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CONSIDERING THE INTERNET AS ENABLING QUEER PUBLICS/COUNTER PUBLICS

INTRODUCTION

From the internet's humble beginnings as a handful of interconnected machines in the 1960s to its wide distribution in the 1990s, noone could have foreseen what it has grown into today – a public network open to all who have access to a screen with a connection to the web.[1] The digital environment has become as much of a real space as a park, coffee shop, town square, clothing store or a couch in your living room. People have actively integrated their lives with their digital doings to the point that they are becoming digital beings. This paper serves to discuss digital as a space for politics to play out, in particular in relation to publics and counter publics. It does so through the lens of what occurred in 2012 at Johannesburg Pride[2] South Africa. To explore lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, asexual and queer (LGBTIAQ) identities, Pride, publics and counter publics through digital spaces, this paper requires a theoretical grounding in queer theory and internet studies. It is vital for the discussion of digital space in relation to queer politics and counter publics that a fairly detailed context of what occurred at Joburg Pride 2012 is provided, as well as a broader background of Joburg Pride since the inaugural parade was held in 1990. The discussion then moves on to unpacking identity and its relation to the internet, and the opportunities the internet affords LGBTIAQ people with particular attention paid to publics and counter publics.

CONTEXT

On 6 October 2012, more than 20 activists from the One in Nine

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1 B.M. Leiner et al., "A Brief History of the Internet", *ACM SIGCOMM Computer Communication Review*, 39(5), 2009.

2 From herein referred to as Joburg Pride, Joburg is a shortening of Johannesburg and is used instead of Johannesburg by the South African LGBTIAQ community.

Campaign[3] halted the annual Joburg Pride[4] parade by staging a 'die-in'.[5] The activists demanded a minute of silence from the parade, and lay down in the middle of the road with life-size dolls that represented members of the community who had been raped and murdered because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. In response to this action, Joburg Pride parade participants threatened to drive over the One in Nine Campaign activists with their vehicles while telling the activists they "had no right to be at the parade".[6]

The 2012 Joburg Pride clash highlighted some of the tensions within the LGBTIAQ[7] community[8], which resulted in the conflict at the 2012 event. Craven describes the LGBTIAQ community as epitomising the diversity and unity of post-1994 South Africa, as the movement's history is tied to the country's own history of democracy and project of building a united national identity. Craven suggests that this is a dominant discourse and sentiment among the LGBTIAQ community, and in light of this, the study presupposes that the degree of violence that took place between the Joburg Pride organisers and activists was surprising.[9] This conflict was an instance when an assumed imagining of unity became fragmented. One space where this splintering was

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3 The One in Nine Campaign is an organisation "grounded on a feminist critical analysis of the patriarchal nature of existing political arrangements". T.M. Milani, *Sexual Citizenship: Discourses, Spaces and Bodies at Johannesburg Pride 2012*, Johannesburg, University of the Witwatersrand, 2012. The campaign was formed in 2006 in response to the Zuma rape trial in which South Africa's then deputy president, Jacob Zuma was accused of rape. The campaign "supports survivors of sexual violence" and seeks to "apply pressure on various branches of the criminal justice system through direct action and targeted advocacy".

4 Pride is an event that occurs within the LGBTIAQ community to make the community visible and celebrate sexual orientation and gender identities that are not the status quo. Cp. S. De Waal and A. Manion, *Pride: Protest and Celebration*, Johannesburg, Fanele, 2006. Joburg Pride is an annual celebration held by the LGBTIAQ community and has taken place since 1990. While there are other Pride events taking place in South Africa, Johannesburg Pride is the longest running Pride event in the country. It has been described as having a history that "runs alongside the history of the transition to democracy in South Africa". E. Craven, *Racial Identity and Racism in the Gay and Lesbian Community in Post-partheid South Africa,* Master of Arts Thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, 2011.

5 A die-in is a form of protest where activists feign being dead. Die-ins were popular forms of protest among members of ACT UP in the 1980s. Cp. J. Taylor, *Playing it Queer: Popular Music, Identity and Queer World-making.* Bern, Peter Lang, 2012.

