[23] For a more detailed timeline of 'stay woke's' progression and use in American culture, see Charles Pulliam-Moore's (2016) article: *How 'woke' went from black activist watchword to teen internet slang*.

[24] Although I do not go into a critical discussion regarding the use of the particular term 'woke', I do recognise its limitations and critiques and believe it is necessary to unpack this term in relation to white people's use of it. Most notably, many are currently arguing that self-declaring oneself as 'woke' it interpreted to mean they have reached a plateau with regards to continued un/learning and development of consciousness. In the same ways, woke assumes a somewhat fixed/static state of being awake/aware, whereas consciousness inherently implies an ongoing process which never ends. These differences and nuances can, and should be, unpacked, however, due to limitations of space and scope in this research, I admit I cannot fully do this here.

cis/sexism, able-bodied privilege and classism in the queer and trans 'community' of South Africa. It also acts a nodal point from which all the resulting expressions, engagements and smaller discourses emerge.

It must also be noted that I do not think this group of participants in any way can be extrapolated to represent the broader white queer and trans population—or white population in general— in South Africa. The fact that each of them do, in varying degrees, recognise and grapple with their positions of dominance and oppression is not a likely representation of all white queer and trans folks. The fact that each of them did acknowledge their privileges was a surprise to me, as I did expect some participants to engage in more explicit forms of dominance and denial of privileges. This is not to say though that because each of the participants see themselves as conscientized, they are engaging with themselves and other people consistently in counter-hegemonic ways. This will be further unpacked in the following sections which will illuminate the contradictions and complexities of declaring oneself as 'woke', aware and/or conscious.

Alcoff (2006) argues that although throughout history there have been white people who have fought in solidarity with people of colour against white supremacy and racial injustice, currently, there is "increasing visibility of whiteness to whites themselves" (p. 205) and an "awakened white consciousness" (p. 206). Although speaking from, and of, the American context, one could argue that such trends are also surfacing in South Africa. With movements such as #FeesMustFall, discourses of decolonisation permeating mainstream conversations, and vast amounts of online content and discussion to draw from, whites in South Africa do have options for un/learning and developing their subjectivity in resistant ways. However, it is also important to keep in mind Steyn's (2007) contribution which argues that whiteness in South Africa has never held the kind of 'invisibility' as in contexts such as North America and Europe. As Anna, a white polysexual (?) trans womxn states:

> I mean growing up, there's no way you ever get away from recognising your whiteness, and I think that, I think that perhaps really actively recognising the privilege that comes with it, I guess a lot of that real engagement was sparked by engaging with the trans community.

Anna affirms Steyn's argument and also illustrates the dissonance between knowing and seeing oneself as white, and actually recognising and redressing the privileges associated with whiteness. It is this dissonance which creates a point of departure for folks to take different

routes when constructing their subjectivity. One option would be to retreat from recognition of the privileges and power attributed to the self as white or any other dominant subject position— resulting in denial, defensiveness and and/or an inability to engage with what this means for the self. The second route is where participants of this research have opted to go— recognising their privileges and power and attempting to do something about it; therefore, becoming interpellated into discourses of wokeness. Sam, a white, non-binary, 'hella queer!' participant describes their[25] experience at this juncture:

> I got *woke*!... that whole thing with the 2012 pride [One in Nine protest and response by Pride organisers], that was a, that was the turning point for me and realising just how, well just how violent Pride really had become to anybody other than the cis, gay, white group of people. And, so, and there's, it becomes a point where you're confronted with it and you go 'yes I just actually can't, I can't sit by and be complicit in all of this. This behaviour is supporting the institution and I just can't be a part of it'.

For Sam, the "turning point" was being confronted with the injustice occurring at Joburg Pride and making an active decision against complicity in such a system. What this reveals is that the process of seeing and embodying oneself as woke, aware or conscious requires a step away from being co-opted into dominant discourses and rather seeking out alternatives.

The two statements from Anna and Sam above also demonstrate some factors which have contributed to their development of consciousness. For Anna, it was engaging in trans spaces which provided her with opportunities to have "conversations around privilege and intersectionality and identity" which allowed her to gain an understanding of her own "positionality within the context and in a kind of deep, more active way." For Sam, one factor was the One in Nine protests at Joburg Pride, although they also acknowledge being pregnant and a non-binary parent, having a group of critically conscious trans and non-binary friends, and being "called out" for their own complicity in hegemonic orders. Many other participants cited coming to university as a point in which they began to develop consciousness about their dominant subjectivities— expressing the value of being in a "liberal," progressive and academic space which "forces" them to confront "race/racism". For some, the university context was a radical departure from growing up in racist, cis/sexist and queerphobic homes. What all of this demonstrates is that participants were able to reflect back on times when they

[25] Sam, along with Alex, use they/them/their pronouns.

were ‘un-woke’— substantiating that they therefore have undergone personal growth in both intellectual and experiential ways which reveals a sense of awakening.

As the following quotations illustrate, participants most notably affirmed their sense of consciousness through their recognition of privileges they hold through dominant subject positions:

Sarah, a white cisgender bisexual womxn:

> I think because we're very aware, we know about issues, we know about white privilege, we know about you know marginalisation within marginalisation.

Samantha, a white cisgender lesbian womxn:

> There are certain privileges that I have that I wasn't even aware of when I met queer womxn who weren't treated the same because of some thing or another and I was like ‘oh shit’.

Alex, a white genderfluid gynesexual person:

> So I think kind of, the comfort that I've gotten from being raised as like, a white, upper-middle class person, means that my coming out and my understanding of identity has kind of been a lot easier than what it is for a lot of people in South Africa.

Trisha, a white queer, ciswomxn on the asexual/aromantic spectrum:

> I'm aware of my privilege, see I'm just woke in the way, I'm so woke, in the way that my white privilege really, I can see it so well.

Each of the participants are able to recognise and state that they have privileges due to their positions as white, as well as for some holding positions of dominance due to being cisgender, middle/upper-class, able-bodied and even within a more ‘accepted’ sexual orientation.[26] This ability to see and name such privileges were foundations for participants constructing themselves as aware of ongoing inequality within the queer and trans ‘community’. Despite the differences in how folks have journeyed to this point and the factors which they see as shaping themselves as woke, all the participants are constructing themselves in opposition to a

[26] For example, this was expressed as being a lesbian or heterosexual— or in a straight passing relationship— were seen, and experienced, as more privileged than folks who are on the asexual/aromantic spectrum or bisexual/pansexual spectrum.

white and/or cis, able-bodied and middle-class subjectivity which remains complicit in forms of oppression.

In addition to their wokeness being informed by, and informing, their positions at the centre, participants also expressed their experiences of oppression as sites for which they have awoke to systemic injustice. Trisha describes how she feels marginalised at Pride events due to the lack of visibility and representation of those on the asexual and aromantic spectrums. Sarah also describes an altercation at a university Pride event where another organiser gave a speech stating "how heterosexuals weren't welcome and bisexuals just needed to figure it out." These events for Trisha and Sarah were intimate acts of marginalisation, and made them question how a space designated as 'safe' for all queer and trans people could exclude and oppress them. Other participants also acknowledged experiences of cis-hetero-patriarchy which oppressed them while simultaneously awakening them to the structural relations of power.

Sam further connects their wokeness through an intersectional lens in the quote below:

> My race and the fact that I'm middle-class and have access to healthcare that other people don't have, the fact that I am able to live in a social environment with my queerness and my masculinity that doesn't make me as much of a target as it does to other people… So, yeah, so how do you separate any part of that out? I know I'm protected by my race, but at the same time I am a target because of my gender. I know I'm protected by my race because I have access to healthcare, but you know, it, I can't separate any of it out. Because my existence is still so privileged.

Their wokeness then emerges from an intersectional lens. Here, Sam connects their experiences of both marginalisation and oppression, resulting in their wokeness being a broader, structural understanding of their own subjectivity and lived experiences.

The participants use of discourses of wokeness and consciousness may be sites of contestations in and of themselves. Ahmed (2004b) argues that the act of declaration and seeing ones whiteness, or other points of power, does not necessarily mean one will act nor engage in anti-hegemonic behaviour. This section is not meant to unpack that as such— however, the lens of wokeness which participants have positioned themselves through, will remain as a thread throughout this *Chapter*, illuminating Ahmed's point. The difficulty of then negotiating, or not, this state of wokeness is the process of how they are making sense of themselves at various

Pride spaces. Wokeness serves as a nodal point in the following discourses, with all other sense-making and articulations flowing from this point. It is this declaring of recognition of power, and declaring of the self, which informs and shapes their ways of being white, queer, trans, non-binary and/or womxn. They are able to use current discourses of wokeness, critical consciousness and awareness to position themselves as being at both the centre and margins, while attempting to resist from both sides.

4.2 Boundaries: Reinforcing and blurring the lines between 'us' and 'them'

The contestations about Pride events in Johannesburg are arguably a fight over who belongs within the queer and trans 'community'. Kilomba (2013) states that "those who are listened to are those who 'belong'. And those who are *not* listened to become those who 'do *not* belong'" (emphasis in original, p. 20). With claims of class, gender and racial exclusion, corporate sponsorship and the hyper-visibility of a particular form of white, gay cis-masculinity at Joburg/Johannesburg Pride, it appears that the organising committee and Pride-goers have made their claims of who does, and does not, belong. For participants, navigating these divisions within Pride spaces, and negotiating multiple options of Pride events in the city, has led to a process of manoeuvring between and through boundaries. Yuval-Davis, (2006, citing Crowley, 1999) defined the "politics of belonging as 'the dirty work of boundary maintenance'. The boundaries that the politics of belonging is concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries that separate the world population into 'us' and 'them'" (p. 204). Although speaking specifically about the politics of belonging within a nation-state, the concept of boundary maintenance can also be applied to social groups such as the queer and trans 'community'. And, as Yuval-Davis (2006) recognises, the power relations which structure and dictate boundaries around collectives, also operate within the collective—meaning that boundaries and notions of 'us' and 'them' can be reproduced within a particular social group.

