

# Sexual citizenship

## Discourses, spaces and bodies at Joburg Pride 2012

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This article explores an incident that took place in the context of Joburg Pride 2012, where the activist group One in Nine Campaign attempted to temporarily stop the Pride parade through means of a die-in protest, resulting in resistance and violence on the part of the Pride participants. The article argues that Pride and the One in Nine protest are manifestations of two very different types of sexual citizenship. Whilst Pride is an orderly claim to the urban environment that is founded on an alignment with state-sanctioned, rights-based discourses of gay and lesbian identity, the One in Nine protest is a spatial disruption that problematises the optimistic reliance on sexual identities as catalysts for political action. The article also seeks to offer a queer epistemology that questions the logocentric bias of research on discourse, space and citizenship by encompassing not only the visual but also and most importantly the corporeal.

**Keywords:** affect; citizenship; linguistic landscapes; national identity; queer; sexuality; South Africa; space

### 1. Introduction

On 6th October 2012, Johannesburg hosted the 23rd local manifestation of a transnational phenomenon: the celebration of LGBT pride<sup>1</sup> in the form of an organised street walk through the wealthy suburb of Rosebank<sup>2</sup> followed by an open-air

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1. *Joburg Pride* is a trademark employed by the non-governmental organisation (NGO) *Joburg Gay Pride Festival Company* to label the festivity that they organised from 2007 to 2012.

2. The location of Johannesburg's Pride march has historically been an issue of contention. In the first decade of its existence (1990–2001), the event took place in the city centre. In 2002, however, it was moved to the suburb of Rosebank because many participants felt unsafe in the inner city (see de Waal & Manion 2006). In 2005, the parade was taken back to city centre, but an empty bottle was thrown from a high-rise building, hurting one of the Pride participants. This resulted in the event being moved once again back to the “safer” suburb of Rosebank.

party at Zoo Lake, one of the city's largest parks. Like other Pride events, this was a way for non-normative genders and sexualities to momentarily re-claim parts of the cityscape and make themselves highly visible for (un)supportive onlookers. Walking under the theme "Protect our rights", the 2012 Johannesburg street convoy was not dissimilar to other spectacles of LGBT pride in other large cities. It was a long caravan of over twenty thousand people interspersed with floats hired for the occasion by a highly diverse set of enterprises.

Unlike other similar occasions, however, the elated and noisy crowd was brought to a halt by a die-in protest arranged by the One in Nine Campaign, a non-governmental organisation that defines itself as "a feminist collective motivated by the desire to live in a society where women are the agents of their own lives" ([www.oneinnine.org.za](http://www.oneinnine.org.za)). A group of mainly black women carrying human-sized figures ran before the parade and lay flat on the street tarmac, creating a human-mannequin carpet of bodies in front of the incoming celebratory pageant. Carrying the signs "No cause for celebration" and "Dying for justice", a few other women went to stand behind the strip of apparently dead bodies and asked the jubilant walkers to stop and hold a minute of silence in memory of all the black lesbian women and gender non-normative individuals that had been killed in South Africa precisely because of their non-compliance with gender and sexual normativities.

This unanticipated interruption was not met with sympathy by the jubilant walkers. As the videos posted on YouTube testify, a Pride participant aggressively urged the demonstrators to "go back to the *lokshinis* [townships]"; a parade marshal head-butted a protesting woman; Jenni Green – the Joburg Pride board member responsible for the logistics of the event – yelled from her golden Mercedes: "This is my route"; and the chairperson of Joburg Pride Tanya Harford ended up in a bodily confrontation with the protesters.

Quite predictably, the scuffle immediately generated a flurry of heated reactions on several media sites, unanimously bemoaning the behaviour of the Pride organisers and participants. According to these commentators, the incident was more than just a struggle over who wields the right to occupy a fairly small section of tarmac on a street in Johannesburg. It was a seismographic indication of deeper frictions between a wealthy, white, politically lethargic, gay and lesbian constituency, on the one hand, and a more radical, mainly black group of activist women, on the other. Media commentators argued that the confrontation was a powerful reminder of the long-standing racial division within the South African lesbian and gay 'community' (see also Gevisser & Cameron 1995). This interpretation also emerged as the dominant script through which the event was discussed in the *Queer Theory Reading Group*, a monthly gathering of academics at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, where I work. Interestingly, this singular understanding of what had happened at Pride became so

paradigmatic that it seemed to require that any discussion about the event be prefaced with a denouncement of the white, racist, middle-class Joburg Pride and a concomitant pronouncement of support of the activists of the One in Nine Campaign.

I do not dispute that the verbal and physical aggression against the protesters was unacceptable and had a clearly racist undertone. That being said, the aim of the present article is to offer a more multifaceted reading of the event than the media representations and academic discussions, which espoused a clear-cut, Manichean distinction between a bad and depoliticised Pride and a good, politically charged protest. Essentially, the argument advanced here is that the Pride parade and the accompanying One in Nine protest are *both* public enactments of a “love that dareth speak its name”, to rephrase Lord Douglas’ well-known poetic description of same-sex desire. Or, put differently, they are both manifestations – though very different ones – of what could be called *sexual citizenship*.