6 Facebook-Statement by the One in Nine Campaign from October 8, 2012.

7 It is important to note that within the history of Joburg Pride, the term LGBTIAQ has not always been used, it was referred to as only a lesbian and gay event in previous years. Cp. De Waal and Manion, *Pride*. For the purposes of this research, the full term will be used except when being specific or referencing a particular body of work.

8 The use of the term community is used here as a way of describing a collective of like-minded individuals.

9 Cp. E. Craven: *Racial Identity and Racism in the Gay and Lesbian Community in Post-partheid South Africa*; W.L. Leap, "Strangers on a Train: Sexual Citizenship and the Politics of Public Transportation in Apartheid Cape Town", in A. Cruz-Malave and M.F. Manalansan (eds.), *Queer Globalisations: Citizenship and the Afterlife of Colonialism.* New York NY, New York University Press, 2002, pp. 219–235.

visible was online, as this is where people sought information about what had happened, watched videos of the event on YouTube[10] and commented on social media sites such as Facebook. The internet became a space for the One in Nine Campaign and the Joburg Pride organising committee to make announcements via their Facebook pages. One such announcement on 3 April 2013 resulted in a series of offline events which culminated with the Joburg Pride organising committee announcing their dissolution.

Once this occurred, LGBTIAQ organisations, members and individuals held events in Johannesburg to discuss a way forward. Events included a meeting on 7 April 2013 at a restaurant, The Melon, in Melville, an event entitled "Boycott Gay Pride" in the Johannesburg CBD at the House of Movements on 13 April 2013, as well as a meeting at the University of the Witwatersrand. Follow up meetings saw the emergence of additional groups such as Johannesburg Pride and People's Pride who would go on to organise the Joburg Pride events of 2013[11]. What was significant about these meetings was the way in which they were predominantly organised online through Facebook. Facebook was not only employed to create 'events' (such as meetings and the actual Pride events invitations) but also to keep members of the community updated on what had been discussed at the meetings and within organising committee meetings. Joburg Pride 2013 can be thought of as a series of events, organised by multiple groups – they could be called Joburg Prides of 2013. While these multiple prides did project a 'fragmented' view of the LGBTIAQ community – it could also be considered to be a truer reflection of the community: not united, having different interests and ways of expressing LGBTIAQ lived realities and experiences. It is this, the post-2012 Joburg Pride digital conversations, associated offline meetings in 2013 and the 2013 Pride marches and parades that are of interest to the positioning of this paper.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PRIDE

Pride is an integral part of LGBTIAQ history.[12] The primary aim of which is to make the LGBTIAQ community visible and place it firmly in the "public gaze". In making the community visible, Pride works to counter the shame, "concealment and disavowal" that the community

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10 One such video titled *Gay Pride March Interrupted by Activists* shows the clash between protesters and parade participants.

11 Johannesburg Pride organised a parade, which took place on 26 October 2013, while People's Pride organised an event, which took place on 5 October 2013.

12 S.M. Kates and R.W. Belk, "The Meanings of Lesbian and Gay Pride Day: Resistance through Consumption and Resistance to Consumption", *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 30(4), 2001, pp. 392–429.

experiences.[13] Pride is seen as a way for a minority group to "challenge the status quo, fight for social change" and gain support from members outside of the LGBTIAQ community.[14]