Participants are using a particular discursive strategy which informs both the meaning of queer and trans collective identity, as well as the relationality of their subjectivity to 'others'. I have used Yuval-Davis's (2006) contribution and the term boundaries to highlight how participants are utilising certain discourses to frame themselves and others, and the lines between us, in

different ways. In some instances, participants are maintaining boundaries between themselves and white cis gay men, as well as between themselves and queer and trans people of colour—which in the former results in a distancing between themselves and who is deemed the perpetrators of exclusion at Pride spaces, and in the latter, ongoing othering. However, there is a fine line which appeared between maintaining boundaries and recognising difference which I analyse as an attempt to blur such lines.

4.2.1 White, cis, gay men… and me

Leatt and Hendricks (2005) describe how boundary maintenance occurs within the queer 'community' through the development of a sub-culture—designed as a safe space for expression and an alternative to heteronormativity— with the unintended consequence of the creation of dominant norms within the 'community' which exclude and marginalise those who do not conform or fit in. Leatt and Hendricks, as well as Berube (2001), argue that a form of white, affluent, able-bodied, cisgender gay masculinity[27] has come to be the dominant image of 'queerness'. Cis, white, gay men, therefore, come to be both the symbolic and embodied representation of the queer 'community' which leads to a 'sub-culture' reliant upon racism, cis/sexism and classism (Berube, 2001; Leatt & Hendricks, 2005; Reygan, 2016). Although not all cis, white gay men actively partake in this dominant culture, nor remain complicit within such a system which excludes trans folks, womxn, people of colour, poor people and folks living with disabilities, the dominance which this identity symbolises does have functions and consequences for inclusion and exclusion.

As the following extracts show, participants in this study both affirmed this dominant image of queerness, as well as reflected on what this means for them— occupying a more marginalised position in comparison:

Samantha:

[27] It must be noted that when I speak about white cis gay men I do so with the understanding that this is a diverse and heterogeneous grouping. There is a vast range of expressions, identities and articulations within this group which includes cis gay men who are also subject to marginalisation by dominant forms of masculinity and patriarchy. I also must note that in the focus group and interviews, some participants alluded to a particular form and expression of white cis gay masculinity which they found particularly oppressive. This was never explicitly named or described—which is a limitation incurred on my part in not asking follow-up questions to understand this—making it difficult for me to also articulate a more nuanced conception. In the same vein though, many participants did often refer to white cis gay men as a stable category, inferring their own belief in the homogenous nature of this grouping.

> …everything's [clubs, bars, social spaces] just for cis, white, gay men. Like everything, like you try and find a place for womxn, good *fucking* luck.
>
> When you look at like the way queer people are represented in the media, you don't see, you very rarely see queer womxn anywhere, unless they're in a series and then they die… So I think like as white gay men, society, they see themselves as the pinnacle of what the lgbt community is because that's all you see in the media and that's what everyone else thinks when they think of lgbt.

Caroline, a white, homosexual/pansexual, non-binary trans womyn:

> And unfortunately a lot of pride movements, the biggest stakeholders are cisgender, gay men. So they do not understand, remotely, the kind of oppression that's faced by even by trans womxn.

Sam:

> White, gay men are the most socially acceptable of all the lgbt minority groups.

Womxn, trans and non-binary folks, people of colour, poor people and folks living with disabilities are then erased from the public imagination of what queer and trans means and looks like. Participants also noted that they believed this to be a large part of the problem of exclusion at Pride events like Johannesburg LGBT Pride; because white, cis gay men are the representational image broadcast on the news and in print and social media. This resulted in some stating feelings of marginalisation, such as when Caroline asserts that "they" cannot understand the experiences of oppression of trans womxn. Anna also states:

> And I was very aware even from the first times that I went to [Joburg] Pride, that it was very dominated by cis-gay white men, and a very specific understanding of what that means and of what, how one should fit into that. And I think even then, although there was some celebration of queer presentation, it was still kind of the sense that femme-presenting people were on the outside. So, yeah it, I went with a nice group of people so it helped but I did still kind of definitely feel on the outside and sort of didn't necessarily have the words to express *why*, but just that I wasn't buying into that form of masculinity that was expected within that space.

Despite going to Pride at the time identifying as a man, she felt marginalised for not complying with the dominant and expected norms which dictated a certain form of cis-gay masculinity. And she clearly represents having to negotiate that space as an 'outsider'.

Beyond affirming the dominance of white, cis-gay masculinity, participants were also able to relate this back to themselves in different ways. For some, despite being marginalised by hegemonic orders of affluence and cis-masculinity, they were able to still take on white, cis gay men as aligned to themselves in the perpetuation of whiteness. Sam describes that the systemic nature of whiteness protects and "acts as shield" for *all* white queer and trans folks—therefore aligning themselves along with white, cis gay men. Through discussing the systemic dominance of whiteness and white affluence, Sam is able to recognise the harm which white, cis gay men inflict on themselves and others, while not relegating the responsibility of racism within Pride events or the queer and trans 'community' solely to 'them'. Anna also argues that "whiteness in the queer community is *our* responsibility"— referring to the collective responsibility of *all* white queer and trans folks regardless of class, ability or gender. These statements reflect a desire for white cis gay men to recognise the ways in which they, and their embodied subjectivity, causes harm and exclusion, while at the same time not relegating them as a distant or 'other' white subject from themselves. Through such sense-making, the result is one which seeks collaboration with other white queer and trans folks to eradicate, challenge and disrupt the dominance of whiteness in Pride and queer and trans spaces.

In contrast, other participants negotiated these power dynamics in ways which serve to protect themselves from claims of perpetuating racism and classism through distancing themselves from white cis gay men. One prominent example of this is when Samantha states:

> White gay men, specifically they feel like, 'oh well, I am also a minority because I'm gay' you know, and then they just feel the freedom to be as problematic as they want. 'Oh I can say that because I can be a misogynist,' you know like, indirectly by telling, like acting like 'I can tell womxn what to wear… Because I'm gay, I can cause drama and you know be incredibly racist' and be like 'ha ha ha, but I'm gay!' You know, 'I'm also a minority.' And we end up perpetuating the divisions in our community by you know allowing people like that to kind of hide behind the fact that they're also queer. 'Oh, we're all queer here, ha ha it doesn't matter.' Meanwhile, you are the reason that people of colour don't feel like there is a space to integrate with us. And then when you try, it's very often perceived as like some sort of white saviour complex, you know. I've dealt with that along like 'oh you're trying to reach out to me and be my friend because inclusivity, because it makes you feel better.' There are a lot of, it's not as simple as just everyone coming together because there are people within the queer community who feel like they're entitled to have problematic views because they're also queer, you know. 'Oh I'm a victim so I will do and act as I please.' And then there are people on the more oppressed side who do not feel like they're welcome in those spaces even when they're told

> they are because those spaces are saturated with people like that and then anyone else is perceived to be just, trying to include people just to be politically correct.

Samantha clearly feels erased and marginalised because of the dominance and privilege which white cis gay men have within the queer and trans 'community'. And her description of the use of a marginal position by white cis gay men to deflect from their privileged position(s) is a common occurrence in the queer and trans 'community'.[28] It is also an indicator that she is able to identify how this sense-making—of hiding behind one's marginalised identity—is problematic. However, it is also through such marginalisation that she is able to identify and construct a 'them' in opposition to herself. She constructs 'them' as the 'reason' for why queer and trans people of colour do not feel 'welcome'— which places the burden of responsibility for redressing this problem on 'them' and prevents any reflection on whether her, or other white queer womxn, may also be responsible for such exclusion. By placing this responsibility solely on white cis gay men, those in similarly privileged positions due to whiteness, are alleviating any interrogation of their own practices or beliefs which may also cause queer and trans people of colour to feel unwelcome. White cis gay men have become the scapegoat for the problem of racism within Pride events and the queer and trans 'community'.

Although a few other participants, to varying levels, also scapegoat white cis gay men for the problem of racism within Pride and the queer and trans 'community', Samantha's statement particularly displays multiple modes of sense-making. In some instances, she aligns herself with white cis gay men by stating that people of colour don't "feel like there is space to integrate with *us*"— echoing that she does see herself as part of the dominant group and reinforcing her sense of consciousness. Yet underneath this is a resentment, which can be found across white folks who occupy privileged positions, that white cis gay men have compromised the ability to connect and interact with people of colour. While there is recognition in such statements of the harm which the dominance of white cis gay men may cause to people of colour, the real affront to this behaviour is that it changes the way people of colour see and perceive *white womxn*. Perceptions that a white queer womxn is only guided by notions of being "politically correct" and appears to be a "white saviour", is rooted in a fear to be cast in such light by people of colour. It appears that the true concern with white cis gay men's actions is how one is perceived by people more oppressed.

[28] For an example of this, see the comment by Cape Town Pride organiser, Mathew van As in C. Haith, (2015), in response to claims of exclusion at the parade here: http://www.thejournalist.org.za/spotlight/enough-is-kwanele-for-gay-pride.

Alcoff (2006) describes Sartre's theorisation of "the look" as: "In the look of the Other we perceive the Other's subjective consciousness… We also perceive our being-for-others, or the value and meaning we have in the eyes of the Other" (p. 218). She further proposes, through Lewis Gordon's argument (cited in Alcoff, 2006), that "white racism is predicated on the need and desire of whites to deflect the look of the black Other, a look that will reveal guilt, accusation, and moral deficiency" (p. 218). This discursive move by those in a position of relative privilege may be an attempt to deflect through the use of white cis gay men as a barrier. For if one were to acknowledge that people of colour may not want to engage because they also see white queer and/or trans womxn as perpetrators of exclusion, one would have to recognise they may also be implicated in this dominance. The fear of being perceived in a certain way which one does not want to be, also reflects a desire to control the gaze of the black 'other'—a move which requires power. Rather than seeing truth in their look, which may cause one to feel guilt and assume responsibility alongside white cis gay men, the scapegoating acts a shield from both. The function of this discursive movement is to continue to affirm one's own "being-for-others"— in that one does not interact with people of colour out of 'politically correct' motivations— and to distance oneself from those whom are deemed responsible for such 'bad' actions. It functions to protect oneself, to not implicate oneself in problems of racism, and to uphold one's intentions of wokeness/consciousness. Sullivan (2014) also points out that this articulation by white allies is a form of presenting oneself as 'good' in opposition to the 'bad' racists. The effect of such thinking and declaration creates a distance between the 'good'/'woke' white person and the 'bad'/'ignorant' white person. This process then separates white people who see themselves as woke from those who may potentially benefit from engaging with white people to un/learn and dismantle unjust racial attitudes.

