Kent Academic Repository

EXPLORING THE (SUB)CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF GAY, BISEXUAL AND QUEER MALE DRUG USE IN CYBERSPACE

By

Brian Jay Frederick

Word Count: 75991

Thesis submitted to the University of Kent and Universität Hamburg in partial fulfilment for requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy after following the Erasmus Mundus Doctoral Programme in Cultural and Global Criminology.

EXPLORING THE (SUB)CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF GAY, BISEXUAL AND QUEER MALE DRUG USE IN CYBERSPACE

By

Brian Jay Frederick

Word Count: 75991

Date of Submission: 19 April 2016

Thesis submitted to the University of Kent and Universität Hamburg in partial fulfilment for requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy after following the Erasmus Mundus Doctoral Programme in Cultural and Global Criminology.

University of Kent, School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Research

Universität Hamburg, Fakultät für Wirtschafts- und Sozialwissenschaften,

Institut für Kriminologische Sozialforschung

STATEMENT OF SUPERVISION

This research project was co-supervised by Prof. Dr. Susanne Krasmann of the Institut für Kriminologische Sozialforschung at Universität Hamburg and Dr. Marian Duggan in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Research at the University of Kent.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Larry, and their partners, Paula and Barbara. It must not have been easy for you to watch (yet again) your oldest child re-experience issues concerning self-esteem and self-worth—especially from such a great distance. Thank you for supporting me in this endeavor, and for forgiving me for being absent while I achieved this last and most important goal for myself. Also, much love and gratitude to my brother Chad for inspiring me to stay focused and for setting an excellent example in how to become (and stay) a good academic.

I continue to be grateful for the lessons (in life and in academia) that I learn(ed) from the faculty and staff in the Criminal Justice Departments at my alma maters, California State University Long Beach and California State University Fullerton. Thank you all for getting me to this point and for staying in touch throughout the years, especially Chuck Bozza, Hank Fradella, Stacy Mallicoat, Connie Ireland, Britt Rios-Ellis, Aili Malm, Dina Perrone, Jill Rosenbaum and Durrell Dew. Your support and your words of wisdom and encouragement sustain me more than you will know.

Also, many thanks to all who provided me with spaces in which I could get away and reflect—especially the faculty and staff at the International Institute for the Sociology of Law in Oñati, Spain; the sisters at Malling Abbey; and, the brothers and sisters at Mucknell Abbey.

As with my Master's thesis, I dedicate this thesis to my dear friend Jonathan Lochrie, whose penchant for partying inspired me to initially tackle the topic of GBQM drug use, and whose decision to stop partying continues to inspire me and others. I also dedicate this thesis to all gay, bisexual and queer men who use (or who have used) drugs. Look after yourselves and don't ever let anyone speak on your behalf.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the tremendous support from the EU Erasmus Mundus Joint Doctorate Fellowship scheme inasmuch as it provided me with a unique and most amazing opportunity to further my education in critical and cultural criminology.

DECLARATION UPON OATH

I declare that the research embodied in the thesis is my own work and has not previously been submitted for a degree at any other university. No commercial doctoral advisory services were used in conjunction with this research. Neither have any sources or aids—other than those listed in the thesis—been used.

Early theoretical conceptualizations for this thesis were presented at the American Society of Criminology conference in Atlanta, Georgia (November 2013), as well as at the Common Studies Programme in Critical Criminology session at Middlesex University in April 2014. Also, parts of the historical narrative concerning cultural criminology were previously published with co-author Paula Larruskain in Wiley-Blackwell's *The Encyclopedia of Crime & Punishment* (2016).

Signed:_____

Brian J. Frederick

Date:_____

ABSTRACT

In 2015, Peccadillo Pictures released the movie *'Chemsex'*, an 80-minute documentary about the experiences of gay, bisexual and queer male (GBQM) drug users in London—men whose lives have been impacted by *chemsex*, that is, the mixing of illicit drugs such as *crystal methamphetamine*, *gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid* (GHB), *gamma-butyrolactone* (GBL) and *mephedrone* with 'risky' sex. The film has been described by the media as painting a bleak portrait of a 'subculture on the edge'—one that is fueled by both the heteronormative marginalization of GBQM and the popularity of online and mobile-based GBQM social networks. The release of *'Chemsex'* was prompted by research that reveals increases in GBQM drug use—not only in London, but among GBQM in many gay ghettos throughout the world. Most of these studies emerge from disciplines outside criminology—for example, behavioral health, epidemiology and public health. These studies also describe GBQM drug users as existing within a subculture. Moreover, these studies also link GBQM drug use to external marginalization and or stigma related to sexual identity or HIV-seropositivity. Yet, rarely are the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use fully explored. Neither do these studies address the fact that drug use—in most jurisdictions—is a crime.

Cultural criminologists argue that crime, deviance and transgression are part of an ongoing process that is interwoven with the dynamics of culture and all of its attendant meanings. This thesis explores the cultural dynamics that may shape the meanings that underlie GBQM drug use—in particular, drug use that is facilitated and or expressed through cyberspace.

This thesis conceptualizes the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug using three tenets that are central to cultural criminological inquiries: that crime and deviance and transgression are often related to marginalization and oppression; that these phenomena are often subcultural in nature; and, that subcultures cannot be studied apart from their mediated representations. Complementing this framework is a research design that employs virtual ethnography, instant ethnography, ethnographic content analysis and visual content analysis. Critical discourse analysis is also employed in an effort to analyze the underlying power differentials that are present in the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. Using these methods, I was able to participate in the activities and understandings of GBQM drug users who were situated in cyberspace. Using the theoretical

framework that was constructed, I was then able to analyze and draw conclusions as to the cultural dynamics that underlie their activities, behaviors, language, norms, rituals and values.

One of the key findings of this thesis was in the discovery of shared group drug injecting experiences that are constructed as temporary networks using Skype and other webcam conference call applications. Another finding concerns the sharing by GBQM of drug-themed photo content in mainstream and GBQM social networks. A third finding involves their sharing of drug-themed videos to Internet 'tube sites'.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

2015 veröffentlichte Peccadillo Pictures den Film *'Chemsex'*, eine 80-minütige Dokumentation über die Erfahrungen von männlichen homesexuellen, bisexuellen und queer (GBQM) Drogenkonsumenten in London – Männer, deren Leben von *chemsex* geprägt sind, d.h. von der Kombination aus illegalisierten Drogen wie *Crystal Methamphetamin, Gamma-Hydroxybutyric Acid* (GHB), *Gamma-Butyrolacton*, (GBL) and *Mephedron* und "riskantem" Sex. Der Film wurde von den Medien als ein düsteres Bild einer *"Subkultur an der Grenze"* beschrieben—eine Subkultur die ebenso von der heteronormativen Marginalisierung der GBQM angetrieben wird, wie von der Popularität der online- und mobiletelefonbasierten sozialen GBQM-Netzwerke. Das Erscheinen von *'Chemsex'* wurde begleitet von Forschungen, die eine Zunahme des Drogenkonsums durch GBQM feststellten—nicht nur in London, sondern in vielen homosexuellen Ghettos auf der ganzen Welt. Die meisten dieser Studien entspringen Disziplinen außerhalb der Kriminologie—bspw. Verhaltensgesundheit, Epidemiologie und öffentliche Gesundheit. Diese Studien beschreiben GBQM-Drogenkonsum als Teil einer *Subkultur*. Außerdem sehen sie Verbindungen zu externer Marginalisierung und/oder Stigmatisierung bezüglich sexueller Identität oder HIV-Seropositivität. Trotzdem sind die kulturellen Dynamiken von GBQM-Drogenkonsum kaum vollständig erforscht. Ebenso wenig, thematisieren diese Studien die Tatsache, dass Drogenkonsum—nach den meisten Rechtsprechungen—ein Verbrechen darstellt.

Kulturelle Kriminolog_innen verstehen Verbrechen, Devianz und Transgression als Teil eines kontinuierlichen Prozesses, für den kulturelle Dynamiken und Bedeutungen relevant sind. Diese Arbeit erforscht die Bedeutungen die GBQM-Drogenkonsum zugrundeliegen— insbesondere Drogenkonsum der durch den Cyberspace vermittelt und ausgedrückt wird. Diese Arbeit konzeptionalisiert die kulturellen Dynamiken des GBQM-Drogenkonsums anhand von drei Grundsätzen der kulturellen Kriminologie: Verbrechen und Devianz stehen oft in Verbindung mit Marginalisierung und Unterdrückung; diese Phänomene sind oft subkulturellen Charakters; und Subkulturen können nicht unabhängig von ihren vermittelten Repräsentationen untersucht werden. Diesem Rahmen folgend, sieht das Forschungsdesign die Anwendung von Methoden der virtuellen Ethnographie, instant ethnography, ethnographische Inhaltsanalyse und der visuellen Inhaltsanalyse vor. Eine kritische Diskursanalyse wird angewandt, um die Machtverhältnisse zu analysieren, welche

in den vermittelten Repräsentationen von GBQM-Drogenkonsum wirksam werden. Mit Hilfe dieser Methoden war es mir möglich, an den Aktivitäten und Kenntnissen der im Cyberspace situierten GBQM-Drogenkonsument_innen teilzuhaben. Unter Anwendung des zuvor entworfenen theoretischen Rahmens konnte ich die kulturellen Dynamiken, welche den untersuchten Aktivitäten, Verhaltensweisen, Sprache, Normen, Ritualen und Werten zugrunde liegen analysieren und einige Schlussfolgerungen ziehen.

Eines der wichtigsten Ergebnisse dieser Arbeit liegt in der Entdeckung von gemeinsamen Gruppen-Drogennutzungserfahrungen, die im Rahmen temporärer Netzwerke unter Verwendung von Skype und anderen Webcam-Telefonkonferenz-Anwendungen stattfinden. Eine weitere Erkenntnis bezieht sich auf von GBQM geteilte drogenbezogene Fotoinhalte in Mainstream- und GBQM-Sozialen-Netzwerken. Eine dritte Erkenntnis betrifft das Teilen von drogenbezogenen Videos auf 'Tube Sites' im Internet.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TABLE OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION

> Gay people have more rights, are better protected by the law, and should enjoy a greater sense of equality in [their] day-to-day lives. Yet, the gay community does not seem to be as happy as perhaps it should be. Some gay men continue to fall into a lifestyle of destruction and self-harm fuelled by a crisis of gay identity (Marsh 2012: 1).

On *Grindr*—a smartphone social media 'hookup' application (or 'app') popular among gay, bisexual and queer men (GBQM)—is a profile of a man in a major metropolitan area of the United Kingdom. His profile picture shows him seated on a couch. One of his arms is outstretched. His elbow rests on a pillow, crook exposed. A tourniquet is tied around his bicep. At the top of his profile is his found: 'H&H'. His profile reads, 'Getting to the point'.

Meanwhile, in a 'video gallery' on the online social network *NastyKinkPigs*, a man from the United States has uploaded a two-minute video of himself. The video shows him seated alone on a bed. In one hand, he holds a glass pipe to his mouth. He lights the pipe and sucks a stream of white smoke into his lungs. He exhales a giant 'cloud' and then smiles into the camera.

Finally, in a *Skype* webcam conference call are found thirty men from all over the globe: *Berlin*, *London*, *Los Angeles*, *Madrid*, *Miami*, *New York*, *Paris*, *Riyadh*, *Singapore*, *Sydney*. Many of the participants are nude. Others are having sex with one or more men. A few of the men are 'blowing clouds'. Others are preparing to 'slam'. A text-based chat window reveals a discussion underway: "GeTTing ready to slam," says one of the men, "who's joining me?" Another types, "Blowing clouds here." "Anyone for PNP?" types another.

The above are only a few examples of the different types of drug-related activities and behaviors that GBQM seek through the use of online social networks and smartphone social media applications. 'H&H' is an abbreviation for 'high and horny'. 'Point' and 'slam' refer to the tip of a hypodermic needle and the injection of drugs, respectively—drugs such as *crystal methamphetamine* (also known as 'crystal', 'T' or 'Tina'), but also *gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid* (GHB), *gamma-butyrolactone* (GBL), *4-methyl methcathinone* (4-MMC, or *mephedrone*), *3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine* ('MDMA') and others. 'Blowing clouds' refers to the smoking of crystal, typically through a glass pipe, or 'glass dick'. Finally, both *chemsex* and *party* (as in

'party 'n' play', or 'PNP') refer to the coupling of these behaviors with sex—sex that sometimes involves 'high risk' (or, 'risky') behaviors such as 'barebacking'[1] and 'breeding'[2].

Background

In December 2015, Peccadillo Pictures released its 80-minute documentary titled *Chemsex* (Gogarty & Fairman 2015). Billed as a 'brave and unflinching journey into the underworld of [London's] modern, urban gay life' (Vimeo 2016: para. 1), the film portrays the experiences of GBQM whose lives have been impacted by *chemsex*. The film has since been described as painting 'a bleak and unforgettably frank portrait of a *subculture* on the edge' ([emphasis added] Huddleston 2015: para. 1)—one that is being further fueled by the popularity of online and mobile-based GBQM social networks:

> 'Chemsex' is pretty much what you'd expect: rough sex (often group, often unprotected) fuelled by hard drugs, with crystal meth and mephedrone being among the favourites. The scene has been around for a while, but over the past two years it has exacted an increasingly brutal toll on many of the capital's more promiscuous gay men, thanks in large part to the increased availability of online hookups.

The decision to produce *'Chemsex'* was undoubtedly linked in part to the increase in the amount of research concerning GBQM drug use over the past decade—research that was spurred by increases in HIV and Hepatitis-C (HCV) infections throughout many worldwide gay 'ghettos' (i.e. gay enclaves). Some studies report a 'meteoric rise' in GBQM drug injection (Morrison 2014: para. 2; see also Bourne, Reid, Hickson, Torres-Rueda, Steinberg & Weatherburn 2015; Lea et al. 2013). Others have found that younger GBQM are now beginning to use (and inject) drugs (e.g., Weatherburn, Schmidt, Hickson, Reid, Berg, Hospers & Marcus 2013). Several factors have been cited, not the least of which is the rising popularity of GBQM social media sites such as those described above.

Studies of GBQM drug use typically describe GBQM drug users as existing within a 'subculture' (e.g., Buttram & Kurtz 2013; Green & Halkitis 2006; Lea et al. 2013; Lyons & Hosking 2014). This is most likely based on the understanding that members of drug subcultures

---

[1] Condomless sex.
[2] Refers to the exchange of semen during sex; however, some men use the term 'breeding' to refer to the passing of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV).

share in common a set of drug-related activities or behaviors, and, that these activities are somehow borne out of a shared lived experience. With respect to GBQM drug users, these shared lived experiences are often described as consisting of psychological-level factors such as anxiety, depression, low self-esteem and guilt. These factors are then linked to other shared lived experiences, such as the experiences of being a member of a sexual minority. Other studies explore the shared experiences of those who live with HIV. Most of these studies are motivated by the public health consequences of GBQM drug use—that is, the propensity of GBQM drug users to engage in sexual behaviors that carry a risk of HIV and or HCV infection. For this reason, these studies are often undertaken by epidemiologists, clinical psychologists and public health entities. Yet, according to Perry Halkitis (2006: 319), a prominent epidemiologist in the study of GBQM drug use, while these studies offer 'critical insights for HIV prevention', on the whole, such studies say little about the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use:

> the extant literature on [drug] use among gay and bisexual urban men tends to leave the symbolic and interactional spheres under-analysed, including the meanings sexual actors attach to these events as special instances of sexual sociality, the interactional norms and pressures that circulate in these milieux, and how these may work in tandem to shape drugtaking motivation and behaviour.

This is not surprising, given that few attempts are made to even describe GBQM drug use as a *culture:*

> that is, a cluster of activities and practices that are meaningful for participants with their own organizing logics and relative coherence; a significant source of pleasure, connection, eroticism and intimacy—notwithstanding the known dangers (Race 2015:256)

Finally, rarely do these studies explore the drug-related behaviors of GBQM drug users as acts of deviance or transgression. Neither do they address that drug use—in most jurisdictions—is a crime, much less a form of deviance.

Despite what is known about GBQM drug use, drug use among GBQM continues to grow. This thesis thus explores additional factors that have either not been addressed, or, that have not been addressed within the context of a discussion on drug use. To do so, this thesis employs a criminological approach to the study of GBQM drug use. However, the focus of this thesis is not on GBQM criminality or deviance, *per se.* Indeed, the reasons why GBQM commit crime or

engage in deviant or transgressive behaviors may be the same or similar to others: praise, poverty, self-preservation, etc. Nor does this thesis seek to add the term 'criminal' to the long list of negative stereotypes that are sometimes used to describe GBQM drug users. Nevertheless, with the increases in drug use that have been observed among GBQM, law enforcement attention to GBQM drug use is inevitable. As a result, some men may face legal sanctions. Others may experience other forms of harm or even victimization. A criminological study is thus necessary inasmuch as it may serve to inform future criminal justice policy. At present, no such research exists. This thesis seeks to fill this gap.

CRIMINOLOGY'S NEGLECT

There are several disciplines that deserve recognition for their contributions to our understandings of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered and queer (LGBTQ) behavior—for example, cultural studies, LGBT studies, sex and gender studies, queer studies, etc. While these approaches can help explain certain behavioral aspects, other disciplines—such as criminology—are perhaps better poised to investigate behaviors that are criminal or deviant. Yet, little, if any criminological attention is given to crime, deviance or transgression committed by LGBTQ individuals. This includes GBQM drug use. In fact, like GBQM drug use, other LGBTQ crime-related phenomena (e.g., same-sex domestic violence; sex work) often falls under the purview of disciplines outside of criminology, as well. When criminology does turn its focus towards LGBTQs, it tends to focus more on crimes committed *against* them, such as hate crimes (Groombridge 1999; see also Sorainen 2003).

There are perhaps several reasons for criminology's neglect of LGBTQs. For example, orthodox (i.e., 'mainstream') criminologists tend to employ experimental and quasi-experimental research methods (e.g., random sampling and prediction modeling). Such methods are often difficult to employ when studying 'invisible minorities' such as LGBTQ men and women (see Morales 1989; Lopez & Chims 1993). Moreover, like the studies of GBQM drug use that are conducted by epidemiologists and public health entities, criminal justice researchers and criminologists also have a tendency to separate behavior (such as crime and deviance) from *culture*. As a result, behaviors such as drug use often become criminalized without recognizing the meanings they may have for the 'offenders'—meanings that may, in fact, be shaped by negative

4

experiences related to mainstream cultural or social isolation. Yet, as Groombridge (1999: 532) notes, criminology has a 'long record of selectively ignoring deviance associated with new social movements' (Groombridge 1999: 532). This would include crime and deviance that 'erupt out of social processes' (Presdee 2000: 11).

Additionally, when investigating drug use, mainstream criminologists often seek to assess the efficacy of behavioral interventions. While such studies can provide useful information about rates, trends and psychological factors, the resultant programs are rarely culturally specific. Moreover, such studies can often lead to the enacting of laws that are based on perceived harms, but that lack a more robust understanding of the diverse meanings that underlie such behaviors— meanings that often reveal the emotions and motivations of the actors in question. In fact, in their pursuit of 'means', 'medians' and 'modes', criminologists can often seem to disavow 'the validity of emotion and style in the investigation of human experience' (Ferrell, Hayward & Young 2004: 159; see also Hebdige 1978). Given that sexuality, sexual expressiveness and drug use are often closely tied to emotionality, and, given that GBQM drug-related behaviors can, indeed, be highly stylized, an understanding of these additional factors is important. In order to acquire such an understanding from a criminological perspective, it is thus necessary to utilize different criminological approaches. Two approaches immediately come to mind—queer criminology and cultural criminology.

In 1999, Nic Groombridge released his article *Perverse Criminologies: The Closet of Doctor Lombroso.* In the article, Groombridge lays out his argument that, because criminology has a tendency to view sexuality as 'normatively heterosexual' (1999: 543), the 'importance of (homo)sexuality to the [contemporary] criminological enterprise' cannot be understated (1999: 541). The article highlights several periods of history wherein criminology has been 'queered'— 'from the works of Lombroso and the early sexologists, through the "nuts, sluts and perverts" period of interactionism to gay activism and polemic against homophobic violence and discrimination' (Groombridge 1999: 531). This, Groombridge does in an attempt to 'queer these nascent or rediscovered "gay criminologies" as well as the emerging "new malestream"' (1999: 545).

5

Then, in August 2003, Sorainen (2003) presented her paper 'Queering Criminology' at Third Annual Conference of the European Society of Criminology. In her paper, Sorainen problematizes criminology's 'faith to its empirical objectivism and theoretical neutrality in questions of sexuality and gender' and calls for further analyses of why queer sexualities have been 'outlawed'.

More recently, several criminologists have 'come out' as queer criminologists. Indeed, in 2014, the journal *Critical Criminology* released its first special issue on queer criminology, *Queer/ing Criminology: New Directions and Frameworks.* In addition to work that highlights the future potential of a queer criminology (e.g., Woods 2014; Ball 2014), the issue explores transgender victims and offenders (e.g., Buist & Stone 2014; Perry & Dyck); space, place and identity (Fileborn 2014); queer and intersectional challenges to hate crime laws (Meyer 2014); the queering of state crime theory (Gledhill 2014); the role of agency in queer criminological research (Panfil 2014); and, the re-working of subcultural theories of deviance for the study of transgressive sex and drug-related behavior in gay men (Frederick 2014).

While the queer criminological project is exciting, it still remains broad in scope. Indeed, in a rather informative account of the history of queer criminology's emergence, Dwyer, Ball and Crofts (2016) hold that, previously 'criminology and queer theories/methodologies have been somewhat awkward and perhaps dangerous bedfellows' (in Dwyer et al. 2016: 1). It is for this reason that I decided to forego queer criminology as a theoretical framework for the present research. This is not to say that I do not identify as a queered criminologist. I do. This is also not to say that the present research is not a queered criminological exploration. It is. However, for the present research, I defer to Jagose (1996: 1), who implies that the term 'queer'—at least in academic research—should be 'unaligned with any specific identity category', thus giving it the 'potential to be annexed profitably to any number of discussions'. The present research is thus an attempt *to queer*, rather than to *be queer*. Indeed, the present research is an attempt on my part to queer my own discipline, *cultural criminology.*

USING CULTURAL CRIMINOLOGY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Cultural criminology is a distinct criminological orientation that moves beyond classic criminological etiologies—in particular, those that have a tendency to portray crime in terms of causality; or, that emphasize crime rates and trends; or that assess the effectiveness of criminal

justice interventions (Frederick & Larruskain 2016; see also Ferrell et al. 2008; Ferrell 1999). For this reason, cultural criminologists are often critical of grand theories that characterize crime as deterministic, or that seek to explain criminal behavior as the product of 'rational choice'. Rather, cultural criminologists incorporate perspectives from numerous disciplines (e.g., cultural studies, postmodern theory, critical theory, interactionist sociology) which then enables them to concentrate on the epistemological or phenomenological dimensions of crime.

Cultural criminologists distinguish themselves from more mainstream (i.e., orthodox) criminologists in terms of the emphasis they place on *cultural dynamics* (Ferrell et al. 2008). In fact, cultural criminologists often explain crime, deviance and even crime control as part of a continuous process that is interwoven with the dynamics of culture and all of its attendant meanings, 'shared symbolism[s]' and 'collective interpretation[s]' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 1). In particular, cultural criminologists are interested in the 'fluid relationship between cultural negotiation and the experience of the individual' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 3; see also Ferrell 2013). For this reason, cultural criminologists are concerned with the ways in which individuals and groups construct meaning, representation, and power, as well as how these constructions influence the construction of phenomena such as crime, crime control, deviance, resistance, and transgression (Ferrell 2013; Frederick & Larruskain 2016). Cultural criminologists thus often critically engage with and perform critical interventions of the politics of meaning and power (see Ferrell 2013) This requires that they consider the role of the tools of construction—for example, images, language, media, style and symbolism—as well as a consideration of the interplay of factors such as race, class, gender and, more recently, sexuality (Ferrell 1995; Frederick 2013; Frederick & Perrone 2014). Moreover, cultural criminologists insist that other phenomena—such as consumerism, identity and style—must be accounted for in any study of contemporary crime, deviance or transgression (see, for example, Hayward 2004; Ferrell, Hayward, Morrison & Presdee 2004).

Cultural criminologists strive to develop a more sociologically-nuanced criminology. In fact, early cultural criminologists were often influenced by the urban sociology developed in the 1920s and 1930s Chicago School in the U.S.—in particular, its 'symbolic interactionist approach', which, at the time, challenged the deterministic theories that had been developed by criminological anthropologists, phrenologists and physiognomists (e.g., Frederick & Larruskain 2016). Other

influential work includes Sutherland's (1939) 'differential association theory'; Cohen's (1955) work on 'rule breaking'; Cloward and Ohlin's (1960) exploration of delinquency and 'opportunity' (based on Merton's [1968] 'strain theory'); Becker's (1963) conceptualization of deviance as a process related to 'labeling' by 'outsiders'; Wilkins' (1964) 'deviance amplification'; and, Lemert's (1969) differentiation between 'primary' and 'secondary' deviance.

In light of its theoretical underpinnings, cultural criminological inquiries often focus on three areas: 'situations', 'subcultures', and 'popular media' (Ferrell 2013). 'Situations' refers to the situational symbolic interactions and emotionality that underlie criminal or deviant activities. For this reason, Katz's (1988) work on the 'seductions' of crime has inspired several cultural criminological investigations that explore the 'emotionally driven "situational" foreground' of day-to-day life (Frederick & Larruskain 2016: 2). Such a perspective does not necessarily disavow the significance of background factors related to race, sexuality and social class; rather, it explains how these factors can enhance the immediacy and emotionality that shape one's meanings when engaging in criminal, deviant or transgressive activities (see Hayward 2004). Indeed, as will be demonstrated in this thesis, the drugs that are often used by GBQM drug users can simultaneously allay and enhance their emotional states—especially when attempting to overcome negative self-perceptions in their pursuit of 'connections' with other men.

Cultural criminologists also acknowledge the subcultural dimensions of crime, deviance and transgression. However, cultural criminologists are more often concerned with the meanings and values inherent among the members of subcultures (Young 1999). These meanings and values are then contrasted with the meanings and values of 'mainstream' culture(s). Moreover, cultural criminologists examine how (sub)cultures are organized and 'disorganized'; how (sub)cultures consider what is 'rational' and 'irrational'; and, how the members of subcultures jointly craft solutions to the problems they face (Young 1999; see also Ferrell et al. 2008). Such an approach emerged during the early 1970s, when the British 'new criminology' challenged criminologists (and later, cultural criminologists) to examine the cultural dynamics that impact deviant or criminal subcultures, including, as mentioned, the role that symbolism and style played in shaping a subculture's identity and meaning (see Taylor, Walton & Young 2013). Hall & Jefferson's (1976) *Resistance Through Ritual*s is of particular importance here, as well as Clarke's (1976) *Style*;

Hebdige's (1979) *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*; and, McRobbie's (1980) *Settling Accounts with Subcultures*. This thesis draws upon these works, as well as others that follow a similar line of reasoning.

Finally, cultural criminologists investigate the role of popular culture in helping to construct societal meanings around social problems such as crime, deviance and transgression. Of particular import are the media-driven narratives and images of these phenomena (i.e., the 'mediated representations'), as well as the ways in which crime, deviance and transgression are commodified and commercialized for greater consumption (e.g., Hayward 2008; Ferrell 2013). For this reason, the capacity for mediated representations to incite 'moral panics' is especially important to cultural criminologists—especially when such representations move away from 'true cultural conflicts' to what Young (2009: 2) refers to as 'a listless depiction of mass media deception'. This requires a critical analysis of mediated campaigns, as well as other phenomenon that involve the criminalization and or demonization of art, culture and subculture (see Frederick & Larruskain 2016). Of particular importance here is Cohen's (2002) *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*—an account of the creation and subsequent demonization of British youth subcultures during the 1960s, and Cohen and Young's (1971) edited work *The Manufacture of News: Deviance, Social problems & the Mass Media*.

The following section outlines the present research, including the main research question and four supplementary research questions. An outline of the structure of the thesis is also provided.

<div align="center">

THE PRESENT RESEARCH

</div>

This thesis asks the question, 'What are the (sub)cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use?'. To explore these dynamics, I constructed a framework based on the three foci of cultural criminology (as discussed above). The first—*situations*—is used to frame GBQM drug use as emerging from the social processes that are specific to GBQM. In particular, this thesis investigates the sources of marginalization and or stigma that exist within contemporary gay culture—both offline and in GBQM cyberspace social networks[3]. The second—*mediated processes*—is used to critically

---

[3] There are numerous ways to describe e-based experience spaces: 'virtual space'; being 'online'; or simply, 'the Internet'. However, cyberspace is preferable among many scholars because it remains 'quite flexible . . . open [and] easily translated across different sectors of society' (Strate 1999: 382). While the term Internet refers to a vast global network of computers, other terms can be thought of in terms of opposing spaces—for

examine the mediated representations of GBQM drug use as crime, deviance and transgression (see Cohen 2002; Ferrell et al. 2008). More specifically, this perspective is used to analyze the power differentials that exist within some of the more traditional forms of mediated representations (e.g., news reports; documentaries); however, the term 'mediated representation' is also used as a rubric for describing and analyzing additional self-mediated forms that have not yet been fully explored. Finally, the third foci—*subcultures*—is used to explore the subcultural dimensions of GBQM drug use. Such an approach is useful for understanding the social aspects of GBQM drug use—in particular how GBQM drug users interact with one another in cyberspace, wherein their actions are more easily observed. Using these three foci, this thesis asked four additional research questions:

1. What are the situations that have the potential to engender feelings of marginalization and or stigma within contemporary gay culture?

2. What are the sources of marginalization and stigma that are specific to GBQM cyberspace social networks?

3. What are the mediated representations of GBQM drug use?

4. What are the subcultural dimensions of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use ?

This thesis is presented in six chapters. Each chapter contextualizes the literature that supports the theoretical framework, the methods and the analyses that were employed. The outline of this thesis is as follows. Chapter Two ('Review of the Literature') reviews the literature that supports each of the research questions. First, the chapter explores the literature that examines the some of the social processes that underlie contemporary gay culture. This includes a review of literature that examines gay culture's unique brand of consumption and how—through increased commercialization—this has led to the gentrification and subsequent 'de-sexing' of gay ghettos throughout the world. A review of the literature on gay 'normalization' will also be presented—

---

example, 'virtual' stands in contrast to the 'real', while 'online' refers to an active engagement that cannot occur 'offline'. 'Cyberspace', on the other hand, is ever-present: 'the place between' two electronically-connected communication devices, or even, 'the indefinite place out there, where … two human beings, actually meet and communicate' (Sterling 1992: 10). For this thesis, I use the term 'cyberspace' because it is more inclusive of the many ways in which individuals can access online/virtual social networks (e.g., desktop computers; smartphones; tablets).

including a description of the 'metropolitan gay male' and how this has contributed to the emergence of a global gay image. This is followed by a review of recent studies that have explored the marginalization of GBQM within cyberspace environments. Next, the chapter reviews the literature on mediated representations and moral panics, including a review of studies that examine the ways in which both gay men and drug users have been demonized through mass media narratives. The chapter continues with a review of the subcultural theories and concepts that are common among cultural criminological inquiries, including 'rule-breaking', 'resistance' and the subcultural re-appropriation of mainstream cultural signs and symbols. Homonormative resistance and 'escape' will also be reviewed. The chapter concludes with a review of the literature that explores the emergence of contemporary GBQM cyberculture. This includes an account of the development of 'cyberqueer studies', and a review of studies that address the popularity and importance of cyberspace for LGBTQs.