Joburg Pride is an annual celebration held by the LGBTIAQ community and has taken place since 1990. Throughout the history of Joburg Pride, race, class and assimilationist politics have been prominent and in a state of negotiation. For instance, before the formation of the Gay and Lesbian Organisation of the Witwatersrand (GLOW), South African gay groups were predominantly "white and reluctant to align themselves with the anti-apartheid movement". GLOW initiated the first Joburg Pride march in 1990, and was the first gay group with a large black membership and "took a directly political line".[15] The contestations that exist around Joburg Pride are not unique to South Africa but what makes it worthy of noting is "the context of the apartheid regime and the post-apartheid era".[16] It is important to note that the events and actions at Joburg Pride 2012 are not isolated moments, and need to be read as part of the historical course that dates back to the first Pride event in Johannesburg in 1990. In 1990, Joburg Pride was the first lesbian and gay pride parade to take place in Africa. This first march was intended to be a political protest, as were those in the years that followed. Cameron describes the first march as having a mood that "was festive, and daring".[17] He states that the Pride participants "marched to assert the spirit of hope that imbued 1990" and the LGBTIAQ community sought to "demand (their) rights as full, proud, productive participants in a fully equal society".[18] In 1994, Joburg Pride began to take a less political stance with the march being called a parade instead. In 1998 and 1999 there was an attempt to strike a balance between celebration and protest but the event was still referred to as a parade and a decision was made that the event "should always be described as such".[19] Out of the discontent with the "commercial and depoliticised nature of Johannesburg Pride" several alternative Pride events emerged over the years, including events such as Soweto Pride.[20]

In 2004, an entrance fee was charged at the Pride festivities, which

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13 De Waal and Manion, p. 9.
14 J.J. Ratcliff et al., "Why Pride Displays Elicit Support from Majority Group Members: The Meditational Role of Perceived Deservingness", *Group Process Intergroup Relations*, 16(4), 2013, pp. 462–475, p. 472.
15 De Waal and Manion, p. 7.
16 Craven, p. 61.
17 De Waal and Manion, p. 4.
18 E. Cameron, "Foreword", in S. De Waal and A. Manion (eds.) *Pride: Protest and Celebration.* Johannesburg, Fanele, 2006, pp. 4–6, p. 4.
19 Craven, p. 58. Craven's work is particularly useful in tracing the history of the LGBTIAQ movement in South Africa, particular with reference to race and class.
20 Craven, p. 58.

left many members of the community disgruntled because many believed that Pride should be open to all members of the community and that an entrance fee was an exclusionary act. In 2005, the parade route briefly returned to the city near Braamfontein but a participant was seriously injured when a bottle was thrown from a building. This incident was later used to support Pride's permanent relocation to Zoo Lake, where it took place in 2006. In 2007, the organisers of Pride organised the event under a new structure. The organisers described themselves on their website as "organisers, all with considerable skills and experiences in relevant fields and not linked to troubled events". They branded the new event as Joburg Pride and removed the words "lesbian" and "gay" from the name. The organisers were accused of devaluing the LGBTIAQ aspect of the event to "make it more attractive and less threatening to heterosexuals".[21] The primary tensions which Craven (2011) and De Waal and Manion (2006) have highlighted in their work revolve around the commercialisation of Pride, class division, race, and assimilationist politics. It is important to note that these tensions are a result of the ongoing legacies of the apartheid system and the inequalities it subjected citizens of South Africa to.

IDENTITY, PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

Queer theory is a crucial pillar in exploring Joburg Pride 2012 and the Joburg Pride 2013 events because it explores identity along multiple lines. Further, queer theory recognises that there are a variety of ways of expressing one's identity which do not fall within the boundaries of heteronormative prescriptions. Queer is a term which attempts to invoke greater inclusion than that of LGBTIAQ because it allows for multiple ways of being. Identity is understood to be that which makes one distinct and unique, yet it also implies a relationship to the people one associates and identifies with.[22] Our identity is something we uniquely possess: it is what distinguishes us from other people. Yet on the other hand, identity also implies a relationship with a broader collective or social group of some kind.[23] The notion of the experience of self is connected to how one may perceive one's existence and a construction of a narrative or history for oneself – "being a particular person with a past, future and various attributes".[24]

Personal identity is formed by how one constructs their life story in

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21 Craven, p. 43.
22 S. Hongladarom, "Personal Identity and the Self in the Online and Offline World", *Minds & Machines*, 21, 2011, pp. 533–548.
23 N. Bostrom and A. Sandberg, *The Future of Identity: A Report Commissioned by the UK's Government Office for Science*, 2011.
24 Bostrom and Sandberg, p. 7.