Inherent in this particular articulation is also a move away from recognising whiteness a systemic issue. By bringing issues of racism, classism and exclusion to an individual level through pin-pointing a particular embodied (white cis gay men) perpetrator, one is able to ignore the structural dominance and power which whiteness has. To do so also assists in removing the self who is also white, within this structural order. For those in privileged positions, it becomes easier to pin-point one person or group as the source of racism rather than recognising the broader institution of whiteness as the problem—which would instinctively implicate themselves. Through this, those who see themselves as woke and/or conscious can deflect their own implication and complicity in such a system while 'proving' their wokeness

through identifying the source of racism/exclusion. In actuality though, those same 'woke' people need to not only recognise the harm which white cis gay men *do* perpetrate, but also simultaneously recognise the benefits and privileges they assume through their collusion with whiteness.

The overall negotiation of the boundary between the participants and white cis gay men illustrates a range of different tactics. While all being on the receiving end of marginalisation by the form of dominance which white cis gay men hold, some are aligning themselves with them— therefore attempting to blur the boundary in the hopes of redressing issues of racism together. On the other hand, other participants are distancing themselves, which in some ways is an attempt to re-affirm their own wokeness in contrast to the 'ignorance' of white cis gay men. By creating a scapegoat for racism in white cis gay men, white queer womxn are able to construct themselves as 'good'— and in practical terms, it also shuts down possibilities for them to truly engage with their own behaviours, beliefs and investments which may also contribute to exclusion and oppression. This latter discourse, while dealing with the reality of exclusion one may feel from white cis gay men, only furthers the power which whiteness has in Pride and queer and spaces. Unlike the former discourse which seeks ways of challenging power collaboratively, this upholds and does little to challenge the dominance of whiteness.

4.2.2 Queer and trans people of colour… and me

The process of othering is to form a distance between the self and the imagined subjectivity of the 'other'. Within white and black relations, Kilomba (2013) describes "whiteness as a dependent identity that exists through the exploitation of the 'Other,' a relational identity constructed by whites defining themselves as unlike racial 'Others'" (p. 17). The relationality of the self to the 'other' requires one to see and imagine themselves in opposition to the ways one imagines and sees the 'other'. It is through such a relational process in which the white subject, or any other dominant social position, imposes and perpetuates dominance over oppressed peoples. Although scholars like Kilomba and Fanon (1952/2008) often describe such relationality through explicitly and overtly racist forms, othering and constructing the self as superior can also be done in more implicit and coded ways. The result, despite the implicit or explicit nature of the doing, is to keep subject positions stable and unequal power dynamics in place.

Although participants in this study consider themselves woke and engaged in resistance to their own privileges, often times the discourses which they have identified with and use to make sense of themselves have consequences which reiterate unequal power relations. A common practice which participants engaged in during interviews was to declare their privilege and immediately qualify it with their imagined counter-part; queer and trans people of colour. This is demonstrated in the following quotation:

Sarah:

> I think it's very easy to, me being in my position, as a white womxn who is pretty privileged, to say oh yeah, '[university campus] is great, I feel super safe'. When really like you just need to look ten metres right to me and see another queer person or a person of colour, or a trans person who's actually like, it's not really how it is.

This statement is one which reiterates that she knows and recognises her privileges as a white cis person, reaffirming her consciousness. What is interesting though is how it is done in relation to queer and trans people of colour. It is as if her privilege cannot be acknowledged in its own right, and rather needs to be made comparable to the perceived counter-opposite. Probyn (2004) describes this as an inability of subject's to discuss and interrogate their dominant position in its own right, leading to an inability to fully grasp what such a position means and how to challenge and resist it. While Sarah may be right that queer and trans people of colour experience more violence and oppression in South Africa compared with white queer and trans folks, what this does is reiterates oppositional subjectivities. Furthermore, we can begin to see the way imagination is operating as well. Because the reality in South Africa is that queer and trans people of colour face higher rates of queer/transphobic violence, that fact is then used to construct the subjectivity of the imagined 'other'. Constructing queer and trans people of colour in such a way may be an attempt to recognise the experiential and material differences between oneself (as white) and others, however, it also runs the risk of essentializing racialised subjectivities. The following extracts form interviews illustrate these dynamics:

Alex:

> I know the comfort I get from my family is very different from what she [their black partner] gets. And I'm not saying that that's purely because of race. But it is, she does come from a much more traditional family than I do. She, you know, there's a lot less, I mean there's a lot of family that I can't tell, and I will never tell, but for

her it's much more direct family that, um, will just never know. Or if they might, it's much more down the line.

Trisha:

> And it's also you need to understand why for instance, black people might not come out as queer. And not force them because you're in a space where white people might be more open minded, whereas in a township, where you literally grow up with your neighbours, you know everyone takes care of you, it's not that easy.

Samantha:

> Especially from what I've gathered, queerness is seen in a lot of African cultures to be an entirely western concept, you know, it's more rejected, from what I've heard, from what I've been told. You know this whole queer thing, from what I've been told, is very much like there are certain cultures and groups who go this is a western thing, don't bring this into our space, it's not valid.[29]

Each of these statements above demonstrate how participants are constructing themselves, as well as constructing queer and trans people of colour. Particularly in Trisha's comment, she constructs white people— which must be inclusive of herself— as being more "open-minded" and therefore less queer/transphobic compared to black people and cultures. Underlying this statement is a particular understanding of black, South African cultures, which, along with Samantha's and Alex's comments, is read as more queer/transphobic because of "cultural" and "traditional" values. This implies that whiteness is void of culture, and without it, white people are more accepting and tolerant of queer and trans people. The consequence of qualifying one's own privileged and dominant experience with its perceived relational opposite is that it relies on essentialist stereotypes which function to keep social positions static. Such imagery, when taken together, also contributes to creating and reinforcing a monolithic understanding of blackness. Through such discursive practices, queer and trans people of colour are therefore not perceived as able to negotiate their own subjectivity in ways outside of these stereotypes— which, is the point of othering, to keep the 'other' in a static, inferior position. Queer and trans people of colour are then imagined and understood within a limited lens of oppression, constantly wounded and fixed within that perception— and the relational opposite being gratitude for being white and in "open-minded" spaces. So, rather than this form of recognising

[29] It must be noted that following Samantha saying this in the focus group, Anna did provide a counter to this and challenged this conception of queer/trans-ness being 'unAfrican'. This engagement, to me, illustrates a benefit of focus groups as it provides a space for participants to learn from and challenge one another.

one's own privileges resulting in challenging that very power, it works to conceal and fix whiteness as dominant. The real danger as well is when these sentiments are taken together, when they connect with one another and form a wider discourse which can be said and used in different ways, with the same effect. And while it is important to acknowledge that the intentions behind such statements are to recognise difference and not meant to reinforce existing power dynamics, the result in some ways does the opposite of the intention.

Through this analysis though, I realised a nuanced difference from the above statements and others which on surface seem very similar. And I began to wonder then, how should we go about recognising white privilege without succumbing to essentializing and othering queer and trans people of colour? The fact is that there are very real, material and experiential differences between queer and trans people of different races in South Africa— so how do we negotiate this without reinforcing asymmetrical power dynamics? This becomes quite difficult because if one were to say that we, queer and/or trans folks, are all the same despite our different races and class positions, that would also be criticised for ignoring the ways in which race and class shape our experiences as queer and/or trans. One way this may be negotiated is seen through Sam's understanding of whiteness as being all-privileging, as the extract from the interview shows:

> I did this ridiculous survey online like how privileged are you? And it came back saying I'm 32 percent privileged, and it was like 'you are not privileged'. And I'm like listen, because I ticked the white box should automatically give me 50 percent at least. The fact that I'm queer, trans, disabled, all the rest of those things, unemployed, like all these things which should really be counting against me, automatically should get half points because I'm white.
>
> Interviewer: So you think whiteness actually makes up for all these other kind of marginalised identities?
>
> Well like I've said, I have access to healthcare, I have access to things that make my disability possible to live a fairly functional existence. Um, I have the ability to go for the expensive operations or get hearing aids, which I used to wear up until I got my ear fixed. Should my disease progress to the point where I need cochlear implants I will be able to get a cochlear implant because I'm on medical aid. Why am I on medical aid? Because my spouse and I can afford medical aid, why can we afford medical aid? Because we have degrees. Why can we afford degrees? Because my parents were able to give me a certain amount of money to get through high school and be able to support me while I was studying and made sure that I went to

> good schools when I was young, which gave me access to university. And I was fed and had the right nutrition from the time that I was born in order to be able to develop the cognitive function that I have. The fact that I do not have to fear for my life walking down the street because of the city I live in, you know. *All of this is directly related to my whiteness. My queerness is protected because I am white*. Let's not joke, let's not think that any of this is even vaguely comparable to other people's existence. Yes, it's hard, it's harder than another white person walking down the street, if I'd been a cis, het, white, male, my existence would have been easier. But let's not pretend my difficult existence is in any way comparable with the difficult existence of a black queer person living in an economically disadvantaged area. Come on. Come on.

While Sam does relate their own privilege through a relationship with people of colour and straight white folks at the end, their sense-making is clearly situated within a framework which sees their whiteness and class as being finite points of reflection. And while one can see the undertone of this statement as implying that people of colour are without such privileges of education and healthcare, the result is not one which fixes that upon the 'other'. Rather, Sam is able to interrogate their privileges through both a systemic and socio-historical understanding of how whiteness operates in South African society. They are not placing notions and perceptions on people of colour, but rather recognising their privileges in their own right—which allows them to interrogate and challenge power by having that be the focus of their reflection.