As will be explained in more detail in the theoretical section below, the non-standard spelling of *citizenship* is a queer, anti-normative linguistic tactic (see Warner 1993) that seeks to capture the spatial nature of sexual politics, as conveyed through different forms of meaning-making. This does not mean that all political acts about sexuality necessarily require an urban context for their realisation. However, some of them do – those for which the materiality of the city is not a passive setting but a key affordance through which social actors can produce and contest particular meanings of sexual identities, desires and practices. The notion of sexual citizenship seeks to encapsulate this human/spatial synergy, together with its semiotic and political implications. It is important to note that the choice of this notion is not just empirically driven by the data analysed in this article. It is also theoretically motivated by a desire to bring into dialogue two strands of scholarship that have traditionally not engaged with each other, namely discourse-based research on citizenship and the growing field of linguistic/semiotic landscapes (see however Martin-Rojo 2012; Papen 2012, Stroud & Jegels 2014 for notable exceptions).

Methodologically, the article is grounded on a multi-pronged approach that seeks to investigate both the *discourses* of, and the *practices* at, Joburg Pride. This bifocal lens is justified by a belief that it is impossible to understand acts of staking claims to cityspaces unless one simultaneously investigates the historical discourses that surround them. Accordingly, this article focuses on a small selection of texts taken from a larger corpus of data, which includes newspaper articles, Facebook pages and postings, blogs and related commentaries as well as photographs taken during the Pride parade itself. Before bringing relevant extracts under scrutiny, however, I first want to turn to the theoretical scaffolding that informs the subsequent analysis.

## 2. Discourse-based studies on citizenship meet research on linguistic landscapes... through sexuality

In recent years, the study of language and citizenship has gained considerable momentum as a key topic of inquiry within sociolinguistics and the cognate fields of applied linguistics and critical discourse analysis (see also the Introduction to this special issue). Several studies have scrutinised the recent debates that have flourished in mainly Western (European and North American) contexts about policy proposals to introduce language requirements for the naturalisation of migrants (Piller 2001; Blackledge 2005; Hansen-Thomas 2007; Milani 2008; Stevenson 2006; see also the contributions to Extra, Spotti and van Avermaet 2009; Hogan-Brun; Mar-Molinero & Stevenson 2009; Shohamy and McNamara 2009). Focusing primarily on policy documents and media outputs, and to a lesser extent on ethnographic data, the main aim of these publications is to unpack the processes that have led to the introduction of language policies related to citizenship.

Also working on issues of language, identity and (language) policy-making, but focusing on artefacts in public spaces, other researchers have highlighted how cityscapes are political battlegrounds where decisions about language and broader issues of representation are negotiated and contested (see in particular Shohamy 2006; Pennycook 2010; Shohamy et al. 2010; Muth 2014; Zabrodskaja 2014).

Whether looking at policy documents, media outputs or objects in public spaces, it is my contention that both discourse-based studies of citizenship and scholarship on linguistic landscapes have been blind to a notion of sociological importance: *sexuality* (see however Piller 2010 for a unique example of critical discourse analysis of the role played by heterosexuality in shaping the linguistic landscape of Basel, Switzerland). This neglect is remarkable considering that the related fields of anthropology, cultural geography, politics and sociology have produced a vast body of work on the role played by sexuality in inflecting citizenship and public spaces (see Massey 1994; Bell & Valentine 1995; Bell & Binnie 2000; Richardson 2000; Oswin 2008; Tucker 2009; Johnston & Longhurst 2010). As I have argued elsewhere (Milani 2014), the absence of sexuality might be considered predictable given the disciplinary origins of both linguistic landscape and language and citizenship research as offshoots of the sub-fields of language attitudes and language policy. These two strands of sociolinguistic investigation have traditionally been concerned with multilingualism, a semiotic phenomenon that is tied to ethnic tensions in nation states but does not lend itself so easily to reflections on sexuality or gender.

In light of this contextual background, sexuality is an “absent presence” (Derrida 1997) that can be mobilised to bring linguistic landscape and language

and citizenship research into dialogue. In doing so, I espouse a queer stance, which is “by definition [...] anything at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant” (Halperin 1995, 61–62), and I propose the notion of *sexual citizenship*. This concept relies heavily on the more established theoretical notion of sexual citizenship (Bell & Binnie 2000), but strategically capitalises on a non-normative, illegitimate spelling in order to highlight its *spatial* character.

An overview of the literature on the topic of sexual citizenship reveals that this theoretical concept has been heavily debated in the social sciences over the last twenty years or so. It lies beyond the scope of this article to offer a comprehensive review of these discussions (see however Bell & Binnie 2000; Richardson 2000). Moreover, I embrace a queer theoretical view that is sceptical of clear-cut boxes and categories (see Warner 1993; Jagose 1996), so I am concerned less with providing a clear definition of sexual citizenship than with highlighting the incongruities inherent in it. Hence, sexual citizenship can be viewed as an ambivalent assemblage consisting of both “moments of acceptance [...] making claims on society, a claim for inclusion” for sexual minorities, and “moment[s] of transgression, when you try to pull the pillars down, when you try to challenge the *status quo*” (Weeks 1997, 323).

Admittedly, Weeks (1997) problematically treats moments of acceptance as the manifestations of what he believes to be citizenship *proper*, and relegates transgression to the margins of the political. In contrast, I draw upon the ideas of a few radical thinkers – Nancy Fraser (1992), Chantal Mouffe (2000) and Holloway Sparks (1997) – who profess that transgressive dissent should not be treated as a peripheral aberration, but should instead be theorised at the very heart of the political. Thus, we cannot limit our analytical focus to those acts which take shape *within* the limits of agency enabled and sanctioned by the state, but we should also take into account the contestations of those very conditions of action “by marginalized citizens through opposition, democratic, non-institutionalized practices that augment or replace institutionalized channels of democratic opposition when those channels are inadequate or unavailable” (Sparks 1997, 83). Reasoning along similar lines, Fraser has argued that we must examine what she calls “radical counterpublics”, that is, those “parallel discursive areas where members of subordinate groups invent and circulate counterdiscourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests, and needs” (Fraser 1992, 123).