order to make meaning and to shape one's identity.[25] An individual will build on their narrative throughout their life and employ it to bring meaning to what one does, and when one interacts with others in order to be accepted or be identifiable within a common understanding of what it means to be a person. An example of such narratives among the LGBTIAQ community are those told around members' coming out processes and their experiences of Pride events.[26] Pride events are key moments of identity-building among LGBTIAQ individuals, communities and organisations concerned with LGBTIAQ rights. At Pride events, LGBTIAQ individuals are able to try out their identities among other LGBTIAQ people in a celebratory and safe manner. Pride events not only serve to affirm or maintain an individual's identity, but also contribute to social cohesion among the LGBTIAQ community as they recognise each other's identities and confirm that individuals belong to the group.

In interacting with others, an individual may adopt a social role which is an attempt to assume an acceptable identity in order to fit in with the group.[27] Identity is in a state of constant negotiation in the context of one's own regulation of self and how one is regulated by those one associates with. An individual does determine their own identity but is reliant on the recognition and confirmation of their identity by others.[28] This attempt to present an acceptable identity links well with assimilationist politics within the LGBTIAQ community.[29] When an individual is attempting to define who they are, they endeavour to assert their individuality but also seek to join with a group. For an identity to be considered legitimate, it needs to be acknowledged by the group. This social identity, as with personal identity, is fluid and the contestations which occur around personal identity also occur within the group identity. As with the case of LGBTIAQ identities, one may find that a particular identity or 'way of being' is prescribed for an individual, and their legitimacy as an LGBTIAQ individual and member of the community is determined by how well they perform in this role or fit this identity.

Group identity, for instance, within the broader LGBTIAQ group, is also subjected to a 'policing of authenticity'. A group such as the transgender or gay group may have requirements of what makes a

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25 M. Durante, "The Online Construction of Personal Identity through Trust and Privacy", in *Information*, 2, 2011, pp. 594–620.

26 Cp. M. Jolly, "Coming out of the Coming out Story: Writing Queer Lives", *Sexualities*, 4(4), 2001, pp. 474–496.

27 Cp. Bostrom and Sandberg, p. 7.

28 Cp. D. Buckingham, "Introducing Identity", in David Buckingham (ed.) *Youth, Identity and Digital Media*, Cambridge MA & London, MIT Press, 2008, pp. 1–24.

29 J. Puar, "Rethinking Homonationalism", in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 45(2), 2013, pp. 336–339.

'good' transgender or gay group and the authenticity of the group depends on how well it performs its role as a unit, as well as how well individuals perform. A concrete example are the actions of the predominantly black lesbian group, the One in Nine Campaign, at Joburg Pride in 2012. Their actions and the violent reaction of the predominantly white lesbian organising committee were both read as bringing shame to the broader LGBTIAQ community.

Identity is something which is done, and is best thought of and understood in relation to Butler's notion of identity as performance.[30] An individual's understanding of who they are will impact on their behaviour and they will behave in a way which they deem appropriate in terms of the person they consider themselves to be. Their context and environment will bring them into contact with information, media and people who will influence how they understand their identity, and will in turn guide how they behave and perform their identity.[31] In arguing that gender is a performance and that "gender is always a doing"[32], Butler (1990) argues that it is a repeated performance or series of performances, and that repetition is a significant system in the construction of identity.

Cover argues that social networking sites should be considered "performative acts in and of themselves"[33]. Butler's theories of identity performativity are presented as having "enormous capacity to further our understanding of how the multiple functions of social networking sites […] are utilised in the construction and playing out of identity, subjectivity and selfhood in both online and offline contexts"[34]. The internet can be considered a performative space in that it provides a space for one to present one's identity to the digital community with which one is interacting. This is, in particular, associated with the rise in popularity of social networks such as Facebook, where a great deal of time spent on the platform is associated with the maintenance of one's identity through the upkeep of one's profile and the content with which one interacts. For example, an LGBTIAQ individual may choose to craft their profile to show their affiliation with LGBTIAQ groups,

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30 Cp. J. Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London, Routledge, 1990.

