

Abstract

The notion of a Pink Economy has become a significant aspect of queer visual and consumer culture over the past two decades. This study investigates the media discourses of the Pink Economy in order to understand and contextualize their historical foundations, as well as their social implications within the queer body politic. This study focuses on post-apartheid queer consumer media in order to investigate the constructions of the Pink Economy and the queer consumer identities which are therein represented. Moreover, this study seeks to locate black queer male subjectivities within the queer media landscape, and investigates the extent to which they are represented as possessing consumer agency, or as legitimate participants within the media discourses of the Pink Economy. A corpus of post-apartheid queer media texts was constructed and organized thematically in accordance to the discourses of sexual identity politics, queer consumption and representations of racialized masculinities. Semi-structured participant interviews with the editors of successful contemporary queer media publications were also designed and incorporated within the corpus for analysis. This was done in order to provide contextual background as to the history of these publications and the editorial motivations behind certain representations which were found to be most salient and interesting. A qualitative discourse analysis was undertaken in order to explore the ways in which the media texts spoke to or problematized the research questions. The assimilationist ideologies which informed the homonormative discourses within these various media platforms were theorized and critiqued accordingly. The homonormative discourses of the Pink Economy were shown to be highly exclusionary in terms of the marginalization of black queer male consumption. This study, therefore, provides a cogent and insightful theory of the homonormative inflection of the discourses of the Pink Economy within post-apartheid queer consumer media.

Key terms: queer consumption, Pink Economy, Pink Rand, queer consumer media, sexual identity politics, representation, consumer-citizenship, visibility, “niche” marketing, advertising, DINKS, luxury, leisure, travel and tourism, homonormativity, assimilation, neoliberalism, commodification, hypersexuality, black masculinity, black sexuality, fetishization, stereotype, marginalization.