This discourse, as opposed to the previous examples, provides perspective in a way which does not fix blackness as a monolith. While both examples attempt to put into perspective the relative privilege and oppression white queer and trans folks have, the second does so in a way which does not construct people of colour as 'other'. The incorporation of socio-historical processes of *why* one is privileged offers a more structural analysis of the self in relation to those whom are further oppressed due to intersecting social positions. Through this, one is able to locate the source of their dominance which, importantly, is also the source of the oppression of queer and trans people of colour. In the first example, the cause of racialised queer/transphobia is black communities and cultures. In the second, the racialised queer/transphobia is the result of centuries of white supremacy. This seemingly small difference has significant impacts. Berube (2001) describes how issues of queerphobia in black communities is often regarded by the white queer and trans population as a problem for black queer and trans folks to address. Through this conception, white queer and trans folks are 'off

the hook' for eradicating queer/transphobia in black communities. And furthermore, we are 'off the hook' for assuming any responsibility in how this issue has been formed. This relates to the first discourse through the construction of blackness being the source of queer/transphobia and violence in black communities. Through such, we are able to recognise the different levels of violence between ourselves and queer and trans people of colour, yet do not challenge how such inequity is constructed and our own implication in this—affecting not only how we see ourselves, but also what we can do about this difference. If we, white queer and trans folks, proceed with the first discourse, we are establishing the issue of violence against queer and trans people of colour as a problem which we are not responsible for.

4.3 Practices at Pride

Pride offers many different experiences in one space, and having multiple Pride marches in Johannesburg, queer and trans folks have even more options for engaging in such spaces. Furthermore, *how* one engages in such spaces is not only a reflection of the person, but also a reflection of the space. As Craven (2011), McLean (2013) and de Waal & Manion (2007) argue, Pride events in Johannesburg have long been sites of tension over power, accessibility, inclusion and how social differences are negotiated. Participants in this study articulated how they navigate and form their subjectivity within Pride and amongst these divisions through descriptions of ways of engaging. This section uses participants' discussions of their experiences at Pride, and various actions and practices which they engage in, to understand how Pride provides a context to bring their woke consciousness into action. Along with depicting their experiences of Pride spaces, participants also described other actions they have taken more broadly in their daily lives. These experiences also shape how they construct their subjectivity within discourses of wokeness and negotiate differences within the queer and trans 'community'. Most notably, conversations about the meaning and practice of intersectionality were common across participants and illustrate the embodied and behavioural ways in which they are negotiating themselves and pride spaces. This will all be unpacked in the following sub-sections: *Intersectionality: Helping or hurting the movement?; Affective experiences of pride*; and *Taking action: Experiences of engagement*.

4.3.1 Intersectionality: Helping or hurting the movement?

This sub-section explores how participants are making sense of intersectionality and how it is used, or not used, in Pride and queer and trans spaces. The fact that each participant discussed and found intersectionality an important feature within queer and trans community-building and organising, shows the theory's relevance for how they are also making sense of themselves. However, the meaning and use of intersectionality varied across participants, opening up questions of whether they found it to be necessary or damaging for future Pride events and organising.

Many participants described themselves as "intersectional feminists" and/or believing intersectionality to be crucial for evening power relations within queer and trans spaces. Much like their wokeness, intersectionality provides a lens for participants to reflect on themselves and broader social divisions within South Africa. Below are descriptions by some participants of what they understand intersectionality to mean:

Anna:

> So for me, I guess it's about recognizing that we all inhabit multiple identities that intersect in various and unique ways. And recognizing that our shared identities provide some commonality, and embracing that and exploring that, but also recognizing that different, our different identities, in and of themselves, give different experiences, but also effect how we experience our shared identities. So as a white, trans womxn, yes I have a lot in common with a black trans womxn in terms of our experiences of trans womxnhood, but our experiences of race are very different. And in fact, our experiences of what it means to be a trans womxn are different from a cultural, language, power- positionality of power- they're going to be different …
>
> I think there was a lot of embracing of intersectionality [at Soweto pride] and recognizing that the experiences of queer womxn of colour are unique and recognized. And not, and that it wasn't perhaps because of privilege that there was no way that that could have very been recognized at the expense of other people's identities, whereas privileged identities can be recognized, will tend to be recognized at the expense of those more marginalized. Yeah, like if you're focusing on recognizing queer womxn of colour's experiences that's not going to invalidate white, men's experiences, whereas when it's focused on white men's experiences it does have the power to erase and to marginalize and to exclude.

Trisha:

> Yoh this is such a deep thing, like intersectionality is my heart. It's like ah... human beings, when I explain intersectionality to people, it's like human beings aren't flat, the things in our lives aren't all mutually exclusive, and it's not like one thing influences this and doesn't influence anything else… Um and a human being is really, we're not just like two things, we're not just gender and sexual orientation, it's also your life experiences, your heritage, where you come from, where you've been, to little stuff like what books you read or what music you listen to, that influence your identity as a whole. And when I practice intersectionality, it gets kind of difficult as well because I am like, I'm queer so I'm obviously not you know experiencing hella straight privilege, but I'm also white and I need to understand that that does impact my experience of queerness, in terms of not being raped, like being gang raped or not being murdered. Or my class where I have access to info about queerness and about learning about the different orientations and stuff that's available.

Caroline:

> So you realise, like for me, I went from being a feminist, to be like I'm for trans womxn, to realizing but, I'm an ally of people with disabilities, I'm an ally of persons of colour, I'm an ally of many different people, you know. And you learn that you've got to understand what their oppression is all about and that's where intersectionality comes from. No person can be 100% perfect when it comes to intersectionality. But as you go and you grow, you need to not try to suppress that or say well, I've got my knowledge and what you know, do whatever. You've got to soak that up.

These demonstrate both shared and different meanings of intersectionality which affect how one would see intersectionality being practiced in meaningful ways. Participants also not only use intersectionality when making sense of divisions within Pride and the queer and trans 'community', but also for how they make sense of their own subjectivity and positionality. For them, it is a way to engage with themselves being simultaneously at the centre and margins. It is a coping mechanism for assuring themselves that despite being privileged due to their whiteness and/or cisgenderness, their experiences of oppression because of their gender and/or sexuality are not invalidated. In the opposite sense, it also provides a lens for which they can recognise and become "more aware" of their privileges through understanding the differences between themselves and others. Caroline's description of being an ally to people with disabilities and people of colour relates to May's (2015) argument that intersectionality is a tool to build coalitions. Through recognising the heterogeneity of the queer and trans

‘community’, the goal is not to all be the same, but to work with difference in a way that builds collaboration and coalitions across differences even within the same collective.

Anna particularly wishes to see intersectionality practiced more “actively” in Pride spaces and queer and trans movements, as she believes it will address some of the unequal power dynamics currently operating. She describes how intersectionality, and spaces such as Pride centring such a politic, allows for shared and “common humanity,” while also allowing “sub-spaces” for groups more marginalised to express and voice their own experiences and meet and connect with one another. Despite many participants describing intersectionality’s importance for both themselves and Pride spaces, when it came down to describing how we move intersectionality from a theory to practice, many were left with uncertain answers. Trisha describes the practice as “difficult” and Caroline affirms that no one can consistently engage in an intersectional way all the time. This also reflects May’s (2012, 2015) description of intersectionality often being deemed ‘too difficult and complex’ to sufficiently incorporate into movements. It appears that although these participants make use of, and desire more incorporation of intersectionality, we, as a queer and trans ‘community’, need to theorise more on how we can implement such a politic and practice into our organising and Pride spaces.

Samantha however, is sceptical of intersectionality’s use and believes it sometimes “makes the environment more hostile instead.” She furthers:

> Intersectionality involves amplifying the voices of people who were previously discriminated against, you know. Which I agree with, but in this situation it's mostly racial, so people with disabilities are generally ignored. People who have more complicated gender identities and may be in danger, generally ignored. Disabilities I'm going to slam, they ignore the shit out of them, okay like don't scream at me about intersectionality and then just ignore people who can't hear, but anyway, anyway. I think because they amplify the voices of people who may have had disadvantages before, while that is a good thing, sometimes it's not done correctly and as a result of that there are just more barriers built like in-between. So people who are, queer people who are already a marginalised group, marginalise themselves further by creating these divisions. So, I'm more important than you because while we're both queer womxn, and we're both cis, I'm black, so I'm automatically more important than you. So then a trans, black womxn who's queer for example, would say I'm more important than you because I'm trans, I'm queer, and I'm black and so on and so on…

What is interesting about Samantha's understanding of intersectionality is that she conceives of it as determining who is "important." Through this understanding, those who "may have been disadvantaged in the past" are considered more important— which also shows how this conception of people of colour's oppression is one which is relegated to the past, largely ignoring the current realities of power asymmetries and oppression. Furthermore, it shows an insecurity and fear of being relegated on the outside, unimportant and therefore left to the margins of society which as a white person, is a fear of not remaining at the centre. May (2015) argues that intersectionality is often critiqued on this basis due to a misunderstanding that it upholds "a hierarchy of oppressions model" (p. IX). Rather than seeing intersectionality as matrix system which does account for those who are at both the centre and margins, this response reveals a fear of having one's own marginality being invalidated. This conception also appears to rely on a false notion that when oppressed peoples reclaim voice and space, it must be done in ways which comfort those in dominant positions. Seeing oppressed people dictate that one is unimportant in comparison to themselves, relies on a fantasy that people of colour, or any other oppressed group of peoples, are out to turn the tables of power. There is a fear of a complete inverse of current power relations which would see those privileged as 'oppressed' by those whom were "previously discriminated against."

For Samantha, intersectionality also dictates who can speak, and those who cannot.

> Yes, if you are not the focus group it is not your space to insert yourself in, you know and like overshadow the people who's space it actually is. I agree with that. But sometimes those divisions get so strong and so stringent, that a person who's space it is not is not even allowed to contribute, you know. And that leads to more marginalisation…
>
> Interviewer: Yeah, yeah so then as a white queer womxn, do you feel like in certain spaces you are not allowed to speak?
>
> Yeah. Especially I think I've encountered it more like in terms of race than in terms of any sort of other factor… I feel like when it comes to racial issues more specifically within [the university], the second it's not your space, you are almost the enemy even though you're fighting for the same cause. Everything you say gets chalked up to 'oh well you don't count because you're white'.

The fear is extended to an anxiety of not being able to speak— and for white folks whom have always been welcomed and encouraged to speak, this is an undesirable departure. Overall, this

understanding of intersectionality is largely missing broader, structural relations of power. Intersectionality is seen as a personal attack on who one is and how one wants others to engage. While Samantha's critiques of the ways intersectionality has been practiced may be warranted for leaving out compassion and common humanity, the result of this is that she remains at the centre of the critique. Her feelings of anxiety and silencing are centred in this narrative, which works to keep existing, unequal power relations in tact. This is often expressed by folks in privileged positions and remains something which needs to be dealt with on both an individual and collective level.