Chapter Three ('Methods') describes the methods that were employed for this thesis. The chapter begins with an overview of *ethnography* and *virtual ethnography*, as well as a description of the more nuanced ethnographic methods that were used to observe GBQM drug users in various cyberspace settings—in particular, *instant ethnography*; *ethnographic content analysis*; and, *visual content analysis*. This is followed by a description of *critical discourse analysis* and how it was used to analyze the power differentials that exist within cyberspace social network member profiles, as well as the power differentials that exist in the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. The chapter also provides a detailed account of the research process, including an explanation of the 'scoping out' phase and a description of each of the GBQM cyberspace social networks that were observed. A new way of conceptualizing cyberspace social networks as either 'static' (i.e., fixed websites/apps) or 'dynamic' (i.e., temporary networks that are created using webcam software) will be proffered. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the ethical considerations of virtual (i.e. 'cyberspace') ethnography, as well as some of my reflections on my role as a queer man in the present research.

Chapter Four ('Uncovering Marginalization and Stigma in the Networks') provides analyses of user-generated data collected from two mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks. The chapter begins with a fictional narrative that illustrates the rituals associated with mainstream

GBQM social networks. Part One of the chapter then describes and analyzes some of the ways in which GBQM cyberspace social network interfaces can serve to reify homonormative ideals around age, attractiveness, ethnicity and masculinity. Network member profile 'preferences' are also discussed. This is followed by an analysis of profile preferences that may have the potential to stigmatize some GBQM around age, ethnicity, masculinity and sexuality. Part Two describes and analyzes some of the ways in which network interfaces can marginalize men with HIV. Network member profile 'preferences' concerning safe sex and HIV-serostatus are discussed, as well. This is followed by an analysis of member profile preferences that may have the potential to stigmatize men who are HIV-seropositive.

In Chapter Five ('Exploring the Mediated Representations of GBQM Drug Use') I explore and analyze several forms of mediated representations concerning GBQM drug use. The chapter is presented in two parts. Part One discusses some of the more ostensible forms of negatively-framed mediated representations—in particular, documentaries and mass media news reports. Using Cohen's 'narrative themes' and Becker's concept of the 'moral entrepreneur', the chapter describes and analyzes two documentaries—*'Dancing with the Devil'* and *'Chemsex'*. Examples of recent mass media reports concerning GBQM drug use—in particular, their potential to incite a moral panic—are also reviewed. This is followed by a discussion and analysis of how public health and drug awareness campaigns also mediate GBQM drug users and how these campaigns often differ from those that target a more mainstream audience. Part Two of the chapter explores some additional forms of mediated representations of GBQM drug use—those that are more 'celebratory'. First, artistic representations of GBQM drug use in photography and in theatrical productions will be analyzed. An analysis of drug-themed gay male pornography will also be provided, using *Treasure Island Media's* movie *'Slammed'* as a case study. The chapter concludes with a description and analysis of some of the ways in which GBQM drug users now represent themselves. The first concerns the uploading of drug-themed photo content to both GBQM cyberspace social networks and mainstream photo-sharing sites/apps. The second concerns the uploading of 'amateur' sexualized drug-themed videos to GBQM 'tube sites'. One such video— from the tube-site *ToxxxicTube*—will be discussed and analyzed. Ethical considerations concerning

drug-themed gay male pornography and the sharing of drug-themed photo and video content will be proffered.

Chapter Six ('Exploring the Subcultural Aspects of Cyberspace-Facilitated GBQM Drug Use') explores the subcultural aspects of drug use in GBQM cyberspace social networks. The chapter is presented in three parts. Part One begins with a critical analysis of some of the 'rules' concerning drug-related activities and behaviors in both physical GBQM spaces and in GBQM cyberspace social networks. Part Two describes and analyzes the ways in which GBQM drug users use GBQM cyberspace social networks to establish connections with each other, as well as how—through network interfaces—they are able to construct drug-using in-groups. *PlanetRomeo's* drug-themed clubs will be analyzed, as well as *NastyKinkPigs 'Drugs'* profile category. Part Three of the chapter investigates the drug rituals that are associated with cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use. This includes an analysis of the ways in which GBQM drug users employ special text- and symbol-based language, as well as how tattoos might be used as a form of body language for some GBQM drug users. An analysis of the types of sex that are solicited by GBQM drug users is then provided. First, 'deviant' sex will be discussed and analyzed. This is followed by a discussion and analysis of transgressive sex—including 'swapping fluids' and 'blood slamming'. The chapter concludes with a description and analysis of a dynamic GBQM drug-related social network created using *Zoom*, a web-based webcam software program that enables GBQM drug users to connect in 'real-time'—privately or in groups. Examples of the sharing of drug-related conduct norms will also be provided.

The thesis concludes with an evaluation of the present research. Part One summarizes the key findings of the research. Suggestions for how the present research might contribute to the literature in several areas will be provided. Part Two discusses the limitations of the study and provides suggestions for future research directions. Part Three offers some suggestions for how the present study might inform policy and reform.

CHAPTER 2 - REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

> …crime and deviance occur when there is a discrepancy between what the social structure makes possible (i.e., the means and opportunities for obtaining success) and what the dominant culture extols (i.e., the social value of material accoutrements and the culture of consumption) (Hayward 2004: 158).

Young (2012b) notes that in order to understand and explain subcultural crime, deviance and or transgression we must be mindful of several factors. First, we must familiarize ourselves with the meanings and values inherent not only in the subcultures themselves (and within those subcultures, the meanings, values and voluntarism of their individual members), but also in the larger dominant mainstream cultures from which they emerge; and, second, we must explore how societies are organized and, for that matter, disorganized. When applied to the study of GBQM subcultures, then, Young's appeal would encourage researchers to familiarize themselves with the meanings and values inherent not only in GBQM subcultures (and within those subcultures, the meanings, values and voluntarism of their individual members), but in larger gay mainstream cultures, as well. This includes exploring how gay 'society' is organized and disorganized.

This thesis asks several questions that are intended to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural dynamics that surround GBQM drug use. For this thesis, the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use are conceptualized as being comprised of three components *situations*, *subcultures* and *mediated processes*. This chapter thus reviews the literature that explores each of these components. In doing so, this chapter effectively sets the tone for a queering of these components for use in the study of GBQM drug use.

Because GBQM exist, to varying degrees, within contemporary gay culture, Part One of the chapter reviews the literature that describes some of the situations that exist therein—in particular, situations that may cause some GBQM to experience feelings of marginalization and or stigma. A review of the literature on marginalization and stigma as emerging from 'ideal' categories will be offered. This is followed by a review of the literature that explores some of the processes that may lead to marginalization and social isolation within contemporary gay culture—including the commercialization of contemporary gay culture and the emergence of an ideal 'normalized' global gay image.

Part Two of the chapter reviews the literature on mediated representations and moral panics. In particular, the section will review the literature that examines how both gay men (in general) and drug users have been demonized through mass media outlets.

Part Three reviews the literature on subculture. This includes a review of 'rule-breaking', 'resistance' and subcultural style, as well as a review of literature that addresses homonormative resistance and 'escape'.

Finally, because this thesis explores GBQM drug use that is facilitated through cyberspace environments, Part Four of the chapter concludes with a review of the literature that explores the emergence of contemporary GBQM cyberculture. This includes an account of the development of 'cyberqueer studies' and a review of studies that point to the popularity and importance of cyberspace for LGBTQs.

It should be noted that the terms 'gay', GBQM and queer are not used interchangeably throughout this chapter, but rather intentionally. Although this thesis concerns GBQM drug use, this is done in order to maintain the integrity of the original literature.

PART ONE: MARGINALIZATION AND STIGMA

Cultural criminologists hold that marginality and exclusion are the defining traits of the 'flux of late modernity' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 6). These traits emerged between the first and second world wars, when the '"naturalness" of both exclusion and inclusion came into question', and, where exclusion was often based upon, among other things, *cultural inadequacy* (Ferrell et al. 2008: 26). Although LGBTQs in many Western societies may not experience institutionalized marginalization on a level commensurate with the past, LGBTQs have not entirely escaped this 'flux'. Indeed, one need only look to current news reports for evidence of continued marginalization and oppression. For example, British professional boxer Tyson Fury recently likened all homosexuals to pedophiles (Bowden 2015); since September 2015, as many as twenty gay men have been the victims of hate crimes in Dallas, Texas; and, as of August 2015, the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria had executed close to 40 sexual minorities (Brydum 2015). Countless other examples abound. Whereas these examples may not have a direct impact on GBQM drug use, events such as these can have a stigmatizing effect on LGBTQs inasmuch as they convey the message that something is 'wrong'

with them. Such events also inevitably contribute to the shaping of the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use—especially where marginalization and or stigma are cited as factors.

In their book *Out There: Marginalization and Contemporary Culture*, West, Ferguson, Gever and Minh-Ha (1990: 7) define marginalization as the 'complex and disputatious process by means of which certain people and ideas are privileged over others'. This process is most noticeable when groups of individuals are 'ignored, trivialized, rendered invisible and unheard, perceived as inconsequential, de-authorized, "other[ed]", or threatening, while others are valorized' (1990: 7). Yet, while West et al. define marginalization within the context of a broader discussion on social harms, others have attempted to establish a link between marginalization and specific social harms, such as drug use. For example, Anderson (1998: 245) defines marginalization (or, 'social marginalization') as

> an individual's disadvantaged or oppressed economic, social, and cultural situation in comparison to important groups and/or entities around him or her. It is similar to relative deprivation, where the substance of the deprivation pertains to various socioeconomic and cultural phenomena. Its degree is measured by the individual's socioeconomic and cultural position with respect to various social groups around that individual (see also Bourdieu 1980; Bourdieu & Passeron 1977; Bourgois 1989, 1996; Waterston 1993).

Moreover, in her *Cultural Identity Theory of Drug Abuse*, Anderson (1998: 244) notes that individuals can also experience 'personal marginalization', which, she holds, is often related to 'various early (childhood and adolescence) experiences [that] can sever individuals from norms or what is socially acceptable'. Numerous studies have, indeed, documented the link between the early traumatic experiences of LGBTQs and their use or abuse of drugs (e.g., Dermody, Marshal, Cheong, Chung, Stepp & Hipwell 2016; Duncan, Hatzenbuehler, & Johnson 2014; Heck, Livingston, Flentje, Oost, Stewart & Cochran 2014).

Notwithstanding the marginalization of LGBTQ individuals by heteronormative societies, some LGBTQ individuals might also experience 'peer-enacted' marginalization (Sharp, SoRelle-Miner, Bermudez & Walker 2008)—that is, marginalization that is enacted by other LGBTQs, or, marginalization that is in some way perceived as originating from within gay culture itself. Some examples might include marginalization related to ideals and norms concerning sexual and or gender identity—such as when a gay man makes a disparaging comment about bisexual males (see

Balsam and Mohr 2007); or, when a lesbian denounces a male-to-female transsexual individual (see Beemyn & Eliason 2016). Some LGBTQs might also experience peer-enacted marginalization related to homonormative ideals concerning age, ethnicity, gender, health (e.g., HIV-serostatus), image, physical attractiveness and sexual expressivity (see Drucker 2015; Mowlabocus 2007, 2010). Such ideals are found within numerous contexts—for example, in advertisements, in news reports, in television programs and so on.

One of the potential consequences of normative ideals is that not everyone in a given society or culture will have the ability (or even the desire) to conform. In addition to the possibility for marginalization to occur, then, according to Goffman (1963), the potential for these individuals to experience a 'stigma' as a result of their exclusion is also increased. Goffman holds that there are three general types of stigma: 'abominations of the body' (e.g., physical deformities; poor health); 'blemishes of character' (e.g., drug use; homosexuality); and undesirable 'tribal affiliations' (e.g., race; ethnicity). These stigmas can be 'felt' (i.e., a stigma that occurs at the personal level) or 'actual' (i.e., a stigma that is experienced at a social level [Goffman 1963; see also Anderson 1998]).

Anderson (1998) establishes a causal link between the stigmatizing effects of marginalization and those who undergo what she refers to as a 'drug-related identity change', holding that the more stigmatizing experiences one endures, the greater the likelihood that they will use or abuse drugs. Anderson draws heavily upon Goffman's work, adding that what is considered 'ideal' can vary across social settings and that, depending upon the setting, people 'establish the categories of persons likely to be encountered there' (Anderson 1998: 2). Such categories are established in all cultures—heterosexual and homosexual alike. With respect to GBQM, such categories occur not only in gay physical settings, but also in GBQM cyberspace social network settings.

The following reviews the literature that examines some of the sources of marginalization that exist within contemporary gay culture. First, gay commercialism will be reviewed. This will be followed by a review of literature that explores gay 'normalization'. The section will conclude with a review of how both phenomena can serve to exclude GBQM who do not fit the gay ideals.

<u>**The Commercialization of Contemporary Gay Culture**</u>

Over the past several decades, LGBTQS in the United States, Europe and beyond have enjoyed changes in policies that have previously curtailed their rights and freedoms. For example, in many places homosexuality has been de-pathologized and de-medicalized (see Conrad & Schneider 1992); sexual acts between same-sex consenting adults have been decriminalized (see Fradella 2002, 2003); and, gay- and lesbian-related (and in some jurisdictions, transgender-related) discrimination has been outlawed. Additionally, there has been considerable easing of many of the former barriers to Western societal institutions, such as adoption, civil unions, marriage, and military service. These changes have not only improved the quality of life for individual LGBTQs, they have increased the economic prosperity of many worldwide gay ghettos: *The Castro* (San Francisco), the *Gay Village* (Manchester), *Chelsea* (New York), *Kreuzberg* (Berlin), *Le Marais* (Paris), *Soho* (London), *Boy's Town* (West Hollywood) and others. As a result, gay ghetto businesses are no longer limited to bars, bathhouses and nightclubs—in fact, the ghettos are now replete with LGBTQ-owned/operated and or 'LGBTQ-friendly' cafés, cinemas, clothing stores, community service centers, grocery stores, sex clubs, sports clubs, theaters, places of worship and a myriad of other spaces wherein LGBTQs can feel 'safe and secure to walk, talk, behave, and consume in as open a way as they [wish]' (Rosenblum 1994: 386). This is supported by Kates (2002: 386), who notes of a Canadian gay ghetto:

> almost all of the necessities of life could be locally obtained: groceries, furniture, hardware supplies, alcohol, and living quarters. Further, if I wished, I was free to socialize and consume exclusively in the gay ghetto, with its wide variety of restaurants, gay bars and nightclubs, sex venues, cinemas, and the gay theatre.

This freedom to socialize and consume has led to a unique brand of gay consumption which, according to Bawer (1993) and Kates (2002), differs from heteronormative mainstream societal consumption. For example, other subcultures, such as 'rave-goers' and *'Star Trek'* fans— subcultures that merely 'step into costume (literally and figuratively) during weekends or special ritualistic occasions' (Kates 2002: 384)—do not share the same 'affiliation with the subculture and the associated social identity issues [that] are more consequential for [gay] consumption'. This unique brand of consumption has led to an influx of money into many worldwide gay ghettos. As a

result, many of the gay zones throughout North America, Europe and Australia have become gentrified and, subsequently, commodified (e.g., Rushbrook 2002).

Moreover, as the 'gay movement constituency' continues to empower itself in Western societies, Chasin (2000: xv-xvi) notes that the gay community has now become a 'target' market, which, in turn, has led to the consumption of the gay ghettos by non-gay 'outsiders', as well. According to Rushbrook (2002: 184), 'whether local residents or visitors . . . empathetic supporters or scandalized voyeurs, [straight] tourists [now] consume the temporary space of queer festivals and parades', as well as 'the more enduring spaces of queer neighborhoods'. Examples of this are found worldwide. For instance, *Melitta Sundström*, a gay café in Berlin's Kreuzberg ghetto now advertises itself as 'tourist friendly' (GayCities 2013); *Forum Bar* in Lyon, France is now listed on a local tourist information website as a 'bar gay convivial' (OnlyLeon 2013); and, Madrid promotes its annual gay pride festival—*Fiesta del Orgullo Gay de Madrid*—as one of the most iconic in the world, due in part to both citizens and tourists: 'La multitudinaria fiesta del Orgullo Gay de Madrid aúna cada año la celebración de ciudadanos y turistas, que han hecho de este evento uno de los más emblemáticos del mundo' (*'Each year, the massive party Madrid Gay Pride celebration brings together citizens and tourists, who have made this event one of the most emblematic of the world'* [esMadrid 2013]).

The Normalization of Gay Culture

Many early gay rights movements (i.e., pre-AIDS) were largely focused on the liberation of sexual identities (e.g., Browning 1997; Signorile 1997; Levine 1998). Nevertheless, during the 1970s, a gay 'Clone Wars' emerged in North America. Gay 'clones' were 'a specifically masculine [gay] subculture [that] stressed gender conformity to traditional masculinity' (Levine & Kimmel 1998: 1). This included, as Levine and Kimmel note, ideals related to homophobia and sexism. This new image was not only a method by which gay men 'challenge[d] their stigmatization as failed men, as "sissies"', it also contributed greatly to the emergence of gay 'clothing stores and sexual boutiques . . . bar[s], bathhouses, and the ubiquitous gym' in many worldwide gay ghettos (Levine & Kimmel 1998: 5). Yet, according to Signorile (1997: 294), the 'insular nature' of the gay ghettos can often keep gay men

locked in one, highly superficial lifestyle, chained to what they know best, keeping them from expanding their lives. The indulgences that this lifestyle encourages and the insecurities it exploits provide these men with all of the highs and lows in their lives offering them none of the richness of queer life that abounds both within the gay ghettos and beyond.

This gay lifestyle is also reified through commercialism. Indeed, with each success of worldwide gay rights movements, the mediated representations of life in the ghettos have demonstrated for 'outsiders'—gay and straight alike—that 'gay people can and do lead a vast array of 'lifestyles' (Signorile 1997: 294).Yet, over the past two decades, some have noted that contemporary gay culture has continued to distance itself from images that are overtly sexual or hedonistic (Signorile 1997: xvii; see also Drucker 2015; Rushbrook 2002). Such a distancing has been criticized by LGBTQ leaders, such as the late Harry Hay, who rejected such depictions as a strategy employed by the national gay press to emphasize gay consumerism (as cited in Bronski 2002). Others, such as Mowlabocus (2007: 62) note that a new form of gay culture has emerged—that of 'metropolitan gay culture'. Mowlabocus defines the metropolitan gay male as 'the most stable, socially recognized, politically assimilated and economically productive expression of homosexuality to be found in the West today'. A sort of gay 'mainstream', Mowlabocus (2007: 62) holds that metropolitan gay culture is physical, referring to 'the gay village, and the proliferation of clubs and bars of shops and cafes that cater to urban gay men'. Metropolitan gay culture is also a lifestyle—'a way of being and a way of being seen as gay' (2007: 62).

Social Exclusion within Contemporary Gay Culture

With the raising of the rainbow flag in many worldwide gay ghettos (a symbol meant to express tolerance of diversity) one might presume that the continuum of sexual identity is also embraced (or, at the very least, tolerated) in these new gay economic zones (see Britt & Heise 1997). Yet, one of the consequences of the commercialization and normalization of gay culture is that some GBQM—i.e., those who cannot (or choose not to) conform to the ideals and images of the 'metropolitan gay male'—risk being excluded from a stake in larger gay cultures. Indeed, Rushbrook (2002: 195) notes that the former 'exotic' qualities of the ghettos have begun to take on a more distinctive and 'disproportionately white, affluent, male, and educated' image that has since become the 'global image of gay identity' (Rushbrook 2002: 195). This is problematic inasmuch as

many LGBTQ communities and organizations espouse an ideology that encourages diversity and tolerance (Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.1. LGBTQ 'CELEBRATE DIVERSITY' rainbow flag.

Nevertheless, it is important to note that the path to LGBTQ acceptance has occurred largely within Western societies (sometimes referred to as 'liberal democracies'; see Ferrell et al. 2008). Such societies can seem almost paradoxical in that they often claim 'to treat the diverse equally [and] to include all citizens on the basis of liberty, equality, and fraternity', while 'formally and informally exclud[ing] whole categories of people on the basis of biology and culture' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 26). This is supported by Drucker (2015: 20), who explains that that, while LGBT people have indeed carved out commercially successful social spaces for themselves, gay commercialism is 'no model of diversity':

> While there are profits to be made from LGBT niche markets, there are far more in uniform spaces targeting consumers with the most effective demand, where people with the wrong bodies, the wrong clothes, the wrong sexual practices, the wrong gender or the wrong colour skin are viewed as bad for branding and marketing, and are regularly excluded. The growth of the commercial scene has thus entailed a rise in stigmatisation and marginalisation for many LGBT people.

Such a view is also supported by Vaid, Duggan, Metz and Hollibaugh (2013: para. 13) who note that within the context of neoliberalism, legal equality is 'an empty shell that hides expanded substantive inequalities'. In other words, these inequalities are 'concealed behind a "truce" between the gay mainstream and capital, which welcomes gay consumers and professionals in return for acquiescence and accommodation' (Hennessy 2006: 389).

21

Evidence of GBQM inequality is found, for example, in the existence of special 'ethnic nights'—often hosted at gay nightclubs or other venues—that are advertised so as to attract GBQM of color and their 'admirers': *Habibi* is a monthly gay Arab party that travels around to different spaces in New York City (HabibiNYC 2016); *Amplifier* is a gay Indian/Middle Eastern event in Birmingham, England (TheGaysian 2016); and *Total Beur* is a gay Arab night in Paris (Le Depot Paris 2016). While perhaps in some regards such events might be construed as positive gestures towards GBQM of color, the fact remains that, for some men, the promotion of such events might convey the message that they are only welcome in the ghettos on certain nights of the week (or even days of the month). Indeed, such gestures can also have the potential to cause 'disenfranchised minorities and marginalized groups' within gay culture to 'encounter significant stress when discovering or coping with their difference' (Braquet & Mehra 2006: 2). The same could also be said of those who feel estranged from mainstream gay communities for reasons such as their body type, their sexual predilections or even their drug use.

In addition to the marginalization of GBQM of color, the rising costs associated with patronizing gay ghetto establishments can also exclude less economically solvent men (e.g., Silverstone 2012). For example, one well-drink cocktail at Paris' *Le Depot* costs nine euros; a dinner at *Café d'Etoile* in West Hollywood or *Thainesia* in Sydney's Darlinghurst district often exceeds forty dollars; and, a three-night hotel stay in San Francisco's Castro district during Pride Weekend can cost as much as two thousand dollars. These figures do not factor in costs such as airfare, train fare, or even parking one's car in a ghetto parking lot for an evening out. Drucker (2015: 3) notes:

> LGBT[Q] people may in a sense be freer today in much of the world than they once were. But whatever freedom they enjoy is increasingly dependent on or constrained by a commercial scene and marketplace that are much more hospitable to people with money, whatever their sexuality, than to those without.

This trend, however, dates back even further. For example, Houlbrook (2005: 69) notes of 1920s London that the key difference among gay consumers was *class*:

> The East End pub may have been cheap and relatively open; the exclusive Mayfair nightspot certainly was not. These differences underpinned the critical tension within queer commercial sociability, focused upon the contradictory ways in which consumerism was understood and organized.

Finally, Rushbrook (2002: 195) notes that, while 'gay urban spectacles welcome tourists and investment . . . sexually deviant . . . landscapes do not'. This has led to a 'watering down of gay space, a simultaneous sexing and desexing of places' (2002: 196). Drucker (2015: 13) links this 'de-eroticisation of the environment' to the effects of capitalism, in that

> free-floating erotic energy in the wider social environment would in systemic terms be wasted, inasmuch as it would not lead people to purchase or perform. The result under capitalism was a 'localization and contradiction of libido' and the reduction of erotic pleasure to the mere pursuit of orgasms.

According to Lambert (2002), the exclusion of non-conforming GBQM in contemporary mainstream gay Western cultures is not surprising given that gay men are only allowed to perform 'queer' (i.e., non-gay) identities when it is useful within a heteronormative context (see also Butler 1993). In other words, gay man cannot openly and publicly engage in queer behavior unless it is seen as a positive contribution to the 'straight world'; or when it is apolitical; or, as Lambert (2002: 62) notes, if it can 'teach a lesson or two about hygiene and style without rocking the boat' (see also Browning 1993). These views are undoubtedly informed by the past gay-enacted marginalization of non-conformist gay identities. For example, mid-twentieth century gay 'liberation', or 'homophile' movements—the *Scientific-Humanitarian Committee* in Germany; the *Forbundet af 1948* in Holland and Norway; the *Riksförbundet för sexuellt likaberättigand* in Sweden; *Arcadie* in France; the *Homosexual Reform Society* in Britain; the *Mattachine Society* in the United States—urged homosexuals to 'adjust' to heteronormative mainstream life by 'adopting heterosexual social and cultural mores' (Meeker 2001: 79). Another example is found in the 'safe-sex'/'no drugs' rhetoric of the 1980s and 1990s AIDS epidemic (e.g., Frederick 2013; Frederick & Perrone 2014), which called upon gay men to modify their sexual and social lives. It is also apparent in the more recent gay 'liberal rights agenda' which 'dominates the lesbian, gay and bisexual political programme, notably in relation to gay marriage' (Ashford 2009: 299).

Some have noted that actions such as those noted above can have a potentially positive effect inasmuch as they are meant to instill a 'profound secondary socialization into gay mores, history, and subcultural meanings' (Kates 2002: 397; see also Britt & Heise 1997; Kates 2000). This is further characterized by 'a set of ideas about politics, high culture, pop culture, society, religion, manners, fashion, and . . . sex' (Bawer 1993: 4). Others, however, have accused the contemporary

gay rights agenda as being *assimilationist* (Hay, as quoted in Bronksi 2002: para. 4); *conservative* (Meeker 2001: 79); *exclusionary* (Holt and Griffin 2003: 405); *unsympathetic* (Kates 2002); and, *but-for-queer* (Rosenblum 1994: 93). Nevertheless, both views highlight the complexity of intersecting sexual identities within a group of people who are comprised of different racial/ethnic identities and social classes (among other types of categories [e.g., Simmons 2013]).

It is perhaps for these reasons that Kates (2002: 384) recommends a reconsideration of the current understanding of 'the relationship between consumption and [the gay] subculture's internal ethos (i.e., shared cultural meanings that constitute the subculture)'. In other words, the notion that gay (sub)cultures are 'relatively seamless configuration[s] of compatible cultural meanings' must be challenged, as, in actuality, 'the [gay] subcultural moral order (or ethos) [is] a protean array of shifting, malleable meanings, open to change, challenge, and internal opposition' (2002: 384).

The following reviews the literature on mediated representations and moral panics. Historical examples and studies that examine the ways in which both gay men and drug users have been demonized through mass media outlets are provided.

MEDIATED REPRESENTATIONS AND MORAL PANICS

In his book *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, Cohen (2002: xxiii) notes that mass media, inasmuch as it is the 'primary source of the public's knowledge about deviance and social problems', often set the agenda, transmit the images and break the silence (by making claims) about such phenomena. Some of the more common forms of mediated representations include news reports, televised reality crime shows and political campaigns (see Ferrell et al. 2008). Indeed, GBQM drug use—in particular *chemsex*—has been the topic of recent mass media news reports. But GBQM drug use is mediated in numerous other ways, as well. For this reason, another question this thesis asks concerns the mediated representations of GBQM drug use—their forms, their 'moral entrepreneurs' and the ways in which some GBQM drug users may internalize their negative constructs. This section reviews some of the literature that highlights the theoretical concepts and studies concerning mediated representations.

Pearce (1973: 290) notes, 'all classes read the sensational press … they find deviance an interesting phenomena'. This is because, as Laing (1971: 115) observes, the media elicits 'pleasurable feelings [that] many people are forbidden to experience, imagine, remember, dream

about, and [that] they are definitely forbidden to talk about'. Moreover, Young (1973a: 316) explains that negatively-framed mediated representations are 'appealing' in that they often 'fascinate and titillate' before reassuring the audience that such behaviors should be condemned (Young 1973: 316). At the very least, 'the media have learnt that the fanning up of moral indignation is a remarkable commercial success' (Young 1973a: 352). Mediated representations are thus frequently the focus of cultural criminological inquiry because—depending upon how they are framed—they are often 'animated with emotion' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 85) and 'saturated with cultural meaning' (2008: 124). In this way, mediated representations serve to construct individual experiences and understandings of social problems such as illicit drug use. This includes the internal constructions of GBQM drug users, as well as society's understanding of them.

One of the potential consequences of the media's negative framing of crime, deviance and social problems is the inciting of 'moral panics'. In fact, Cohen (2002: xxiii) notes that terms such as moral panic and 'deviance amplification'—both products of the 1960s—were 'symbolically linked to certain assumptions about the mass media'. Moral panics can have a number of negative effects inasmuch as they have a tendency to raise social anxieties. As a result, moral panics can deflect 'the interests of political and media elites [by] legitimizing and vindicating enduring patterns of law and order politics, racism and policies such as mass imprisonment' (2002: xxix)—Becker (1963) refers to such campaigns as 'moral enterprises', with 'moral entrepreneurs' at their helm (see also Cohen 2002).

Some have criticized the term moral panic as evoking irrationality and the sense that the world is somehow out of control. However, Cohen defends the term as metaphorical inasmuch as it encompasses a wide variety of media-driven narratives related to such themes as 'drama'; 'emergency and crisis'; 'cherished values threatened'; 'objects of concern, anxiety and hostility'; and 'evil forces or people to be identified and stopped' (Cohen 2002). Such themes are useful for studying the media-driven narratives concerning GBQM drug use, which often focus on the rising rate of gay drug use ('drama'); public health epidemics ('emergencies'); threats to meaningful gay relationships ('cherished values threatened'); the eroding of the gay community ('concerns'); increasing rates of HIV and HCV infection among men who have sex with men ('anxiety and hostility'); and, hedonism ('evil forces or people to be identified and stopped').

In particular, both subcultural theorists and cultural criminologists have often cited the media's role in inciting moral panics around subcultural deviance:

> Though youth was, in this polarizing climate, by no means, the only object of attack and control, it continued to provide one of the pivots of more organized and orchestrated public campaigns. In these campaigns, politicians, chief constables, judges, the press and media joined hands ad voices with the moral guardians in a general 'crack down' on 'youth' and 'permissive' society (Clarke, Hall, Jefferson & Roberts 1975: 73).

As examples, theorists from the *Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* (CCCS) point to the 1960s media coverage of the 'Mods versus Rockers' quarrels, as well as the media's covering of the hippie movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s (e.g., Clarke et al. 1975; see also Cohen 2002). Additionally, Hebdige (1979) describes the media's role in inciting moral panics involving such groups as the 'beats', the 'hipsters' and 'punks'. Finally, in her book *Club Cultures: Music, Media, and Subcultural Capital* Thornton (1996) notes that negatively-framed mass-media moral panic stories can often serve to certify transgression and even legitimize subcultures. This view is bolstered by subcultural theorists, who have suggested that the media is complicit in reproducing deviance, as noted by the BCCC Mugging Group (1975: 75):

> The routine structures of news production—impartiality and objectivity—direct the media in the first instance to the outside, accredited sources. In the case of 'deviant' events, this, in practice, means the representatives of the Control Culture (e.g., police, judiciary, Home Office). Thus, news items are based in the reproductions of primary definitions presented by the Control Culture. The structure of 'balance' requires the admission of alternative definitions, but these always come later, and so are required to reply on terrain already marked out by primary definitions; and they, too, must come from accredited sources (organisations or 'experts'), and not from 'deviants' themselves.