These calls to theorise the transgressive are in line with recent critiques (Isin 2008) that point out that existing scholarship has treated citizenship as either *status* – the “legal status of membership in the state, if not the nation-state” (Isin 2008), or *habitus* – individuals’ socialisation and practices of rights and duties. Without downplaying the role of such scholarly work, Isin (2008) urges us to explore what he calls *acts of citizenship*, those conglomerates of practices with

which individuals constitute themselves as political claimants (see also Holston 2009 for examples of “insurgent citizenship”). These expressions of claim-staking

are not necessarily founded in law or responsibility. In fact, for acts of citizenship to be acts at all they must call the law into question and, sometimes, break it. Similarly [...] they must call established forms of responsibility and, sometimes, be irresponsible. (Isin 2008, 39)

Isin goes on to explain how different acts of citizenship bring into being a diverse set of “subject positions [that] can be analytically identified on a spectrum of intensity ranging from hospitality to hostility, from ‘solidaristic’ to ‘agonistic’ and ‘alienating’” (2008, 19). From this it follows that *orderly* assimilation into the body politic and alienating *disorder* can be seen as two poles of a continuum of tactics employed by individuals to come into being as political subjects.

Against this backdrop, the notion of *sexual citizenship* could, in a queer fashion, be left ambiguously vague so as to seize a wide range of sexed assemblages (Deleuze & Guattari 1980; Puar 2007), a set of textual and bodily interdependencies producing forms of collective stickiness with spatial and political implications: from those orderly claims to urban environments which are founded on an alignment with state-sanctioned, rights-based discourses of lesbian and gay identities, to those spatial disruptions that problematise an overly optimistic reliance on sexual identities as catalysts for political action.

On a theoretical level, the queer facet of this academic exercise also lies in its attempt to “think otherwise” (Pennycook 2012), an eccentric epistemology which in the case of this article requires expanding the logocentric scope of discourse-based research on space and citizenship so as to encompass not only the visual but also and most importantly the *corporeal* (Grosz 1994; Peck & Stroud 2015), that is, the body and its political role in (re)producing or contesting affective economies of space (Ahmed 2004; Thrift 2004; Stroud & Jegels 2014).

### 3. Joburg Pride vs. One in Nine Campaign

In order to avoid falling into the trap of treating the discourses and practices of Joburg Pride 2012 and the One in Nine Campaign as isolated and idiosyncratic phenomena, it is important to begin by looking back to the first Pride march in Johannesburg, which took place in 1990 under the aegis of the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (hereafter GLOW). Its slogan – *Unity in the community* – as well as the location where demonstrators gathered – the Institute for Race Relations – are fairly unambiguous signifiers of the overt attempt to bring together different non-heterosexual constituencies *across* racial lines. The occasion was underpinned by an explicitly political imperative, powerfully

entextualised in the “Lesbian and Gay manifesto” which was drafted for the occasion by Mark Gevisser, a well-known South African activist and cultural figure (de Waal & Manion 2006) (see Extract 1 below).

(1)

**JOIN US IN THIS FIRST LESBIAN AND GAY PRIDE MARCH TO:**

- **UNITE** in the fight for the basic human rights of all South Africans, including lesbians and gay men.
- **MOBILIZE** against discrimination.
- **ASSERT** the role of lesbians and gay men in the current process of political change.
- **CONFRONT** South Africa with the presence of its lesbian and gay community.
- **DISPEL MYTHS** nurtured by years of discrimination and stereotyping.

**WE CHALLENGE PARLIAMENT** to decriminalise homosexuality by legalising all private consensual conduct between adults.

This extract is like a geological formation that testifies to a particular historical nexus in South African history, a moment of transition during which a few organisations, including GLOW, were not only lobbying for the decriminalisation of homosexuality, but were also advocating for sexuality-based rights to be included into the new post-apartheid dispensation (see also Gevisser 1997). Noteworthy here is the reliance on a *human-rights discourse* to achieve political change and social justice. More specifically, through a universalizing nationalist rhetorical tactic (“all South Africans”) (see Billig 1995), the emancipation of a segment of the polity – sexual minorities – is framed as part of the broader fight for a new human rights-based political and symbolic entity.

### 3.1 Joburg Pride 2012

Twenty-three years later, when those rights so strongly advocated in the 1990 Lesbian and Gay manifesto were now a reality officially sanctioned by the South African Constitution, a more ambiguous scenario transpired in how Joburg Pride presented the theme for the 2012 event – “Protect our rights”.

(2)

“Human rights” cannot be taken for granted – as highlighted with recent calls from some political quarters to change South Africa’s Constitution to remove clauses pertaining to “sexual orientation”. Hence, this year’s loud-and-proud message – that South Africa’s LGBTI community should stand together as one, protecting and supporting the Constitution and its protection of fundamental human rights. Ultimately, a strike against the human rights of South Africa’s LGBTI community is a strike against the human rights of ALL South Africans!