31 P. Cheong et al., "Media Use as a Function of Identity: The Role of the Self Concept in Media Usage", in M. Hinner (ed.), *Freiberger Beiträge zur interkulturellen und Wirtshaftskommunikation: A Forum for General and Intercultural Business Communication. Volume 6. The Interrelationship of Business and Communication,* Berlin: Peter Lang, 2009, pp. 365-381.

32 Butler, p. 25.

33 R. Cover, "Performing and Undoing Identity Online: Social Networking, Identity Theories and the Incompatibility of Online Profiles and Friendship Regimes", *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies.* Vol 18(2), 2012, pp. 177–193, p. 177.

34 Cover, p. 178.

celebrities, and causes if they want to represent themselves as an open and cause-conscious LGBTIAQ person. As LGBTIAQ identities are considered as marginalised identities within society, in order to attain a sense of belonging LGBTIAQ individuals need to carve out new spaces of being.[35] The internet creates the opportunity for LGBTIAQ individuals to seek each other out online "without fear of stigma or violence", such as that which they may face offline in public.[36] The research by Prinsloo et al. further positions the internet as a space to access information and highlights its potential to create a platform for marginalised groups, such as the LGBTIAQ community. This community can utilise the internet despite being geographically dispersed, to engage in creating safe spaces and planning 'agitational' activities to contest heteronormativity and associated homophobia.[37]

The internet forms a kind of 'cyber-shelter' in that lesbians and lesbian groups are predominantly unable to maintain physical spaces due to fear of stigma, violence and persecution - the internet makes it possible for lesbians who cannot make connections offline to do so online. This is a consequence of information technology altering the way in which we are able to connect with others and think of ourselves and our identities.[38] The internet makes possible access to information that marginalised people, such as lesbian people, would not normally have access to, and provide a space for learning from shared experience.[39] The oppression and marginalisation of LGBTIAQ people "accentuates their need for sharing and identity building" and this contributes to the formation of online communities.[40] Furthermore, the anonymity of the internet can explain the rise in uptake among the LGBTIAQ community, as individuals may feel safer using the internet anonymously.[41]

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35 Cp. D. Collins, "'We're there and Queer': Homonormative Mobility and Lived Experience among Gay Expatriates in Manila", *Gender & Society*, 23(4), 2009, pp. 465–493.

36 E. Friedman, "Lesbians in (Cyber)space: the Politics of the Internet in Latin American On- and Off-line Communities", *Media, Culture & Society*, 29(5), 2007, pp. 790–811, p. 791.

37 Cp. J. Prinsloo et al., "Cyberqueer SA: Reflections on Internet Usage by Some Transgender and Lesbian South Africans", *Gender and Media Diversity Journal*, 10, 2012, pp. 139–146; N. Fraser, "Transnationalising the Public Sphere: On the Legitimacy and Efficacy of Public Opinion in a Post-Westphalian World", *Theory, Culture & Society*. 24(4), 2007, pp. 7–30.

38 L. Hillier and L. Harrison, "Building Realities less Limited than their Own: Young People Practising Same Sex Attraction on the Internet", *Sexualities: Studies in Culture and Society*, London, Sage, Vol 10(1), 2007, pp. 82–100.

39 T. Davis, "Third Spaces or Heterotopias? Recreating and Negotiating Migrant Identity Using Online Spaces", *Sociology*, 44(4), 2010, pp. 661–677.

40 J. Nip, "The Relationship between Online and Offline Communities: The Case of the Queer Sisters", *Media, Culture & Society*, 26(3), 2004, pp. 409–428, p. 424.

41 B. Mehra et al., "The Internet for Empowerment of Minority and Marginalized Users", *New Media & Society*, 6(6), 2004, pp. 781–802.