With respect to moral panics that focus on subcultural deviance, Cohen (2002: xxix) notes that after the initial media attention has subsided, these 'villains' of the day often become heroes of the past—that is, they become 'folk devils'. 'Permanent moral panics', on the other hand, can actually increase the level of hostility towards both marginalized groups and (sub)cultural deviance (Cohen 2002: xxix). With respect to GBQM (and perhaps to worldwide LGBTQ 'communities'), the AIDS epidemic provides a good example of a more permanent moral panic—one that continues to not only affect social anxieties towards GBQM by 'outsiders', but that creates and maintains social anxieties *among* GBQM, as well (see Botnick 2000) Similarly, recent media coverage of

chemsex and *party and play* (i.e., behaviors that have been reported as being linked to rising HIV infection rates) threatens to have a similar effect. This thesis investigates some of the media events concerning GBQM drug use, including the criticisms of those who fear such events may incite a moral panic.

According to Ferrell (2013: 258), media-driven moral panics—not to mention the subsequent 'campaigns of criminalization' that often follow—have inflicted 'real and significant damage' on those who are characterized as criminal, deviant or transgressive. Drug use and HIV aside, this trend has affected homosexuals for decades. Indeed, according to Pearce (1973: 290), the early social stigmatization of homosexuals was largely fueled by newspaper headlines that sensationalized homosexual men as 'evil', 'sick', 'perverted' and even 'traitorous'. Whether they were to be 'pitied' (as physiologically deficient) or 'condemned' (as psychological immature), homosexual men were nevertheless seen as 'defective males' (1973: 286). Such characterizations were undoubtedly responsible for the criminalization of homosexual acts—for example, through legislation such as Britain's 1967 Sexual Offences Act; or, through anti-sodomy laws and similar legislation in the United States and other countries. As a consequence, fear of social stigma and police pressure caused many homosexuals to 'concentrate in "gay ghettos", hidden from public view' (Pearce 1973: 284). Even today, GBQM have not been entirely loosed of negative characterizations related to their sexuality. For example, Michigan's state senate recently passed an animal cruelty bill which included a ban on sodomy (see Wright 2016); and, U.S. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump has said that, if elected president, he would strongly consider appointing judges to overturn the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in favor of same-sex marriage (Human Rights Campaign 2016).

For almost a century, illicit drugs have also been a popular topic of media coverage—often driven by thematic narratives such as those articulated by Cohen (above). However, Young (1973b: 315) notes that in media-driven narratives concerning drug use, 'it is not drugs *per se* which are denigrated—for our culture is historically normal in that drug use is ubiquitous. … rather it is drugs taken for *hedonistic* reasons' [emphasis added]. Such narratives can result in the demonization of drug users. This trend dates back to the early twentieth century with mass media coverage of the 'dangers' of marijuana. Indeed, headlines such as, 'The cruel tragedy of dope', or 'Marihuana

makes fiends of boys in thirty days—hasheesh goads users to bloodlust'(Speaker 2001: 608) were not uncommon. Similar tropes continued from about the mid-twentieth century to the present, with each decade seemingly focused on a different type of drug: *LSD* in the 1960s (e.g., Cornwell & Linders 2002); *cocaine* in the 1970s (e.g., Reinarman 1979); *crack cocaine* in the 1980s (e.g., Fan & Holway 1994); *ecstasy* in the 1990s (e.g., Platt 1995); *methamphetamine* in the 2000s (e.g., Weidner 2009); and today, legal highs such as *cathinone* and others (e.g., Stogner & Miller 2013). Moreover, public reaction to illicit drug use was (and, to some extent, continues to be) further fueled by Nixon-era rhetoric, which declared a 'war on drugs' (The American Presidency Project 1971). One of the consequences of such rhetoric is that illicit drug use is often cast as not 'freely chosen but a result of corruption and innocence' (Young 1973a: 352).

Nonetheless, while world leaders consider a change in prohibitionist drug policies (AlterNet 2016), and, despite hedonism having now become more 'mainstream' (Hayward 2004: 182), 'hedonistic' GBQM drug use is now in the crossfires of the mass media. This thesis thus employs the theoretical concepts developed in the study of mediated representations and moral panics to an analysis of the various mediated representations of GBQM drug use. In addition to analyzing more traditional sources such as news reports and documentaries, several unexplored sources will be analyzed, as well—including public health agency and drug awareness organizations campaigns, artistic expressions of GBQM drug use, gay male pornography and the self-mediated representations of GBQM drug users themselves.

The following reviews the literature associated with the subcultural theories and concepts that are associated with cultural criminological inquiries and that are used throughout this thesis. This includes concepts such as 'rule-breaking', 'resistance' and the stylistic subcultural re-appropriation of 'dominant' and 'parent' culture signs and symbols. Homonormative resistance and 'escape' will also be reviewed.

SUBCULTURAL THEORIES: STYLE AND RITUALS

As noted, at the core of the cultural criminological project is the recognition that cultural dynamics often convey the meanings that underlie acts such as crime, deviance and transgression. Equally important is cultural criminology's acknowledgment that these phenomena are collectivized inasmuch as they often begin with subcultures—that is, groups that experience isolation from, or

marginalization by a more dominant culture. In fact, cultural criminologists often view subcultural crime and deviance as 'jointly elaborated solutions' that are crafted in order to solve the subculture's 'collectively experienced' problems (Ferrell et al. 2008: 34). This view echoes the work of Chicago School sociologist Howard Becker (1963: 80), who, in his book *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* notes that subcultures emerge when 'some group of people have a bit of common life with a modicum of isolation from other people, a common corner in society, common problems and perhaps a couple of common enemies'. This view is also supported by Goffman's (1963: 108-9) work on stigma, wherein he explains the process whereby marginalized or stigmatized individuals come to construct their own rituals (or, 'codes'):

> the stigmatized individual defines himself as no different than any other human being, while at the same time he and those around him define him as someone set apart. Given this basic self-contradiction of the stigmatized individual it is understandable that he will make some effort to find a way out of his dilemma, if only to find a doctrine which makes consistent sense out of his situation. In contemporary society, this means that the individual will … attempt on his own to hammer out such a code.

The study of subcultures, whether they are criminal, deviant or drug-using has long been the purview of disciplines such as criminology and sociology. From the early Chicago School to the CCCS (and beyond), subcultural theorists have sought to explain the causal mechanisms of subcultures, as well as the conditions and environments from within which they emerge. Cultural criminology, on the other hand, 'attempts to integrate the fields of criminology and cultural studies or, put differently, to import the insights of cultural studies into contemporary criminology' (Ferrell 1999: 396). For this reason, cultural criminologists are 'attuned … to the subtle, situated dynamics of deviant and criminal subcultures, and to the importance of symbolism and style in shaping subcultural meaning and identity' (Ferrell 1999: 396).

The term *subculture* was first used to classify groups of individuals in the early 1940s; however, Gelder (1997) and others have dated the study of subcultures as far back as sixteenth century England, wherein 'elaborate schem[es] of classification were developed to give identification to a diversity of [deviant] subcultural anti-heroes' (Gelder 1997: 2). In fact, homosexuals were once (and to some extent, still are) the object of such classifications, as Browning (1993: 219) notes:

Homosexuals, as Michel Foucault and his followers have demonstrated, are rather new creatures, inventions of the Victorian obsession to categorize everything on earth. Homosexual as a noun only came into existence during the last quarter of the [nineteenth] century. Until then, a whole array of 'perverse' acts—from sodomy to pedophilia, from lesbianism to masturbation—was considered 'unnatural' sexual behavior.

It was not until the early twentieth century that sociologists from the University of Chicago (i.e., the *Chicago School*) began to map out subcultural 'meaning'. In fact, such a perspective is central to the 'symbolic interactionist' perspective, as posited by Chicago School theorist Herbert Blumer (1969): that individuals act toward things and each other on the basis of the meanings they have established for them; that meanings are derived through social interaction with others; and, that these meanings are interpreted, managed and transformed as individuals attempt to make sense of and handle the objects that make up their social worlds.

Nevertheless, early Chicago School studies often focused on the 'rule-breaking' behavior of subcultural groups. Indeed, in his book *Deviance and Control* Albert Cohen (1966) introduced the notion that subcultural deviance was predicated on the recognition of and adherence to rules—in organizations, in institutions, and in society as a whole—as well as their negative and positive consequences. According to Cohen (1966: 3), 'if human beings are to do business with one another, there must be rules, and people must be able to assume that, by and large, these rules will be observed'. Such a perspective—while sometimes useful for exploring rule-breaking behaviors such as drug use (a crime in many jurisdictions)—is not necessarily comprehensive enough for exploring GBQM drug use. Indeed, as this thesis demonstrates, the use and or solicitation of drugs by GBQM is not only tolerated in many cyberspaces—GBQM and non-GBQM alike—it is promoted.

At a fundamental level, subcultures are groups that exhibit certain features which set them apart from other groups and from society as a whole. For this reason, when investigating subcultures, it is necessary to situate them within the larger culture (or cultures) from which they emerge. This is because social individuals (of which subcultures are comprised) are 'born into a particular set of institutions and relations', as well as a 'peculiar configuration of meanings' which gives them 'access to' and locates them within a larger, or 'dominant culture' (Clarke et al. 1976: 11). Dominant cultures typically possess a set of dominant or ideal societal customs, languages,

norms, political ideologies, religions, values, rituals, and so forth. In a society wherein multiple cultures coexist, the dominant culture is the culture that is the most prevalent and that wields the most power and or influence in these areas. This can complicate one's meanings with respect to drug use and or sexuality. Often, *economic power* (i.e., financial capital) determines which culture is dominant; however, as noted by Pierre Bourdieu (1986) other forms of capital, such as 'social capital', 'cultural capital' and the value of one's social networks can also determine dominance.

Notwithstanding the dominant culture into which one is born, social individuals are also born into a *parent culture*. Not to be confused with one's 'parents', a parent culture encompasses,

> a distinctive structural and cultural *milieu* defined by territory, objects and things, relations, [and] institutional and social practices. In terms of kinship, friendship networks, the informal culture of the neighbourhood, and the practices articulated around them, [individuals] are … located in and by the 'parent' culture ([emphasis in original] Clarke et al 1976: 52).

From this locus, then, the subculture, 'encounter[s] the dominant culture, not in its distant, remote, powerful, abstract forms, but in the located forms and institutions which mediate the dominant culture to the subordinate [i.e., the subculture]' (Clarke et al 1976:52-3). The CCCS, which focused primarily on the study of youth subcultures, often discussed parent cultures in terms of their socioeconomic class, for example, 'working class', 'middle-class', 'bourgeois' and so on. Because a subculture is, in essence, a 'sub-set' of its parent culture, both the subculture and the parent culture 'share significant things which bind and articulate them' (Clarke et al 1976:7). Following from this, a working class subculture emerges from a working class parent culture. One example of this relationship would be the 'hippies', who, although they possessed a distinct enough drug- and music-centered subculture, still embraced some of the values of the middle class parent culture from which they emerged (see, for example, Young 1973; Willis 1976). In this example, the parent culture exists within the middle-class and the hippie subculture emerges from its middle-class parent. Such a perspective is also useful for understanding the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug subcultures—indeed, GBQM drug users exist not only within a dominant heterosexual culture, they may also exist and or participate within a larger gay parent culture, as well.

Finally, although subcultural studies typically examine 'what binds people together in non-normative ways' (Gelder 1997: 6), what sets subcultures apart from their dominant or parent

culture are the dynamics at play—in particular, the contrasts (i.e., the contestations) of their activities, behaviors, belief systems, identities, norms and values to the more 'conventional' values of their dominant and or parent cultures. Indeed, Clarke et al. (1976: 13-14) argues,

> sub-cultures must exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably *different* … They must be focused around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture.

This view is supported by Hebdige (1979: 3), who notes that while 'the meaning of subculture is … always in dispute', it is these contrasts and differences—or, as he refers to them, these 'styles'— that 'the opposing definitions [of subculture] clash with most dramatic force'. In his book *Subculture: The Meaning of Style,* Hebdige (1978: 13) defines subcultures as subordinate groups that re-construct society's codes, language, rules, objects and signs. In this way, even the most 'humble' or 'taken-for-granted' objects can be stolen (or, 'magically appropriated') by subordinate groups and then re-created to carry 'secret' meanings—meanings which express, in code, a form of resistance to the order which guarantees their continued subordination' (Hebdige 1978: 18).

> we are intrigued by the most mundane objects—a safety pin, a pointed shoe, a motor cycle—which, none the less ... take on a symbolic dimension, becoming a form of stigmata[4], tokens of a self-imposed exile ... for those who erect them into icons, who use them as words or as curses, these objects become signs of forbidden identity, sources of value (1979: 13).

These re-appropriations can sometimes be 'traced and re-traced along the lines laid down by the dominant discourses about reality, the dominant ideologies' (Hebdige 1979: 15). This is because subcultural signs tend 'to represent, in however obscure and contradictory a fashion, the interests of the dominant groups in society' (Hebdige 1979: 15). Consequently, the stylized forms and rituals which carry the subculture's meanings are 'dismissed, denounced and canonized' by mainstream society (Hebdige 1978: 2).

LGBTQ Style, Resistance and Transgression

Citizenship in LGBTQ communities, 'like in any community, may [also] be marked through the deployment of style': to signify membership, to separate one's self from 'a more general culture'

---

[4] Hebdige's use of the word stigmata is important to note in that stigma is often described as a catalyst for subcultural formations (see Goffman 1963).

and to express 'common feelings and values' (Freitas, Kaiser & Hammidi 1996: 85). Such an understanding is useful for exploring gay subcultures in which style is perhaps most obvious—for example, 'bears'[5], 'drag queens' and 'leathermen'[6]. Subcultures such as these have adapted, inverted and or twisted the dominant masculine and feminine ideals, norms and values of larger heteronormative societies in highly-creative stylized ways (e.g., *drag queens* are feminized men; *bears* and *leathermen* are hypermasculine).

Style is also useful for exploring the re-appropriations by LGBTQs of other, less obvious dominant cultural signs—for example, the 'lambda'[7] and the 'pink triangle'[8] (e.g., Green & Morrow 2006). Some of these signs and re-appropriations emerged in contrast to a masculine, heteronormative dominant or parent culture. Others may have emerged in response to a dominant or parent gay parent culture. Indeed, as Hall et al. (1976: 5) note:

> Groups which exist within the same society and share some of the same material and historical conditions no doubt also understand, and to a certain extent share each other's' 'culture'. But just as different groups and classes are unequally ranked in relation to one another, in terms of their productive relations, wealth and power, so cultures are differently ranked, and stand in opposition to one another, in relations of domination and subordination, along the scale of 'cultural power' [emphasis in original].

Although perhaps not exclusively, GBQM identities, in general, are expressed in spaces where men of all ages, colors, shapes and sexually 'subversive' identities converge (Rushbrook 2002: 91). It is within these spaces that Simmons (2013: 178-9) argues 'identity and embodiment' are often contested, because, she notes, 'categories of sexual identity and practices are [often] informed by the cultural and spatial settings they are located in or associated with' (see also Butler 1990; Fuss 1991). Yet, Stychin (1998: 200) holds that 'membership of queer space[s]' is often distinguished between 'good gays' and 'bad queers', which he refers to as the 'straight/queer gay dichotomy'. This view is bolstered by Ashford (2009: 302), who notes that 'the straight gay is free

---

[5] Bears strive 'to be seen as regular guys who just happen to like other guys' (Hennen 2008: 9).

[6] Through the donning of leather (jackets, harnesses, caps, etc.), leathermen exhibit 'exaggerated masculinity and a hyperextension of masculine power relations', which it then 'recasts as "play"' (Hennen 2008: 9).

[7] According to the Gay Activists Alliance (1970), which originally re-appropriated the lambda, the lambda sign was appealing inasmuch as it had been used by the Spartan army—an army that banded together to fight against a common oppressor.

[8] In Nazi Germany, homosexual concentration camp inmates were forced to wear a cloth pink triangle in order to differentiate them from other inmates.

to embrace all aspects of their identity except sex itself'. This, he claims, is partly attributed to the gay rights-based politic, with its focus on adoption, same-sex marriage, military service, etc. (see also Bain & Nash 2007).

Recalling Mowlabocus' definition of the 'metropolitan gay male', it is important to note that such an expression of gay conformity implies several outcomes that, in order to be achieved, would suggest the existence of norms and rules that individuals would be logically expected to adhere to, if not embrace, in their pursuit. These outcomes also suggest the existence of rules and norms that are commensurate with those found in heteronormative societies, inasmuch as they lead to stability, sociability, economic viability, and participation in the (LGBTQ) political process. Arguably, in order for GBQM to enjoy positive relations with one another—indeed, in order for them to enjoy positive relations with 'others' in society—some common 'ground rules' must be established. Others may choose to break these rules. Indeed, as Cohen (1966: 7) notes, some persons, 'because of their special personal characteristics [may] have wants that the rules do not recognize as legitimate'. Consequently, if these 'special' individuals are not given a legitimate 'safety valve' for the expression of these needs, they may eventually strike out at both the rules and 'the social institutions which they support' (Cohen 1966: 7). Interestingly, Cohen uses marriage and family as examples of two social institutions that have found it necessary to tolerate minor indiscretions—such as premarital and extramarital sex—in order to preserve their attractiveness, not to mention their integrity.

Nevertheless, Browning (1994: 71) notes that 'being queer … is about *refusing* [emphasis added] to be imprisoned by heterosexual conventions'. In this way, some behaviors—such as drug use and condomless sex—might be seen as acts of resistance against contemporary gay culture. This view is commensurate with that of both cultural criminologists and subcultural theorists, who have characterized some forms of subcultural crime, deviance and transgression as counternormative 'resistance'. In fact, this viewpoint is one of the hallmarks of the CCCS, which posited that certain subcultural configurations, being in a 'continuous struggle over the distribution of cultural power' would seek to 'resist or even otherthrow' the reign or hegemony of the dominant culture (Clarke et al. 1976: 12; see also, Franklin 2007; LeBlanc 1999; Lewin & Williams 2009; Portwood-Stacer 2012).

The LGBTQ community, in general, has had a very recent history of nonconformity to heteronormative societal rules, with many LGBTQ individuals and groups even openly (and sometimes aggressively) resisting the values of heteronormative mainstream societies (see Rosenblum 1994). These forms of resistance have manifested in numerous ways—for example, as expressions of gender nonconformity (e.g., Butler 2011; Cole 2000; Halberstam 1998; Harris 1997; Hennen 2008); in AIDS activism (e.g., Crimp & Rolston 1990; Schulman 2012); and in gay white supremacist groups (Healy 2014). Some LGBTQ subcultures may form in response to mainstream *homonormative* rules and values, as well (e.g., Browning 1994: 71; Drucker 2015; Silverstone 2012). Yet, no studies have explored GBQM drug use as a form of homonormative resistance—this, despite the fact that GBQM drug users often engage in activities and behaviors that run counter to established gay cultural norms concerning, for example, responsible drug use and 'safe sex'.

Notwithstanding heteronormative resistance, many LGBTQ individuals often strive to distinguish themselves from other LGBTQs, as well. This is often accomplished vis-à-vis unique 'quest[s] for distinction' (Kates 2002: 396). Such quests are often related to the 'subcultural meanings of blatant sexuality, safety, and gender flexibility', which are often expressed in opposition to 'a presumably unsympathetic, orthodox mainstream [gay] culture' (Kates 2002: 396). For example, Silverstone (2012) offers a critique on the highly commercialized and normalized aspects of 'gay pride' events, which she bases on her attendance at gay 'shame' events. Gay shame events emerged in London during the late 2000s and have since appeared in Canada, Sweden and the United States; they are often described as 'creative forms of resistance to the banalities of … mainstream gay pride festival[s] and [act as] a satire on the commercialization of [LGBTQ] community' (Silverstone 2012: 67). Many gay shame events are, in fact, produced by gay and queer subcultures, such as Manchester, England's *Get Bent Festival* and Berlin's alternative *Kreuzberg Pride* festival (also known as *Transgenialer CSD*). Among other purposes, these events often serve to criticize the gay mainstream for being wooed by corporate consumerism.

Another way in which LGBTQs confront homonormalization is through transgression, which Simmons (2013: 179) holds, 'deconstruct[s] dominant categories of sexual and gender identity'. As Young (2003: 389) notes, globalization has a tendency to exacerbate both 'relative deprivation and

crises of identity'. As a result, some individuals may perceive that they are somehow treated unfairly. Some individuals may respond in transgressive ways—especially where pleasure is concerned (see also Hayward 2002). Indeed, as this thesis investigates, GBQM drug users often engage in pleasurable transgressions—some of which may be a constructed as responses or challenges to the relative cultural, social and sexual deprivation they may experience in contemporary gay culture. Others may seek to escape altogether, as discussed below.

Escaping from Homonormativity

Certainly, for some GBQM, discriminating discourses concerning 'appropriate' forms of gay expression and identity coupled with the 'invasion' of the ghettos and the exclusion of ethnic, lower income, and sexually subversive queers might, to varying degrees, affect their sensitivities towards mainstream gay physical spaces. In fact, several ethnographic studies of gay consumers/consumerism have revealed that some men now perceive gay ghettos as unwelcoming or even as 'physically and socially unsafe' (Kates 2002: 386; see also Kates 2000; Rushbrook 2002; Halperin & Traub 2009). Such perceptions can engender feelings of internalized homophobia in some men (e.g., Shidlo 1994), which can subsequently lead to a fear of being ostracized, of being further stigmatized, or even of being harmed. In his book, *The Culture of Desire*, gay historian Frank Browning (1997: 166) notes:

> fear of loss and obliteration runs deep anywhere gay men gather—not just because of AIDS. For centuries, homosexuals have been driven from their homes, disinherited, locked behind bars, and, even today in certain Islamic countries, executed. . . . Collective memory does not fade quickly.

In other words, when confronted with fear, GBQM often escape by flocking to 'places of collective release' (1997: 166)—places wherein they can feel safe to express themselves without fear of repercussion.

Some GBQM may seek GBQM cyberspace social networks as an escape from gay physical spaces. Indeed, GBQM have reported using cyberspaces as an alternative escape to more traditional spaces, such as gay bars, bathhouses, nightclubs and circuit parties (e.g., McKirnan, Houston & Tolou-Shams, 2007; see also Wakeford 2002; Ashford 2009). This is supported by Gudelunas (2012: 351), who holds that, 'for sexual minorities routinely discriminated against in the offline world, online environments can often times be a safe space to connect with others and explore

sexual identities'. Moreover, Wakeford (2000: 410) observes that stigma associated with the lack of a 'sense of belonging' can be a chief reason why some GBQM turn to cyberspaces, which, she posits, can often serve as 'refuge[s] from other lesbian, gay, transgender and queer worlds'. Finally, Lambert (2002: 62) points out that:

> homosexual communities have always sought to create or find spheres of activity in which both the 'freedom of expression' and 'safety' lacking in the dominant heteronormative restructuring of social spaces can be found. Certainly virtual environments can be seen to promote the idea of such freedom and the possibility of identity and activity without limits.

It is thus conceivable that men who no longer perceive gay physical spaces as welcoming, tolerant, or even safe may utilize cyberspaces as alternative spaces of 'collective release'.

The following presents a review of the literature that highlights the emergence of gay cyberculture. This is followed by a review of cyberqueer studies and a review of the literature that explores the popularity and importance of GBQM cyberspaces.

GBQM CYBERCULTURE

Cyberspace use among GBQM began during the mid-1980s, at a time when the gay community was being hit hardest by the AIDS epidemic. This usage was facilitated by the release of the new personal computer (PC) and its complement, the *Smartmodem*. Not long after, the development of software that allowed PCs to connect to 'host' computers helped to facilitate the creation of the 'bulletin board system' (BBS)—a new, albeit crude, DOS-based[9] mode of electronic communication that enabled users to access local and national news, download computer software, and buy and sell personal goods and services. Many BBSes also featured private messaging options that allowed members to communicate with one another (Oxford 2009).

Certainly, the 'post-crisis' sensibility that prevailed in the gay communities most affected by AIDS (Watney 2008) may have caused some men to seek sex partners in spaces where they felt safest. In fact (and rather ironically), given the increased risk of HIV infection in physical spaces (such as gay bathhouses, sex venues and pornography video arcades), computer-mediated sexual encounters (i.e., 'cybersex') was (and to some extent, still is) promoted as the 'safest' form of sex

---

[9] DOS is an acronym for 'disk operating system, a computer that is operated using a command line.

(e.g., Daneback, Cooper & Månsson 2005; Rimington & Gast 2007). For many men, this new method of computer-mediated-communication may have helped to 'restore a sense of identity and dignity for [the] formerly social . . . who could not (or would not) leave their home, whether stemming from a fear of contracting HIV, or because they had already begun to show the first signs of infection' (Frederick 2012: 54-55; see also Baams, Jonas, Utz, Bos & van der Vuurst 2011).

Following the BBS, GBQM began to use a Windows-based software program known as 'Internet Relay Chat' (IRC). Similar to the chat rooms found on many of today's cyberspace social networks, IRC was the first mass-marketed service that allowed for 'real-time' communication between individuals in cyberspace—both individually, and in 'channels' of users (e.g., '#gayolder'; '#gaymuscle'; '#gayteensex' [Shaw 1997]). Although today a largely defunct method for communicating, IRC was once criticized as being 'void of all physical contexts' (Shaw 1997: 134)and thus it was believed that users would be unable to fully decode the implied meanings in chat messages. On the contrary, GBQM IRC users were found to be 'bricoleurs of physical context, actively employing all of the letters, numbers, and symbols the computer keyboard offers in order to create and convey these physical contexts' (Shaw 1997: 135).

Not long after the introduction of IRC, Internet 'dial-up' services such as *America Online*, (more popularly referred to as AOL) and *EarthLink*—both based in the U.S.—began to rise in popularity due in part to user-friendly interfaces that offered e-mail accounts, local and national news, online shopping and access to the World Wide Web (Coates 1999). These 'online communities' were popular with GBQM, often acting as electronic gay ghettos (e.g., Shaw 1997; see also Woodland 1999). Moreover, like their predecessor IRC, most dial-up services also featured easy-to-access chat rooms within which GBQM spaces began to emerge—spaces with names such as 'men4menlosangeles' (i.e., men in Los Angeles who sought to connect with other men for dating, sex and intimate relationships), 'm4m4sex' (i.e., men seeking to have sex with other men) and other *'x4x'* combinations.

As Internet service providers began to offer faster, more direct connections to the Internet, dial-up services began to fall out of favor and were replaced by direct access. Since the advent of Web 2.0, virtual space has played host to a multitude of GBQM social spaces, most of which can be found using simple keyword searches (e.g., 'gay online social network') through Internet search

engines such as *Google* and *Yahoo*. For example, there are websites for local LGBTQ community service centers, online clothing stores (e.g., *ChicagosGayMart.com*; *10percent.com*), news outlets (e.g., *Advocate.com*; *PinkNews.co.uk*), porn websites (e.g., *ManHub.com*, *FreeGayPorn.com*), sex 'gear' shops (e.g., *FortTroff.com*; *Prowler.co.uk*), special interest groups (e.g., *Great Autos of Yesteryear* [or, *G.A.Y.*]); *Great Outdoors*), gay activist groups and many others. In fact, Shaw (1997: 137) uses the analogy of the 'gay bar' as an all-encompassing term to illustrate the different types of cyberspaces that GBQM seek. Indeed, like the physical space of the archetypal gay bar— which elicits images of 'large crowds, loud music, flashing lights, and pulsating bodies'—there also exist other GBQM physical social spaces, such as 'corner bars, piano bars, leather bars . . . discos . . . under-age gay dances and drag shows' (1997: 137).

PC technology has advanced such that individuals can now access cyberspaces from practically anywhere they may be in physical space. This is typically accomplished through the use of smartphones, but also with mobile technologies such as 'tablets' (e.g., Apple's *iPad*). One of the advantages of these mobile virtual spaces is the ability to communicate with others using new software and hardware interfaces. Indeed, *Google*, *Facebook* and *Skype*—all PC-based at one time—have been re-packaged into new smartphone- and tablet-native apps. As well, the webcam— now available for use with computers, smartphones and tablets—has liberated individuals from the former text-based communications that were once standard fare.

<u>Cyberqueer Studies</u>

Morton (1995) and Wakeford (2002) were among the first to discuss the importance of the Internet to LGBTQ individuals. They were also the first to coin the term 'cyberqueer'—the melding of 'cyber', which denotes the virtual space of the Internet, and 'queer', a 'positive reunderstanding of a once negative word [used as] an umbrella to encompass the concerns of both female and male homosexuals and bisexuals' (Morton 1995: 369). Little more than a decade ago, 'cyberqueer studies', an offshoot of the fields of Internet studies and queer theory, was a still a fairly nascent area of research. This is because:

> many of the technologies which [were] required to access online spaces began to be developed in the late 1980s, and as a result this area of study has a short history, with published works beginning in the mid-1990s and concentrating on the United States (Wakeford 2002: 115).

Around the same time that GBQM began to access cyberspace, research concerning GBQM Internet use was overshadowed by the amount of attention given to HIV/AIDS (Wakeford 2002). Even today, many studies of GBQM cyberspace use are concerned with the epidemiological consequences of drug- and sex-related behaviors that occur as a result (e.g., Berg 2008; Carpiano, Kelly, Easterbrook & Parsons 2011; Golub, Johnson & Dunlap 2005; Green & Halkitis 2006; Grov 2011), with little attention given to the (sub)cultural dimensions of these environments. Nevertheless, some studies reveal that, for some LGBTQ, cyberspace social networks can be 'an integral part of [the] coming-out process and the formulation of a gay identity' (Shaw 1997: 143). Even in South Asia and India, where 'the internet remained a distant space until very recently', GBQM cyberspace social networks play 'a vital role in the growth of queer communities and mobilising towards queer rights' (Dasgupta 2012: 117). Indeed, as Dasgupta (2012: 119) notes, in cyberqueer space, not only *gay* identity, but *queer* identity serves as

> a point of entry into mainstream politics around restriction and discrimination, [and] makes distinctions between identities shaped by culture and geography (the West and the East), social conditions (class structures) and personal identities—ones that we construct on our own.

Nevertheless, Wakeford (2002) notes that most studies of LGBTQ Internet use are unable to provide definitive information about the identity of the users themselves. Rather, many of these studies focus on the psychosocial aspects of online interactions. Others report that the study of LGBTQ Internet usage can be problematic inasmuch as such studies are typically 'limited to a single online community' and, 'the lives represented . . . often reinforc[e] hegemonic cultural beliefs of the "gay lifestyle"' (Paradis 2009: 449). Still others contend that many studies of LGBTQ cyberspace usage 'operate within [a] 'heteronormative *straight*jacket' ([emphasis in original] Ashford 2009: 304), and are thus limited by the full range of queer expressions that might otherwise be explored.

At one time it was predicted that the use of GBQM online services would be short-lived (e.g., Wakeford 2002); however, this may not be as true today as numerous studies have documented the increasing popularity of GBQM online social networks (e.g., Wakeford 2002; Davis et al. 2006; Gudelunas 2012; Rice et al 2012; Toch & Levi 2012). Indeed, according to

Consumer Economics (as cited in Dasgupta 2012), by 2005 the number of gay individuals who accessed the Internet was expected to reach 22.4 million. Certainly, this number is much higher today. In terms of Internet usage, one study found that, on average, LGBT youth spent an average of five hours each day (approximately 45 minutes more than non-LGBT youth in the study) accessing cyberspaces via a variety of different electronic devices (Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network 2013). Another study (Harris Interactive 2010) found that LGBT adults used cyberspace social networking sites more often than their heterosexual counterparts. In fact, excluding email, the study found that nearly twice as many gays and lesbians (32%) reported that they were online 'between 24 and 168 hours per week, compared to 18 percent of heterosexuals' (Harris Interactive 2010: para. 2). With respect to GBQM, this is not surprising given that GBQM networks such as *Grindr*, *Adam4Adam*, *Gaydar* and *Scruff* report millions of members worldwide (with smaller networks reporting membership numbers in the thousands and hundreds of thousands).

