

## Abstract

The first Johannesburg Pride march took place in 1990 and an event has taken place in the city every year since. The history of Johannesburg Pride runs alongside the history of the transition to democracy in South Africa. The event has from its very beginnings been the site of multiple contestations sometimes bitterly fought out. These conflicts have erupted around issues such as the route of the parade, its political content and its commercialisation among others. These conflicts it could be argued speak to the generally much fractured nature of gay and lesbian community in South Africa. As a result of apartheid policies of identify control, the ongoing legacies of the apartheid system and the various ways in which all people have been renegotiating their identities within the post-apartheid moment have left a community characterised by massive race, class and gender inequalities. Pride is one of the few times and spaces in which the various members of this community converge and this speaks to why it has become such an important space of contestation. Contestation not just around Pride, but in fact around what it means to be gay in post-apartheid South Africa and what it means to claim community. And importantly, what are the networks of power that exist that determine who is able to define and control both gay and lesbian identity and community.