Of course, as a reflection of the LGBTI community, Joburg Pride will – as always – offer a frisky mix of fun, flair and finesse, rounding out its important messaging. (<http://joburgpride.org/2012/06/joburg-prides-theme-and-message-for-2012/>)

Analogous to the Lesbian and Gay Manifesto, the theme of Joburg Pride 2012 conveys a human rights-based discourse that reminds audiences of the fleeting and precarious nature of sexual minorities' political enfranchisement. The "recent calls ... to change South African constitution" alludes to the (then recent) request of members of the National House of Traditional Leaders<sup>3</sup> to remove "sexual orientation" from the Equality clause of the Constitution. Just as the fight for the legal recognition of non-normative sexualities was presented in the Lesbian and Gay Manifesto as deeply entwined with the *universal* human rights of "all South Africans", so was the attack against these rights seen as a threat to the very foundations on which the South African nation-state is built. Billig's (1995) notion of "syntax of hegemony" is particularly apt in this context because it captures the ways in which nationalist discourses work *metonymically* by "presenting sectional interests as if they were universal ones" (Billig 1995, 166). In the extract above, not only is a part of a totality – sexual minority rights – represented as if it were the tip of a more universal iceberg, but the metonymy contributes to re-inscribing sexual minorities *within* the "imagined community" (Anderson 1983) of the South African nation. The marker of deontic modality "should" presupposes that LGBTI South Africans are not yet a cohesive whole, although unity remains an aim to which to aspire.

In terms of labels, whereas lesbian and gay were the main sexual identity categories in the 1990 Manifesto, they were replaced in 2012 by the more inclusive abbreviation LGBTI, which, besides lesbian and gay, encompasses bisexual, transgender and intersex individuals as well.

To what extent a greater level of inclusivity has actually been achieved (or not) will be discussed in the sections below. But what is perhaps most notable in the extract above is how the politically charged message about the protection of legal rights ends with a more light-hearted promise of "fun, flair, and finesse". These lexical items could be seen as textual cues of the "lifestylization of sexual politics" (Bell & Binnie 2000, 99), promising "a certain form of social and cultural identity based upon homosexuality" (Altman 1996, 116), one which increasingly revolves around consumption practices and the lifestyle(s) associated with them

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3. The National House of Traditional Leaders is a statutory body that oversees issues of customary law in South Africa.

(Bell & Binnie 2000; see also Stroud & Mpendukana 2009 for an interesting analysis of multilingualism, aspiration and consumption in the South African context).

The fact that the focus of Johannesburg Pride has shifted over the years is not unexpected, especially considering that the organisation of the event shifted hands from a group with an overt political agenda – GLOW – to a non-profit company in 2002. Indeed, de Waal and Manion (2006, 8) remind us that one should not underestimate the costs connected to an event of such dimensions. Yet, it is noteworthy that festivity and depoliticisation are overtly employed to market Joburg Pride.

Lifestylization (Bell & Binnie 2000, 99), however, does not equate with total political apathy, but is, in my view, the manifestation of an *ordered* form of political engagement that has specific historical provenance and social class undertones (see also below). Textually, the concern – obsession even – with orderliness emerges from the response given by the Pride organisers to the accusations of racism following the scuffle (see extract below).

(3)

It [the Joburg Pride NGO] was constituted to organise the annual Joburg Pride event in a safe, credible and legal manner on behalf of the wider Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex (LGBTI) community. (<http://joburgpride.org/2012/10/joburg-pride-board-responds-to-false-accusations/>)

In the same response, the intersections between legality and safety are emphasised in even more detail in the following excerpt.

(4)

Joburg Pride is legally and morally bound to comply with safety requirements laid down by eventing legislation (Safety at Sports And Recreational Events Act 2010), with written approvals from the City of Joburg and the South African Police Service. (<http://joburgpride.org/2012/10/joburg-pride-board-responds-to-false-accusations/>)

The fact that the organisers of a public event take security and compliance with the law into serious account as conditions through which to make that event ‘credible’ is not particularly extraordinary or wrong. However, I would argue that lawfulness, safety and credibility are textual manifestations of a strategy of *ordered acceptance*, one which is concerned with working within the parameters set by the state in order to *fit in* and be included into the body politic. That legality is used as the benchmark to judge what counts as legitimate political action also features prominently in an interview of the chairperson of Joburg Pride with the South African online platform *Mambaonline*.

(5)

[Tanya] Harford insisted that the protest was “absolutely inappropriate and illegal. They had none of the necessary permissions. They also embarrassed the entire LGBT community. The campaign wasn’t explained nor was it clear about what their purpose is”. (<http://www.mambaonline.com/article.asp?artid=7478>)

Through the reference to the lack of “necessary permissions”, the chairperson of Joburg Pride is drawing upon legal discourse in order to illegitimise (Bucholtz & Hall 2005) the One in Nine protest and present it as an unauthorised act (Bourdieu 1992). Although not explicitly stated, the discursive delegitimation of the One in Nine protest goes hand in hand with an implicit positioning of Pride as a rightful, authorised event. Abiding by South African laws (or not), however, is not simply a legal matter, but becomes the springboard for both moral and emotional accusations. According to Harford, the lack of authorisation is not just unlawful, but is also “inappropriate” and the source of “embarrassment” for the South African LGBTI community at large.

This argumentation is the result of a dual discursive move. Firstly, a reason-based distinction between a legal vs. an illegal act is projected onto a moral domain, thus creating an opposition between what Harford sees as appropriate vs. inappropriate. Secondly, this rational/moral dichotomy is painted with strongly affective hues. As Ahmed has proposed, emotions should be taken into consideration less for their ontological status than for their performative ability to “do things, [...] align individuals with communities – or bodily space with social space – [and] mediate the relationship between the psychic and the social, and between the individual and the collective” (Ahmed 2004, 119). The emotionally charged verb “embarrass” works as an affective, discursive device of exclusion through which Harford shames, devalues and emotionally excludes the One in Nine Campaign from the imagined South African LGBTI community that she invokes (see also Munt 2008).