Of course, membership numbers do not necessarily prove popularity (e.g., members may be inactive or may have duplicate accounts); however, research shows that within the gay community the popularity and importance of cyberspace has grown such that GBQM report cyberspace as more likely to be the preferred environment for them to meet other men for dates, friends or sexual encounters (e.g., Bolding et al. 2007; Wakeford 2002). Moreover, Ashford (2009: 299) notes that, for some sexual minority groups, the use of environments such as 'bulletin boards, chat rooms, [and] profile based sites' has grown such that these environments are beginning to encroach upon traditional brick-and-mortar spaces (i.e., bars and nightclubs [see also McKirnan, Houston & Tolou-Shams 2007; Wakeford 2002]). Indeed, Ashford reports that men who have sex with men are significantly more likely to meet their first sexual partner through cyberspace environments than they are in physical spaces (see also Tsang 1994; Wakeford 2002).

Some GBQM cyberspace social networks can be thought of as 'different social spaces [wherein] different realities are constructed so as to enable a form of intimate interaction' (Ashford 2009: 298). For some, these networks are used for 'real world sexual encounters' (Ashford 2009: 303). For others, though, GBQM cyberspace social networks are used to facilitate 'virtual' sexual encounters (also known as 'virtual sex' or 'cybersex'). At least one study (Braquet & Mehra 2006)

has concluded that, for some men, this can lead to 'Internet addiction', which, in turn, can result in feelings of low self-esteem and a tendency to engage in 'denial' techniques in an effort to neutralize otherwise negative feelings concerning Internet usage. Although some men in Braquet and Mehra's study reported that they had originally sought Internet chatrooms 'as a way to overcome perceived social isolation', these individuals, it was also reported, were described as having 'lost the ability to relate in real world relationships, and at times, [even] engaged in dangerous and anonymous sexual encounters' (2006: 5).

Finally, for some LGBTQs, some cyberspace environments can serve as alternative communities altogether. In fact, Gudelunas (2012: 351) holds that, 'for sexual minorities routinely discriminated against in the offline world, online environments can often times be a safe space to connect with others and explore sexual identities'. And Lambert (2002: 62) notes:

> homosexual communities have always sought to create or find spheres of activity in which both the 'freedom of expression' and 'safety' lacking in the dominant heteronormative restructuring of social spaces can be found. Certainly virtual environments can be seen to promote the idea of such freedom and the possibility of identity and activity without limits.

This is particularly true for GBQM who, for one reason or another, feel as though they do not 'fit in' in these environments. Indeed, Wakeford (2000: 410) observes that the stigma associated with the lack of a 'sense of belonging' can be a chief reason why some GBQM turn to cyberspace social networks, which, she posits, can often serve as 'refuge[s] from other lesbian, gay, transgender and queer worlds'. Yet, as demonstrated below, 'the Internet, as a social technology, can be complicit in reproducing patterns of social inequities that are omnipresent offline' (Paradis 2009: 447-448).

Marginalization and Stigma in Cyberspace Social Networks

It is presumed that marginalization and stigma are anticipated by GBQM cyberspace social network developers. This is evidenced by the presence of network 'tolerance' statements which serve to inform members of the networks' intolerance for discriminatory language—whether in the profiles of members, or in the personal communications that are shared between them. For example, on its *About Us* page, *PlanetRomeo* posts the following statement:

> Tolerance, respect, openness, freedom of expression…. These are not just empty words. Without them a community like ours could not survive. We want our community to be open to as many people as possible. This includes people of all

nationalities, religions, and political persuasions—from left to right, black to white, top to bottom—and everything in between. Sexually we're very broad-minded too! We do our best to respect diversity and we expect our users to do their best too. […] Racism, discriminatory insults and cruelty to people or animals are absolutely forbidden (PlanetRomeo 2015).

Similarly, *Grindr* posts a tolerance statement under its *Terms of Service*, which warns members not to

post, store, send, transmit, or disseminate any information or material which a reasonable person could deem to be objectionable, defamatory, libelous, offensive, obscene, indecent, pornographic, harassing, threatening, embarrassing, distressing, vulgar, hateful, racially or ethnically or otherwise offensive to any group or individual, intentionally misleading, false, or otherwise inappropriate, regardless of whether this material or its dissemination is unlawful (Grindr 2016)

And yet, despite the use of such tolerance statements, some studies have shown that discriminatory language is often found in GBQM cyberspace social networks. For example, Woo (2013) notes that on *Grindr*, some men may experience discrimination through the presence of partner 'preferences'. Others have explored anti-Asian sentiment in cyberspace social network member profiles (Han, Proctor & Choi 2014; Riggs 2013). Still others have examined the 'anti-feminine' preferences of men who employ terms such as 'Str8-Acting' (i.e., someone who does not act 'gay' [e.g., Cassidy 2013; Milani 2013; Payne 2007; Shuckerow 2014]). These studies refer to the use of discriminating text by GBQM in the United States, however, at present no studies have documented the use of such of such text in other countries.

More recently, some researchers have suggested that homonormative ideals are also reified by GBQM social media developers who build these ideals into the very network technologies themselves. Indeed, Race (2015: 254) notes that these developers often begin with ideas of the 'ideal user', which they then use to 'inform the design of these technologies' (see also Woolgar 1991). According to Race (2015: 254-5), these 'racialized and masculinized forms of sexual capital [are] typically *valued* and *promoted* on the most popular sites', not to mention 'the privileging of certain body types (i.e., the gym body)' ([emphasis added] see also Faris & Sugie 2012; Gosine 2007; Mowlabocus 2007; Rushbrook 2002). One of ways in which these ideals are 'built in' is through the use of ideal images on a network's homepage and or in its marketing materials. Another way is through the network profile. Both of these mechanisms are discussed and analyzed in greater detail in Chapter Four.

CONCLUSION

In order to understand the cultural dynamics that underlie crime, deviance and transgression, it is necessary to situate those who engage in these phenomena within the larger culture or cultures within which they exist. Over the past several decades, LGBTQs in many Western societies have experienced increased visibility as a result of changes in policies that formerly curtailed their rights and freedoms. As a result, economic prosperity in many worldwide gay ghettos has increased. This has resulted in the gentrification of the ghettos and an increase in the cost to participate in gay ghetto life. While these changes have improved the lives of many, other less economically solvent individuals may experience marginalization as a result.

Many gay ghettos and gay events have also experienced an increase in 'outsiders' who visit the ghettos in search of exotic experiences. This has led to a 'de-sexing' of many ghettos. Consequently, some LGBTQs may perceive of the ghettos as 'unsafe'.

At the same time, a new 'global gay image' has emerged—one that is characterized by the 'metropolitan gay male'. Such an image, however, is not representative of all GBQM—for example, older men, men of color, queer men, and men with bodies that do not 'fit'. Furthermore, through the emergence of 'ethnic nights' in many gay ghetto nightclubs, some men may perceive that they are only welcome at certain times. Others may feel objectified.

Whereas dominant cultures typically possess a set of dominant or ideal societal customs, languages, norms, political ideologies, religions, values, rituals, etc., parent cultures are defined by territories, objects, things, relations and institutional and social practices that possess a distinctive structural and cultural *milieu.* It is within the parent culture that social networks—and the practices that are articulated around them—are located. For many, contemporary gay culture can be viewed as a parent culture. Yet, as contemporary gay culture becomes more 'normalized, some men may experience a crisis of identity. Others may refuse to conform; some may be unable. As suggested by Cohen (2002), still others may have special characteristics that, they believe, may exempt them from the 'rules' of contemporary gay society. At the very least, some may require a 'safety valve'. Transgression and resistance are two ways of overcoming these limitations. Escape is another.

Browning (1995: 162-163) notes that gay culture is 'marked by the ritualistic pursuit of party, pageant, and parade' in 'places of collective release', and that, within these spaces one finds

an 'aura of ritualized deliverance' from the collective memory of fear, oppression and stigmatization. Although Browning's observation was made at a time when cyberspace was still in its infancy, the same might also be said of GBQM cyberspace social networks. Indeed, some men who experience a sense of stigma as a result of their exclusion from mainstream gay culture may escape to cyberspace. The second part of this chapter thus began with a review of the evolution of cyberspace usage by LGBTQs—from their early experiences with IRC to the emergence of numerous LGBTQ cyberspace social settings. A review of the emergence of cyberqueer studies was also provided; this included a review of studies that have revealed the importance and popularity of cyberspace for LGBTQs who may feel marginalized within contemporary gay culture. The chapter concluded with a review of some of the more recent studies that have revealed the presence of social inequities and discrimination within GBQM cyberspace social networks.

The next chapter describes the methods that were employed for this thesis. The chapter begins with an overview of ethnography and virtual ethnography, as well as a description of the more nuanced ethnographic methods that were used to observe GBQM drug users in various cyberspace settings: instant ethnography; ethnographic content analysis; and, visual content analysis. This is followed by a description of critical discourse analysis and how it was used to analyze the power differentials that exist within cyberspace social network member profiles, as well as in the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. The chapter also provides a detailed account of the research process, including an explanation of the 'scoping out' phase and descriptions of each of the GBQM cyberspace social networks that were observed. New ways of conceptualizing networks that exist as more permanent (i.e., 'static') environments, as well as those that are more temporary (i.e., 'dynamic') will be proffered The chapter concludes with a discussion of the ethical considerations of virtual (i.e. *cyberspace*) ethnography, as well as my reflections on my role as a queer man within the present research.

CHAPTER 3 - METHODS

> Subcultural studies, exhaustive ethnographies, may well reveal more about a particular group, community, or a district (or all three as if indistinguishable) than any other mode of research practice … [a]s such, it details, elaborately details, particularity and difference (Jenks 2005: 67-8).

According to anthropologist James P. Spradley (1973: 11), before attempting to apply theory to behavior, researchers should first determine how their subjects of interest 'define the[ir] world[s]'. Nevertheless, many social scientists often utilize one culture as a template by which to analyze and assess other cultures. This is referred to as 'ethnocentrism', which can be overcome by striving to discover new theories based on the empirical data gleaned from cultural and subcultural descriptions (e.g., Glazer & Strauss 1967). *Ethnography* offers such an opportunity. Different from quantitative methods (which seek to predict behavior based on statistical analyses of finite variables), ethnographies try to gain access to subjective meaning (see Geertz 1973; Spradley 1973) and are thus as unique and as varied as the individuals they describe. Ethnographies often involve the observation of cultural and subcultural behaviors. Such behaviors often include the use of special language, the re-appropriation of signs and symbols, the practice of rituals and the ways in which members of groups interact with themselves and others.

While cultural criminologists employ a variety of research methods, ethnographies make up a considerable part of cultural criminology's body of research. Through ethnography, cultural criminologists are better poised to 'uncover the complex, subjective meanings and systems of meanings that are constructed by criminal, deviant or transgressive individuals and groups' (Frederick & Larruskain 2016: 3; see also Ferrell et al. 2008). Additionally, through ethnography cultural criminologists are able to observe the numerous ways in which different cultures (and, for that matter, different subcultures) make use of (and or reappropriate) the signs and symbols of more dominant or parent cultures. Ethnography also enables cultural criminologists 'to observe the cultural and subcultural use of signs and symbols, the practice of rituals and customs, and the ways in which members of criminal or deviant groups interact among themselves and with others (Frederick & Larruskain 2016: 3). Some examples of the ethnographies that have been conducted by cultural criminologists include Ferrell's (2004) 'dumpster diving' ethnography, Martin's (2009)

ethnography of a British 'chav' subculture, and Ilan's (2013) ethnography of young impoverished men in Dublin.

This thesis employs ethnography in that, through the observation of cyberspace environments and cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug-use, it attempts to make sense of the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use by revealing how GBQM drug users utilize the tools and spaces available to them; how they interact with one another; how they construct drug-related identities; and, how they pursue their drug-related activities and rituals. Underpinning this methodology is a symbolic interactionist approach which, I found, was useful for exploring some of the ways in which individuals might ascribe meaning to their actions (see Blumer 1969), as well as to study the activities and behaviors of individuals in cyberspace environments—environments wherein the importance of identity construction cannot be understated.

For this thesis I employed a theoretical 'tool kit' (Swidler 1986) that is comprised of many of the concepts and theories that are often associated with the study of cultural and subcultural dynamics. In this way, I employed a 'pragmatic' theoretical approach to GBQM drug use. This approach has been successful in the study of other GBQM subcultures—for example, 'faeries', 'bears' and 'leathermen' (Hennen 2008). Such an approach is ideographic in that it views theories as cultural artefacts which are then used 'to help make sense of some aspects of specific kinds of phenomena' (Hennen 2008: 13). As with Hennen's (2008: 13) study, I, too 'address some aspects, but probably not others'.

This chapter describes the methods that were employed in the observation of numerous cyberspace environments; in the observation of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use; and in the observation of some of the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. Part One of the chapter begins with an overview of virtual ethnography, as well as a description of the more nuanced ethnographic methods that were used: instant ethnography, ethnographic content analysis and visual content analysis. A description of critical discourse analysis is also provided. Part Two of the chapter provides a detailed account of the research process. First, the 'scoping out' phase is described. This is followed by descriptions of each of the networks that were observed. The chapter concludes with a section on the ethical considerations of cyberspace research, including the

protection of research subject identity, the protection of network identity, the integrity of the researcher in highly sexually-charged environments and my own reflexivity.

PART ONE: ETHNOGRAPHY AND CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

According to Hine (2000: 4-5), ethnography 'takes account of and participates in the relationships, activities and understandings of people'. Ethnographies can be conducted almost anywhere people live, work, play, or otherwise act. For this reason, criminologists are able to conduct (and or otherwise draw upon) ethnographies in a variety of locations—for example, bars and taverns (e.g., Becker 1963); crack-houses (e.g., T. Williams 1992); working class suburbs (e.g., Hebdige 1979); and, nightclubs (e.g., Perrone 2010; Thornton 1996), to name a few.

Ethnographies can also be conducted in cyberspace environments. Indeed, similar to ethnography, 'virtual ethnography' (also known as 'cyberethnography', 'Internet ethnography' and 'nethnography') also takes account of and participates in the relationships, activities and understandings of people. Rather than conducting observations using physical field sites, though, virtual ethnographies are primarily conducted in online or virtual settings—that is, in cyberspace, where the focus is on the effects of computer-mediated-communication on 'social interactions and the presentation of the self online' (Mann & Stewart 2006: 4). Some examples of the types of virtual sites that have been the focus of non-criminological ethnographies are Internet chat rooms (e.g., Mileham 2007; Mathy, Kerr & Haydin 2003); online social networks (e.g., Bury 2003; Hodkinson 2003); gay online social networks (e.g., Crooks 2013; Mowlabocus 2012); and, multi-user domains (MUDs [e.g., *World of Warcraft* {e.g., Lopez-Rocha 2010; M. Williams 2006}]).

Criminologists have only recently begun to utilize ethnography to explore the criminogenic aspects of cyberspace. For example, Banks (2014) observed the behaviors and spaces associated with online gambling; Potter (2010) explored online cannabis markets; and Wilson and Jones (2008) tracked a pedophile's use of the Internet. Criminology has yet to perform an ethnography of GBQM drug users, though—regardless of the setting in which their drug use occurs. In fact, only two criminological nethnographies have been performed of GBQM drug-related phenomena. The first (Frederick 2013) explored the subcultural dynamics of GBQM drug users in a Los Angeles-based online message board. The second (Frederick & Perrone 2014) explored the Internet as an 'escape' for GBQM drug users—in particular, escape from stigma related to the marginalization,

medicalization and pathologization of GBQM drug users by drug- and health-related organizations (public and private). This thesis thus seeks to complement the current criminological research by employing ethnography to explore GBQM cyberspace-facilitated drug use.

Ethnographic accounts are often constructed from the researcher's field notes which are used to 'shape, challenge, reproduce, maintain, reconstruct and represent … the selves of others' (Coffey 1998: 8). For this reason, an ethnographer's field notes should be as 'thick' as possible (see Geertz 1973). Copious field notes were taken in conjunction with this thesis. Although I took notes as I made my observations, it was often necessary to continually reflect for a period of time in order to make sense of the relevance of my observations with respect to new observations that were made. These notes, which took the form of handwritten journals, *Microsoft Word* documents, screen grabs (taken on my Apple *iPhone*) and screenshots taken on my personal computer were used to both record my observations and collect data on, for example, the types of drugs that were solicited by GBQM drug users; the ways in which drugs were solicited; the ways in which drug-themed visual content was posted in cyberspace environments (including the types of content that were posted); the potentially stigmatizing preferences found in cyberspace GBQM social network member profiles (i.e., preferences for the types of sexual partners sought or not sought); and, the actions, appearances and emotionality of men who performed drug ingestion experiences via 'real-time' webcam performances. From these notes I constructed narratives in order to paint a more detailed picture of the cultural and subcultural dynamics of GBQM cyberspace-facilitated drug use. Using theoretical concepts and research from such fields as criminology, cultural criminology and subcultural studies, I then analyzed these narratives and my data for their impact on our present understandings of not only subcultures in general, but of GBQM drug-using (sub)culture(s) in particular.

In her book *Virtual Ethnography*, Christine Hine (2000: 4-5) defines the 'virtual ethnographer' as one who 'spend[s] an extended period of time immersed in a [virtual] field setting', which, she notes, assists the virtual ethnographer in making 'explicit the taken-for-granted and often tacit ways in which people make sense of their lives within such settings'. Hine (2000) also posits that, because of the mobile and or multi-sited characteristic of computer-mediated interactions, conceptualizing the virtual field site can be quite challenging. This is because the

'flow and connectivity' of virtual spaces differs considerably from face-to-face ethnographies, which often involve specific physical locations with 'tangible boundaries' (Hine 2000: 64; see also Steinmetz 2012). Indeed, Steinmetz (2012: 29) notes that one of the features of websites is the presence of 'weblinks' (or simply, 'links') which, when 'clicked', can often redirect researchers out of their field sites. According to Steinmetz (2012: 29):

> it can be argued that the link (the website that was 'linked' to the original page) makes the website a part of the field site, albeit a less relevant part. It can also be argued that to follow every link and make it part of the study is too overwhelming a task for any single researcher.

However, Steinmetz (2012: 29) warns, 'to *not* click on the links … is to perhaps miss items of cultural relevance which may yield context to the ethnography [emphasis added]'. It is perhaps for this reason that Hine (2000: 64) advises virtual ethnographers to leave the boundaries of their field sites open and unrestrained in order to explore 'the making of boundaries and the making of connections—especially between the 'virtual' and the 'real'.

For this thesis I spent over three months immersed in numerous cyberspace social networks that are popular among GBQM—both drug-user and non-drug user alike. In addition to observing GBQM cyberspace social networks, through the clicking of weblinks I was able to explore a myriad of other GBQM (and non-GBQM specific) environments. These environments included both mainstream social media platforms (e.g., *Instagram*; *Twitter*; *Tumblr*; *YouTube*), as well as sites that targeted GBQM specifically (e.g., other GBQM cyberspace social networks; gay male pornography sites). I found that many GBQM even inserted weblinks into their cyberspace social network member profiles, as well as in their chatroom discussions. There are perhaps numerous reasons for this—for example, to direct individuals to other GBQM social networks (i.e., those that permit the uploading of drug-themed visual content); or, to pornography websites (i.e., to convey the individual's preferences for and or to share certain genres of pornography). Following these weblinks and member-created links also allowed for the examination of 'media paratexts' concerning many of the GBQM cyberspace social networks that were observed. Indeed, this combining of 'software and paratext' helped to provide an 'outline [of] the internal logic' (Roth 2014: 2118) of many of these spaces.

There are, of course, other challenges to conducting virtual ethnographies. For example, Steinmetz (2012) notes that the researcher must often decide how and whether to include content that is provided by individuals whose identity cannot be established (e.g., in the form of weblogs, chats and profiles). This was a challenge that I encountered repeatedly, given that it is not uncommon for GBQM network members to omit identifying information in their cyberspace social network profiles (beyond that of one or more 'faceless' photographs). Nonetheless, I discovered that what a person *did not* reveal about himself could often be relevant—especially when applying Goffman's (1963) concept of the 'discrepant role' (discussed in Chapter Four). Additionally, temporality can be an issue in virtual ethnographies, especially when using data collected from archived Internet message boards. In this regard, the 'message board itself becomes an ethnographer's raw data because the website itself has captured everything already' (Steinmetz 2012: 30). Indeed, some cyberspace social network profiles remain unchanged for long periods of time, thus becoming an archive of sorts. With the exception of cyberspace social network member profiles and visual content, I did not experience many temporal challenges, as some of my field notes were based on the 'real-time' webcam interactions of GBQM drug users.

Steinmetz (2012:27) notes the importance of developing ethnographic methodologies for use in virtual environments inasmuch as such methods can provide a way for researchers to better understand and experience 'the immediacy, the emotions, and the connection' of those who use virtual sites (see also Blevins and Holt 2009). This thesis thus employs a variety of ethnographic methods—many of which are used by cultural criminologists and subcultural theorists in physical environments—in *cyberspace* environments, as noted in the following sections.

<u>Instant Ethnography</u>

One method that was utilized for this thesis is 'instant ethnography'. Instant ethnography counters the claim that an ethnographer must spend considerable amounts of time 'inside a group or situation' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 179). Rather, instant ethnography allows the researcher to view 'crime, criminality, and criminal justice as a series of [instant] contested performances undertaken in dangerous little everyday theatres' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 181). For this reason, instant ethnography is often referred to as 'the ethnography of performance' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 180).

While the definition of instant ethnography implies that it is only suited for capturing acts of crime and deviance as they occur in the 'real world', instant ethnography was found to be particularly useful for observing the real-time (i.e., 'live') drug-related activities, behaviors and discussions (i.e., text-based, visual and auditory) of GBQM in their various cyberspace 'theatres'. These 'performances' ranged from webcam discussions concerning drug usage to drug-related ingestion activities (e.g., blowing clouds and slamming[10]). These phenomena were often of a transient nature and thus demanded instant ethnography inasmuch as the windows of observation-opportunity were often limited to a few hours (and sometimes minutes). Some examples of these transient phenomena included webcam chatroom discussions with limited logging histories (i.e., chatroom text that was automatically deleted after a period of time or after a set number of lines of text) and webcam conference calls that were only active for a set period of time.

I took field notes of my real-time observations—often using desktop computer screen recording software. I then played back these performances and coded them to account for the types of environments in which GBQM drug users were individually situated (e.g., bedrooms; hotel rooms; other spaces), as well as the nature of the observations themselves (e.g., drug use; drug soliciting; emotionality; language usage; sexual activity; other rituals). These observations were then analyzed using theoretical concepts from criminology (mainstream; critical; cultural), cultural studies, behavioral health, epidemiology, media studies and subcultural studies.

Participant and Complete Observation

Participant observation involves research that is conducted by a researcher whose identity as a researcher is known to those being studied (e.g., Atkinson & Hammersley 1994). This method is further nuanced by such factors as

> how much, and what, is known about the research by whom … what sorts of activities are and are not engaged in by the researcher in the field, and how this locates her or him in relation to the various conceptions of category and group membership used by participants … [and] what the orientation of the researcher is; how completely he or she adopts the orientation of insider and outsider (Atkinson and Hammersley 1994: 249).

---

[10] Although these acts may not constitute crimes in all jurisdictions, the ingestion of illicit substances while web-camming nevertheless makes these performances dangerous inasmuch as the performers place themselves and others at risk of arrest, overdose or perhaps predation (e.g., blackmail).

On many of the GBQM cyberspace social networks that were observed (for example, *Get2ThePoint*, *Grindr*, *NastyKinkPigs* and *PlanetRomeo*), I was a participant observer inasmuch as my status as a researcher was made known to the members of the networks that were observed. Additionally, on three of the networks (*Get2ThePoint, NastyKinkPigs* and *PlanetRomeo*) my status as a researching 'member' was also searchable even when I was not signed-on to the network (for example, when in Hamburg, *PlanetRomeo* members would have been able to see my profile if performing a search for members in Hamburg). Also, in each of the static networks, my member profiles contained either a statement that identified me as a researcher, or, my member name (or, 'screen name') reflected my status as a researcher (i.e., 'KentResearcher' or 'PhdResearcher'). It should be noted that, on occasion, members would attempt to communicate with me via private chats, instant messages or internal emails. Generally speaking, these messages and emails were inquiries for further information on my research. None of these communications were used as data for this thesis.

On the contrary, in more temporary networks (i.e., webcam conferences calls created using *Skype* and *Zoom*) I maintained a passive role as a covert observer. According to Davidson (2006: 48-49), covert research is often used with 'difficult-to-access or deviant groups' and is undertaken without the consent or knowledge of respondents':

> This type of social research is most strongly associated with participant observational work where a researcher joins a group or organization assuming a covert role in order to observe first hand the functioning and daily life of the group.

Unlike my presence as a participant observer in the networks noted earlier, I found that it was often necessary to maintain a more covert role in temporary networks wherein presumed drug-related activities (such as 'blowing clouds' and or 'slamming') were carried out in real-time. Thus, my status as a researcher was not made known to the participants of these networks. In *Skype* conference calls (i.e., a desktop application that requires the use of a permanent account and screen name), I used the screen name 'PhDUKUSEU'; on *Zoom*—a web-based application that allows individuals to change their screen name at any time—I changed my screen-name with each new meeting.

Ethnographic and Visual Content Analysis

Ethnographic content analyses differ from conventional content analyses in that conventional content analyses have a tendency to measure 'static content within media texts' (Ferrell et al. 2008: 188). On the contrary, ethnographic content analysis positions textual analyses 'within the communication of meaning' (Altheide 1987: 68). In this regard, such analyses can act as cultural trackers by 'following traces of cultural forms, activities, and histories' (Acland 1995: 19). The same could be said of visual content analysis; however, visual content analyses primarily focus on all types of visual information and technologies, as well as their 'meanings, pleasures and consumption' (Lister & Wells 2001: 62).

For this thesis, I employed ethnographic and visual content analysis to analyze cyberspace social network interfaces. For example, because some of my observations were of the various types of images that were built-in to GBQM cyberspace network interfaces, I collected data on the physicality of the male models that were used for these images. These images were then compared to data collected on the demographics of the members themselves, as well as data related to the stated sexual-partner 'preferences' in network member profiles.

Second, I analyzed the text- and visual-based content posted by GBQM cyberspace social network members—drug user and non-drug user alike. For example, I collected and analyzed data concerning the types of drugs that were solicited (and the ways in which they were solicited). These solicitations were then analyzed according to their direct or indirect (i.e., tacit) nature. I also analyzed the ways in which drug-themed visual content was posted and presented in cyberspace environments. In particular, I looked for evidence of member discretion and or indifference. I also collected data concerning the sexual-partner 'preferences' of GBQM social network members. These were then coded according to age preferences, body type preferences, drug preferences, ethnic preferences, HIV preferences, etc. Finally, I took extensive notes on the emotional aspects of text-based and visual-based user-generated content. These were coded for any recognized cultural and subcultural meaning that would help to further illustrate the (sub)cultural dynamics at play— especially where sexual identity, sexual expressiveness and drug-related identity was concerned.

Ethnographic and visual content analyses were also performed on non-cyberspace-located content. These data included text- and visual-based content found in drug awareness posters and

flyers; newspaper articles (including photographs) and printed materials (e.g., gay newspapers [i.e., 'pink press'] and gay magazines ['gay rags']). These data were also coded for recognized cultural and subcultural tropes, such as emotionality (e.g., desire, shame, fear), sexual suggestibility, and target demographic.

Critical Discourse Analysis

According to Fairclough (2001: 121), critical discourse analysis (CDA) is a social scientific theory that can also be used as a method for 'analysing language or semiosis within broader analyses of the social processes'. The aim of CDA is to produce insights into how discourse reproduces and or resists socio-political inequalities, as well as how discourse reproduces and or resists abuses of power or domination. CDA is a particularly useful method for analyzing hegemonic discourse (see Fairclough 1992; Forgacs 1988; Laclau & Mouffe 1985), especially when 'a particular social structuring of semiotic difference [becomes] hegemonic', or, when it becomes 'part of the legitimizing common sense which sustains relations of domination' (Fairclough 2001: 124). For this reason, I employed CDA as a method for analyzing the discourse of individuals who, for example, commented on GBQM drug users from both a professional and paraprofessional perspective. This included addiction counselors, film directors, journalists and public health officials, to name a few. These analyses would later help to illuminate the dynamics that exist between these and other types of representations—in particular, those that are self-mediated by GBQM drug users themselves.

Beginning in September 2012 (and continuing throughout the research process), I identified several sources of mediated representations of *chemsex* and *PNP*. These sources largely consisted of mainstream and GBQM newspaper reports (see Ferrell et al. 2008) that were found on the Internet. I also identified several sources of mediated representations that, I believed, represented GBQM drug use, but that were not previously referred to in the literature. For example, I took photos of and or collected public health/drug-awareness posters and flyers distributed at LGBTQ centers and drug and sexual health clinics in the U.K. (e.g., *56 Dean Street* in London's SoHo district; the GATE Clinic in Canterbury); France (*Centre LGBT Paris-ÎdF* in Le Marais); Germany (e.g., *Centrum für AIDS und sexuell übertragbare Krankheiten* [also known as *CASA blanca*] and *Hein & Fiete*, both in Hamburg); The Netherlands (Amsterdam's HIV testing clinic at *Out of the*

Closet); and, Portugal (*CheckpointLX* in Lisbon). I also took photos of drug admonition posters in numerous U.K. and European GBQM bars, bathhouses, sex arcades and nightclubs; I viewed a short four-part video series on *crystal methamphetamine* use by GBQM (*'Dancing With the Devil'*) and a feature-length documentary on *chemsex* (*'Chemsex'*); I observed a *chemsex* photo exhibition in London; I viewed two drug-themed gay male pornographic films; and, finally, I viewed the numerous forms of 'self-mediated representations' of GBQM drug users that were posted on several 'amateur' GBQM video-sharing sites.

The next section provides a detailed account of the research process for this thesis. First, the 'scoping out' phase is described. This is followed by descriptions of each of the networks that were observed. The chapter concludes with a section on the ethical considerations of cyberspace research—this includes a discussion on the protection of research subject identity; the protection of network identity; the integrity of the researcher in highly sexually-charged environment; and, my reflections on my role as a queer researcher.

PART TWO: THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Prior to commencing fieldwork for this thesis, I spent several months during Autumn 2013 in a 'scoping out' phase (Gottschalk 2011). The scoping out phase was useful for several reasons. First, it helped me to identify and or familiarize myself with the 'mainstream' GBQM cyberspace social networks (i.e., *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*) that would be selected for observation for this thesis. Through my observations of these networks I was then able to learn of other more 'subcultural' networks (i.e., wherein GBQM drug-related activities and behaviors were more conspicuous). The popularity of the mainstream networks was determined through a *Google* search using keywords (and keyword combinations) such as 'gay', 'chat', 'dating' and 'social network'.[11] These keywords produced a list of numerous mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks. I then conducted a *Google* search using the keyword combination 'popular gay social network'. This search produced several popularity 'ranking' sites. The site *Ranker.com* was selected because it features an 'LGBT Social Networks' section wherein the popularity of over 80 lesbian, gay and queer online social

---

[11] It is important to note that, although I had used *Grindr* for personal reasons in the U.S. (most often in Los Angeles County, California), I did not have experience with the application in the U.K. or Europe. Moreover, although the popularity of *Grindr* is often taken-for-granted in the U.S., I felt that it was prudent to determine if the same was also true outside the U.S.

networks and applications are listed. *Ranker.com* determines the popularity of networks by allowing visitors to click on a 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' icon, with the number of 'thumbs ups' assigned to each network determining its popularity ranking. Based on the changing popularity of networks, *Ranker.com's* list is updated frequently.

