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

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.