It would be naïve, however, to see this three-fold – rational/moral/affective – accusation against One in Nine as being idiosyncratic of this particular social actor, because to do so would be to disregard its historical provenance as the direct by-product of the rights-based discourse that held so many expectations in the Lesbian and Gay Manifesto in the 1990s and has underpinned post-apartheid South African politics (see also McCormick 2012 for a critique of human rights-based discourse in South Africa).

Post-apartheid South Africa is a textbook example of a “good state”, that is, a political entity that “controls its demonic proclivities by cleansing itself with, and internalising human rights” (Mutua 2002, 10), including sexuality-based rights.

Moreover, the state has been made responsible for ensuring that “[n]ational legislation [...] be enacted to prevent or prohibit unfair discrimination” (Bill of Rights). Any recognition of rights, however, comes with a compromise, because “[e]very entitlement is freighted with a duty” (Bell & Binnie 2000, 3). In this sense then, rights-based emancipation and empowerment are inherently accompanied by certain limitations. These restraints include those conditions of agency (e.g. strike and picket rules, protest regulations, etc.) that determine the boundary between legitimate and illegitimate political acts.

Specifically with regard to the legitimisation of non-normative sexualities, this has meant the “cementing into rights-based political strategies, which forecloses or denies aspects of sexuality written off as ‘unacceptable’” (Bell & Binnie 2000, 3). This domestication of sexuality for political purposes has social class undertones, because as Munt suggests, for any minority groups, sexual or otherwise, to argue for rights, they “must make the bourgeoisie their aspirational model, they must ‘talk the talk and walk the walk,’ assimilate those values and proselytise those norms, in order that their claim gains credibility” (2008, 25).

The internalisation of a human rights discourse as the main ideological principle of the post-apartheid South African body politic has gone hand in hand not so much with the taming of radical political behaviours *per se*, but with the emergence of a moral and affective regime that polices the boundaries of ‘good’ vs. ‘bad’ sexual citizenship. And this is a form of governmentality that is best attuned to a Western, middle-class obsession with social control, order, cleanliness and decency. After all, Foucault reminds us that “sexuality is originally, historically bourgeois, and that, in its successive shifts and transposition, it induces specific class effects” (Foucault 1978, 127). It is this classed inflection of sexuality-based rights that is picked up by One in Nine in their official statement about the protest, to which I will now turn.

### 3.2 One in Nine Campaign

The One in Nine Campaign was established in 2006 in reaction to the rape trial against Jacob Zuma, currently president of South Africa, as an “expression of solidarity with the woman in that trial as well as other women who speak out about rape and sexual violence”. (<http://www.facebook.com/groups/10123398375/members/>). The name of the group was inspired by the results of a study on sexual violence conducted by the Medical Research Council in 2005 showing that only one out of nine rape survivors actually report the violence to the authorities. The mission of the One in Nine Campaign to “target the South African government for its failure to protect the rights of women and other female-born people and force it to fulfill its mandates and responsibilities” (<http://www.oneinnine.org.za/>) is perhaps

one of the clearest textual expressions of an attempt to “speak truth to power” (Said 1994) with regard to gender issues. Grounded on a feminist critical analysis of the patriarchal nature of existing political arrangements, the One in Nine Campaign questions the very democratic nature of post-apartheid South Africa. In light of this contextual background, it is not surprising that One in Nine’s official statement about the protest targets the rights-based discourse on which South Africa’s politics is founded (see Extract 6 below).

(6)

Yes, we have rights – rights that were won through decades of activism, rights that grant almost complete formal equality to lesbians, gay men, and bisexual and transgender people; and rights that must be defended against assaults from regressive forces.

And yet: The numerous legal reforms and policy changes granting equal rights to members of the LGBT community – from marriage rights to official recognition of people’s preferred gender identity – have not put a dent in the vicious attacks against black lesbians, bisexual and transgender people and gay men. Increased visibility has been accompanied by increasingly gruesome acts of rape, murder and torture. In the absence of social and economic justice, rights only benefit social elites and a privileged few.

Although not made explicit in this excerpt, references to the first Pride are made in another section of the document (see extract 7 below). There is also alignment with the argument advanced by the organisers of Joburg Pride 2012 that sexuality-based rights are not an everlasting achievement but a precarious one that is constantly under threat. Rhetorically, the anaphora of three relative clauses beginning with “rights that” not only helps to set the scene of this paragraph, but also works rhythmically to build up a crescendo that is cut short by the conjunctions “and yet”, which abruptly introduce a counter-argument.

One in Nine highlights how enhanced visibility of non-normative genders and sexualities in public spaces as a result of constitutional protection has resulted in a concomitant increase in violent behaviour against same-sex and non-normative gender performances (see also Reid & Dirsuweit 2002). Particularly notable is the list of sexual identity categories that, according to One in Nine, are on the receiving end of violence. Because of the position of the racial signifier in the front of the ensuing list, it is unclear whether “black” is employed to qualify “lesbians” only, or whether it modifies all the following categories as well. Either way, race is clearly mobilised as a way of questioning the image of a unified LGBTI community. This picture is further complicated by the addition of social class through the reference to “elites” and “privileged few”.

The strategic manner in which sexual identities are inflected by race and social class is a discursive move through which One in Nine questions the *trope of equality*. This is the widespread fallacious belief that, just because everybody is equal before the law, legal equality is evenly allotted throughout society. As One in Nine points out, access to and respect of legal rights is differentially distributed because of the very unequal socio-economic status of South Africans. Essentially, the argument is that the post-apartheid rights-based dispensation has mainly benefited white, upper-middle class homosexuals, which, as several commentators have pointed out, are also those who sat on the board of Joburg Pride.