After reviewing *Ranker.com's* list of the most popular worldwide GBQM networks, I then performed a *Google* and *Wikipedia* search for the first 10 networks that were listed. I did this in order to obtain information about the countries in which each of the networks were most commonly used (or accessible), as well as to ascertain any reports of network membership numbers. *PlanetRomeo* (also known as *GayRomeo* or *GR*) was selected for this thesis because it features over 6 million registered profiles and over 1.3 million active member-users worldwide. Additionally, *Grindr* was selected because it features over six million users worldwide (192 countries), with more than 1.1 million users online each day.

As mentioned, the scoping out phase also helped me to discover several GBQM cyberspace social networks that are not discoverable on ranking sites—in particular, cyberspace social networks that are frequented by individuals seeking drug-related experiences such as *chemsex* and *PNP*. As also noted, GBQM social network members sometimes include weblinks in their network profiles that direct individuals to other sites and networks wherein the member maintains a presence. Although I did not approach individuals directly, I considered this method of locating other networks (i.e., following the links in member profiles) to be a sort-of 'snowball' sampling method in that, similar to the gathering of research subjects through subject referral, I was able to gather information about 'deviant' and or socially isolated subcultural networks through the identification of weblinks in the initial field sites (see Faugier & Sargeant 1997). From this, I was able to determine the existence of the network *NastyKinkPigs*, which, in turn, revealed the existence of the GBQM 'slamming' network *Get2ThePoint*. From these two networks, I was then able to learn about other, more private networks, such as those created using webcam conference call technology (i.e., *Skype* and *Zoom*).

During the scoping out phase, it became apparent that there are two general types of cyberspace social networks that are used by GBQM. The first type of network is 'static' inasmuch as it maintains a permanent web- or smartphone-based location that can be accessed via two

different mechanisms. The first mechanism involves the typing of the network's website address (also known as a 'Unique Record Locator', or 'URL') into a web browser on a personal computing device (e.g., desktop computer; laptop computer; smartphone; tablet browser). The second mechanism involves the downloading of the network's application (or, 'app') to a smartphone or tablet. Static networks are hosted by an individual or a company; they have a login page which requires member-users to enter their 'username' (or, 'screen name') and password. Finally, in static networks, communication between members is typically facilitated through a 'message' link in member profiles. There are other similarities, as well; some of these will be articulated in greater detail in later chapters.

'Dynamic' networks, on the other hand, are temporary networks inasmuch as they are only 'open' for short periods of time (hours and sometimes minutes). These networks do not possess a URL; rather, they are created by individuals using desktop- or web-based webcam applications such as *Skype* or *Zoom* that have a 'group call' (as with *Skype*) or 'meeting' feature (as with *Zoom*). To create a dynamic network, an individual must first start a group call or meeting and then send an invitation to others to participate. Alternatively, an individual must receive an invitation from someone who has already organized a group call or meeting. Individuals can often be invited by other call or meeting participants; however, the call or meeting organizer has the option to disconnect individuals. I observed numerous dynamic networks were that had been created using both *Skype* and *Zoom*.

The next section describes the five static networks that were selected for observation for this thesis. The section also includes an account of how these networks were accessed.

Static Networks

The five static networks that were observed for this thesis are *Grindr*, *Get2ThePoint*, *NastyKinkPigs*, *PlanetRomeo* and *ToxxxicTube*. *Grindr* is only available as a smartphone/tablet app. *Grindr* first released its app in 2009 as a gay cruising (or, 'hookup') app for Apple's *iPhone*; however, the app was soon made available to other smartphone and tablet platforms (such as Samsung's *Android*). What initially made *Grindr* unique was its use of global positioning satellite (GPS) technology; however, unlike other networks that employ GPS, *Grindr* members are typically

only able to see other members within their local area[12]. While there are now numerous other GPS-driven GBQM dating sites and hookup apps[13], *Grindr* is perhaps the world's largest GBQM online social network (Rice et al. 2012).

Get2ThePoint (or, *G2TP*) is a website that is powered by *SocialParody.com*, an online service that allows individuals to create, customize and share adult online social networks. It is not known when *Get2ThePoint* was first launched. *Get2ThePoint* is similar to other GBQM cyberspace social networks in that it is primarily profile-based; and, it provides an internal messaging feature which members can use to communicate with each other. The network also features a webcam option, as well as 'galleries' that contain member-uploaded photo and video content. Of all the networks that were observed, *Get2ThePoint* is the smallest, with just under 5000 members. *Get2ThePoint* was the only network that was observed that markets itself exclusively to GBQM drug injectors—in fact, on its homepage, *Get2ThePoint* describes itself as 'A Slammin' Fraternity 4 Men!' [Get2ThePoint 2015]). Finally, *Get2ThePoint* is a 'word-of-mouth' community in that its URL is not *Get2ThePoint.com*, but rather *ynotmingle.com*. This is perhaps due to the fact that the injection of illicit drugs is not legal in most countries (including the U.S., where the site appears to be owned and operated).

NastyKinkPigs (or, *NKP*) is a U.S.-based static GBQM social network hosted out of Providence, Utah. Based on the network's own figures, *NastyKinkPigs* features over 90000 members worldwide[14], with a daily average usage of over 5000 active members. *NastyKinkPigs* is also profile-based; and, like *Get2ThePoint*, *NastyKinkPigs* also features a webcam chatroom, as well as a member photo gallery with over 20000 images and a video gallery with over 10000 videos. *NastyKinkPigs* is also the only network that was observed that provides a drug-use preferences category in its member profile-building template (i.e., 'Drugs').

PlanetRomeo is one of the world's largest online and mobile GBQM social networks. The network, which markets itself as a gay-owned company, was established in October 2002 by

---

[12] Depending upon the filters a *Grindr* member uses, the radius of other users can be expanded. An explanation of this feature will be discussed in Chapter Six.
[13] Both *NastyKinkPigs* and *PlanetRomeo* have mobile app versions—*Oink!* and *GayRomeo, respectively.* Additionally, members who access the networks from an Internet browser can also choose to activate the networks' GPS-feature, which is determined by their computer's IP address location.
[14] *NastyKinkPigs'* membership has doubled since commencing research for this thesis; in September of 2012, *NKP* reported just under 45000 members worldwide.

PlanetRomeo GmbH in Berlin, Germany; however, the network has been operated by *PlanetRomeo B.V.* in Amsterdam since September 2006. *PlanetRomeo* is the largest German-speaking GBQM social network on the World Wide Web; however, it also maintains a smartphone/tablet-native app (i.e., *GayRomeo*, or *GR*). The network is primarily profile-based and provides an internal messaging system which members can use to communicate with one another. A unique feature of *PlanetRomeo* is the ability of members to form 'clubs', of which numerous drug-themed clubs were observed.

Finally, *ToxxxicTube* is an online GBQM social network 'tube site' which acts as a sort-of pornographic *YouTube* inasmuch as it features thousands of short user-uploaded videos (average length about 5 minutes). Most of the videos on *ToxxxicTube* feature men engaged in sexualised scenes—many of which depict them engaged in the acts of 'slamming' or 'blowing clouds'. Visitors to *ToxxxicTube* can elect to browse the site as 'guests'; however, in order to communicate with other members a membership account must first be established. Whereas *ToxxxicTube* does allow for the creation of a profile, I found that the profile feature was not well-used by its members. Unlike the other networks that were observed, *ToxxxicTube* is owned by a gay male pornography studio—*Treasure Island Media* (or, *TIM*)—that operates offices in San Francisco, California and London. *TIM* features many of its own professionally-produced video content on *ToxxxicTube*. It is not known how many members the network features, nor its average number of active daily members.

Dynamic Networks

The dynamic social networks that were observed for this thesis differed considerably from the static networks that were observed—this owing to the fact that dynamic networks are created using webcam software with, for example, a 'group video call' or 'meeting' feature. There are numerous software programs that enable individuals to create such networks—both desktop based and web-based. GBQM dynamic networks that are created using *Skype* (a desktop-based webcam program) and *Zoom* (a web-based webcam program) were selected for observation for this thesis because both applications were found to be most often used by GBQM drug users (as discovered through information nin their static member profiles and in their static network group chat discussions).

60

Before accessing a dynamic GBQM webcam network 'group video call' (as with *Skype*) or 'meeting' (as with *Zoom*), one must have a webcam and a personal computer (or, as with *Skype*, a smartphone/tablet with the required software)—neither application will allow users to participate in calls or meetings without this hardware. Both *Skype* and *Zoom* are available for download from their homepages, *www.Skype.com* and *www.zoom.us*, respectively.

Both *Skype* and *Zoom* act as mediums whereby individuals communicate directly with one another, thus, there are no member profiles to browse, nor are there groups, clubs, or photo/video galleries. Neither is there any advertising in these environments (save *Skype*, which often advertises its own upgraded services in the software interface). Finally, while *Skype* allows users to create a profile (with one [uncensored] photograph), a review of group video call participant profiles revealed that, like *ToxxxicTube*, few users fully utilized this option.

Skype Group Call Networks

Before being able to access *Skype's* features a user account must be established. As mentioned, *Skype* does not require that individuals make use of the profile feature. The only requirement is that users create an account name, which is permanent and cannot be changed (however, additional accounts with different screen names can be created). A password must also be created. User account names are searchable through *Skype's* 'Search the Skype Directory' feature under the 'Add a contact' pull-down menu at the top of its main application window.

Skype is a free service and there are no additional fees for creating a group video call. Up to 25 individuals can participate in a group video call at one time; however, it was found that the quality of group video calls—in terms of the smoothness of the participants' webcam images and the overall connection—seemed to degrade as more individuals were added to the call. Typically, an individual wishing to create a group video call sends an invitation to another individual using that individual's *Skype* account name. The individual can then add additional participants until the group video call user-limit has been reached. Group call participants can also add others to the call. *Skype* group calls can be joined from most desktop or laptop computers, as well as smartphones and tablets with cameras.

In a *Skype* group calls each of the participants' webcam 'broadcasts' appear as separate windows in a grid formation in the application's main window. Private messages can be sent to

individual members by selecting the 'chat' icon on the user's webcam window. Group messages can also be sent by typing text directly into the main chat window. Windows for individual member webcams can be made 'full screen' as well, creating a more intimate 'one-on-one' (also known as 'cam-to-cam', or 'C2C') experience.

The organizer of a *Skype* group video call can disconnect any or all of the participants from the group call at any time; however, unlike *Zoom* (described below), he cannot transfer this function to other participants. Also, once the organizer disconnects from the group call (or logs out of *Skype*), all participants are disconnected. Generally, in order to view the webcam broadcasts of other call participants, users must add the names of the participants to their *Skype* 'contacts' list. A request is then sent to the participant whereupon the requested participant must accept the request in order for the requesting participant to be able to view his webcam. Each participant is also able to 'mute' the microphone of those whom he does not wish to hear.

Zoom Meeting Networks

Unlike *Skype* group calls, *Zoom* 'meetings' can only be created or joined from a desktop or laptop computer. The interface and protocol for joining and creating *Zoom* meetings is also different from *Skype*. As with *Skype*, new *Zoom* users must first establish a *Zoom* user account; this requires that a valid email address be provided and that a password is created. Individuals can make use of *Zoom's* 'profile' feature if they choose; however, the only information that is required is a first and last name (this information is not subject to verification and can be changed at any time). Whichever name the user chooses is then superimposed upon his webcam broadcast.

To create a *Zoom* meeting, individuals must first select the 'Start with video' option from the application's main window. A meeting 'room' is then opened and a nine-digit 'room number' is provided to the meeting's organizer. This number can then be sent to individuals whom the meeting organizer—or other meeting participants—wish to invite. This is accomplished by sending a link to the meeting 'room' (e.g., *https://zoom.us/j/#########*); or, through an invitation that can be emailed through the *Zoom* service. Alternatively, the meeting organizer can post the room number (or link) to other cyberspaces in which he maintains a presence (e.g., social network profiles, *Google+ Groups*, blogs). In doing so, any individual can join an active, publicized *Zoom* meeting

at any time. Some meeting organizers can also create a meeting password as a method for managing who is able to participate.

Once an individual joins a *Zoom* meeting, his webcam is broadcast to all of the meeting's participants. Individuals can elect to switch their webcams 'off'; however, the meetings that I observed required that all participants made their webcams viewable—irrespective of whether individuals maintained a physical presence in front of their webcams. Indeed, some participants turned their webcams toward a television monitor that was playing a pornographic movie; others were asleep or 'off camera'. For each of the *Zoom* meetings that I observed, I, too, maintained a webcam presence.

In a *Zoom* meeting, participant webcams are displayed in a 5x5 grid formation in the application's main meeting window. The main meeting window can be adjusted so that other application windows can also be seen (for example, to view other networks in which an individual may be logged into); or, the window can be made full screen. Like *Skype*, meeting participants can also adjust their viewing preferences so that a single meeting participant is viewable 'full screen'. When viewing individual participants, the remaining meeting participants can still be viewed via a smaller window that displays four participants at a time; however, this window can be 'scrolled' so as to view other meeting participants. Also similar to *Skype, Zoom* meeting participants can communicate with one another by clicking a 'text bubble' icon at the bottom of the main meeting 'Zoom Group Chat' window—a list of all participants is then displayed in a separate pop-up window. Participants can send either a group message (i.e., to all of the meeting's participants) or they can click on the name of a participant with whom they wish to have a private conversation.

Zoom's 'Basic' plan limits the number of meeting participants to a total of 25. Additionally, unless one elects to pay for a 'Pro' account, meetings are limited to 45 minutes, after which time a new meeting room must be created. Individuals who pay for the upgraded Pro plan can create up to nine 'host accounts' and can host meetings of unlimited length. Depending on the level of the Pro plan, the meeting participant limit can be increased up to a total of 100 participants. Other than the meeting time limit, it is not possible to determine whether a meeting organizer has a Basic plan or a Pro plan.

Finally, *Zoom* meeting organizers have the ability to mute any or all participant microphones. Also, as with *Skype, Zoom* meeting organizers can disconnect any participant from a meeting at any time. Unlike *Skype*, though, a *Zoom* meeting organizer can share this administrative function with other participants (which can be rescinded at any time). Finally, once a *Zoom* meeting organizer decides to leave a meeting, the meeting ends for all participants (unless he has designated another participant as an administrator).

Accessing the Networks

Beginning in January 2014, I spent several months observing each of the five static networks that were selected for this thesis. I also observed numerous dynamic networks using both *Skype* and *Zoom*. During this period, I observed and took notes of each of the network's interfaces; I collected textual and visual data from thousands of network member profiles; and, I observed and collected textual and visual data from network chat room discussions (both textual and webcam), network blogs and network photo and video galleries. I accessed each of the web-based networks using my laptop computer; however, I was also able to access some of these networks using the 'Safari' browser on my Apple *iPhone 4S*. Smartphone-native networks, such as *Grindr* were only accessible via my smartphone.[15]

In order to gain access to each of the networks, I was required to first establish a network member account. For each of the static web-based networks, I was also required to create a member-user profile. As noted, I created 'research only' accounts for each of the static networks using one of two screen names: 'KentResearcher' or 'PhDResearcher'. Also as noted, because my status in each of these networks was as a 'participant-as-observer', I identified myself as a researcher in the text section of each of my profiles. Finally, in my member profiles I encouraged individuals to contact me with questions or comments about my research—either through a network's' internal messaging features or through my university email address. None of the inquiries I received were included as data for this thesis.

---

[15] It is important to note that I maintain personal accounts for both *PlanetRomeo* and *Grindr. Because Grindr* allows only one account per smartphone (or tablet), in order to set up a separate 'research only' account it was necessary that I purchase a second Apple *iPhone*.

When creating member profiles for each of the static networks, I maintained the same standard that I use when creating personal GBQM cyberspace social network accounts. For example, I only provided factual information regarding my height and weight (and, where allowed, my eye color and hair color). Although I provided my location, I was not specific with respect to the section of a city in which I resided (or that I was visiting). I did not provide my age, race/ethnicity, or any information concerning my body or penis measurements. Neither did I provide any information concerning sex-, drug- or alcohol-related preferences. Although *Skype* provides a profile template for its members[16], I determined during the scoping out phase that most GBQM *Skype* users do not utilize this feature. I thus decided not to include any information in my *Skype* profile.

Each of the networks also required that I provide a valid external email address—often needed for 'confirming' member accounts. For some networks, I provided my university email address; for others, I created an email account with the name 'KentResearcher'; I used *'gmx.com'* as my email provider. After creating member accounts for each of the five static networks (and for both of the webcam applications), I received a confirmation email that was sent to my external email accounts. In all cases, a link was provided that I then needed to click in order to confirm my identity.

Once all of my network member accounts were confirmed and active, I commenced with my field site observations. The amount of time I spent observing each network varied throughout the fieldwork phase. Factors such as my location (i.e., where I accessed the networks from within physical space) and the time of day often impacted the types and frequencies of observations that were made. For instance, when observing local member profiles on each of the mainstream networks, the time of day (or day of the week) often impacted the number of users who were 'signed on' to each network. This was evident when accessing each of the mainstream networks from European locations during weekday business hours—or even late-night hours on weekdays. In general, fewer overall members were signed-on during late-night time periods than during weekday afternoons or weekends.

---

[16]As noted, *Zoom* does not provide a profile feature for its member-users.

During low-activity periods, I often shifted my observations to members in other time zones. For example, when in Europe, I observed individuals in Australia or the United States; or, when in the United States I observed individuals in Australia or Europe. Contrastingly, while observing smaller networks (wherein drug-related activities were more visible) and dynamic networks, a relatively higher rate of member activity was observed regardless of the time of day or day of week. This was perhaps due to the fact that I learned of active dynamic networks as they opened (for example, by observing a meeting announcement in a group chat discussion on a static network).

I accessed each of the static and dynamic networks from various locations in the U.S. (Atlanta; Washington, D.C.); France (Paris; Roissy-en-France; Taillebois); Germany (Dusseldorf; Hamburg); Hungary (Budapest); Spain (Barcelona; Bilbao; Oñati; Santander); The Netherlands (Amsterdam: Stramproy; Utrecht); Portugal (Lisbon); and, the U.K. (Brighton; Cambridge; Canterbury; Dover; Faversham; London). Wherever possible, I collected information about the age and location of members; however, owing to the possibility that some individuals might be traceable on some networks through their profile text (for example, through a network's 'advanced search'; or, through Internet searches for specific words and or phrases), specific information concerning the network wherein the drug- and or sex-related profile data was collected, as well as the city/country of the member are not provided in this thesis[17].

Interestingly, within a week of commencing fieldwork, it became apparent that not all GBQM cyberspace social network members actually read other member profiles before making individual contact with them. For example, despite including the phrase 'For Research Purposes Only' in my network profiles, I received numerous messages asking me if I was 'looking' (i.e., looking for sex). I also received requests for pictures of my body and or my penis (e.g., "Can I see your body"; or, "Got a dick pic?"). I did not respond to these requests; rather, I made additional attempts to establish my identity as a researcher with these individuals—especially when responding to instant messages or emails sent by network members; or, when addressed by members in chat room conversations.

---

[17] Profile text on *Grindr* is not searchable.

Because virtual communications and interactions are often transient or fleeting in nature, as noted, I often made use of the 'screenshot' feature on my research *iPhone*. I also used the 'Print Scrn' (i.e., 'print screen') key-combination on my computer keyboard. This allowed me to overcome such barriers as network message expiration, member profile modifications (or deletions) and lost chat room conversations. Through the use of features such as 'screenshot' and 'Print Scrn', I was able to save conversations, images, profiles and other material for later review and analysis. Images that were saved to my *iPhone* were transferred to my laptop and desktop hard drives before being deleted.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Regardless of whether research is conducted in physical or online environments, ethical considerations must be made—especially when the topic of study involves criminal (or potentially criminal) behaviors. For this thesis, three critical areas of ethical concern were identified—each of which were discussed during an ethics review at the University of Kent. The first involved the protection of the identities of individuals. The second related to the protection of information concerning certain networks that were considered to be 'private' (for example, the 'room numbers' of *Zoom* meetings). The third related to my integrity as a researcher in environments wherein drug-use and or sex occurs.

To address the protection of subject identity, as noted, specific information concerning the network wherein data were collected (for example, text from network member profiles) is not provided in this thesis. Neither are the cities or countries of the individuals from whom data was collected[18]. Additionally, no personal names or screen names are included. This was somewhat disappointing inasmuch as some individuals construct cyberspace screen names with word combinations that can be very informative and that are often rich in cultural meaning. Finally, email addresses and telephone numbers—although present in some network profiles—were not recorded as part of my field notes.

To address issues of network identity, I borrowed from Jenkins' (2003) study of online pedophiliac *UseNets*. Jenkins (2003: 22-23) notes:

---

[18] Midway during this thesis, it became apparent to me that some network profile text can be searched via 'Google'—especially if individuals had posted the same (or similar) content to other more public websites.

I describe at length the boards and sites that I have used, I do not provide specific URLs that would allow other researchers to use them, and I refer to the active boards and newsgroups through pseudonyms. … I am painfully aware that this is a prima facie violation of the rules of social science, as it prevents any kind of replication of the research, but my rationale is strong.

Unlike the networks studied by Jenkins, all of the static GBQM networks that were observed and analyzed for this thesis are easily located through an Internet search. The exception might be *Get2ThePoint*, which uses a different URL than its network name (*ynotmingle.com*); however, because *Get2ThePoint* is now searchable through an Internet search, I decided to include its actual URL in this thesis. On the contrary, I decided not to include *Zoom* meeting room numbers, as these are not searchable (nor could I confirm that their creators would have wanted this information to be disclosed). Indeed, creating hard-to-find networks using third-party software indicates a desire by these individuals to remain hidden—a consideration that was respected herein. Jenkins (2003: 23) notes:

> The sites I have been using are exceedingly difficult to find and cannot be located simply by using a regular search engine such as Excite or Google. Using such an engine to locate "child pornography" or "lolitas" will produce hundreds of sites, including tirades against the porn trade and advice on how to report criminal activity as well as fraudulent sites targeted at the gullible. But supplying the URL of just one authentic site would potentially create a network effect that would bring the observer into the whole subculture. It would be wrong to publish material that could assist a person seeking such images or that could lead a person to discover within himself an interest in this kind of sexual activity.

Finally, because there is concern that the observation of highly-charged sexual images and or deviant environments carries the potential for researcher 'licentiousness' (Kulick & Willson 1995: 3), I employed reflexivity, as noted by Killick (1995: 76):

> self-searching reflexive analyses give the impression that they [i.e., the researcher] tell all and, conversely, that what they do not tell does not exist; thus, the ethnographer is constructed as an objective observer, free from distracting desires, not merely celibate but asexual.

During the data collection period of my Master's thesis—a study that addressed the subcultural aspects of a drug and sex subculture on the online message board *Craigslist*—I found that, despite not having had any personal interactions with the individuals whom I observed, it was nonetheless necessary for me to maintain an 'asexual' attitude with respect to my data—data that was often sexually explicit(both textually and visually) and often included graphic accounts of sex and or

nude photographs. This was relatively uncomplicated in that I found myself becoming, in essence, 'desensitized' to sexually-charged words and images. Because the present research often involved the viewing of live or pre-recorded drug and sex acts (e.g., via webcam)—including gay male pornography—I had initially anticipated a much greater challenge with respect to my ability to desensitize.

REFLEXIVITY

As a queer man who has been out-of-the-closet for over thirty years, I was able to 'tap into' a breadth of experience that served to inform my role as a researcher for this thesis—experience the likes of which other researchers may not have had access. As Perrone (2010: 10) notes:

> Like many . . . whose own life experiences, such as their living arrangements, conveniently provided them with access to drug users or dealers, my early life experiences supplied me with an entire entree into the lives of drug users.

Indeed, as a queer man growing up in Los Angeles (in particular, West Hollywood—a 'very' gay ghetto), my life has been punctuated by various experiences within the LGBTQ community. From time-to-time, these experiences have brought me into contact with gay, bisexual and or queer men who have used drugs. I met many of these men through the gay social spheres (e.g., bars, circuit parties, nightclubs, pride festivals) and social circles that are customary to gay ghetto life and that were inextricably tied to my identity as a queer man. I also came into contact with drug users through my own personal use of social media. Some of these men I befriended. Others were friends of friends.

It was the drug-using men I had met that I would eventually reflect upon when, at the beginning of my masters studies I reviewed an academic journal article on drug use among MSM. The article had been written from an epidemiological perspective, and, although the researcher made a compelling argument about the role of HIV-related stigma in MSM drug use, the research was devoid of any cultural coloring. As well, the emphasis on stigma seemed to lack a critical examination of other sources of stigma that, I believed, might be present *within* the LGBTQ community. Finally, little, if any attention was given to the role of social media in perpetuating peer-enacted stigma. These factors prompted me to review additional research on MSM drug use, whereupon I often arrived at the same conclusions. I was confident that a much broader cultural

brush could be used to explore drug use among MSM. This led to my eventual decision to pursue my own research on the topic—first, with my master's thesis, and now, with the present research.

The absence of a cultural exploration of GBQM drug use also informed my decision to pursue ethnography as a methodological approach. This, I suspected, would raise issues as to my own positionality in the research. Having been born to rather liberal parents in the late 1960s, my meanings around drug use were uniquely shaped from an early age. As well, I was the object of pejorative labels—from elementary school through junior college—and thus my meanings around sexuality were also distinct. During the AIDS epidemic, I formed further meanings around sex and mortality. Finally, my meanings concerning what it means to be a mature queer man among younger 'metropolitans' are now starting to take shape, as well. In other words, in addition to having formed meanings around GBQM drug use, I had already formed meanings around much of the related phenomena that I would eventually observe in my research. I was thus continually forced to suspend my own subjectivity when considering what GBQM drug users perceived to be rational and irrational. I was also frequently challenged to be objective in my analyses and interpretations of the ways in which GBQM drug users expressed their own systems of meaning-making.

Nonetheless, as a queer man, I share much in common with other GBQM—regardless of our attitudes concerning drugs. Jenks' (2005: 60) notes,

> The development of the reflexive self through socialization is seen to be brought about by two complementary processes, the first being the attainment of a language, learning to speak, and the second being the practical experience of interacting with other people…. The manner in which people escape 'solipsism', that is the belief that the self is all that is the case, is through a sustained concentration on defining the self, not in isolation, but as an object in a world of similar objects.

My identity as a queer man has socialized me such that I have attained a language that allows me to understand many ways in which GBQM communicate. This, in turn, has provided me with much 'practical' experience when observing and analyzing the ways in which GBQM drug users communicate—practical in the sense that, through the attainment of GBQM language I was already familiar with the unique 'language games' (see Wittgenstein 1958) that are 'played' by GBQM. This granted me unique access to the world of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use.

Finally, throughout this research project I would often reflect on my emotions concerning my observations—especially when observing the activities and behaviors that carried with them a risk of harm to the men I observed. As Presdee (2000: 74) notes:

> Not only can we consume it but we can also produce it. In a Sontagian sense, with the onset of camcorder technology, we are faced with the dilemma of whether to intervene in social acts or to film them.

This is important to note inasmuch as there were numerous occasions in which I observed GBQM drug users who had seemingly been rendered unconscious through their use of drugs. While I did not record (i.e., 'film') these men, I was nonetheless discomfited by these experiences inasmuch as I was unable to intervene. I was also sometimes disquieted by the viewing of certain activities and behaviors that challenged my own moral code. To address these emotions, I often found it helpful to talk with colleagues and or other researchers who have had similar research experiences.

CONCLUSION

This chapter provided a description of the research process for the present study. Part One of the chapter described the methods that were used for this thesis—methods that are particularly well-suited for exploring the cultural dynamics of human behavior and that are often used in cultural criminological inquiries.

One of the primary methods employed for this thesis is ethnography, a method that allowed me to participate in and take account of the activities and understandings of GBQM drug users. Examples of the types of ethnographies that have been conducted in the investigation of criminal, deviant or transgressive behavior were provided; this included a brief discussion of two criminological ethnographies that have been conducted in the exploration of GBQM drug use.

This thesis employs two forms of ethnographic methods. The first is virtual ethnography. Through virtual ethnography, I was able to observe and participate in the activities and understandings of GBQM drug users in cyberspace environments. Second, this thesis employs 'instant ethnography'—a method that allowed for the observation of activities and behaviors that occurred as brief 'performances' in the 'dangerous little theatres' of dynamic GBQM drug-related webcam groups.

Ethnographic content analysis was also described as a method that allowed me to position textual analyses within the communication of meanings that are integral to GBQM who seek drug-related experiences in cyberspace. Such a method allowed me to track, for example, the (sub)cultural dynamics of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use—its forms, its activities and its histories. This was followed by a description of how visual content analysis was employed—for example, to analyze the meanings, pleasures and consumption of drug-themed photo and video content that was posted by GBQM drug users in cyberspace. Visual content analysis also enabled me to analyze drug-themed gay male pornography.

Both ethnographic and visual content analysis were also described as methods that allowed me to observe the interfaces and environments of both static and dynamic GBQM cyberspace social networks, as well as to observe the text- and visual-based content found in drug awareness posters and flyers, newspaper articles and other printed materials that are used to construct the mediated representations of GBQM drug use.

Finally, this chapter provided a description of how critical discourse analysis was employed as a way of uncovering the power differentials that were found to exist within the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. In particular, critical discourse analysis was used to analyze the discourse of both individuals and organizations who 'represent' GBQM drug users—for example, addiction counselors, film directors, journalists, nurses, public health agencies and sexual health clinics.

Part Two of the chapter provided a detailed account of the research process wherein I assumed the role of both a participant observer and a covert observer. First, the scoping out phase was described. The scoping out phase was instrumental in identifying the seven networks that were chosen for inclusion in this thesis. Definitions for two different types of cyberspace environments—'static' networks and 'dynamic' networks—were proffered. This was followed by detailed descriptions of each network that was observed, as well as explanations of how each type of network was accessed and how each was observed. The chapter then discussed the ethical considerations of the present research. This included explanations as to how I addressed such factors as the protection of subject identity, the protection of network identity, and, how I

maintained my integrity as a researcher in highly-sexualized environments. The chapter concluded with some thoughts on my reflexivity as a queer researcher.

The next chapter ('Uncovering Marginalization and Stigma in the Networks') provides analyses of user-generated data collected from two mainstream static GBQM cyberspace social networks. Part One describes and analyzes some of the ways in which network interfaces can serve to reify homonormative ideals around age, attractiveness, ethnicity and masculinity. Network member profile 'preferences' are also discussed. This is followed by an analysis of network member 'preferences' that have the potential to stigmatize some men around age, ethnicity, masculinity and sexuality. Part Two describes and analyzes some of the ways in which network interfaces may engender feelings of marginalization in men with HIV. Network member profile 'preferences' concerning safe sex and HIV-serostatus are also discussed. This is followed by an analysis of member profile preferences that may have the potential to stigmatize men who are HIV-seropositive.

CHAPTER 4 - UNCOVERING MARGINALIZATION AND STIGMA IN THE NETWORKS

> The sense of apartness, of difference, is more neglected, and for a good reason. This is an immensely confused experience in modern society, and one reason for the confusion is that our ideas of sexuality as an index of self-consciousness make it hard for us to understand how we stand apart from other individuals in society (Foucault & Sennett 1981: para. 7).