This sub-section shows the contested terrain of intersectionality and poses an important task for the queer and trans 'community'. If we wish to use intersectionality to address the inequities within Pride spaces and broader society, we must come to some common understandings and ways of engaging through this theory. For some, intersectionality remains central to undoing the historical and current inequalities within queer and trans collectives, while for others, intersectionality poses a threat to their own inclusion in such spaces. Despite the differences in understanding, intersectionality does offer people who occupy positions at both the centre and margins a lens through which to make sense of themselves. Coupled with knowledge of systemic and structural matrices of power, intersectionality may offer Pride spaces and queer and trans folks opportunities to engage in more just, equitable and humanising ways.

4.3.2 Affective experiences of pride

This section explores the emotional and affective experiences of participants at various Pride spaces in Johannesburg. Ahmed (2004a) discusses how emotions move between bodies, creating "affective economies" which shape and interact amongst subjects and contexts. She states:

> Emotions play a crucial role in the 'surfacing' of individual and collective bodies and signs… emotions are not simply 'within' or 'without' but they create the very effect of the surfaces or boundaries of bodies and the worlds (Ahmed, 2004a, p. 117).

In this conception, emotions do things, working to produce subjectivities and configuring bodies into 'us' and 'them' dynamics. Although Ahmed (2004a) uses the example of the "hated Other", if we apply this theory more broadly to the feelings and emotions of participants at Pride events, we can see the ways in which context, power relations and bodies are simultaneously constituting boundaries within the queer and trans collective. Furthermore,

opening up the discursive landscape to include emotions provides insight into how emotions also work to constitute and make meaning of specific bodies and spaces. The inclusion of affective experiences in this section on practices also reveals how emotions work to open up and close down possibilities for how participants construct their subjectivity and engage in further action.

Two participants described that attending a university Pride parade was a "rite of passage," in which they felt it brought them into the queer and trans 'community.' This "community" feeling was described as:

Sarah (describing initially going as an ally for queer and trans people):

> I want to say like there was this part of me that was like, 'go because this is actually a part of you as well'. Like *you are a part of this community*, but, I didn't really make the connection yet. So, maybe it was a subconscious thing, I don't know. But, I stuck with it and I went to Pride and I loved it and I was like, *'this is amazing*' and I ignored everything else that was happening in my head.

Trisha:

> It's so nice to be in an environment where you can be supportive of each other and there isn't hate. It's just like yas! We're all treating each other so nicely and we all have the same kind of struggles and I mean some people have more struggles than others, but like, it's just really nice, it's like a *family vibe* even…
>
> This is where I belong… I just feel like *good*, I'm like yes, these people understand and *I feel part of the community* but I also feel like an ally in some ways, cause I am for trans people for instance… But yeah, yeah there's no word for it but it's just like, you know like if you do something like kissed a girl or some crap no one's going to care and that's quite *liberating* at the same time. Because you're like I don't have to put a word on myself even like you just do it and it's a really really nice vibe especially if you're with your friends and they can express themselves and you know no one's going to like be mad at them or judge them or whatever. Uh, it gives me *fuzzy feelings*.

Other participants also added to this sense of belonging, highlighting feelings of happiness, community and freedom from the normative cis-hetero-patriarchal society. McFarland Bruce (2013) describes Pride events as being a site for developing a "shared sense of self" (p. 610) which contributes to feelings of belonging and affirmation of identity. These affective experiences at Pride events contribute to how folks are constructing their subjectivities and

offers space for them, as Samantha describes, "to see who can be yourself around." Sarah adds that she feels "very safe and accepted," which was also described by two other participants. The feeling of safety ties in with belonging through the affirmation by others of the self and a sense of being in a supportive space. Such emotions allow people to find themselves through creating connections with others in a safe and collective context. While these emotions open up possibilities for self-discovery and human connection, it also leads one to question though who is 'allowed' to experience such emotions in Pride spaces? With contestations of Johannesburg Pride being exclusionary, inaccessible and dominated by white, cis gay masculinity, the ability for such 'happy' and 'good' emotions to 'stick' to certain bodies may be limited.

Alternatively, three participants describe how their feelings and emotions at Joburg/Johannesburg Pride changed over time. Anna describes initially attending Joburg Pride believing it to be a "safe space," which she grew to realise it was actually not a safe space for her once she transitioned. Caroline and Sam also describe going to Joburg Pride and "having fun" and enjoying the "party." However, they also both grew to have very different experiences of that space. Caroline describes this scene which she remembers of Joburg Pride:

> And I can remember one of the most horrible images and like now, my previous self was oblivious, but now *I think about it with such distaste*, how the security were digging into people's bags doing searches for water and cool drink and throwing out bottles, they were like literally looking like a rubbish dump at the entrance of pride. And in hindsight I wish I could have actually taken a photo of that to show people, this is the problem. People's basic right to water is being undermined. And then there was the whole fence issue, it's not an open space. And there was this whole segregation, you know all the rich white people and middle-class black people were inside in the sports space, in the sports field. And then this sports field had a fence around it, and outside at Zoo Lake, you had the black people.

Although at the time Caroline was "oblivious" to how this scene was a blatant display of exclusion, her feelings of 'distaste' were aroused after the moment. And her description of this scene also illustrates how not only are bodies being physically segregated, but how emotions like belonging, safety and community are not possible for certain people. The affective economy is operating within dominant Pride parades, with 'good' feelings only able to be experienced by certain people and in this scene, literally creating divides between 'us' and 'them'.

For Anna, Caroline and Sam, their emotional investments in Joburg/Johannesburg Pride were eroded and they each decided to attend Soweto Pride and/or Johannesburg People's Pride (JPP). While many argue (McFarland Bruce, 2013; McFarland, 2012) that the importance of Pride events is to create a sense of belonging, safety, comfort and happiness, these three participants describe how attending 'alternative' pride marches arouse different emotions.

Anna:

> But the point wasn't for me to understand [speeches given in Zulu at Soweto Pride]…
>
> And so I didn't feel that, I felt that everyone, as far as I could tell, felt included within the space, not necessarily from outside the space, but that they felt inclusion and acceptance from within the space. So yeah, it definitely felt a more united group, perhaps in the face of more adversity, but definitely a more united pride movement within Soweto than within Joburg. And it was definitely more of a feeling that we are out here doing something and connecting with people and having fun, but it wasn't about getting drunk and finding a hook-up.

Caroline:

> I was uncomfortable in the beginning [at JPP]…
>
> I feel safe [at JPP]. Even as a white person, I feel safe. Not that safe, because there's my white fragility that still comes into play. Cause we go through Hillbrow, because we're reclaiming spaces that are normally seen as not very queer friendly because of all the violence and things that happened with queer bodies, not bodies, queer persons.

Sam:

> I'm here [at Soweto Pride] for support, I'm here to say 'I see'. I would like to show whatever support I can in whichever way I can. I want to be the white person who leaves their comfort zone…
>
> Interviewer: Do you feel uncomfortable at Soweto Pride?
>
> Surprisingly not, because I've been working in clinics there the whole time. My spouse was like 'are you sure this is safe, are you sure this is safe, are you sure this is safe?' the whole time. I'm like yes, this is safe, it is really, really safe. So, the only discomfort I feel is that I don't want my whiteness taking up space that is not mine.

These three reflections point out how they experience both belonging and non-belonging. In some senses, they feel that Soweto Pride and JPP create unity and community, while sometimes individually feeling on the outside. Despite these feelings of being on the outside, it is much different from the feelings of marginalisation at Joburg/Johannesburg Pride through their realisation that these spaces are to validate queer and trans folks of colour who have largely been silenced by the dominance of white, cis gay masculinity. As white folks in Soweto and JPP, they recognise their place in these contexts in some ways should be marginal in order to affirm the voices and experiences of queer and trans people of colour. In some ways, this is a chosen marginality rather than the forced marginality within dominant Pride spaces. The chosen aspect is a practice of solidarity with queer and trans people of colour and reflects a form of engagement which negotiates space in a resistant way.

Another important emotion highlighted in the above statements is the role of comfort/discomfort. As Caroline points out, when she began engaging in JPP, she felt 'uncomfortable'. And Sam affirms a sense of discomfort, not because of being in Soweto, but discomfort in not wanting to "take up space" which they see as not "for them." Boler & Zembylas (2003) argue that comfort is afforded through the "inscribed cultural and emotional terrains that we occupy less by choice and more by virtue of hegemony" (p. 111). They go on to describe how discomfort, as an emotional and physical experience, can open up possibilities for learning about how dominant norms are produced through meanings ascribed to differently positioned people. Anna, Caroline and Sam, by forcing themselves out of their comfort zones and attending Pride marches which are led and centred on queer and trans people of colour, produces moments for not only cognitive learning, but emotional development. Through such experiences, these participants are actively placing themselves in contexts and positions of discomfort which allow them to 'see' and experience themselves, and others, in new and different ways to the norms established in Johannesburg Pride. Through such practices and descriptions, discomfort is recognised as an important feature of experiencing Pride. Allowing participants to grow and stretch themselves into the unknown and eliciting new conceptions of themselves.

In analysing the participant's descriptions of emotions, it became clear that statements and experiences of affect were largely centred on their positions as queer and/or trans. There was an absence of discussion about emotions attached their states of consciousness particularly as white people. Caroline and Trisha were the only participants to discuss emotions in relation to

being white. Caroline mentions her "white fragility" operating when she marched through Hillbrow during JPP. Her recognition that her whiteness particularly made her feel insecure and not completely safe in a predominantly black neighbourhood is an acknowledgement that just because she is aware of her privileges, does not mean that she does not experience feelings which have been constructed within white dominance. Trisha also describes her feelings of insecurity of being white in South Africa, mentioning rhetoric of Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF) calling to "kill the whites." She describes how this makes her feel threatened, but reconciles this by "contextualising" this rhetoric as not being aimed at white people, but rather the institution of white supremacy. Caroline and Trisha were the only two to discuss emotions attached to being 'consciously' white, and it is clear that they undergo processes of reflection and systemic understandings to deal with these feelings. However, there remained a broader absence of participants not discussing feelings of white guilt, shame, embarrassment and/or other feelings of insecurity. The fact that this remained absent in many discussions may point to a fear of discussing such emotions being critiqued, denial or deflection from feeling these kinds of emotions at all, and/or not knowing what to do with such emotions. While it is understandable that folks may not want to centre white emotions as it can often detract from the emotions and experiences of people of colour, it does leave one to wonder whether the absence is a reflection of their inability to negotiate these emotions into productive forces of resistance, or whether they just do not want to confront and engage with them at all.