The class-based critique becomes even stronger in another section of the One in Nine official statement about the die-in protest.

(7)

The de-politicisation of most prides has allowed the old, racial apartheid to be translated into a new, economic apartheid, which is clearly evident in many pride celebrations. Capitalist consumerism and individualistic rights claims now characterise many prides in South Africa, as they characterise most other spaces for the LGBT community. This is not the history that Bev, Simon and others imagined they were making in 1990. [...] We never imagined that we would matter only if we constituted the “gay market,” had “double income, no kids” and were aflush with the “pink rand.” [...] It is time for everyone – queer, lesbian, femme, trans, gender resistant, straight, butch, bisexual, gender fluid, black and non-black – to bring back to pride the spirit of revolution.

In the South African context, apartheid is an emotionally laden word that carries with it a history of division, violence, inequality and struggle. Its repetition in the extract above saturates the text with a highly charged affective tone whereby social class inequalities are seen as structural divides on par with the racial divisions that characterised the South African past.

The critique of the consumerist, individualistic nature of Pride 2012 is made authoritative through an intertextual link to the programmatic political statement “Today, we are making history” made by Beverley Ditsie, who, together with Simon Nkoli, was one of the key figures of GLOW and Pride 1990 (see De Waal & Manion 2006). As Bakhtin has pointed out, “our speech [...] is filled with others’ words. [...] These words of others carry with them their own expression, their own evaluative tone, which we assimilate, re-work, and re-accentuate” (1986, 89). Although neither Ditsie nor Nkoli made any explicit mention of the relationship between politics and consumerism in their Pride inaugural speeches in 1990, the intertextual reference discursively positions One in Nine’s anti-capitalist critique in direct relationship with the ‘origins’ of Pride in Johannesburg and black

homosexual activism, thus imbuing the argument with historical *gravitas* and racial authenticity<sup>4</sup> (cf. Bucholtz 2003; Coupland 2003).

Another intertextual link is present in the following sentence, where the phrases “gay market” and “double income, no kids” are quoted directly from the Joburg Pride website (see discussion above). The change of context, however, has resulted in a negatively laden re-evaluation. What was heralded as the ground from which to argue for the “acceptance” of a “gay and lesbian” “lifestyle” (Joburg Pride website) is presented here as the cause of exclusion *within* the “LGTB community”.

Finally, the attack against capitalism and consumerism serves as the springboard for a radical political proposal, namely bringing back the “spirit of revolution” to Pride. What this means in practice is not explained in the document. However, the very character of the die-in protest provides a glimpse of what One in Nine means in terms of political action. As the next extracts will show, the forms of civil disobedience promoted by One in Nine follow the long-standing historical tradition of the anti-apartheid struggle according to which political claims to space can only be made through *social disorder*. As it was reported in the online publication, *Daily Maverick*,

(8)

One in Nine also rejected the idea that they “ambushed” or “hijacked” the event, because that presupposes that Pride belongs to a certain set of people rather than being a space for the entire queer community. (<http://dailymaverick.co.za/article/2012-10-09-joburg-pride-a-tale-of-two-cities>)

The lexical choices of “ambush” and “hijack” are key to understanding the very different views about space/citizenship espoused by the supporters of Joburg Pride and One in Nine, respectively. The former saw the parade as a spatially specific, bounded event to be controlled and managed by an authorised entity (the non-profit Pride organisation); the One in Nine Campaign viewed Pride as a broader political space of gender and sexual non-normativities that extended beyond the material *mis-en-scene* of the actual parade and ensuing mardi-gras. So anyone who identifies as queer is or should be entitled to make claims to this specific event without prior communication. From the perspective of Joburg Pride and its organisers, the decision made by One in Nine to not communicate their intention was not only an antagonistic act of defiance of existing authorities, but also

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4. From a post-structuralist viewpoint, authenticity is a discursive construction achieved through a plethora of devices. Here I do not mean that there is such an ontological thing as ‘racial authenticity’, but I am arguing that racial authenticity is something that is discursively achieved using historical references to black activists.

a manifestation of disorder that should have been orderly incorporated into the pride timetable. But, as Gillian Schutte pointed out in an editorial in the weekly *Mail & Guardian*

(9)

Asking for permission to intercept an event that has become more of a sponsor-driven party than a movement with a social justice or LGBTI-rights political agenda would defeat the point. If the One in Nine campaign had asked for permission, it would have been slipped into the programme as an afterthought and given political legitimacy to a movement that does not deserve it: it did not even consider, of its own volition, a minute of silence for those murdered black lesbians. (<http://mg.co.za/article/2012-10-12-00-no-cause-to-celebrate-a-racist-pride>)

Read through the lens of Isin's (2008) theorisation of citizenship, the controversy between Joburg Pride and One in Nine is the expression of a deeper struggle about which political strategies should be employed for social enfranchisement. Pride is the embodiment of lawful sexual citizenship *habitus*; it is legitimate insofar as it draws upon the rights enshrined in the South African Constitution to peacefully demonstrate and publicly (re)assert freedom of sexual orientation. In contrast, the protest enacted by the One in Nine Campaign is an insubordinate and "insurgent" (Holston 2009) act of sexual citizenship, one of those "momentous acts [that] required the summoning of courage, bravery, indignation, or righteousness to *break with habitus*" (Isin 2008, 18).