Imagine for a moment that you are a gay man and that you have decided to spend the evening at a private gay nightclub. Perhaps you are looking to meet another man for a relationship. Or, maybe you are simply looking for someone with whom to have sex. As you walk through the entrance, you are greeted by a faceless attendant who accepts your entrance fee and then asks which type of 'body suit' you would like to wear while you are in the club: "Would you like to show only your chest?" "Your penis?" "Your buttocks?" "Or, would you prefer to enter naked?" You are also asked if you would like a paper bag to place over your head. You decide to wear the suit that covers your body, but you decline the paper bag.

Next, you are given a small chalkboard to wear around your neck, which, you are told, can be used to write certain aspects about yourself—for example, your age, your height and or weight, your preferred sexual position, and any other preferences or details about yourself that you may wish others to know. Upon this slate you write:

Age:	*40*
Body Type:	*Average*
Ethnicity:	*Caucasian*
HIV Status:	*Positive*

You enter the club. There is no bar or dance floor. There is no DJ spinning the customary loud, thumping disco music. Instead, you observe thousands of men in various states of dress: some have only their penises exposed, some wear paper bags, some are completely naked. Like you, most are wearing chalkboards around their necks.

Throughout the evening, numerous members approach you and ask if they can see your penis. Or, they simply ask, "How big?" You do not wish to respond to such requests, so you politely excuse yourself. Others ask for information that you have not written on your chalkboard, such as your penis size.

One member—baring only his chest—notices you. He seems to fancy your face and he is not dissuaded by the information you have written on your chalkboard. From under his paper bag you hear him say, "Hey sexy." You answer, "Hello, how are you this evening?" He responds, "Good thanks, can I see more of your body?" Excited, you comply, unzipping your body suit and removing it down to your waistline (leaving your penis covered). He regards your upper body for a moment and then, without a word, he walks away. You call to him but he does not respond.

Other members respond favorably when you reveal your body; however, upon closer inspection, they notice the age and or HIV status you have written on your chalkboard. You notice that their chalkboards read, 'No one over 35' or 'Disease-free, UB2'. You say "Hello," but you are ignored. You are not having much luck in this club.

You are not alone, though, as many other members are experiencing the same types of interactions: Asian members are wearing paper bags to avoid embarrassing situations with those who state 'No Asians'; some (older) members have not written their age at all; others have attached what appears to be a 20-year old *Polaroid* of their face to their paper bag—hoping to avoid having to remove it.

After several hours, you decide to leave. You have not had a good experience at this club, but you know that you will return tomorrow night. And the next night. And the one after that. Perhaps you will present yourself differently tomorrow. As you leave the club, you think to yourself, "Maybe I'll go to the gym."

Of course, such spaces do not actually exist in the physical realm. Likewise, men do not walk through physical spaces with chalkboards around their necks, nor do most men expose their chests or genitals to complete strangers. In cyberspace, however, these types of environments and interactions are often the norm. Indeed, in many GBQM cyberspace social networks, men do— through the use of 'profiles'—wear chalkboards.

One way in which GBQM may feel marginalized in GBQM cyberspace social networks is through 'blanking' or 'ghosting'—that is, the ignoring of requests for contact or the discontinuation of conversation without explanation, respectively. Whether intended or not, these silent 'messages' can also convey a sense of stigmatization in some men. Evidence of the effects of this non-communication is often seen in the profiles of *Grindr* members. For example, in the 'About'

section of his picture-less profile, an 18-year old member from western Europe made the saddening request, 'If you're not interested, just tell rather than stop talking' (Grindr member profile, 13 January 2014).

Another way in which GBQM may experience marginalization and or stigma is in the profile text of network members. Some men may even experience a sense of marginalization or stigma through network interfaces. This chapter describes some of these sources.

This chapter presents data that were collected from two mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks—*Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*. These data were observed in network member profiles as well as in each network's interface. The analyses of these data are supported by past and present understandings of marginalization and stigma—for example, Goffman's (1963) thesis on stigma, (including his conceptualization of 'ideal categories and attributes'); Mowlabocus' (2007) work on 'prescriptive identity categories'; and Anderson's (1998) compelling research on the link between stigma and drug (ab)use. In particular, this chapter will demonstrate how GBQM cyberspace social networks can serve to conceal, marginalize and or stigmatize non-ideal GBQM identities.

This chapter is presented in two parts. Part One explores the ways in which non-ideal GBQM might experience marginalization and stigma in mainstream cyberspace social networks. Part Two examines the ways in which GBQM with HIV might experience marginalization and stigma.

PART ONE: MARGINALIZING THE NON-IDEAL

Images of gay mainstream culture are often found within numerous different settings that exist both offline and online. For example, when performing a *Google Image* search for the word 'gay', thousands of photos of young, muscled, Caucasian men are returned (Figure 4.1). Many of these images (which can also be thought of as 'mediated representations') are drawn from the most popular online (gay and mainstream) websites where they are used (or re-used) in advertisements, blogs, online magazines, memes, social networks and other content. Occasionally, other images, such as that of a presumed hate crime victim (also shown in Figure 4.1) are also returned—perhaps suggesting that there are still consequences attached to being gay.
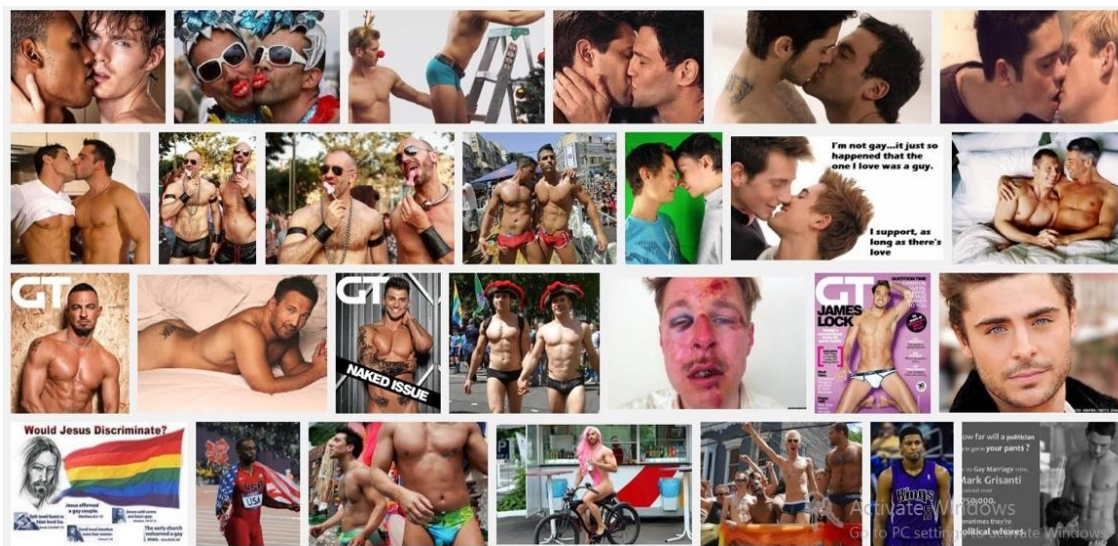
Figure 4.1. Google Images results for the word 'gay'.

Similar to the images returned in a 'gay' *Google Images* search, the official website for

Grindr features a full-color 'screenshot' of the application's main browsing page wherein the

'profiles' of 15 *Grindr* 'members' are displayed (Figure 4.2). Most of the men are shirtless, baring

their chests, arms and or ('six-pack') abdominal muscles. Most of them are Caucasian; however,

two of the men are 'light-skinned'. All of the men appear to be in their mid- to late-twenties; and,

all of them sport sexually provocative poses. The webpage reads, 'With more than 5 million guys

in 192 countries around the world—and approximately 10,000 more new users downloading the

app every day—you'll always find a new date, buddy, or friend on Grindr' (Grindr 2015). In other

words, *Grindr's* website implies that most of the men one might expect to meet on *Grindr* are

young, muscled and White—or, in other words, 'racialized' and 'masculinized' (Race 2015). Given

that *Grindr* is accessed by GBQM worldwide, these images serve to reify Rushbrook's notion of a

'global gay image'. Such likenesses are also evocative of Mowlabocus' (2007) 'metropolitan gay

male'.

Figure 4.2. Grindr webpage 'screenshot' (courtesy of Grindr.com 2015)

On the contrary, *PlanetRomeo's* homepage features four very different attractive 'members': one appears to be Arab; one, Latin; one, Black; the last, Caucasian. The Latino model sports a tank top; the Black model's bicep is raised and flexed; the Arab model clutches what appears to be a jockstrap—his 'designer stubble' and big brown eyes exuding 'sex'. The Caucasian model—a masculine, rugged 'Daddy' type—displays a hint of his bare chest under a black leather jacket. With the exception of the 'Daddy', each of the models appears to be in their mid- to late-twenties. Below the models, the homepage reads,

> We're different! Just like you, we like guys! […] From horny hook-ups to the man of your dreams, find what you need with our powerful search engine. Free and unrestricted. You never know, Mr Right may be waiting just around the corner! (PlanetRomeo 2014)

Such representations as those described above create, rather effectively, the impression that mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks are full of attractive available men—all of them waiting to meet you, to date you, and maybe even to fall in love with you. However, in addition to

78

serving the market-interest goals of GBQM social media developers (i.e., pictures of beautiful men will attract *all men*), these images also create meaning around what it is to be a desirable gay man. Because these images have a tendency to focus on ideals such as beauty, virility and youth, though, such images can also serve to marginalize those who do not (or cannot) conform to these ideals.[19]

Notwithstanding mainstream GBQM social networks, the same types of marketing practices are also employed by non-mainstream GBQM networks. For example, the homepage for *NastyKinkPigs* features two images—one is of a young, attractive, muscular, light-skinned Latino male model. The model sports a baseball cap with the word 'DIRTY'—his right hand is inserted into his blue jockstrap; his tongue touches his upper lip. The other image is of two attractive young Caucasian male models—one of the models wears a leather harness while the other wears a leather jockstrap. The model in the harness takes position behind the other—the two appear to be engaged in the act of anal sex. The webpage reads, 'Extreme Cruising, Hardcore Videos, Fetish Groups, Video Chat … Find your angry tops and hungry holes' (NastyKinkPigs 2015). Interestingly, at the beginning of the fieldwork phase for this thesis, *NastyKinkPigs* did not feature these types of images; rather, the website featured its corporate logo—a graphic depicting an anthropomorphized pig wearing a gas mask[20]. What is important to note here, then, is that such a strategy may signal the commodification of non-mainstream GBQM social networks (*NastyKinkPigs* has tens-of-thousands of members compared to the millions of members on *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*) by profit-seeking owners who see value in the valorization of ideal images.[21] Moreover, given the counternormative or transgressive nature of some of the activities that are facilitated through *NastyKinkPigs* (e.g., the solicitation of drug-related experiences; the posting of drug-themed visual content), the use of idealized gay cultural tropes hints at the fact that such images have been 'seized upon' by more 'subcultural' networks wherein, like that of more mainstream networks, they are

---

[19] Arguably, because *PlanetRomeo* is a German-based social networking site, the market interests of its users may be different from that of *Grindr*, which is U.S.-based (but markets to a worldwide audience).
[20] Gas masks are sometimes used in GBQM fetish play.
[21] Contrast this with the fact that *Get2ThePoint* does not feature any images of men on its homepage. Rather, the only image that is displayed is a graphic of a syringe—a stream of rainbow-colored fluid emerging from its tip. Such an image signals to potential members what is valorized within the network—that is, the injection of drugs. Similarly, *ToxxxicTube* does not display any images either, save the thumbnail images of videos that have been uploaded.

also 'packaged and marketed [as] romantic, exciting, cool and fashionable cultural symbol[s] … as desirable consumer choices' (Hayward 2004: 169).

In addition to the potentially marginalizing marketing strategies of some GBQM cyberspace social networks, 'the privileging of certain body types (i.e., the gym body)' (Race 2015: 254; see also Faris & Sugie 2012; Gosine 2007; Mowlabocus 2007) can take other forms, as well. One way is through a network's censoring of 'non-ideal' member-uploaded images. Within the 'Reviews' section of Apple's *iPhone* 'App Store' (i.e., Apple's proprietary marketplace for Apple-approved *iPhone* applications) are found numerous complaints by *Grindr* members concerning the perceived unfair censoring of their profile photographs. For example, one member-reviewer stated:

> Seems to me that the regulators [i.e., Grindr staff members who regulate member profiles] … make the rules as they please! They seem to be regulating certain profiles while they approve others who wear only swimming trunks or leather straps (which I think is ok, don't get me wrong Grindr users) … I have been trying to load my picture which has been professionally made by a photographer with my less than insinuating anything swimming trunks for nearly a week and every-time [the regulators] keep cropping my picture so it only shows above my waist… Is there anything wrong with my swimming trunks? If this is a question of taste, or if the regulator who keeps cutting half of my body off does not like the trunks, apologies but these are the only ones I got… Or perhaps you don't like my legs? According to people they are my best feature so I don't really understand why you keep cutting them off ????? Let's be less prudish as at the end of the day this is a gay app and showing my swim trunks and legs is not going to hurt anyone's sensibility here (*claritu*, Apple iPhone 'App Store' review, 8 December 2011).

Another reviewer voiced frustration over what he believed to be the favoring of certain *Grindr* member profile photos over others:

> [A]s if the attitude of all the wankers on the site wasn't enough to put you into a lull-less state, it takes hours to have your profile picture changed, the moderators give you a warning if u so much as show your shoulder if they don't fancy you (*redeeeemer28*, Apple iPhone 'App Store' review, 29 September 2014).

Whether *Grindr* actively and deliberately discriminates against members with less-than-'ideal' body types—or, whether *Grindr* censors photos of members who do not meet a certain physical standard of attractiveness—cannot be confirmed. Nevertheless, as with other forms of discrimination, it is the perception that discrimination has occurred that is important (e.g., Brittian, Toomey, Gonzales & Dumka 2013; Schmitt, Branscombe, Postmes & Garcia 2014). Such perceptions may cause some individuals to seek other cyberspace social networks—ones in which

they are more free to express themselves, or, as Mowlabocus (2007) holds, ones in which they, too, can have a stake in gay culture.

Finally, some GBQM cyberspace social network members may perceive marginalization when constructing their social network identities—that is, their 'profiles'. In his book *Gaydar: Gay Men and the Pornification of Everyday Life* Mowlabocus (2007: 65) notes that—in addition to being 'the principal method of communication' within GBQM cyberspace social networks—the member profile 'appears to be central to the production, maintenance and communication of [ideal GBQM] identity'. Indeed, it is not uncommon for some men to have numerous profiles across multiple sites or apps. Some men even may have more than one profile on a particular site.

Depending on the social network, profiles can act as a sort-of 'snapshot' of individual network members inasmuch as profiles often include information (also known as 'stats') concerning, for example, the member's chosen screen name, his photograph(s), his demographic information (e.g., age; race/ethnicity) and his physical characteristics (e.g., height; weight; hair/eye color; waist size; chest size; and, sometimes, penis size). Additionally, many networks also provide their members with other identity-building categories which are often accessed through the use of 'pull-down menus' with categories (and attributes) such as 'age' (e.g., 'twink'[22]; 'daddy'), 'body type' (e.g., 'bear'[23]; 'otter'[24]; slim; muscular; stocky; 'twink') and 'sexual position' (e.g., 'top'; 'bottom'; 'versatile'). Finally, in some networks there are categories for drug use and HIV serostatus. Although this information may seem to be fairly standard across social networks, the number of categories (as well as the range of attributes) for each network varies. Mowlabocus (2007) refers to these categories (and their attributes) as 'prescriptive identity categories'; and, he infers that—when compared to the unlimited ways in which individuals might otherwise choose to describe themselves—such categories are often quite narrow and limited. In other words, as a member of a GBQM cyberspace social network, one must often 'give up' some of his control when establishing a cyberspace identity.

---

[22] A 'twink' is a young GBQM—typically with a smooth body and slightly effeminate or boyish.
[23] A 'bear' is typically used to refer to an overweight, hairy, masculine GBQM.
[24] An 'otter' is a slender hairy GBQM.

To varying degrees, *Grindr*, *NastyKinkPigs* and *PlanetRomeo* each offered prescriptive identity categories (Appendix A)[25]; however, at the time of my observations *Get2ThePoint* and *ToxxxicTube* did not. Nevertheless, on the mainstream social networks that were observed, I discovered what appeared to be a dubious underuse of these categories—at least with respect to 'non-ideal' attributes. For example, at the time that data was collected, little over half of the *Grindr* members who were online responded to the 'Body Type' category—of the 51 members who had responded, 41% chose *Average*, 35% chose *Slim*, 18% chose *Toned* and 6% chose *Muscular*. No members selected the attributes *Large* or *Stocky*. Similarly, little more than half of the online members ($n = 59$) utilized the 'Ethnicity' profile category. Of the members who did select an attribute, 49 members had selected *White*, two selected *Asian/South Asian*, two selected *Mixed* and one member selected *Latino*. Similarly, in a sample of 1195 *PlanetRomeo* members who were online in the London area, 388 members (32%) identified as *Average*. This was followed by 233 (19%) who selected *Slim*, 40 members (3%) who selected *Stocky* attribute and 30 members (3%) who selected *Belly*. This data suggests that a considerable number of *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo* members either chose not to respond to a profile category, or, it suggests that these members did not identify with the attributes that were provided. It could also suggest that some non-responsive members may have chosen to control certain aspects about themselves that they did not wish others to know. Although referring to the camaraderie of 'team members' in developing strategies that enabled them to share and keep secrets, Goffman (1959: 238) believed that individuals sometimes 'controlled' information about themselves in order to prevent others 'from coming into a performance that [was] not addressed to them'. Goffman (1959: 241) referred to such a nondisclosure of information as a 'discrepant role', especially when the information could serve to disaffirm the appearance an individual was trying to convey. Such a strategy is not new to GBQM dating rituals, as noted by Harris (1997: 43):

> Even as late as 1968, in an issue of the gay publication The Male Swinger, the writers were so unspecific about their own characteristics, let alone those of the men they were seeking, that readers were forced to winnow through ads that presented a

---

[25] Alternatively, all of the static networks that were observed provided a 'free-text' space which members could use to write-in their own personal identifying information (e.g., hobbies; likes/dislikes; descriptions of the 'perfect mate'). *Grindr* offered the smallest character-count for its member's free-text section (i.e., About). Conversely, *Get2ThePoint*, *NastyKinkPigs*, *PlanetRomeo* and *ToxxxicTube* provided their members with what seemed to be an unlimited word count (this perhaps owing to the web-based nature of these networks [i.e., larger server space]).

generic figure, a Man Without Qualities, a featureless cipher often identified solely by a box number or the region of the country in which he lived.

Such a strategy could thus be employed by GBQM cyberspace social network members who choose not to disclose 'non-ideal' information about themselves—for example, men who possess a body type that 'does not fit' (see Mowlabocus 2007).

In addition to body type and ethnicity profile categories, *Grindr* also featured a unique 'My Grindr Tribe' category. At the time of observation, there were twelve 'tribes': *Bear, Clean-Cut, Daddy, Discreet, Geek, Jock, Leather, Otter, Poz, Rugged, Trans and Twink. Grindr* provided no definitions for its tribes; however, several of these appeared to be based on gay cultural tropes concerning body type (e.g., a 'bear' is often thought of as overweight and hairy; an 'otter' is slim and hairy; a 'jock' is more muscular; see Hennen 2008). Members who used *Grindr's* paid version (i.e., *Grindr Xtra*) could select more than one tribe (for a total of three); however, members who used *Grindr's* non-paying app could select only one. This can be problematic for non-paying members who must decide with which tribe they most closely identify. Perhaps it is for this reason that I found *Grindr's* tribe feature to be underused. Indeed, out of the 100 *Grindr* members I observed within a several mile radius of the Canterbury city center, only 35 members had made use of the tribe feature. Of those who selected a tribe, the most commonly-selected attributes were *Clean-Cut* ($n = 5$), *Jock* ($n = 3$) and *Otter* ($n = 3$). Similar patterns were found in other locales.

Underuse of *Grindr's* tribe feature has also been noted elsewhere. For example, a recent article in the gay online magazine *The Advocate*— 'Dating Tribes: Helpful or a Hindrance?'— reported that 'there are more profiles that don't have a Grindr Tribe listed than ones that do' (The Advocate 2015). The article also polled *Grindr* member 'satisfaction' with the tribe feature. One member reported that he found the feature to be 'closed-minded' inasmuch as it did not 'depict the many individuals who don't fit into that "role"' (The Advocate 2015). Another individual stated that *Grindr* 'need[ed] more [i.e., tribes]', because, as he pointed out, 'bisexual is not there' (The Advocate 2015).

Though not referring to GBQM cyberspace social networks, Hayward (2004: 154) notes that, because the 'current social climate' (of which cyberspace networks could be included) 'is one of constant change and uncertainty, the creation of identity and the exertion of control become

complex tasks'. While the creation and control of identity in GBQM cyberspaces may seem relatively simple and straightforward, it is indeed complex. Moreover, the use of ideal images (such as those displayed on mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks) and technologies (such as prescriptive identity categories)—although perhaps not directly linked to GBQM drug use—may nonetheless cause some men to feel a simultaneous 'external pressure to define [themselves] in some socially proscribed fashion' and an inability to 'define a satisfactory identity' for themselves (Anderson 1998: 246). Both internal processes, according to Anderson (1994; 1998), are linked to drug use. Although Anderson does not refer to GBQM drug users specifically, it is likely that the same types of processes may be linked to drug (ab)use among many GBQM. At the very least, for some men who cannot conform to ideal normative images or identities, the feeling that they are 'ignored', 'trivialized', or 'rendered invisible and unheard' (West et al. 1990) by others may lead some to experience 'felt' marginalization, which in turn can lead to 'actual' stigmatization.

There are, of course, more direct ways in which GBQM social network members might experience actual marginalization and or stigma related to their age, body type, ethnicity and or sexual(ity) expressiveness. Using data collected from both *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*, the next sections provide examples and analyses of some of these other methods—in particular, the presence of potentially stigmatizing profile 'preferences'.

Stigmatizing the Non-Ideal

Preferences for specific types of dating and or sexual partners are commonly expressed within the profiles of GBQM cyberspace social network members. These preferences can often center around age, body type, ethnicity and masculinity, to name a few. For example, one 18-year old *Grindr* member in western Europe stated his preference for a certain age range: 'I am 18!!! And sorry, not into older than 25' (Grindr member profile, 15 February 2014). Another *Grindr* member in western Europe specified his preference for a specific body type:

> FACELESS WILL BE IGNORED […] INTO HUNG TOPS […] Into men who are good looking, single and MUSCULAR. […] If you're not confident enough to post your face, you don't deserve a reply (Grindr member profile, 6 January 2014).

And, regarding ethnicity, an example was found in the profile of a *PlanetRomeo* member in Southeast Asia who stated, 'I want looking for white bf serious life and live stay together forever' (PlanetRomeo member, 8 January, 2014).

The stating of preferences plays an integral part in the GBQM cyberspace dating or 'hook up' experience. Arguably, one of the consequences of these preferences is that those who do not meet another's criteria may experience a felt sense of marginalization (or even a felt sense of stigma). This cannot be helped. What can be helped, perhaps, is the *manner* in which preferences are conveyed. Indeed, as demonstrated below, some cyberspace social network members state their preferences using potentially abusive language—that is, language that has the potential to bring about actual stigma (see Goffman 1963).

Whether having the potential to evoke feelings of anger, or shame or stigma, potentially stigmatizing preferences were found on both *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*. These preferences seemed to be largely centered around age, body type, ethnicity, masculinity and sexuality. For example, with respect to age, one *PlanetRomeo* member in central Europe likened older men to his father: 'E per cortesia non mi contattate se avete piú di 40 anni. Un papá ce l'ho giá, grazie' (*Don't contact me if you're older than 40. I already have a dad, thanks* [PlanetRomeo member profile, 7 January, 2014]). Another, a 26-year old *PlanetRomeo* member in central Europe went a step further: 'no old guys … don't need to fuck with my grandpa' (PlanetRomeo member profile, 3 February 2014). Regarding body type, a *PlanetRomeo* member in the Middle East wrote, 'Turn OFFs: poor hygiene … too skinny … too fat' (PlanetRomeo member profile, 5 February 2014). Some used racially insensitive words to describe ethnicity, such as a 22-year old *Grindr* user in western Europe: 'No rice [i.e., Asian men], no spice [i.e., Latin men], no chocolate [i.e., Black men]' (Grindr member profile, 20 November 2014). Still others denigrated non-masculine GBQM, such as a 28-year old *PlanetRomeo* member in northern Europe who wrote: 'No twink fairy or sissy. Macho and gentle TOP only' (PlanetRomeo member profile, 29 January 2014).

Potentially stigmatizing preferences are also directed at GBQM who self-identified as 'gay'. The website *douchebagsofgrindr.com* (i.e., *Douchebags of Grindr*) features numerous screenshots of *Grindr* members who, among other 'douche-y' behaviors (e.g., 'ageism'; 'racism'; 'hypermaterialism') posted homophobic text in their member profiles. One of the featured profiles

was that of a 28-year old *Grindr* member whose profile headline read, 'I hate that faggot shit!

(*Douchebagsofgrindr* 2015). Another profile featured the words. 'I hate gay people'

(*Douchebagsofgrindr* 2015).

Criticism of perceived homophobia within GBQM social networks are found in numerous

cyberspace forums—such as the *Grindr* 'Reviews' section of Apple's App Store:

> Probably important to share that there are lately Grindr users verbally attacking,
> sending threat, or hatred (homophobic) comments to other users, or try to preach to
> be gay is wrong […] Grindr, and all of us, have to do something about this (Reynhard
> Sinaga, Apple iPhone App *Store* review, 17 March 2014).

Finally, the use of anti-gay (i.e., homophobic) language was also sometimes criticized within the

profiles of GBQM cyberspace social network members themselves. For example, a 49-year old

PlanetRomeo member in Southeast Asia wrote:

> What heck is discreet? Does it mean we have to conform to you because you are not
> out and uncomfortable? If you have a criteria like "NO GAY", please don't expect
> to get some ass and get suck. Straight men will not offer you his ass nor go down on
> you...unless he is gay for pay. Capice? (PlanetRomeo member profile, 27 January
> 2014).

In addition to the potential for some GBQM to experience marginalization and

stigmatization concerning appearance and masculinity, some GBQM might also experience

HIV/AIDS-related marginalization and stigmatization. The next section discusses some of the ways

in which HIV-seropositive men might experience marginalization and stigma in GBQM cyberspace

social networks. First, examples of how HIV/AIDS, safe sex and HIV-seropositivity are

represented within gay culture (for example, through safe sex promotional campaign) will be

presented. I will then highlight some of the ways in which GBQM cyberspace social networks were

found to allow (and to not allow) members to disclose their HIV-serostatus. Examples of

potentially stigmatizing HIV/AIDS-related language found in GBQM cyberspace social network

profiles will also be offered.

PART TWO: MARGINALIZING GBQM WITH HIV/AIDS

It is perhaps easy to imagine how individuals with HIV/AIDS or other sexually-transmitted

infections (e.g., Hepatitis-C) might experience marginalization. Perhaps the most damning source

of this marginalization emerged as a result of the initial gross mischaracterization of AIDS as 'Gay-

Related Immune Deficiency Syndrome' (also known as 'GRID'). GRID had the effect of labeling

gay men—at the time, already largely considered 'criminal' and or 'mentally ill' in many

jurisdictions—'diseased'. Indeed, as Browning (1993: 220) notes, even lesbians,

> the human beings least likely to be infected with HIV found themselves attacked along with gay men as spreaders of AIDS. Disease, like perverse desire, was presumed to belong to a category of people. To isolate the minorities of disease and desire was to inoculate and protect the majority.

Moreover, following the discovery that GBQM were not solely at risk for infection with the HIV,

GBQM were sometimes (and to some degree, still are) labeled as 'infectious'—this owing to their

'high risk group' status (e.g., Browning 1993; Botnick 2000).

The development of the HIV antibody test (i.e., the 'ELISA/Western Blot') also had a

marginalizing effect on GBQM inasmuch as it divided GBQM into a binary hierarchal status:

'positive' and 'negative'. Absent a cure or treatment, public health officials and HIV/AIDS NGOs

began to push for condom usage as a 'safe' way in which men could still have sex with other men

with less risk of infecting themselves or others (Botnick 2000). This led to the development of safe

sex campaigns that labeled sex without a condom as 'risky'. Eventually, language such as 'clean',

'healthy', and 'safe' emerged as a way for HIV-seronegative men 'to describe themselves to

potential sex partners' (Botnick 2000: 62–63). Conversely, language identifying HIV-seropositivity

also emerged: 'dirty', 'infected', or 'unsafe' (e.g., Frederick & Perrone 2014).

HIV/AIDS prevention campaigns continue to impact and influence the daily lives of GBQM.

This is evidenced by safe sex advertisements and admonishments that are sometimes found on

billboards in gay ghettos; on posters in gay sex venues; and, in gay magazine advertisements

(Figure 4.3). Similar to the ways in which GBQM drug use is mediated (as discussed in Chapter

Five), HIV/AIDS campaigns often employ guilt or shame as a way of inducing GBQM to comply

with safe sex norms. Some ads go a step further by attempting to evoke feelings of distrust in other

GBQM. Such admonishments thus also run the risk of causing men who do not use condoms to feel

as though they are 'untrustworthy', 'dumb' or 'unwanted'.

Figure 4.3. Examples of safe sex advertisements and admonishments.

Numerous sexual health campaigns exist in cyberspace—GBQM and non-GBQM spaces alike. For example, the recruitment webpage for *The PROUD Study* (2015)—a two-year study that examined the impact of using Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis [PrEP] treatment among gay populations[26]--was found to be linked to a number of GBQM cyberspace environments. On its recruitment page, *The PROUD Study*, in effect, sexualizes safe sex by featuring two attractive male models. Similar to the models found on *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*, both models appear to be in their mid- to late-twenties; both are shirtless; both are muscled. One model's head is turned toward the groin of the other, who has his right (flexed) arm lifted and his index finger pointed towards the viewer in a manner that is reminiscent of a U.S. Armed Forces advertisement—as if to say 'PROUD wants *you'* (The Proud Study 2015). Not only does the ad suggest that all HIV-seronegative men look like models, such advertisements have the potential to indirectly marginalize GBQM who do not fit such standards of attractiveness.

Similarly, an advertisement for *LoveLife.ch*, a Swiss website, also sexualizes safe sex (AIDS-Hilfe Schweiz 2014). The website features two nude—also muscular—male models reclined on a bed (Figure 4.4). One of the models is shown lying on his back, his right leg slightly raised to cover his penis, his head resting in the lap of his partner. The other model is seated in an upright position, his right arm (again, flexed) braces the bed-frame. Both models gaze longingly at

---

[26] PrEP refers to 'Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis'—i.e., the treatment of HIV-seronegative men with the same medications used to control HIV infection in HIV-seropositive men. PrEP is used by some men as an alternative to condom usage; or, it is sometimes used as an extra safety measure for men who do wear condoms.

each other while three other models (also attractive, but clothed) busy themselves with different

mundane tasks. At the top left of the ad is displayed a warning: 'Sperma und Blut nicht in dem

Mund' *('[No] sperm and blood in the mouth').* Along the bottom of the ad are the words, 'Falls die

Vergangenheit Ihre Beziehung stört: check-your-lovelife.ch' ('*If the past is interfering with your*

relationship: check-your-love-life.ch' [AIDS-Hilfe Schweiz 2014]).

Figure 4.4. LOVELIFE safe-sex advertisement

In addition to its potential to evoke arousal, *Lovelife's* ad employs an emotional

mechanism—one that is tied to desire, guilt and remorse (e.g., Botnick 2000)—inasmuch as the ad

suggests that past unsafe sexual relations may lead to difficulties in finding a loving relationship.