The affective experiences of participants at various Pride events illustrates how their feelings and emotions at different Pride spaces have both opened up and closed down possibilities. By feeling safe, welcomed and a part of a community, participants highlight the importance of Pride events for exploring themselves and meanings of 'community'. While such emotional experiences do open up possibilities for self-discovery and human connection, this may also close down possibilities for engaging in the broader structural relations of power in a context such as Johannesburg Pride. If one develops a sense of belonging in a specific space and with specific bodies, the ability for them to challenge and critique such spaces seems limited. As Boler and Zembylas (2003) highlight, feeling comfortable in such a space may not allow one to learn how the norms, including emotional operations, are working to uphold unequal power relations. If one belongs and feels safe, how much are they able to see that other people are not afforded the same experiences? While others have moved from feelings of belonging to negotiating non-belonging and discomfort, the realms of understanding themselves in relation to other queer and trans folks is opened up and provides possibilities for engaging in ways

alternative to dominant norms. We can begin to see the ways in which emotions and affective experiences operate relationally between bodies and spaces.

4.3.3 Direct action: experiences of engagement

The movement from knowledge, recognition and awareness to action is not an inherent movement. Ahmed (2004b) describes the dissonance between declaring and knowing something, and having that directly translate into accordant action. She states:

> I will suggest that declaring whiteness, or even 'admitting' to one's own racism, when the declaration is assumed to be 'evidence' of an anti-racist commitment, does not do what it says. In other words, putting whiteness into speech, as an object to be spoken about, however critically, is not an anti-racist action, and nor does it necessarily commit a state, institution or person to a form of action that we could describe as anti-racist. To put this more strongly, I will show how declaring one's whiteness, even as part of a project of social critique, can reproduce white privilege in ways that are 'unforeseen' (para. 12).

While warning of the potential to reproduce white privilege, Ahmed provides critical insights into how dominance can be reproduced despite declarations of the opposite. Her scepticism is supported by Biko (1971/2005), Fanon (1952/2008) and Freire (1968/2000) whom all describe how, while the intentions of dominant groups working to end oppression may be rightfully motivated, often times the actions in consequence can reproduce unequal power dynamics. Participants in this study construct and declare themselves as aware, woke and conscious, however, being able to translate that into anti-racist, anti-cis/sexist and anti-classist action is not always accomplished seamlessly. This section shows the difficulty of being a white person whom is aware of the privileges attributed to whiteness and translating that into accordant action. And, while this is not an attempt to centre the adversity of white folks over people of colour, it does show that the reality of negotiating such an 'awakened' state is difficult, and answers and actions are not easily discernable.

As described in the above sections, the act of going to particular Pride events rather than other choices, highlights the most basic action which participants are engaging in. Beyond the choice to participant in particular Pride events, how one enters and sees themselves in that space also illuminates how they are bringing their cognitive knowledge into action. For some, attending any Pride event, despite critiques of exclusion, remains a political act.

Samantha:

> I think it's also inherently political whether a person goes in seeing it as political or not because society tells you, you as a queer person should not exist. Full stop. So whether you go there with a political agenda or whether you go just because you want to have a party, the fact that you are taking it upon yourself to affirm and validate your own existence as a queer person collectively in a group, automatically becomes political because your kind of proverbially sticking it to the man. Society is constructed on this premise that I am not real, or I should not be real, but we're here, we're queer, you know. So I think whether or not you go into it going this is political or this is just a social thing, the fact that you're saying I am proud of the fact that I exist and I am real and I am visible, is political in itself because it's an act of defiance.

Alex:

> I think wherever you move in a queer body is a political statement and that doesn't change when you're around other queer bodies and if anything it gets exacerbated because you kind of, you get to explore more of yourself when you're not trying to explain to someone kind of your first identifier when you're trying to explain how you fit in within that identifier.

For Samantha and Alex, the act of attending Pride is a political act, defying the norms of dominant culture which denies the existence and experience of queer and trans people. Sarah furthers this by stating:

> And while it's great to party and have fun and be free, at this stage in time, uh, it needs to still remain a political issue. Because one group of queer bodies forgets that, you know, trans people or queer womxn or people of colour are being excluded, and no one really does anything about it and that's not okay in a community like this. There shouldn't be, you know people shouldn't be forgetting. So it has to be a political thing I think that's important. It can be a party but you can't forget the whole purpose of the thing and the whole political agenda. I mean we have a political agenda and you can't deny that.

This statement is interesting in multiple ways. She simultaneously affirms that exclusion is occurring and that a party at Pride is political. Milani (2015) affirms that spaces such as Johannesburg Pride are political in that they act as a profound and visible disruptions of cis-heteronormative society, however, he argues that it is an "ordered form of political movement" which relies on dominant and acceptable conceptions of the meaning and image of lgbt (p. 439). Sarah's statement also highlights a tension between being woke— or in an awakened state— and "forgetting." For one to be consistently woke would require one to be constantly

aware, continuously conscious of the divisions and exclusion occurring at Johannesburg Pride. The act of forgetting is arguably the result of privilege operating to obscure the realities of others because it simply does not personally affect one in a position of privilege. Sarah acknowledges that such forgetting is occurring, and she goes on to describe how she experiences it herself:

> The thing is you don't notice [divisions across race] happening until it's happened. I know I find, like you'll be continuing with whatever event and then suddenly I'll notice that there's this compartmentalisation. It's not like oh I can see this already, it just happens. And then I think we notice, I think because we're very aware, we know about issues, we know about white privilege, we know about you know marginalisation within marginalisation. But I know for me personally, especially at big events, like, there will be that divide that differentiation, and then only once it's happened will I realise oh this happened, why is this happening? I'm noticing now, and then we'll discuss it. You know, it's very weird kind of feeling. I don't, it just happens. I don't know. I think it's something that's so engrained in our society.

She describes how she does not immediately notice divisions occurring within the queer and trans 'community' until after the fact— confirming that forgetting does happen despite 'being aware'. The repetition of "I don't know," also reveals an inability to not only explain why such processes happen, but also how to act against this. Participants often described not knowing what to do in the face of divides within Pride spaces and the broader queer and trans 'community'. Ahmed (2004b) argues that dominant subjects wanting to rush to action may have consequences. She believes that a quick movement to action often leaves the moment of exposure to injustice without proper saturation in the dominant subject. Rather, she argues that perhaps white folks, and others in dominant subject positions, need to simmer in the exposure, to listen and grapple with why this exposure is so shocking before moving on to act. So, perhaps Sarah's, and others, inability to know what to do or how to act is an important state if combined with the recognition to do the self-reflection and listening required to absorb how one is positioned differently to those more oppressed.

Participants did discuss the importance of listening and voice as processes of engagement within both Pride spaces, and the broader queer and trans 'community'. Alex stated in the focus group:

> I do think one of the most effective things, and one thing you have to start with, is listening. I think even it's possible today we've been doing some whitesplaining[30], you know like this is what people feel, you know. And, I think before you can even do a call out or before you can stand up for someone, you need to have really taken time to understand where they're coming from, so that's kind of always my first step is to just understand someone's positionality and moving on from there.

They argue that the first action white queer and trans folks need to engage in is listening to those in the queer and trans 'community' who experience multiple forms of oppression. Kilomba (2013) affirms that listening is the central act through which dominant subjects can challenge their own dominance, and support systemic change for justice. She states that "listening is… the act of authorization toward the speaker. One can (only) speak when one's voice is listened to. Within this dialect, those who are listened to are those who 'belong'" (p. 20). She furthers that listening is the act of "becom[ing] aware of [ones] own whiteness and of itself as a performer of racism" (p. 20). For white queer and trans folks, to address the divisions which Sarah contemplates, listening is perhaps the greatest political act one can undergo. Arguably, listening also must come before a state of wokeness, for one to be awakened, one must have listened to the 'other'.

Participants, however, also describe actions other than listening as critical to their subjectivity as woke white queer and trans folks, and affirm their sense of challenging white, gender and class privilege. Many described "calling out" as a tactic and act which they perform as they see it as challenging whiteness, cisgenderness and classism. Sam articulates that calling out can also be an emotionally-burdened process which they will only undergo if they know it will be a process of behavioural change in the other person. Sarah also confirmed she often "calls-out" white, cis gay men who are 'ignorant' of their problematic behaviours, speech and actions. Most participants also included discussions of engaging with other white folks, with differences in approach and levels of compassion through such a process. These acts align with Biko's (1971/2005) and Baldwin's (1984/2010) suggestions of white folks working within white spaces and amongst other white folks to address the dominance of whiteness. In many ways, such acts appear to be a way to affirm to the self that they are in fact engaging in wokeness in 'real' ways.

[30] 'Whitesplaining' is a term used to describe how white people use their position of privilege to explain, analyse and interpret meanings with little to no regard of how their position effects what they are saying. For more about 'splaining' see Kinney (2017).

Along with actions of listening, conversations and calling-out, the negotiation of voice and knowing when and where to speak, as a white queer and/or trans person, was an example of how participants are engaging in various ways. Caroline's description of her involvement in organising JPP was a constant iteration of listening and learning. She also describes how she asked questions, while recognising her position as a white person in a space which centres black consciousness, which made her recognise when her voice would detract from that mission. Trisha, describing her experience at a conference on sexual assault and being one of few white people in the room, explains:

> At the conference I was so aware, you know don't speak, you can't necessarily speak all the time because you are white and you have that white experience, and you kind of have to stop yourself, where you're like mm, err, I need to look at where my voice will actually contribute and not just because I want to talk… And it's very challenging sometimes not to talk over black people for instance because you're kind of like, you know you have to be aware of the white saviour complex.