#### 4. Troubling performances of sexual citizenship

The distinction made in the section above between Pride/*habitus* and One in Nine/*rupture* is grounded on a deconstruction of the discourses present in the texts published in conjunction with Joburg Pride 2012. Such a clear-cut division, however, becomes problematic as soon as one delves into the *bodily practices* at the Pride parade and the One in Nine protest. These highly stylised, carnivalesque performances (Bakhtin 1986; Coupland 2007) cannot be fully captured without taking into account their highly affective component (see Ahmed 2004).

The remainder of this article will illustrate how the Pride parade, despite being part of a legitimate state-sanctioned event, contained moments that mocked and disrupted Pride's official alignment with the nation-state; it will also show how the One in Nine die-in strongly relied on a tactic whereby black women employed their own bodies and bodily proxies to re-inscribe themselves – at least momentarily – as powerless and dominated. Yet both performances were underpinned by a common denominator: they marshalled together particular semiotic/material

devices in conjunction with elements of the built environment in order to generate the powerful emotions of *shame/guilt*, which they used to perform affectively incisive citizen critiques.

Sally Munt, perhaps one of the most acute thinkers to have theorised the roles and functions played by shame in relation to sexuality, proposes that “emotions are produced by attachments, they are effects, they also make us seek attachments, and refuse attachments” (2008, 12). In other words, emotions “work by sticking figures together (adherence), a sticking that creates the very effect of a collective (coherence)” (Ahmed 2004, 119). This *stickiness* does not necessarily need to be something negative as in the case of the relationship between fear, hate, asylum seekers and international terrorists analyzed by Ahmed (2004), but can be more ambivalent, “incorporat[ing] some latent, positive effects” (Munt 2008, 4). Such is the case with *shame*, which “has political potential as it can provoke a separation between the social convention demarcated within hegemonic ideals, enabling a re-inscription of social intelligibility” (Munt 2008, 4). These reflections are similar to Bakhtin’s view of the politically subversive potential inherent in the carnival as a “temporary liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order, [...] hostile to all that was immortalized and completed” (1986, 10). And it is precisely the ambivalent element of carnival that will be brought under investigation in the two pictures below.

#### 4.1 Pride/shame and national identity: Proudly South African or not?

Susan Sontag has suggested that “photographs are a way of imprisoning reality [...] One can’t possess reality, one can possess images—one can’t possess the present but one can possess the past” (Sontag 1977). Accordingly, Picture 1 is a frozen moment from the past, taken from the dynamic process of the pride parade 2012. Two members of the gay and lesbian group from the Holy Trinity Catholic Church in Johannesburg were walking in front of me carrying a cross when a professional photographer suddenly appeared wishing to take a picture of them. At that moment, the parade was turning onto Jellicoe Street, which hosts the offices of the Proudly South African Campaign, a commercial initiative “promote[ing] South African companies, products and services” (<http://www.proudlysa.co.za/>).

In the spirit of the moment, the two men seized the opportunity offered by the material affordances of the urban space in order to engender a fleeting, but not politically irrelevant, act for the camera. The “proudly South African” slogan and the stylised South African flag in the company logo worked as both stage prompts and a “material canvas” (Nayak 2010) for the performance captured in the photograph. This multimodal arrangement of two black bodies, the South African flag and the adjacent slogan could be read *literally*, as a visual display of these men’s



Picture 1. Proudly South African?

*pride* in belonging to a nation-state that legally recognizes sexuality-based rights as well as freedom of religious creed and consequently sanctions their parading through the streets of Johannesburg. In this way, pride can be said to generate an affective *attachment* to the imagined community of the South African nation.

Examined more closely, however, the white paper sheets attached to the cross carry brief notices of violence against homosexuals, serving as a *memento mori* of what the South African state has *not* done to prevent such aggressions. The presence of such testimonies twists and tweaks the meaning of the “proudly South African” slogan, adding a mocking undertone (see Coupland 2007). Hence, through parody, the state is shamed and made guilty about the constitutional promise that it has failed to deliver. But, as Bakhtin has noted, parody is *inherently ambivalent* because it operates like a carnival mirror of the world; “it is that same ‘world turned inside out’” (Bakhtin 1984, 127). Therefore, instead of bringing this analysis to definite closure, one could rather conclude that the multimodal arrangement in the picture is ambiguous; it is an emotionally ambivalent act of citizenship, a double-voiced moment of pride/shame, producing a simultaneous connection to and detachment from the national community, rather than a straightforward identification with or dis-alignment from it. As will be illustrated below, this duality and ambiguity also lies at the heart of the die-in protest, in which One in Nine supporters lay side by side with mannequins on the street tarmac.

## 4.2 History repeats... uncannily: Black bodies on the tarmac

Analogous to the earlier observation with regard to the photograph above, Picture 2 does not fully capture the dynamic aspect of what actually occurred; it depicts a static moment *after* the physical confrontation between the parading crowds and the One in Nine protesters. By the time the picture was taken, the protesters had been moved to the side by the Johannesburg police so that the parade convoy could proceed around them.

This picture shows a complex multimodal formation in which the black banner works as a stage background framing the bodily carpet of mannequins and female activists. The slogan “No cause for celebration” is less a caption explaining that the adjacent corporeal assemblage represents dead black lesbians and gender non-normative individuals than a demand speech act directly addressing the Pride parade. Framed in these terms, the carpet of bodies can be read as a synesthetic speech act that visually screams at the incoming pageant: STOP, LOOK AT ME. Such a semiotic reading, however, does not fully account for an important element, namely the strong emotional component at work here. The banner and the bodily carpet are an example of *affective performative* (see also Deleuze 1994, del Rio 2008), bringing about an emotion that isn't overtly named: shame. This is because the composition of bodies and language is not a passive spectacle to be looked



Picture 2. Black bodies on the tarmac

at. Instead, it works like a Bakhtinian “crooked mirror” (1984, 127), projecting a parodic, grotesque image of the emotion that binds the parade together. Put differently, Pride looks at the One in Nine protest and sees itself reflected back as Shame.