For men who are HIV-seropositive, though, the ad conveys a simpler message: *If you have had*

unsafe sex, or, if you are HIV-seropositive, you can expect problems with your 'love life'.

Other campaigns 'ramp up' the rhetoric, such as London's *56 Dean Street's*

*'*UNDIAGNOSED HIV CAN BE A DEATH SENTENCE' campaign (Figure 4.5). Messages such

as these are not necessarily the messages that those with HIV/AIDS—or even those who are unsure

of their HIV serostatus—need (or want) to hear. Indeed, such messages can induce actual stigma

inasmuch as they have the potential to bring about anxiety in undiagnosed men. Such campaigns

can also cause profound fear in newly-diagnosed men who have not yet begun HIV treatment.

89
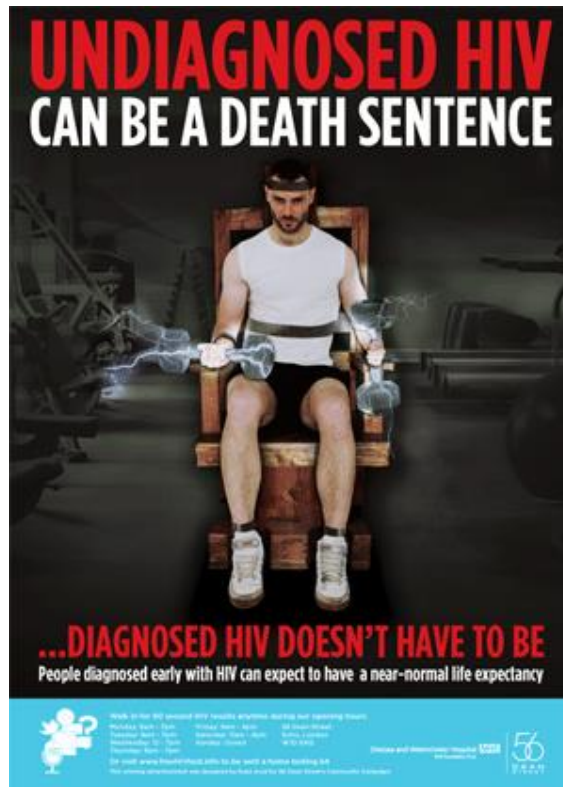
Figure 4.5. Sexual health advertisement created by London's 56 Dean Street.

Notwithstanding the potential for cyberspace-located sexual health campaigns to cause some men to experience a felt or actual sense of marginalization, some men may also experience felt marginalization in GBQM cyberspace social networks. According to Winchester, Abel and Bauermeister (2012: 28), some GBQM partner-seeking networks 'do not afford users the ability to be explicit about' matters concerning HIV or 'safer sex'. This is perhaps most notable in a network's use (or non-use) of sexual health-related prescriptive identity categories. Indeed, of the five static GBQM cyberspace social networks that were observed, only two—*NastyKinkPigs* and *PlanetRomeo*—offered a sexual-health-related prescriptive identity category. Of these, only *NastyKinkPigs* offered an HIV-serostatus-specific category—'HIV Status'. Within this category were found six attributes: *Negative, Positive, Don't Care*, *Undetectable* and *No Answer*[27]. Of the network's 78614 members, the largest percentage of members (39%) identified as *Negative* (*n* = 22458). This was followed by 37% of members who identified as either *Positive* or *Undetectable*; 8465 members (15%) who selected *No Answer*; and 5207 members (9%) who stated *Don't Care*.

---

[27] *NastyKinkPigs* has since added a 'Negative on PrEP' attribute.

Interestingly, 37% percent of *NastyKinkPig's* members had selected *No Answer*, or, they simply chose not to respond at all. This suggests that—even within a network wherein a higher number of members identified as seropositive—HIV/AIDS-related stigma may still be a factor for nondisclosure of one's HIV-seropositive status. This also suggests that some of these men may have been performing an HIV/AIDS-related 'discrepant role'.

Unlike *NastyKinkPigs*, *PlanetRomeo* offered a 'Safe Sex' profile category. Under this category members could respond *Never*, *Always* or *Needs Discussion*. Although the category does not directly infer one's HIV-serostatus, by responding *Never* or *Needs Discussion*, such members might be assumed to be HIV-seropositive—or even irresponsible. In particular, *Needs Discussion* was found to be singled out in the profiles of (presumably) HIV-seronegative *PlanetRomeo* members. For example, a 47-year old *PlanetRomeo* member in western Europe stated, 'If you have 'always safe' in your profile, and suddenly say: It 'needs discussion', don't bother to contact me. Be clear about how you play. Sorry not into Asians' (PlanetRomeo member profile, 30 January 2014). Another profile, from a 32-year old *PlanetRomeo* member in central Europe, read,

> Safe sex is a must. I will waste time with guys that think that an infection risk can be managed by 'discussion' or who write 'always' in their profile […] And I count 'needs discussion' as barebacking (PlanetRomeo member profile, 29 January 2014).

Finally, *Grindr* featured neither an HIV-serostatus-specific profile category nor a 'safe sex' category. Some men, I found, had experienced problems when trying to state their serostatus in their member profiles, such as one *Grindr* member, who voiced his concerns on Apple's AppStore *Grindr Reviews*:

> What was my sin? The 'about' line of my profile stated, in its entirety: 'HIV+ with undetectable viral load'. This 'about' line just got blanked in my profile after the Grindr 'moderation'. Normally, I would think this is just some mistake. But this is the 4th time it has happened, each time with the same content. I tried it repeatedly over the past month to make sure it wasn't a one-off error (or a "clerical" one, as the California DMV once said to me). The first few times it happened, I had not noticed the pop-up because Grindr always starts with pop-up ads that I don't read. But I did notice that my profile had been deleted, so I started looking into why. I now believe that it is the actual unwritten policy of Grindr not to allow us to openly state our HIV positive status (i.e., there is a ban on stating it). This is a reprehensible ban that no only furthers the HIV stigma, but also makes Grindr complicit in HIV transmission (madbrain 20 March 2013).

Arguably, *Grindr* does feature a *Poz* attribute as one of its 'tribes'; however, I found that, with the exception of *Grindr's Discreet* tribe, *Grindr's* other tribes—*Bear, Clean-Cut, Daddy, Geek, Jock, Leather, Otter, Rugged, Trans and Twink*—seem to refer more to physicality than physical health. This runs the risk of conflating physicality with one's HIV-serostatus. Additionally, as previously noted, unless an individual purchases *Grindr's Xtra* version, he will only be able to select one tribe and will thus have to choose the tribe with which he most closely identifies. Recalling West et al.'s (1990) definition of marginalization, such a process is disputatious in that—because it forces HIV-seropositive men to select either their physicality or their HIV-serostatus—it privileges HIV-seronegative men over HIV-seropositive men. Finally, *Grindr's Poz* tribe is also problematic inasmuch as identifying *with* those who are HIV-seropositive and identifying *as* HIV-seropositive are not one in the same. For example, an HIV-seronegative individual may choose to identity with the *Poz* tribe out of an affinity for his HIV-seropositive partner. Others may identify as *Poz* because they have an HIV-seropositive partner and are seeking other HIV-seropositive men for 'three-ways' (i.e., a *ménage-a-trois*) or group sex scenes. Still others may seek intentional infection with HIV (as with 'bug chasers').

As noted, when conceptualizing discrepant roles, Goffman (1963: 123) holds that it is not merely individuals who hide 'destructive information', but also groups of individuals (or, as conceptualized herein, networks such as *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*). Although it is not suggested that GBQM cyberspace social network developers actively seek to marginalize HIV-seropositive men, by not providing a method through which HIV-seropositive members can specify their actual serostatuses networks such as *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo* convey the illusion that their members are 'clean' or 'free of disease'. Consequently, men who are HIV-seropositive may perceive that they are 'invisible' or 'threatening' (e.g., West et al. 1990), or, that they should 'keep out'. These men may thus seek other cyberspace social networks wherein their 'stigma' is less 'stigmatizing'— spaces wherein they can 'affirm [their] identity' or, to escape 'an oppressive area or situation' (Campbell 2004: 53). This is perhaps particularly true for HIV-seropositive men who experience actual HIV-related stigma in cyberspace social networks, as discussed below.

Stigmatizing GBQM with HIV/AIDS

As with the stated preferences of those who seek partners with specific physical or personality traits, GBQM cyberspace social network members were also found to use their network profiles to state their preferences concerning HIV. Some men stated preferences for 'safe sex'—the idea being that they did not wish to be exposed to sexually-transmitted infections, or, that they did not wish to infect other men (i.e., if they, themselves, are HIV-seropositive). Others simply stated in their network profiles that they were HIV negative (some even provided the date of their last HIV-negative blood test result), or, still others stated that they were only seeking HIV negative men. In many cases, such preferences were stated without further any explication. Yet, according to Winchester et al. (2012), whereas such preferences may not be intended to marginalize or stigmatize HIV-seropositivity men, 'employing these types of implicit or passive strategies could be problematic from a safer sex negotiations perspective [inasmuch as] the interpretation of the language may not be as intended' (see also Lombardo 2009).

Nevertheless, as with the preferences stated around age, appearance, ethnicity and masculinity, it is the manner in which HIV/AIDS-related preferences are stated that can make the difference between an HIV-seropositive individual experiencing felt marginalization and felt or actual stigma. Numerous examples of potentially stigmatizing HIV/AIDS-related 'preferences' were found in the profiles of both *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo* members. Some men were found to equivocate safe sex or HIV-seronegativity with being 'clean'. For example, a 38-year-old *PlanetRomeo* member in central Europe wrote, 'If it´s about sex: safe and clean' (PlanetRomeo member, 25 January 2014). Others equated cleanliness with 'decency' and 'responsibility', such as a 25-year-old *PlanetRomeo* member in Asia, who wrote:

> Easy going down to earth guy here. looking for NSA fun with decent clean responsible boys and men. Open to new things. So hit me up and drop me a text and if we click, we can meet up for a hot session ;) (PlanetRomeo member, 25 January 2014).

Still others equated being clean with being 'healthy', such as a 27-year-old *PlanetRomeo* member in central Asia, who stated:

> BE : smart, reasonable, gentle, kind, pure & heartedly, honest, successful, decent, respectful, serious, adult, easy, strong, clean, healthy, MAN, generous & give love […] don'T BE : capricious, moody, paranoiac, mentally retarded, liar, faker, knock-

off, windy, feminine, especially STINKY... (PlanetRomeo member, 25 January 2014).

Although the use of words such as 'decent', 'responsible', 'clean' and 'healthy' may be seen by some as preferences, the use of such binary language not only has the potential to stigmatize HIV-seropositive men, it suggests that HIV-seropositive men—even those who are healthy and or who have undetectable viral loads[28]—are 'diseased', 'indecent', 'irresponsible', 'unclean' and 'unhealthy'. Indeed, the negative forms of these binaries were also found in the member profiles of the networks that were observed. One example was that of a 45-year-old *PlanetRomeo* member in Southeast Asia, who stated, 'Can't say that I'm experienced with guys but like to experiment nonetheless. I'm disease-free and plan to stay that way so safe sex is a must' (PlanetRomeo member, 20 January 2014). Another example was found in the profile of a 35-year-old *PlanetRomeo* member in southern Europe, who stated, 'LUSTFUL ADVENTUROUS TOP likes meeting handsome, athletic, disease free men' (PlanetRomeo member, 25 January 2015).

Language such as 'clean', 'disease-free' and even 'neg only' (i.e., HIV-seronegative only) has been criticized by NGOs such as *The Stigma Project*, which claim that such language has the potential to confuse and or stigmatize both HIV-seropositive *and* HIV-seronegative men (Figure 4.6). Notwithstanding its link to drug use among HIV-seropositive GBQM, one of the potential consequences of HIV/AIDS-related stigma is the reluctance of some HIV-seropositive men to disclose their serostatus before having sex. (see Adam et al. 2011). Thus, *The Stigma Project* suggests that individuals should avoid using phrases such as 'drug and disease free'—in other words, language that suggests HIV and drug use are 'mutually inclusive and that people with HIV also use drugs' (The Stigma Project 2016)[29].

---

[28] Many individuals who are treated for HIV infection achieve an 'undetectable' status. 'Undetectable' refers to the fact that the virus—as a result of treatment—is not detectable in their blood.
[29] *The Stigma Project* does not, however, offer any recommendations for language adjustments that relate only to drug users.
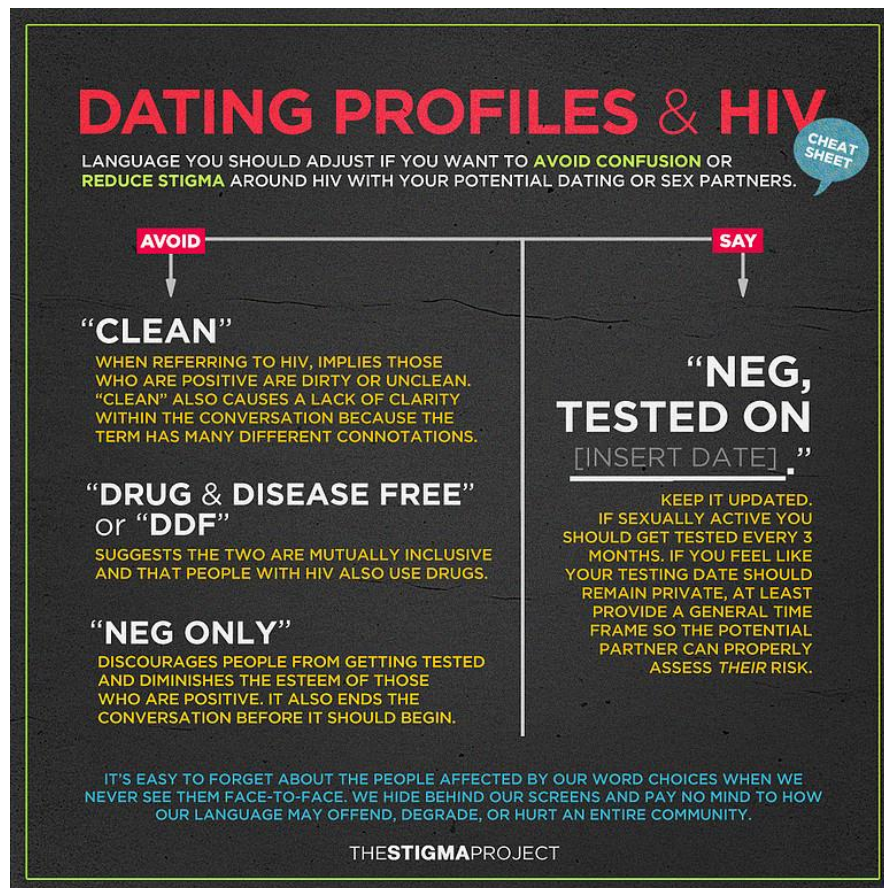
Figure 4.6. The Stigma Project's 'Clean UB2' campaign.

CONCLUSION

What is considered 'ideal' in a given society or culture—not to mention the ways in which such

ideals can lead to social inequities—often varies greatly across social settings. According to

Presdee (2000: 60),

> Obsolescence becomes an important part of everyday life as our lives become characterised by the sell-date of commodities. We need to savor the consumption process and check if we have the shelf-life to do it.

In some regards, the dynamics that shape contemporary gay culture can be characterized by

numerous different 'shelf-lives'. 'Age' may most effectively illustrate Presdee's statement;

however, within contemporary gay culture, other ideals exist as well—for example, ideals around

body type, ethnicity, masculinity and HIV-serostatus. As Paradis (2009) suggests, though,

cyberspace—as a social setting—can sometimes reproduce the ideals and inequities that are found

offline. This chapter presented data that highlighted some of the ways in which these dynamics are

shaped—for example, through the ideals and inequities that are found in cyberspace and in GBQM cyberspace social networks.

Because marginalization is a process that involves the privileging and or valorizing of certain people and ideas over others, those who are not privileged or valorized can sometimes feel as though they are ignored, rendered invisible and unheard, 'othered' or even perceived as threatening. One way in which GBQM might experience marginalization in GBQM cyberspace social networks is through a network's use of images—images that reify the 'metropolitan gay male'. For networks that have a global membership base, these ideals may even contribute to the proliferation of a 'global gay image'. Examples of these ideal images were presented throughout this chapter.

Another way in which GBQM might experience marginalization is through the design of a network's interface. In particular, this chapter described and analyzed some of the ways in which a network's use of 'prescriptive identity' profile-building categories and attributes can serve to countenance homonormative ideals—not only concerning image and masculinity, but also concerning HIV-serostatus. Not all GBQM cyberspace social network members make use of all of a network's profile categories, though. Numerous reasons for this non-use were proffered; however, one reason that was noted was that of the 'discrepant role'. Indeed, by assuming a discrepant role, some individuals might, in essence, attempt to control the sharing of characteristics that, they believe, may be negatively perceived by others. Moreover, as organizations, some cyberspace social networks might also employ discrepant roles by not providing profile categories (or, as noted, even other opportunities) for network members to disclose their HIV-serostatus.

One of the consequences of the privileging of ideals in societies and or cultures—heteronormative or homonormative—is that not everyone will have the ability to conform. For these individuals, then, the potential to experience a stigma as a result of their exclusion is increased. As an example, the use of 'preferences' in GBQM cyberspace social networks was discussed. Examples of how preferences were stated for age, body type, ethnicity, masculinity, sexuality and HIV-serostatus were provided. As noted, some preferences—however innocuous they may seem—can still have the potential to cause men to feel a sense of marginalization or stigma. As a component of cyberspace dating and or 'hook up' sites, however, this cannot be avoided. On

the contrary, preferences that are stated using bigoted, discriminatory, racist or serophobic[30] language may have the potential to inflict a greater harm for some men. Examples of these potentially stigmatizing 'preferences' were also provided.

What is important to note is that some GBQM may rely on GBQM cyberspace social networks as their only connection to the larger gay 'community'. As reviewed in Chapter Two, numerous studies have documented the increasing popularity and usage of cyberspace social networks among LGBTQs—some have even shown that GBQM in particular are more likely to meet other GBQM in cyberspace social networks than in any other environment. In other words, GBQM spend a great deal of time within the social settings of cyberspace. For this reason, the likelihood that individuals will encounter homonormative ideals concerning what it means to look gay (and to be gay) is increased. As a result, some men may perceive that they are in some way excluded from a stake in gay culture. This may be especially true for those who spend protracted periods of time perusing network member profiles: although the 'preferences' they encounter may not always contain stigmatizing language, these preferences nonetheless run the risk of being conflated with others that are even more potentially stigmatizing. In other words, for men who encounter preferences that are *actually* stigmatizing, other preferences (for example, those that might otherwise cause a 'felt' sense of stigma) may be *perceived as actual.* Some men may thus seek other GBQM social networks wherein image- and HIV-based preferences are not as prevalent.

According to Anderson (1998), the more stigmatizing experiences one endures, the greater the likelihood they will undergo a drug-related identity change. Although Anderson does not mention cyberspace social networks (or, for that matter GBQM cyberspace social networks), Anderson's observation is nonetheless applicable inasmuch as there exists within GBQM cyberspace social networks both the potential for stigma to be experienced and the opportunity to encounter drug users (for whom preferences around image and HIV-serostatus may not be as important). Furthermore, Anderson hypothesizes that an individual's risk of drug use increases if they possess certain 'traits' or 'statuses' that are more stigmatized than others (1998: 244).Within GBQM cyberspace social networks, certain traits are more valorized than others. For men who do

---

[30] An irrational fear of HIV.

not possess these traits—indeed, for men who experience stigma as a result of their not possessing these traits—their likelihood to engage in drug (ab)use may thus be increased.

The next chapter explores how some GBQM—in particular, those who engage in drug use—may experience marginalization and or stigma as a result of other sources—that is, mediated representations. First, some of the more ostensible forms of negatively-framed mediated representations around GBQM drug use will be discussed—in particular, documentaries and mass media news reports. To these will be added a third form: public health agencies and drug awareness organization campaigns. The chapter also explores more 'celebratory' forms of mediated representations, including artistic expressions of GBQM drug use and drug-themed gay male pornography. Finally, two forms of 'self-mediated representations' will be explored: GBQM drug users who share drug-themed content on photo-sharing sites/apps, and, those who share drug-themed videos on GBQM 'tube sites'.

CHAPTER 5 - EXPLORING MEDIATED REPRESENTATIONS OF GBQM DRUG USE

'Because we exist in headlines, we exist in life' (Browning 1993: 206).

Prior to the release of the film *'Chemsex'*—a documentary about GBQM drug use in London—journalist Matthew Todd invited the film's directors, Will Fairman and Max Gogarty, along with David Stuart, director of *56 Dean Street* (a sexual health clinic in London's Soho district) to an event at London's Soho Theatre. The event, titled *'Matthew Todd and Guests: The Rise of "Chemsex"'* (tickets £5) was billed as an 'explosive discussion': 'what was once perhaps harmless fun on the dance floor, is arguably pulling the community apart now' (Soho Theatre 2015). One of the audience members, Jamie Hakim (2015: para. 2)—a lecturer in media studies at the University of East Anglia—had this to say of the event:

> Two weeks ago I went to an event organised to discuss chemsex in Soho, London, in which someone compared it to the AIDS crisis in the 1980s. My jaw dropped. Although well meaning, this comparison is historically inaccurate and does a tremendous disservice to the memories of all the people who died such gruesome deaths at that time. … Unfortunately, this is not the only hysterical note being hit in the recent outpouring of discussion on the chemsex phenomenon. Amongst much of the good work being carried out that deals with the harms associated with chemsex, a moral panic is beginning to take shape, itself reminiscent of the 1980s, which is unwittingly painting a homophobic picture of gay men and our sexual lives.

Hakim's (2015: para. 18) concern over the negative framing of *chemsex* (i.e., GBQM drug use) is undoubtedly due, in part, to his assertion that such characterizations can affect the representation of GBQM drug use in the news media which, he holds, 'often selects the most horrifying and harmful behaviors … in order to create click-bait and shift content'. Hakim's concerns are not unfounded. Indeed, not long after the release of the film *'Chemsex'*, several U.K. news outlets released stories with headlines such as 'Addicted to chemsex: "It's a horror story"' and 'Chemsex: "seriously sobering"'. Even the gay news media (i.e., the 'pink press') released sensationalized reports such as 'Drugs, Orgies and Addiction'.

Mediated representations—such as news reports and documentary exposés—are often the primary source of the public's knowledge about deviance and social problems. Indeed, as Presdee (2000: 71) notes, 'the search for "naturally" occurring suffering, violence and crime is a continuing exploration process for the media industry'. In addition to news reports and documentaries,

however, mediated representations can take other, less obvious forms, as well. Indeed, there are numerous sources of mediated representations concerning GBQM drug use—not all of which are negative; not all of which are mediated by 'outsiders'. On the contrary, some are 'celebratory'. Some are even mediated by GBQM drug users themselves.

This chapter explores some of the mediated representations of GBQM drug use—in particular, those concerning *chemsex* and *party and play*—in an effort to reveal the underlying emotionality as well as the cultural dynamics and meanings that contribute to the shaping of society's understandings of these men and their behaviors. The chapter presents analyses of two general types of mediated representations of GBQM drug use. The first consists of negatively-framed representations and includes examples in the form of documentaries and new media reports, as well as those that are mediated through public health agency and drug awareness campaigns. These representations, in effect, can serve to define GBQM drug users—definitions which are often provided by 'experts' (or, 'moral entrepreneurs' [Becker 1963]) such as documentary directors, addiction practitioners and public/sexual health representatives, to name a few.

The second type of mediated representation that will be discussed are those that are celebratory. These representations include artistic expressions of GBQM drug use in photography and in theatrical productions; in gay male pornography; and through photo- and video-sharing websites and applications. In this way, this chapter demonstrates how other types of moral entrepreneurs—such as artists, playwrights and porn directors—can act as different kinds of 'experts' who represent GBQM drug-use. Finally, through an analysis of drug-themed photo- and video-sharing, the chapter will illustrate some of the ways in which GBQM drug users can (and do) take an active role in defining and representing themselves.

PART ONE: NEGATIVELY-FRAMED MEDIATED REPRESENTATIONS OF GBQM DRUG USE

The following provides descriptions of several mediated representations of GBQM drug use that are framed as 'moral panics' and that feature individuals who represent the GBQM subculture as 'experts'. The section first describes and analyses two documentaries on GBQM drug use—the first was produced in the U.S.; the second, in the U.K. Next, examples of GBQM drug use in news reports—in particular, reports that have emerged since the release of the film *'Chemsex'*—will be

discussed and analyzed. The section concludes with examples of the ways in which public health agencies and drug awareness organizations represent GBQM drug use—this includes an analysis of the different types of strategies that are often employed. Cohen's (2002) 'narrative themes' (i.e., 'drama'; 'emergency and crisis'; 'cherished values threatened'; 'objects of concern, anxiety and hostility'; and, 'evil forces or people to be identified and stopped') and Becker's 'moral entrepreneurship' will be articulated throughout.

GBQM Drug Use in Documentaries

Drug use is often the topic of documentaries. Numerous examples abound, from early American propaganda exploitation films such as *'Reefer Madness'* to more recent films such as *'The History of Marijuana in America* and *DMT: The Spirit Molecule'*[31]. Only in the past decade, however, has GBQM drug use been of interest to documentary filmmakers. The following discusses two such documentaries: *'Dancing with the Devil: Gay Men and Crystal Meth'* (Horvat 2006), and *'Chemsex'* (Gogarty & Fairman 2015).

Documentary 1: Dancing with the Devil: Gay Men and Crystal Meth

'Dancing with the Devil' is a documentary based on the play *'The Tina Dance'*, a collectively written docudrama about the use of crystal by gay men in Los Angeles. The play was billed as 'a reality show on stage' (Kearns 2016); it opened on August 3, 2006 at the Los Angeles Gay and Lesbian Center's Renberg Theatre and ran for nine days.

     'Dancing with the Devil' is presented in four separate vignettes: *'Part I: HIV'*; *'Part II: The Show'*; *'Part III: The Drug'*; and, *'Part IV: Sex'*. *'Part I: HIV'* begins with the sort of music one might expect to hear in a gay bathhouse or gay nightclub—that is, low bass, thumping drums and a surrealistic synthesizer (see Thornton 1996). Four men, each appearing to be in his late twenties to early forties introduce themselves separately—their names are not given (Horvat 2006):

Man 1:	"I am a crystal meth addict."
Man 2:	"I am a crystal meth addict."
Man 3:	"I am a crystal meth addict."
Man 4:	"I am a crystal meth addict."

---

[31] DMT refers to *N,N-Dimethyltryptamine*, a psychedelic compound of the tryptamine family.

And then:

Man 1:	"I was a monster."
Man 2:	"I was a monster."
Man 3:	"I was a monster."
Man 4:	"And I was a monster."

And finally:

Man 1:	"I was a monster because of my crystal meth addiction."
Man 2:	"I would just do things that were not human-like."
Man 3:	"It made me free and savage."
Man 4:	"Every time I used crystal meth … uh … I became more distant."

According to Pearce (1973: 290), 'In the stereotypical presentation of deviants' identity, the essential self of the deviant is seen to reside in their deviant activity'. Speaking specifically of homosexual men in the early 1960s and 1970s, Pearce notes their 'supposed essential difference from other men is emphasized by *objectifying* them', that is, 'using a vocabulary which emphasize[s] that they are *less than* the normal human citizen' ([emphasis in original] 1973: 290). Pearce uses examples such as 'freaks', 'perverts', 'degenerates', 'sick' and 'ill', as well as the tendency to compare homosexual men to animals (e.g., 'lizards'; 'newts'; 'toads'). Although the men of *'Dancing with the Devil'* do not refer to their sexual identity, *per se* (the understanding being that they are gay men), their responses make clear that a similar de-humanizing process has occurred: *'monsters'*; *'savages'*; *'not human-like'*. Arguably, the men describe *themselves*; nonetheless, whether their definitions are truly self-prescribed, or, whether these are, in fact, drug-related labels that have been picked-up through exposure to other (media) sources remains unclear.

One of the first to explore the link between labeling and deviant subcultures was Becker (1963), who argued that deviance was the product of being labeled as such by society. In this way, the 'deviant' merely wore the label by which he was then judged. Labeling has also been linked to the amplification of existing deviance, which, in turn, can cause individuals to seek out higher plateaus of deviance of which to ascend (Lemert 1969; see also Wilkins 1967). Anderson (1998: 244) posits that labeling, as a stigmatizing experience, can engender a sense of 'personal

marginalization', whereby individuals sever themselves from 'what is socially acceptable'. These experiences can also bring about a sense of 'ego-identity discomfort' wherein the individual suffers 'a significant level of dissatisfaction with how one feels about who one is' (1998: 246). Both experiences, according to Anderson (1998: 244), can initiate a drug-related identity process. On the other hand, Willis (1976: 91-93) notes that drugs can help to bring about 'the *loss* of ego' [emphasis added] inasmuch as drugs can enable individuals to avoid any guilt they may have over entering 'strange lands':

> In psychiatric terms, which the hippies often used, there was 'ego-loss' and also the experience of a 'meta-egoic' state. The head[32] could ride the forces, experience the forces, that the alert autonomous mind would have nervously blocked. He was free experientially because he was relieved of the personal task of holding the world together. In a sense, then, nothing could harm the head, when 'high': he was beyond the reach of coercion in the public world. Because he had seen the ultimately coercive nature of life, and had found it liberating, nothing could touch him again.

Labeling has been linked to chronic drug use among GBQM (e.g., Halkitis, Fischgrund & Parsons 2005; Rhodes et al. 1999; Semple et al. 2006). Labeling has also been cited in numerous studies as a contributing factor for such 'high risk' drug-related sexual behaviours as bareback sex (e.g., Grov & Parsons 2006); the intentional transmission of HIV (e.g., Grov 2004); nondisclosure of HIV status (Chesney & Smith 1999; Siegel, Lune & Meyer 1998); sexual compulsivity (Semple, Zians, Grant & Patterson 2006); and, the seeking out of intentional HIV infection (Gauthier & Forsyth 1999). Some of these behaviors were found to be expressed by GBQM drug users in GBQM cyberspace social networks (as discussed in Chapter Six).

It is also important to note that, although the men in *'Dancing with the Devil'* identify as crystal meth addicts, each of them is *in recovery* from drug use—or, to use the verbiage of 12-Step programs (e.g., Narcotics Anonymous; Crystal Meth Anonymous), because they were 'once an addict' they will 'always [*be*] an addict' (Narcotics Anonymous 1986). And yet, each of the men present themselves as well-dressed, clean-shaven and articulate—in fact, if you encountered one of them on the street, you would perhaps never know of their past experiences with drugs. Although they speak about their use of drugs, they do so in retrospect—not as active users. Thus, while we may be tempted to believe that the subculture is providing its own primary definitions through

---

[32] 'Head' is slang for a Hippie.

these men (see BCCC Mugging Group 1975), the question remains: *'Where do these definitions actually originate?'*

Similarly, in Part II of the documentary—'HIV'—each of the men relate personal stories about their experiences with 'unsafe sex'. Their stories are preceded by images of a sexual health clinic. Dark thumping dance music is again heard. A close-up of a syringe is shown drawing blood from a man's arm. The man grimaces in pain. The word 'BIOHAZARD' and its attendant symbol flashes repeatedly on the screen (Figure 5.1). The interviews resume (Horvat 2006):

> Man 2: "My being HIV positive is a hundred percent because of crystal meth."
>
> Man 3: "My HIV status is umm … yeah … I'm positive obviously, and I do believe that… throughout my crystal use that really put me at risk.
>
> Man 1: "Crystal meth was directly responsible for me seroconverting."