She, and other participants, recognise a need to negotiate their own voice in spaces which are meant to centre people of colour. As white folks, our voices are often centred and dominant, which perpetuates white privilege and power. Therefore, negotiating when and when not to speak is a process of engagement which seeks to challenge the dominance of white speech acts. This also relates back to the affective experiences of those whom felt both belonging and non-belonging in 'alternative' pride spaces— occupying the margin as an act of disrupting white dominance. Anna also offers this:

> I think some of the things that we can do include trying, if possible, going into those spaces that kind of transgress those boundaries and go into spaces that are traditionally spaces for people less privileged, but if you're going to go there then just, shhh. Don't kind of insert your voice into it and don't try and speak for those people, rather amplify their voices.

Anna's suggestion is one of self-silencing— removing our (white) voices from spaces centred on and for people of colour. And this was also argued for cis folks engaging in spaces for trans people. The act of removing one's voice can be seen as an act which also requires listening— for if one is not speaking, then one must be listening.

The last line of Anna's statement also describes an act which many participants articulated: "amplifying their voices." This was expressed by four participants and refers to, as white

people, seeing themselves as in a position to amplify the voices of those more marginalised within the queer and trans 'community'. This sentiment coincides with participants describing "using one's privilege" to counter oppression within Pride and everyday life. Anna explains "amplifying voices" in the context of social media as, rather than putting forth her own (white) opinion on racial justice issues, she retweets and shares people of colour's voices. She sees this as countering the power dynamic which upholds white voices as more 'objective' and 'valid' compared to people of colour's. For her, amplifying the voices of those more oppressed than herself is "to make sure that black voices are heard and acknowledged and validated and that we celebrate that. People of colour are the authority on their own experiences and we recognize that." She sees using this as a way to disrupt white hegemony and to challenge the power of whiteness which she still lives within. Other participants also concurred with this and believe that using one's own privilege to 'help' queer and trans folks who are more oppressed is a necessary act to challenge their own privileges. Such a sentiment, while initially sounding to be well-intentioned, could also be read at patronising. As Trisha mentioned earlier, she is constantly trying to not be the 'white saviour'. This refers to white people, or those in other dominant positions, who attempt to 'help' marginalised people which actually enforces a kind of dependent relationship on the oppressor. "Amplifying voices" can simultaneously be read as an act to challenge one's own privilege, as well as enforcing the unequal power dynamics. This tension is characteristic of most choices being made by woke white folks—having to negotiate whether one's speech or action is actually challenging privilege or just reinforcing the existing unequal dynamics.

Caroline, while also believing in "using one's privilege," grapples with the complexity of this in the following statement:

> So like for us, the onus relies on us, as people who have privilege…. We need to use it, it is our duty, and I have problems with that, the fact that I'm using my privilege to help the movement, but someone explained to me that's not a problem because you are actually redistributing your privilege to try and correct wrongs; current wrongs. And it's still bad for me in the sense that I'm still continuing to perpetuate that privilege to a certain degree to try and help that movement, but at that end of the day a lot of good is being done. And I'm not saying this to ease my conscience, I realise I shouldn't say this to ease my conscience, it's just so that I know that I'm doing something, you know.

Caroline points out the difficulty of negotiating whether using one's privilege is challenging or reinserting white privilege. Probyn (2004) asks the same question: how do white people challenge whiteness? For if one uses their privilege, those same privileges remain within the still dominant group. However, if one does not use their privilege, are they complacent in inequity? I believe this is the point of difficulty for woke or conscious white folks, or any other subject who holds a dominant social position— how to negotiate this state of being while being constantly critical of how one goes about being in that state.

This section has found that how participants are engaging through action and behaviour in various spaces is dictated by options of discourses and how one sees and would like to present the self in such contexts. There is a difficult process to negotiate as they appear to know— through available discourses of wokeness and consciousness— how they should engage and act, yet there are really no concrete answers for what one should do.

Chapter Five: Conclusions

Pride events in Johannesburg have recently taken on varied forms, missions and expressions due to the contested nature of the events themselves, and in relation to contestations surrounding meanings and experiences of queer and trans in South Africa. For white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks, Pride acts a site for making sense of their own subjectivity and the tensions within the queer and trans 'community'. This study has sought to reveal how white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary people are constructing themselves at, and in relation to, Pride events in Johannesburg. What is revealed through analysing subject formations of white queer and trans folks is the ways in which power relations are operating to effect what is possible for themselves and the broader 'community'. The subject comes into being through discursive options available to them, and at Pride events which centre whiteness, cis-masculinity, able-bodiedness and affluence, the options for white queer and/or trans womxn and non-binary folks are multi-layered and complex. Furthermore, the recent availability of discourses of wokeness and consciousness provide new space for white queer and trans folks to negotiate their subjectivity. For participants in this study, they are having to negotiate themselves between and through both the centre and margins. Through this, we can begin to untangle both complicity and resistance to power from those who occupy both ends.

Pride events in Johannesburg offer a unique context to understand how power is operating within the broader queer and trans 'community'. As was highlighted in literature and research on Pride events in South Africa, it is easy to see how unequal power relations are taken from broader society and replicated within queer and trans spaces. However, this research particularly shows that power is not only operating in this top-down movement, but also across bodies and differences within the collective. For folks who straddle multiple lines and intersections both within society and within the queer and trans 'community', we can see that power operates in multiple ways within a single subject. Participants in this study each expressed marginalisation in their everyday lives, as well as within Pride spaces due to their gender and/or dis/ability, sexuality and/or class. Yet they all occupy dominant positions, and in some instances recognise this, due to their whiteness. For these folks, and myself included, we are able to interface with power in multiple ways and construct ourselves outside of dichotomised conceptions of solely privileged or oppressed. This 'in-between' the centre and margins creates a unique space to negotiate the self and oppression from both sides.

It also opens up the reality that although we are positioned at the centre and margins, advancing and resisting uneven power networks is not an easily dichotomised or practiced process. Through engaging with intersectional subjects, we can see that resistance to and perpetuation of power often occur simultaneously; not in a purely either/or manner. What this reveals are the ways in which challenging power can often be mitigated and diluted through our own collusion with power itself, as well as our complicity with power negating moments and space for resistance. The two (resistance and complicity) cannot be mutually exclusive—particularly for those of us who hold a position of power due to whiteness. To challenge whiteness as a white person will always be mediated through that very whiteness. This means that as we, white queer and trans folks, engage in resistance to the dominance and power of whiteness, we must hold with us that our resistance is intimately bound within the very structures we are seeking to defy and dismantle. Through holding such knowledge with us when we think and act, we can begin to not only interrogate how we go about challenging power from a position of power, but we can also engage in a praxis which reflects upon how our actions and resistance may easily be co-opted back into power. While this may seem like an impossible task, one which is forever entangled and bound within an unjust system, white queer and trans folks have the unique ability to negotiate across and through such bounds. By recognising the limits of our resistance as white folks, we can use our positions of marginality as non-dominant gendered and sexual subjects to better inform our discursive and embodied practices.

The lens of wokeness and consciousness is a defining feature of this research, and while not representative of the broader white queer and trans population, provides particular insights into the perpetuation of and resistance to unequal power dynamics. Through this lens, we can see that this particular discourse provides white queer and trans folks different ways to construct their subjectivity and potentially impact the inequities which are continuing in both the queer and trans 'community' and broader South African society. Through recognising and being aware of themselves as in positions of privilege within the broader queer and trans 'community', participants are actively trying to discover what this means for them and challenge their unearned advantages. Insights, suggestions and experiences of participants may be useful for other white queer and trans folks who are already engaged in a process of challenging their own whiteness, or for those whom are interested in starting such a journey.

However, what can also be learned from the above analysis is that despite having the increased availability to learn about privileged positions and how to challenge that power, the process of

effectively translating that into corresponding action, behaviour and discourses is not always consistent. Arguably, the lens of wokeness may be a newly fashioned form of white liberalism, acting as a façade of solidarity with people of colour, while largely remaining complicit in both the interpersonal and structural dominance of whiteness. Through this analysis, I urge against using a lens of wokeness, awareness and/or consciousness to prevent further un/learning and development of the self in resistant ways. It is clear from the analysis that seeing oneself through such a lens can mitigate and potentially stop continued self-reflection and growth. Even if we do consider ourselves to be conscious and aware, that should not prevent us from continuously engaging in critical self-reflection and how our behaviours and actions can have real consequences for others. While I admire and think it is positive that people who occupy centred and dominant positions in society are taking up their rightful responsibility of learning how to combat the power and privileges they hold, I do think it needs to be constantly humbled and put in perspective to allow for further growth and learning.

One of the main points which was revealed in the analysis which illuminates dissonance between seeing and believing oneself to be woke or conscious, and remaining complicit in unequal power dynamics, is how white queer and trans folks are negotiating difference through boundaries. South African society challenges us through the multiple ways in which oppression and injustice is enacted, and making sense of these complexities is difficult and prone to misunderstandings and misguided beliefs and/or actions. The reality of differing experiences of violence between white and black queer and trans folks in South Africa presents a challenge for white queer and trans folks to re-imagine our solidarity and coalitions with queer and trans people of colour. The reality is that violence is more often perpetrated against queer and trans people of colour, and while we can easily see how that is made sense of in the section *Queer and trans people of colour… and me*, the consequences of these understandings being used in this particular way can actually contribute to reinforcing unequal power relations. Through this portion of the analysis, we can not only see how power is coded within sentiments of understanding, concern and awareness, but we can also see how discourses and representations of 'others' have distorted possibilities for how we negotiate our own subjectivities as white queer and trans folks. This particular aspect of negotiation by white queer and trans folks appears to need further interrogation at individual, collective and theoretical levels. If we genuinely do not want to reinforce white dominance in the queer and trans 'community' and Pride spaces, then we need to rethink the ways that we discuss and see ourselves within these differences.

Following this analysis, I am tempted by Probyn's (2004) suggestion that we interrogate and unpacks whiteness in its own right, free from infringements and implications of other, intersecting social positions. The aim of such a suggestion it to get to the core of how whiteness is perpetuated as dominant and to theorise and practice disruptions and challenges to its privilege and power. While tempted, I am also restrained by the importance of intersectionality, as well as the realities of everyday life which we cannot experience as singularly-positioned subjects. I will suggest however, that as white queer and trans people, we do, desperately, need to address whiteness within the queer and trans 'community'. If we are to take seriously the issues of exclusion, classism and racism within the 'community' and experienced at dominant Pride events, then we do need to take up Probyn's challenge of "theorising the relinquishment of power." As folks who are marginalised in society because of our gender and/or sexuality, we may be able to recognise the consequences of living on the margins, which can be used as a tool to recognise structural relations of power. However, we as white people, are also subjects in the continuation of white supremacy and can no longer hide behind our marginality to obfuscate the power we do hold. The fact that we may experience marginality and oppression because of our gender and/or sexuality can be potentially useful to instruct how we engage as privileged and centred people.