In many ways, the black bodies on the tarmac are a “troubling vision” (Fleetwood 2011), firstly because of their presence in a wealthy part of the city. Historically, Rosebank was a racially white suburb. In post-apartheid South Africa, however, discussing the racialisation of this particular neighbourhood is perhaps less important than highlighting its social class undertones, not least because of the presence of a fashionable mall frequented by young and trendy consumers from different racial backgrounds (see in particular Nuttall 2009). The troubling element here is that the black body on the tarmac is not the lively and fashionable body in the mall. Nor is it the fairly innocuous black beggar who asks for money at the intersection. Rather, it is a provocative black body whose lifelessness cries out a reality that, in this neighbourhood at least, is only familiar through media representations. The gender-based and homophobic violence that affects many township dwellers is normally far-removed from prosperous Rosebank.

The racialised corporeality on the tarmac is also a “troubling vision” because of the intertextual links on which it relies. Pictures of dead black bodies on the ground have historically been part of the South African journalistic visual field, from the well-known Sharpeville demonstration and ensuing massacre in 1960 to the more recent killings during the Marikana mine uprising in 2012. Read intertextually then, the One in Nine protesters *conform* to a visually intelligible position in the South African context; they embody – quite literally – the epitome of powerlessness, that of a racialised body whose lifelessness is the result of repressive state intervention. However, while the stark emotional force of the Sharpeville and Marikana pictures lies in their realism, the affective power of the One in Nine die in photograph is a product of its *uncanniness* (Freud 2003 [1919]), the unsettling ambiguity of something that is at the same time familiar and unfamiliar, real and unreal. From a distance, the mannequins are indistinguishable from the protesters, which, in turn, could indeed be dead but are not.

As South African artist Berni Searle has pointed out, “using my body is a tricky thing to do because it can reinforce stereotypes” (cited in Sobopha 2005, 130). By the same token, one could argue that the One in Nine protesters are *complying with* the visual trope of the powerless dead black body, a strategy of vulnerability that might sound paradoxical for a group that strives for a society “where women are the *agents* of their own lives”. But they do so *uncannily*. The embodiment of death, which is at the same time realistic and illusory, has been actively re-appropriated in order to make a claim to an actual and affective space, that of a suburban street of Johannesburg awaiting an incoming celebration of homosexual pride.

It may be too early to discuss the long-term transformative effects that the die-in protest and its mediatisation may have on future pride events in Johannesburg. The short-term effects, however, are quite pronounced. The NGO that had been organising Joburg Pride ceased operation in 2013, and two very different events arose in the vacuum that was left behind. A group of activist organisations, including One in Nine, organised *Johannesburg People's Pride*, a political march through the streets of Hillbrow, the neighbourhood in the heart of Johannesburg where the first Pride march took place in 1990, today an area that is feared by many South Africans because of its reputation for crime. Those who took part in *Johannesburg Pride* paraded through the streets of Sandton, one of South Africa's most exclusive mall districts. Although it is still unknown what will happen in the coming years, it is pretty clear that the One-in-Nine intervention in 2012 has been a "a stitch that sutures but leaves the wound that it mends [...] a discursive intervention to address narrative erasure and insert a troubling presence in dominant racializing structures" (Fleetwood 2011, 9).

## 5. Concluding remarks

Van Dijk points out that "a critical analysis of discourse and dominance is far from straightforward and does not always imply a clear picture of villains and victims" (2001, 302). So I would argue that, no matter how commercial Joburg Pride 2012 might have been, twenty thousand people parading through a group of streets in the wealthy neighbourhood of Rosebank is a deeply political act of sexual cityzenship. It is an *ordered* collective performance that invokes constitutional rights in order to stake a momentary claim to a small section of the Johannesburg cityscape. It is also a *symbolic* "act of defiance" (Gevisser & Cameron 1995) in which individuals make themselves visible as a group and publicly challenge those retrograde forces that still view homosexuality as unAfrican, perverse and taboo, a disorder that should rather remain invisible. Moreover, the above analysis of the highly stylised carnivalesque performance illustrates that the parade is not a homogeneous manifestation of homosexual pride. Instead, the *politics of affect* is ambiguous and "'happens' where one may least expect it – in the nooks and crannies of everyday life, outside of institutionalized contexts that one ordinarily associates with politics" (Besnier 2009, 11). Stated differently, the performance is staged but unrehearsed, taking advantage of the material fabric offered by the otherwise banal "nooks and crannies" of the everyday urban landscape.

That being said, the discourses and practices of the One in Nine campaign show that ordered sexual cityzenship is a fragile and nasty accomplishment. In an attempt to fit in the conditions of agency laid down by the state, Joburg Pride 2012 erased the racial and class divides that crisscross allegedly similar patterns

of sexual identification. However, breaking the *habitus* by bringing disorder and shame to the party is not completely unproblematic either, not least because of the reliance on an ambivalent strategy that exploits a stereotypical visual trope of racialised powerlessness. Perhaps, as queer theorists have taught us (Butler 1997), ambiguity is where the promise for resistance and political change lies: that uncontrollable affective and semantic interstice between what one feels and what one means, and how feelings and meanings are understood and taken up by a variety of (non-)present audiences.

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