THE INTERNET: AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

The internet is seen as supplementing social capital. It is increasingly "integrated into rhythms of daily life, with life online viewed as an extension of offline activities",[42] and can be utilised in such a way as to enhance and complement offline lives.[43] While the internet does supplement social capital, it does so for those who can afford to be online. Not all individuals have access to devices or the means to connect their devices to the internet. This is a factor that needs to be considered when researching and exploring the possibilities that digital environments bring to the lives of marginalised identities.

The internet is in itself a social space and can be recognised as a "public space".[44] It is, like any offline space, a place where one is able to play one's identity out. This is particularly true with the uptake in social networks such as Facebook, which allow for online representations of one's everyday life and performance of one's identity. The digital space makes it possible for voices to be heard and viewed publicly - voices which may not have been present in the public sphere prior to the existence of social networking sites. It allows for individuals to be exposed to differing viewpoints and to be held accountable for the values they espouse, as well as have these publicly challenged.[45] This paper argues that this provides for a richer public sphere than the one found offline, and that offline interactions are enhanced by integrating them into digital conversations and spaces.

To a greater degree than prior to the event, Facebook became a public space for members of the Joburg LGBTIAQ community post-Pride 2012. The tensions, clash and conversations that occurred in Johannesburg moved online to Facebook. Although the internet is in itself a public space, it is important to note that the internet offers privileges to "certain groups, languages, gender or countries to the exclusion of others".[46] This is no different to previous issues raised around Joburg Pride, such as access to white privileged spaces – one of the primary, historical contestations to surface in online conversations.[47]

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42 B. Wellman et al., "Does the Internet Increase, Decrease, or Supplement Social Capital? Social Networks, Participation, and Community Commitment", *The American Behavioral Scientist*, 45(3), 2001, pp. 436–455, p. 440.

43 Cp. S. Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet,* London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1995.

44 Nip, p. 414.

45 V. Goby, "Physical Space and Cyberspace: How Do They Interrelate? A Study of Off-line and Online Social Interaction Choice in Singapore", *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 6(6), 2003, pp. 639–644.

46 M. Wall, "Social Movements and Email: Expressions of Online Identity in the Globalization Protests", *New Media & Society*, 9(2), 2007, pp. 258–277, p. 263.

47 Cp. N. McLean, "Digital as an Enabler: A Case Study of the Joburg Pride 2012 Clash", *Feminist Africa 18. E-spaces: E-politics*, 18, December 2013, pp. 25–42.

Following the clash between the Joburg Pride organisers and the One in Nine Campaign activists, the internet was alive with videos, images, tweets, Facebook wall posts and blog posts of what had taken place. After the initial news moment had passed, conversations continued to take place online, as did posting of content about what had taken place and participated in conversations in comment feeds. Social media and other online spaces became an archive for conversations that occurred among each group's members and between the groups themselves. Under normal circumstances, these conversations disappear in national and local media as other events unfold and capture the public's attention. Social media platforms, in particular Facebook, became enabling spaces, which allowed for these conversations to continue.

THE INTERNET AS COUNTER/PUBLIC

The use of digital and the exposure to alternative viewpoints results in a richer public sphere. As with the case of Joburg Pride 2012, the internet provided a platform for the public to discuss and dissect what occurred between the Pride organisers and the activists as well as for members of the LGBTIAQ community to debate some of the issues that arose. Prinsloo et al.'s workon lesbian use of the internet is useful in its application to the broader LGBTIAQ community (2012) they put forward Dahlberg's proposal that the internet makes available the space for a marginalised group to establish a counter public and to "engage in debate and develop arguments to counter the mainstream public sphere"[48]. To understand what Dahlberg means by the internet making spaces available for the establishment of counterpublics, it is important to unpack the meaning of publics and counter publics.