The expressed experiences, emotions, actions and discourses surrounding different Pride events in Johannesburg provides further reflection for the queer and trans 'community' to deal with issues of exclusion and conflict. The analysis serves to demonstrate that not only are unequal power dynamics present at Pride events, but that the ways it is being continued and resisted are occurring through particular discourses and subject formations. The ways that we, as a queer and trans 'community', negotiate difference and power differentials at Pride events cannot solely be explained by organising committee's decisions and commentary. Rather, power is also operating within and between individual subjects, which when taken together in a collective, reinscribes meanings and relations of power. This then moves the responsibility of addressing issues of power inequities, exclusion and dominance solely from organisers and decision-makers, and implicates all queer and trans people who attend and engage within Pride spaces. Subjectivity can then be a site of reinforcing or resisting power relations; opening up the potential for challenging racism, cis/sexism, classism and able-bodied privilege to all queer and trans folks. How we construct ourselves, behave, and form discourses as white queer and trans people affects material and social circumstances for others in the 'community'. The relation of the subject to broader political and social systems of inequality, is a critical site for

re-imagining and challenging the inequalities within Pride events, the queer and trans 'community', as well as broader South African society. Through understanding how the individual is inherently linked and related to the social, we can see that engaging in new and resistant subjectivities offers possibilities of disrupting current social divisions.

While this research does provide new and particular insights for white queer and trans people and points of reflection for Pride events in the future, it is limited in its incorporation and analysis of class and ability. While these two social positions did come through briefly in interviews, the analysis does not fully grapple with how these two social positions are particularly being experienced and negotiated at Pride events. This limitation is a potential gap which can be filled in future research on Pride events and intersecting social positions.

This research exposes how power continues to be unequally distributed within Pride events in Johannesburg and how queer and trans folks who occupy positions at the centre and margins are finding themselves within such entanglements. Through particularly focusing on subject formations at the intersections of whiteness, gender and sexuality, we can see how power is extended and challenged through individual and collective processes. While contestations and tensions over the meanings, decisions and forms of Pride events in South Africa will most likely continue on in the future, this research acts as an intervention for white queer and trans folks to not fall into the traps which Gevisser and Reid stated in the beginning of this paper. As folks who occupy the centre within a marginalized 'community', we must not "divorce our own future from the future of other oppressed groups in the country" (Gevisser & Reid, 1995), and continue to work to form subjectivities which resist and challenge both privilege and oppression.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Letter Sent to Potential Participants

Wits Centre for Diversity Studies
University of the Witwatersrand
13th Floor, University Corner
011 717 4418
https://www.wits.ac.za/wicds

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Jamie Martin and I am currently a MA student in the field of Diversity Studies at the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg, South Africa. I am a white, queer American womxn who has been living and studying in South Africa for the past year and a half. In fulfillment of my degree, I am conducting a research study on the experiences of white trans and cis womxn and non-binary folks at pride events in Johannesburg. My research intends to reflect upon how individuals who are privileged due to their race, yet remain in marginal positions due to their gender identity and/or expression, are experiencing and constructing their identities at various pride events in Johannesburg and Cape Town.

The aim of the research is to:

- Understand how white queer womxn and non-binary folks are experiencing their identities at pride events in Johannesburg
- Explore how individuals are navigating the current contestations over pride events being inclusive or exclusive
- Provide an analysis which will be useful for other white queer people who participate in pride to reflect on their own identities

I kindly invite your participation in this study and hope you will consider this opportunity. If you identify as a white womxn or non-binary and part of the lgbtqia+ 'community', and have participated in any formal or alternative pride events in Johannesburg, your participation would be greatly appreciated.

If you choose to participate in this study, your involvement will include a one-on-one interview with me hosted in Johannesburg. The interview will last about one hour and include a discussion regarding your experiences and participation in various pride events in Johannesburg. The location and time for the interview can be negotiated to fit with your schedule.

If you choose to participate, your consent and confidentiality will be held with great respect and your identity will remain completely anonymous throughout the research process and report. Your participation is completely voluntary and you can choose to not answer any questions which may arise during the focus group and you may withdraw from the study at any time which will not result in any penalties.

The results of the study will be used for my academic dissertation and will be made available online through the University of the Witwatersrand database. Furthermore, this research is part of Professor Melissa Steyn's South African Research Chair in Critical Diversity Studies, so audio recordings and transcripts from the interview will be archived at the Wits Centre for

Diversity Studies. However, I assure you that the transcripts will be saved on password-locked computers at the Centre and on my personal password-locked computer. If you wish to have a copy of the final report or a summary of the report, I will happily provide you with that.

If you have any questions, comments or concerns about the research study or your participation please feel free to contact me or my supervisor through the contacts listed below.

If you are interested in participating, please email, whatsapp or call me. I sincerely thank you for taking the time to read this letter and consideration for participating in this study.

Research Supervisor: Professor Melissa E. Steyn, melissa.steyn@wits.ac.za

Sincerely,

Jamie Martin
MA Candidate in the field of Diversity Studies
University of the Witwatersrand, Braamfontein, Johannesburg
jamiemartin17@hotmail.com
072 464 0124

Appendix B: Demographic Form

Please Fill in the following demographic information, thank you!

Name: _____

Pronouns: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Sexuality: _____

Ethnicity/Nationality: _____

Occupation: _____

Highest Level of Education: _____

Hometown: _____

Pride events you've attended in the Johannesburg and/or Cape Town areas:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix C: Consent Form

Thank you for considering participation in this research study. Please read the following carefully and answer accordingly:

I have read the letter provided by the researcher, Jamie Martin, which outlines that this study is about how I have experienced pride events in Johannesburg:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I am 18 years of age or older:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my participation will include taking part in a focus group or interview which will last 1 hour or less:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and I can opt-out of answering any questions or withdraw entirely from the study at any time without repercussions:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that the focus group/interview will be audio recorded:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my identity will remain anonymous through the use of a pseudonym and all potentially identifying factors will be changed in the research report to protect my anonymity:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that my participation in this study will result in a research report which will be available online through the University of the Witwatersrand database (WiRED Space):

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that audio recordings and transcripts of the focus group/interview will be saved on the researcher's personal password-locked computer and a password-locked computer at the Wits Centre for Diversity Studies:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that information collected at the focus group may be used in future publications linked to the DST-NRF SARChI Chair in Critical Diversity Studies which is held by Professor Melissa Steyn, and my identity will remain anonymous in any future reports:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I understand that the transcript from this focus group/interview may be given to the GALA Archives for future researchers access, however, my name and identifying factors will be removed:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to participating in this study through a focus group/interview:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to the researcher's use of direct quotes from this focus group/interview:

☐ Yes ☐ No

I consent to being audio recorded during the focus group/interview:

☐ Yes ☐ No

_____

Name

_____

Signature

_____

Date

Appendix D: Focus Group Schedule

1. What are your pronouns?

2. How do identify? (Racially, gender, sexuality, anything else?)

3. What pride events have you attended in Johannesburg and/or Cape Town?
    a. How did you come to know about the pride events you attended?
    b. What was your experience like?
    c. What emotions, if any, do you feel at pride events?
    d. What did you make of the environment it was in?
    e. What did you wear? What, if anything, were you carrying or displaying on your body? Why?
    f. How have your experiences differed over time?

4. How have you experienced your gender, race and sexuality in society? And, expression at pride events?
    a. Workplace, university?

5. What do you know about some of the conflicts around Pride being exclusive for some lgbtqia+ people? (May use quotes from news sources regarding the conflicts at Johannesburg and Cape Town pride parades)
    a. What are your thoughts on this?
    b. How, if at all, have these conflicts impacted your perceptions of pride?
    c. How, if at all, have these conflicts impacted your experiences of pride?
    d. How are you making sense of some of the statements by black queer people about pride being exclusive?
    e. What do you think about the argument that pride is becoming more commercialized and less political? Do you think this has anything to do with you and your identities?

6. How do you describe your identity at pride events?
    a. How do you represent your identity at pride?

7. How are you making sense, if at all, of your whiteness in South Africa?
    a. And within the lgbtqia+ community in South Africa?
    b. How, if at all, do you experience your whiteness at pride events?

8. Do you think pride events are white? If so, how do you think they are ‘white’? If not, how would you describe the racial ‘culture’ of pride?

9. Can you describe for me how you imagine an inclusive pride for all?

Appendix E: Interview Schedule

1. Can you remind me of what Pride events you have attended and your experiences there?

2. Why do/did you attend Pride?
    a. Did you have any expectations before you went?
    b. What were your thoughts and feelings about Pride during/after you attended?

3. Do you feel that your gender has an impact on how you experience Pride? Why or why not?
    a. Does this experience translate more broadly into your experiences in spaces outside of Pride?

4. Do you feel that your race has an impact on how you experience Pride? Why or why not?
    a. Does this experience translate more broadly into your experiences in spaces outside of Pride?
    b. How do you make sense of your whiteness in South Africa?
    c. In the lgbtqia+ community in South Africa, if at all?

5. What do you make of the claims that Pride is exclusive for black lgbtqia+ people, poor people, disabled people and trans people?
    a. Does this exclusivity affect you at all?
    b. Do you think it is an issue for the lgbtqia+ community?
    c. If so, how do you think Pride organizers and/or the lgbtqia+ community should rectify these issues?
    d. If so, do you feel a personal investment in rectifying or addressing these issues? Why or why not?

6. Have the tensions occurring at Pride over the inclusivity of events altered your participations in such events? How so?

7. Do you think you have a role in making Pride an inclusive space? Why or why not?
    a. If so, are you actively taking on these roles?
    b. If not, whose responsibility do you think it is?

8. If you can imagine a Pride that is reflective of the lgbtqia+ community in Johannesburg or South Africa, what would it look like?