A public is ideological and maintained through discourse, and unable to exist outside of the discourses that discuss them. Warner argues that "some publics are defined by their tension with larger publics. Their participants are marked from persons or citizens in general." This public in conflict with the larger project is then understood to be in breach with the "rules obtained in the world at large, being structured by alternative dispositions or protocols" - in effect a counterpublic.[49] Counterpublics, by definition, are shaped through their divergence with "the norms and contexts of their cultural environment".[50] Against the backdrop of the public sphere,[51] a

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48 J. Prinsloo et al., p. 145; cp. L. Dahlberg, "The Internet, Deliberative Democracy, and Power: Radicalising the Public Sphere", *International Journal of Media and Cultural Politics*, 3(1), 2007, pp. 47–64.

49 M. Warner, *Publics and Counterpublics*, New York, Zone Books, 2005, p. 56.

50 Warner, p. 63.

counterpublic "enables a horizon of opinion and exchange; its exchanges remain distinct from authority and can have a critical relation to power"[52].

Nancy Fraser suggests that for marginalised groups, such as LGBTIAQ persons, it is in their interest to form "alternative publics" which she terms "subaltern counterpublics". These subaltern counterpublics are "parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter-discourses" in order to form and assert their own interpretation of their identities and interests.[53] One essential purpose of the counterpublics is to introduce new or alternative discursive positions into public spaces where they are able to be publicly opposed or challenged. Fraser suggests that counterpublics serve two purposes: as spaces of safety and reorganising, and as training spaces for protest activities to be directed towards the broader public.

In considering Joburg Pride 2012, the internet was provided a space for both the Joburg Pride parade participants and the One in Nine Campaign activists to regroup and to discuss what had taken place among their groups. It also allowed them the opportunity to plan additional actions which were directed at each other, and publicised for the broader public's attention. For instance, the Joburg Pride 2013 events came about as a result of the discussions which took place on Facebook, which were moved to offline public spaces such as the meetings held in Melville, the Johannesburg central business district, and at the University of the Witwatersrand. The Facebook pages were used to keep members and interested parties updated about what had taken place during the offline meetings, as well as to notify them of follow-up meetings and events, while managing and sustaining their own representation.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper argues that the success of the Joburg Pride 2013 events, such as that of Joburg People's Pride, was greatly due to the use of the digital environment to engage and sustain attention around Joburg Pride. Digitally LGBTIAQ individuals were able to negotiate the issues raised around Pride, this was done through conversations revolving around some of the following areas: who had access to spaces; which spaces were preferred and were accessible; the form Pride took, whether it was to be a remembrance event, be celebratory, political or a

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51 Here it is useful to refer to Habermas' notion of the public sphere.
52 Warner, p. 56.
53 Fraser, p. 497.

combination of the aforementioned.

These negotiations around issues provided the space for all members who had access to the page/group to participate (if they wished) in the shaping and development of the Joburg People's Pride event – allowing for a sense of ownership of an integral narrative moment in the lives of LGBTIAQ people. Some may argue that having multiple Pride events in 2013 can be seen as a sign of a fragmented LGBTIAQ community, which could hold some truth. However, the multiple events could also be read as the LGBTIAQ community recognising that its members have different needs that cannot necessarily be contained within a single definition. In doing so, the community acknowledged that all identities should be free to perform and be recognised within their own right without needing to be contained within a single definition of what the LGBTIAQ community may look like.

The degree of organising and recognising the divergent needs of the LGBTIAQ community would not have been as rich if it were not for the digital space and what it offered in way of communication and organising. As we increasingly move into a digital world, we need to imagine new ways of organising and engaging in protest and politics, ways that may enable a degree of sustained action. If we are to imagine new ways of organising through the integration of offline with online, we must also set ourselves the task of conceiving a world where access to digital tools and connectivity is readily available to all. When imagining the possibilities that the digital environment provides, we must recognise and note that internet communities are "restricted to the digital 'haves' (or at least those with digital social capital) rather than the 'have nots'".[54]

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54 D. Murthy, "Digital Ethnography: An Examination of the Use of New Technologies for Social Research", *Sociology*, 42, 2008, pp. 837–855, p. 845.