The video then cuts to the director of the documentary, Michael Horvat—also a former drug user—who explains his reasons for making the documentary:

> Crystal meth is not just about gay. It's about housewives in the Midwest and truck drivers in the southeast and … but … when it is about 'gay' and … AIDS, or when it is about gay and meth, then … that's what we have to look at (Horvat 2006).

Arguably, the use of drugs such as crystal has been well-documented as contributing to rising rates of HIV infections among GBQM. Nonetheless, statements made on behalf of a subculture—statements such as "My being HIV positive is a hundred percent because of crystal meth"; or "I'm positive *obviously"*—create the illusion that HIV infection is an inescapable consequence of drug use. For some—such as those who seek intentional HIV infection—it may be. Yet, the totality of these statements (inasmuch as each of the men in *'Dancing with the Devil'* are HIV-seropositive) negates the fact that many GBQM drug users do not engage in condomless sex; that many GBQM drug users actually practice 'serosorting'[33]; that many men are on PrEP; or even, that many GBQM drug users engage in other harm reduction strategies.

---

[33] 'Serosorting' refer to the practice of 'preferentially selecting sex partners with concordant HIV status [or] preferentially using condoms with partners of discordant status' (Cassels, Menza, Goodreau & Golden 2009: para. 4).

Figure 5.1. Biohazard symbol and biohazard tattoo.

Finally, when asked *'Why Meth?'*, at least two of the documentary's participants stated reasons related to difficulties with being gay (Horvat 2006):

| Man 1: | "Sex was always shameful for me. And being homosexual was something I really didn't want." |
| Man 5: | "Heterosexual society is abusive to the gay soul." |

Yet, in Part IV of the series—'Sex'—Horvat explains, "It's not a question of why the people who are addicted to it are … I mean, there's a million explanations. The demon voices do not … ever … quiet. They never quell" (Horvat 2006). In effect, Horvat's statement negates the statements of his participants—statements that are important to an understanding of the reasons why these individuals use drugs, not to mention to an understanding of the cultural dynamics that underlie GBQM drug use in general. Horvat thus casts himself as an 'expert' (or, a 'moral entrepreneur') who effectively defines the subculture as one that is comprised of individuals who—'possessed' by a demonic drug—are without choice, willpower or agency.

Documentary 2: Chemsex

Almost a decade after the release of *'Dancing with the Devil'*, Peccadillo Pictures (through popular online magazine *Vice*) released its 80-minute documentary *Chemsex* (Gogarty & Fairman 2015) in several movie theaters throughout the U.K. The movie is also available to rent through the online video-streaming site *Vimeo* for £3.49 (for a 72-hour streaming period), or for purchase for £9.99 (to stream the movie anytime). *'Chemsex'* is described as follows:

Vulnerable gay men with issues around sex, new drugs that tapped into that problem and changing technology. What they call the perfect storm. Chemsex: the name given to the rising phenomenon which refers to the use of drugs in a sexual context. Often referring to group sex that can last for days, the allure of chemsex has lead to many young men being trapped in a vicious circle of sex, addiction and dependence. This powerful and potent film tells the stories of gay men whose lives have been affected by the crisis; from self-confessed 'slammers' to sexual health workers, from those who deny there's a problem to those who 'got out alive'. Offering unprecedented access, Chemsex is a brave and unflinching journey in to the dark underworld of modern, urban gay life (Vimeo 2016).

Similar to *'Dancing with the Devil'*, *'Chemsex'* also opens with dark-sounding dance music. The London skyline is shown—a full moon hangs over the city, perhaps setting the tone for the 'horror story' that will later unfold.[34] The scene cuts to the image of a syringe—an unnamed shirtless man 'loads' the syringe with a crystalline substance. He applies a tourniquet to his arm. The camera zooms in on the syringe as the man draws blood from his vein into the syringe's 'barrel'. He injects the combination of blood and clear fluid into his arm. When he's finished, he removes the tourniquet and lifts his arm above his head. He sits back on a couch and begins to grope his crotch. His breathing becomes faster. Dialogue ensues (Gogarty & Fairman 2015):

Man:	"See all I wanna do now is get fucked. Have sex. Crazy."
Off-screen:	"Straight away?"
Man:	"Uh huh … yeah … just my … cock cock cock cock cock (he laughs and shoves his hand into his shorts).
Man:	"I'm not like a proper drug addict. I know that like to some people it would seem that I am, but…"
Off-screen:	"What's a proper drug addict?"
Man:	"I dunno. A news… like, yeah I dunno. Probably me."

Words flash against a black background: 'THERE IS A HIDDEN HEALTH EMERGENCY AMONGST LONDON'S GAY COMMUNITY … OVER ONE CALENDAR YEAR WE INVITED GAY MEN TO DISCUSS THEIR EXPERIENCES WITH SEX AND DRUGS' (Gogarty & Fairman 2015). Then, in what is reminiscent of a voyeuristic webcam chat room, twenty-one separate frames are shown—each with a solitary chair. Sixteen men take their seats in their respective frames, while shadows of the remaining five men are seen behind red curtains. In

---

[34] *The Guardian* newspaper would later run the headline 'Addicted to Chemsex: It's a Horror Story' (Flynn 22 November 2015).

the center frame is David Stuart, the director of *56 Dean Street*. The camera closes-in on one

man—a voice is heard off-screen (Gogarty & Fairman 2015):

Off-screen:	"What is it that you're here to talk about today?"
Man 1:	"Well, really it's uh…" (he looks at his shaking hand)
Man 2:	"I'm here because I'm worried about what's happening on the scene. Umm… I'm worried about my friends. I've seen people get hooked on crystal and just what they look like when they're on it."
Man 5:	"I'm here to talk about chemsex and what it's meant to me and what it's kinda meant to my community."
Man 6:	"I'm here because… I'm here because I'm alive. Umm, I did get out, and umm… and why not should I not tell this story?"

A different voice is heard—that of Stuart's (Gogarty & Fairman 2015):

Dave Stuart:	"They just look possessed. Wild and hungry and desperate."
Man 7:	"I'm here because of this… kinda perversion of the gay scene. It's pathological. There's something scary happening."

Like *'Dancing with the Devil'*, the opening statements in *'Chemsex'*—with language such as

'perversion'; 'wild', 'hungry' and 'desperate'—set the tone for the rest of the film. However, unlike

'Dancing with the Devil', which focuses on the effects of drug use on a handful of men, the

underlying narrative of *'Chemsex'* is that GBQM is a *growing threat*—one that threatens to affect

all gay men. The film also focuses on the role of GBQM cyberspace social networks (such as

Grindr), as noted by Stuart:

> In my day you'd get asked out in a bar perhaps. These days? Fifteen, sixteen, you leave your home in Hertfordshire… you come to London to find your gay life and you find Grindr and within perhaps four conversations you're gonna be introduced to chems. Within eight conversations on Grindr you're gonna be introduced to injecting or slamming, as it's called. There is no textbook on how to be a safe gay man in modern times. In a changing healthcare world… in a changing app world… in a changing hooking-up technology world. Where do these kids get the tools to manage this? (Gogarty & Fairman 2015).

The film then cuts to scenes of sex in a darkened sex club. Several men are present. Shot glasses

filled with what might be GHB or GBL are passed around. Nipple clamps are shown. Dark rooms.

Flesh. A man performs anal intercourse on another man in a sling. Over these images, Stuart

continues:

> "What's tapping into our sexual dark places and fantasies and why is it like that for gay men almost exclusively? There's something about our relationship to our sex for

gay men… that's causing harm, and that needs addressing" (Fairman & Gogarty 2015).

And so, within eight minutes of the opening to *'Chemsex'*, we are also introduced to the film's expert—its 'moral entrepreneur'—that is, David Stuart. Throughout the film, Stuart offers his perspectives on what he sees as a growing drug problem within London's gay scene. Arguably, some of Stuart's comments are based in fact: *Grindr has*, indeed, been documented as contributing to the increase of availability of drug use among GBQM (e.g., Thanki & Frederick 2016; Daly 2015); the future of public healthcare in the U.K. *is* uncertain; and, there is *still* no 'textbook' on how to be a 'safe gay man'. Nonetheless, Stuart's sweeping generalizations about the swiftness with which young gay men ("kids," as he refers them) will be introduced to drugs and slamming—like Horvat in *'Dancing with the Devil'*—also strips GBQM drug users of their choice, their willpower and their agency. Not *all* gay men use *Grindr;* of those who do, not *all* will be introduced to drug; of those who are, not *all* of them will be introduced to 'slamming'.

In another scene of the film, the camera focuses on an amateur video-sharing website that contains video 'thumbnails' of numerous men engaged in the act of slamming. The image cuts to the homepage for *Get2ThePoint*; this is followed by a close-up of the homepage for *NastyKinkPigs*. Referring to *NastyKinkPigs'* homepage, Matt Spike, a fetish photographer (and former drug user) states:

> I mean yeah, you know. There's nothing subtle about that. Uh, this is NastyKinkPigs. The … uh, the kinda, the name really says it all, doesn't it? Morals are exactly not a priority. I mean this is basically just a place where people come to find others who basically want to *slam*… this site, too, you can find guys who will poz you up[35]… give you HIV. For someone to want to give you HIV is such a *brutal* thing to do. I think it's really an extreme form of sadism and that really extreme masochists will seek out their sadist (Gogarty & Fairman 2015).

As will be demonstrated in Chapter Six ('Exploring the Subcultural Aspects of Cyberspace-Facilitated GBQM Drug Use'), fewer than half of *NastyKinkPigs'* members actually identify as drug users. And, as discussed in the previous chapter, fewer than half of its members identify as HIV-seropositive. Spike's assessment of *NastyKinkPigs* is thus misleading inasmuch as it characterizes *all* of *NastyKinkPigs'* members as HIV-seropositive drug users when, in fact, both

---

[35] Referring to 'gift givers'—HIV-seropositive men who are willing to infect HIV-seronegative men with the *human immunodeficiency virus*.

drug users and non-drug users alike, and, both HIV-seropositive and HIV-seronegative alike cohabitate therein. Moreover, Spike's description of men who intentionally seek or pass HIV ('bug chasers' and 'gift givers', respectively)—while perhaps reprehensible to many—vilifies these men as sadists and masochists, thus stripping their behaviors of any deeper, more personal meaning.

One positive message that *'Chemsex'* conveys—and yet, one that is not emphasized as such—is that many GBQM employ harm reduction strategies around drug use. One example of this is found in the filming of the preparation for a private sex party. The host of the party, a man in his mid-to-late fifties, presents a spreadsheet with the names and avatars (i.e., the 'screen names') of twenty men who have been invited to the party. The spreadsheet includes a 'G o'clock' timetable— that is, a schedule of when each party participant can take his dose of GHB/GBL without risk of overdose. Over other scenes of the party—which show the participants slamming and imbibing shots of G—the voices of two invitees are heard. One discusses the amount of drugs he has had: 'One slam of m-cat [mephedrone] and a shot of G. Not too fucked up to fuck" (Gogarty & Fairman 2015). Another voice is heard: "I got into chemsex down here. I met up with some guys that I really trust and that's the best thing" (Gogarty & Fairman 2015). While these examples demonstrate harm reduction strategies—for example, dose maintenance, overdose avoidance and trust of fellow users (see Riley & O'Hare 2000; see also Young 1971)—no attention to these strategies is given by the filmmakers or by Stuart.

Cohen (2002: xxv) notes, when discussing moral enterprises and moral entrepreneurs, we need to ask questions such as, 'Do they have a right to say this?' and, 'Is their expertise merely another form of moral enterprise?' Interestingly, in one scene of the film, while leading the film's directors on a tour of *56 Dean Street*, Stuart notes that the clinic is a 'pilot program' that he hopes to 'roll out' across the United Kingdom. Stuart's participation in the film, then—albeit, we hope, altruistic—is somehow also tied to a larger moral enterprise based on addiction outreach.

Equally interestingly is the fact that both of the film's co-directors are heterosexual men. This raises questions concerning their authority to present a story about a largely GBQM phenomena. Although not much media attention has been given to the sexuality of the directors, in an interview with *Huck Magazine,* Gogarty was asked how—as 'outsiders'—he and Fairman won trust and access in telling the 'story' of chemsex:

That was really important to us. We made a lot of editorial decisions to make sure of that: the film wouldn't have any sort of external voice in the form of a narrator or a presenter, it would be very much observational and authentically told from the voices that mattered. The way we did that was spending probably three or four months researching the subject, meeting everyone from the NHS, the Terrence Higgins Trust to Lord Norman Fowler who ran the early AIDS campaign in the Thatcher government. Through those meetings we got introduced to more people and *it was really important for us that all of the authoritative voices, the key organisations, were at least on board or understanding what we were doing and were behind it* ([emphasis added] King 4 December 2015).

While Gogarty states that *'Chemsex'* has no external voice or narrator, during the film, the directors' voices (we are never sure which director speaks at which time) are nonetheless often heard. Indeed, as directors with editorial license, Gogarty and Fairman <u>do</u> have authority to tell the story from their perspective—the film is, after all, shot through their eyes. But it is perhaps Stuart's voice—most often heard over the film's scenes of sex and drug ingestion—that comes across as the true authority of *'Chemsex'*. This is perhaps best summed-up in a quote by Stuart himself:

We have an issue with sex. We do. If you don't believe me, go to your local sexual health clinic and you will see *hordes* of gay men in this town self-medicating themselves through complicated sexual identity and experience with really harmful drugs. The average number of partners? (Stuart shudders) Sometimes between five and fifteen people *per weekend*. They are sometimes sharing needles if they run out. They are douching from hoses with the showerheads taken off. And if there are cuts and marks from rough sex on drugs, *you're gonna catch Hepatitis-C*. That's a lot of risk (Gogarty & Fairman 2015).

Hordes of gay men. Self-medication. Complicated sexual identities. Numerous sexual partners. Needle sharing. Rough sex. Hepatitis C. In this very statement alone, Stuart 'ticks' several of the media narrative 'boxes' described by Cohen (2002). Thus, any positive message one might take away from the movie *'Chemsex'* is overshadowed by undertones of anxiety and drama—not only by its framing of GBQM drug use as an 'emergency' and a 'crisis', but in its representation of chemsex as potentially 'evil', and, of GBQM drug users as people to be 'identified and stopped'.

GBQM Drug Use in the News

Mainstream news media outlets—such as those found on television, in cyberspace and in print—are perhaps chief among the sources that provide the mediated representations of crime, deviance and other social problems. Such accounts can also incite moral panics, however—particularly where themes such as 'drama'; 'emergency and crisis'; 'cherished values threatened'; 'objects of

concern, anxiety and hostility'; and, 'evil forces or people to be identified and stopped' are employed.

Some of the more common themes found in news media coverage of GBQM drug use are those that employ rhetoric that depicts GBQM drug usage as a public health threat; or, that casts GBQM drug usage as a threat to the fabric of gay community relations. For example, a 2003 article in the San Francisco Chronicle—*'Dance of Death: Crystal Meth Fuels HIV'*—describes the use of crystal by gay men as 'alarming' and 'reckless', and posits that crystal use leads to 'epidemics' and 'pitfall[s] of addiction' (Heredia 2003: para. 40). Moreover, the article notes that, because crystal use in San Francisco is '*only* a misdemeanor' [emphasis added], criminal justice actions are often difficult. Indeed, one police officer is even quoted as saying, "we're trying to kick ass as much as we can" (Heredia 2003: para. 42).

Whereas news reports concerning GBQM drug use were once more-often covered by popular 'pink press' news outlets (e.g., *The Advocate*; *Attitude; Gay Times*; *Pink News*; *Poz*), with the release of the film *'Chemsex'* there has been an increased amount of coverage on the topic of GBQM drug use in mainstream news outlets, as well—for example, *The Guardian, The Times, Huffington Post, The Daily Mail* and others. Indeed, in November 2015, *The Guardian* ran two articles about GBQM drug use—both seemingly fueled by the film's release. The first article's headline read '*Chemsex rise prompts public health warning'* (Meikle 2015), while the second read *'Addicted to chemsex: "It's a horror story"'* (Flynn 22 November 2015). Concerning the practice of *chemsex*, one reviewer of the film stated: 'For a lot of vulnerable men on the scene, chemsex promises a sense of escape so overwhelming that sobriety feels like hell' (Robey 2015). Still others, such as a columnist for *VICE* (the co-producer of the film) seemingly defended the demonization of GBQM drug users:

> It is quite a spectacular achievement for one group of people's particular pleasure to be singled out and demonised. And for other finer, more upstanding citizens to be endlessly told that they are not having fun. Quite the reverse; this is something scary, sad, sordid, seedy, even deadly. And so it is with chemsex, the media's latest 'moral panic'. The Observer recently called it 'A Horror Story'. The headline to this scary story also informed readers gay men were 'Addicted to chemsex'. But of course, this could only be a crazed compulsion: they literally can't help themselves? (Smith 2015).

In their work on journalism, moral panic and the public interest, Morton and Aroney (2016) discuss a recent Australian *'60 Minutes'* story on Sharleen Spiteri[36], an HIV-seropositive sexworker who, as a result of public outcry over the story, was later detained in a locked AIDS ward, as well as a mental health institution. The story prompted legislation by New South Wales' parliament that led to the eventual criminalization of HIV transmission:

> Journalists working in mainstream media organizations have limited capacity to challenge news values and editorial priorities. Yet journalists also submit in certain cases to reporting restrictions or voluntary codes of practice when there is a clear public interest in doing so, for example, in the reporting of suicide. We do not argue that Sharleen's story should never have been reported, but rather that it should prompt journalists to reflect more on what they mean when they claim to act in the public interest (Morton & Aroney 2016: 32).

Concerning such news media reports, Presdee (2000: 71) notes, 'how we are affected by it and how we respond to it are of increasing concern to media regulators, as more and more producers are being held to account for the responses of the audience'. This is not surprising, given Young's (1973: 316) explanation that negatively-framed mediated representations are more 'appealing'. Indeed, Hakim's response to the recent moral panic around *chemsex* (as noted in the introduction to this chapter) is nowhere to be found in the mainstream media's coverage of *'Chemsex'* (or, for that matter, in news reports on the practice of *chemsex* in general). Thus, for the time being, it would seem as though the 'fanning up of moral indignation' concerning GBQM drug use is more commercially successful than the 'calm, measured, and rigorously researched' (Hakim 2015: para. 23) approaches that are needed.

Representations Mediated by Public Health Agencies and Drug Awareness Organizations

Public health agencies and drug awareness organizations can also represent drug users. Typically, this is accomplished through images of 'drug users' that are sometimes used in drug awareness and or drug prevention campaigns (for example, in drug awareness/prevention campaign materials [e.g., posters; flyers] and advertisements). However, drug users can also be 'represented' by the statements made by public health officials, as well as by academics in research publications. Such representations are found both offline and in cyberspace. Previously, these forms have not been discussed by cultural criminologists or subcultural theorists as mediated representations.

---

[36] Not to be confused with Sharleen Eugene Spiteri, lead singer of the rock band *Texas*.

Depending upon the target audience, drug awareness/prevention campaigns often employ different emotion-based strategies. For example, more 'mainstream' campaigns (i.e., campaigns that do not target GBQM specifically) seemingly seek to elicit emotions related to self-destruction. Often, the associated images feature a loss of physical attractiveness (e.g.,missing teeth; skin sores; gaunt faces)or, as demonstrated in *MethProject.org's* campaign, a loss of control (Figure 5.2). On the contrary, campaigns that target GBQM audiences often employ 'desire' as a tactic—sometimes using attractive, shirtless, young, muscled male models. Two examples of these are *TweakersProject.org's* '*Happy, Healthy, Meth Free'* campaign[37] launched in West Hollywood, California, and *56 Dean Street's 'Chemsex Support'* flyer in London (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.2. MethProject.org's 'Not Even Once' campaign.

---

[37] The word 'tweaker' is a pejorative term sometimes used to describe individuals with crystal methamphetamine-related use problems.

Figure 5.3. Examples of drug campaigns that target a GBQM-specific audience.

According to Bell, Salmon, Bowers, Bell and McCullough (2010) 'stigma' is often an explicit policy tool in public health campaigns that target the consumption of illicit substances. In this way, images such as those featured in *MethProject.org's* campaign—while perhaps meant to act as deterrents for the uninitiated drug user—have the potential to nonetheless stigmatize active (and perhaps even former) drug users. As Browning (1993: 220) notes of earlier gay-targeted drug campaigns, 'The campaigns against recreational drug use and perverse sexuality have developed striking parallels: Take unsanctioned pleasures into your body and you'll die a grisly death, either as a junkie or as an AIDS victim'. It is thus not surprising that fear is not as commonly used in GBQM-specific drug campaigns—this owing perhaps to the gay community's past experiences with the stigmatizing effects of other public health campaigns[38]. Hayward (2004: 163) notes:

> One form of social response to the fundamental transformations and uncertainties of late modernity has been the emergence of various social agencies that attempt to deal with these changes through what has been characterised as a non-judgmental, non-reductive form of 'risk management'. However … often the very steps taken in a bid

---

[38] In his work on HIV-related stigma, Botnick (2000: 52) notes the comments of a San Francisco public health official, who, whereupon learning that gay men in the Bay Area had become seemingly lax in their use of condoms, exclaimed ''I guess we're just going to have to scare the shit out of gay men again.''

to stave off (or more accurately 'manage') risk serve only to produce new risks or exacerbate older ones.

Whether the use of desirability is an effective alternative strategy in GBQM-specific drug campaigns is unknown, as there appears to be no research in this area. Obviously, attractiveness is subjective. Yet, it is important to note that, with respect to campaigns that target a GBQM audience, the age, ethnicity and 'healthy'-appearance of the models that are often used do not necessarily represent the likenesses of the entire GBQM drug-using demographic. As Guttman and Salmon (2004: 531) point out, this raises ethical questions related to the '"targeting" and "tailoring" of public health messages to particular population segments' inasmuch as these strategies can have the adverse effect of labeling, stigmatizing and expanding social gaps among the individuals sought to assist. Guttman and Salmon (2004: 531) recommend, then, that

> an ethical analysis should be applied to each phase of the public health communication process in order to identify ethical dilemmas that may appear subtle, yet reflect important concerns regarding potential effects of public health communication interventions on individuals and society as a whole.

The above presented analyses of three types of potentially negative mediated representations of GBQM drug use—those that are found in documentaries, those that are found in mainstream and 'pink press' new media reports and those that are found in public health and drug awareness organization campaigns. Such representations demonstrate that, while perhaps not receiving primary definitions from law enforcement agents or criminal justice practitioners, GBQM drug users are defined by others—typically 'experts' in the field of drug use, but also by former drug users, as well.

PART TWO: CELEBRATORY REPRESENTATIONS OF GBQM DRUG USE

The following introduces several forms of 'celebratory' mediated representations of GBQM drug use. First, artistic representations of GBQM drug use will be presented. Matt Spike's 2014 photo exhibit *'Chemsex: The Exhibit'* will be discussed, as well as examples of theatrical productions that have had GBQM drug use as their subject. This will be followed by a discussion and analysis of the 2006 release of a professionally-produced drug-themed gay male pornographic video titled *'Slammed'* (Cole 2012). The section concludes with descriptions and analyses of two forms of self-mediated celebratory representations of GBQM drug use—those that are shared on photo-sharing

websites and those that are shared via GBQM video-sharing websites such as *ToxxxicTube*. None of these forms been previously discussed by cultural criminologists or subcultural theorists as mediated representations.

Artistic Expressions of GBQM Drug Use

In August 2014, gay fetish photographer Matt Spike exhibited a series of black-and-white photographs at London's *The Unit* (Figure 5.4) The exhibition, titled *'Chemsex: The Exhibition'*, featured nine photographs—each depicting men either engaged in the act of *chemsex* or, as Spike notes in the film *'Chemsex'*, suffering from a 'shattered psyche' as a result of their drug use (Gogarty & Fairman 2015).

One wonders how Georges Bataille—obsessed with the intersection of horror and eroticism—might have reacted to Spike's images which, Spike claims, have been lauded as 'hot' (i.e., 'sexy') or as a 'turn on', while at the same time criticized as being 'disturbing', oreven 'twisted, dark and scary' (Peccadillo Pictures 2015). Bataille (1989: 34) sheds light on this duality inasmuch as he notes that there is 'an obscure, *immediate* reaction' to mediums that combine death (or the threat of death) and eroticism 'in the way, I believe they can be understood, a decisive value, a fundamental value' [emphasis added].

Figure 5.4. Photos from Matt Spike's 'Chemsex: The Exhibit'.

Nonetheless, Spike states that it was not his intention to shock individuals with his photos, but rather to make them 'think' (Peccadillo Pictures 2015). Yet, Hayward (2004: 69) notes that one of the most striking feature of today's modern art (of which *'Chemsex: The Exhibit'* can perhaps

best be described) is that, through its 'rather contrived attempts at "shock and awe"' it 'effortlessly crosses back and forth into the mainstream contemporary culture'. Hayward is, of course, referring to art in mainstream heteronormative culture; however, given the media attention to the film *'Chemsex'*, Spike's artwork—through the film *'Chemsex'*—has, to some extent, crossed over into the U.K.'s mainstream *gay* culture.

Interestingly, Peccadillo Pictures (the same company that produced the movie *'Chemsex'*) created a mini-documentary of the opening of *'Chemsex: The Exhibit'*, which it released as a 10-minute film titled '"*Chemsex" Extras: Matt Spike's Photo Exhibit'* (Peccadillo Pictures 2015). Even more interesting perhaps, is that David Stuart—who also appears in the short film—explains that, like Spike, he was at first concerned that Spike's photos might be perceived as an attempt to 'glamorize' *chemsex*. Nevertheless, Stuart expressed in the short film that he believed the exhibit provided a good opportunity to 'raise awareness and create a dialogue' (Peccadillo Pictures 2015).

Yet, it is important to note that the images of which *'Chemsex: The Exhibit'* are comprised are not images of men actually engaged in the act of drug use; rather, the images are *simulations* of drug use. In this way, Spike's images represent what Jean Baudrillard (1993: 71) might describe as a 'collapse of reality into *hyperrealism*, the meticulous reduplication of the real, preferably through another reproductive medium such as … photography' [emphasis added]. This hyperrealism is perhaps best illustrated in the movie *'Chemsex'*, wherein we are granted backstage access to the photography shoot that would eventually lead to Spike's exhibit. Spike, himself a former drug user, is shown photographing a tattooed man in a 'dungeon'. The man reclines on a black vinyl mattress—a rubber tourniquet is tied around his left arm; he clenches the other end of the tourniquet in his mouth. He holds a syringe to his arm. "Gimme a real *pained* look," Spike says. The man complies. *Click*. Spike's voice is heard over the scene:

> "So what we're doing is, we are… showing what it's like in a play session shooting up crystal meth. I can't help the fact that the drug was invented. And I can't help the fact that people merged it with sex. So … for me it's an artistic thing just *representing* what's going on. And if that happens to look sexy, that's not my fault" (Peccadillo Pictures 2015).

Interestingly, the online gay magazine *Cocktails and Cock Talk* had this to say about Spike's exhibit (Gilet 2014):

> At the end of the day, Spike's photographs can be interpreted in a number of ways but I believe the importance here is that people are talking about it. ChemSex may feel amazing at the time, with your sky high confidence and diminishing inhibitions—both of which are fuelled by that baggie you're clutching to—but ultimately it's a form of self-destruction. Whether that refers to the comedown that follows for x amount of days/weeks, the detrimental damage to ones self-esteem, a disconnection from meaningful contact or the pure physical stress your body suffers, is moot.

While Gilet may not specifically refer to Spike's photographs, he notes that it is important that such an exhibit is spurring people to talk about chemsex. Nevertheless, Gilet's descriptions of chemsex (i.e., 'self-destruction'; 'detrimental damage'; disconnection) sets the tone for a negative discussion. Arguably, for many GBQM drug users drug use can be self-destructive. It can also damage one's self-esteem and subject the body to physical stress. For others, though, drugs are often used to increase self-esteem and establish meaningful contact (as will be discussed in the next chapter). This is not mentioned in Gilet's review.

In addition to the artistic expression of GBQM drug use through photography, GBQM drug use is also artistically represented in other mediums. For example, *'The Clinic'* (Cash 2015) was a theatrical production produced in August 2015 by *56 Dean Street's* David Stuart and the 'Dean Street Wellbeing' program. The play focused on sex, *chems* (i.e., drugs), smartphone social network apps and HIV, and how the combination of these factors intersected in the lives of a Soho wellbeing center. Similarly, *'5 Guys Chillin'* (Darney 2015)—another theatrical production about *chemsex*—opened at the January 2015 Brighton Fringe festival before going on to play at the King's Head Theatre in London's Soho District.

Similar to the tone of other negatively-framed mediated representations of GBQM drug use, *'5 Guys Chillin'* was described by at least one 'pink press' reporter as 'an original look into [the] drug-fuelled, hedonistic, highly secret world of Chem-Sex, Grindr and instant gratification' (OutSavvy 2016). However, another review (Collins 2015) stands out as very different:

> [5 Guys Chillin] both shines a light on a corner of society which is misunderstood and unfairly vilified and, examines the rules, conventions, habits and language of a particular form of sexual expression. When you realise, as I did at some point in the latter part of the play, that the kinds of experiences the characters were discussing were the sorts of experiences that might be discussed in a football locker room or a banker's pub on a Friday night or a Hen's do in Malaga—not the specifics, obviously, but the spectrum of experiences, desires, regrets and passions—you appreciate the real value of works like this. … They broaden horizons, create empathy and foster understanding.

Similar reviews were proffered for *'The Tina Dance'* (Kearns 2006)—the theatrical production upon which the documentary, *'Dancing with the Devil'* was based. The play, conceived and directed by Michael Kearns, ran for two nights at the Highways Performance Space in Los Angeles, California. Indeed, one reviewer noted that *'The Tina Dance'* was performed in a 'half-celebratory, half-revelatory style':

> While some of the darker, more serious vignettes are powerful, the piece shines most brightly in its comedic moments that are often more incisive, despite the laughter and farce. Kearns' direction emphasizes the communal aspect of the piece, and the entire cast gives strong performances. … The piece seems cathartic for both the performers and the audience in true 'heal as you reveal' style (Keshaviah 2006).

As noted by Ferrell et al. (2008: 95), mediated representations are often of interest to cultural criminologists because—*depending upon how they are framed*—they are often 'animated with emotion'. This can further serve to shape and contest the (sub)cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use inasmuch as not all artistic expressions of GBQM drug use will resonate as positive messages for everyone. Nevertheless, it would seem as though simulations of GBQM drug use—such as the artistic expression of GBQM drug use through photography and through theatrical productions—may serve to elicit very different emotions than the mediated representations of *actual* drug use.

Drug-themed Gay Male Pornography

Perhaps the newest medium through which GBQM drug use is represented is gay male pornography. At present, at least two gay male pornography companies—*Treasure Island Media* (or, *TIM*) and *3rd World Video*—have produced such videos: *'Slammed'* (Cole 2012) and *'Slammin' Perverts'* (Dennegar 2000), respectively. On *TIM's* webpage is an image from *'Slammed'*. The image features 'newcomer' porn actor Jon Phelps on his back—apparently assuming the passive role in a group sex scene (Figure 5.5). The video is described as follows:

> London's fuck-pigs party hard in Liam Cole's most extreme video yet. SLAMMED is an honest and true record of lawless 21st century man-sex: real, raw and straight to the point. Featuring KEIRAN, JAKE ASCOTT, SCOTT WILLIAMS, and newcomer JON PHELPS in an all-night odyssey that leaves him slammed, gang-banged and changed for life (Treasure Island Media 2012).
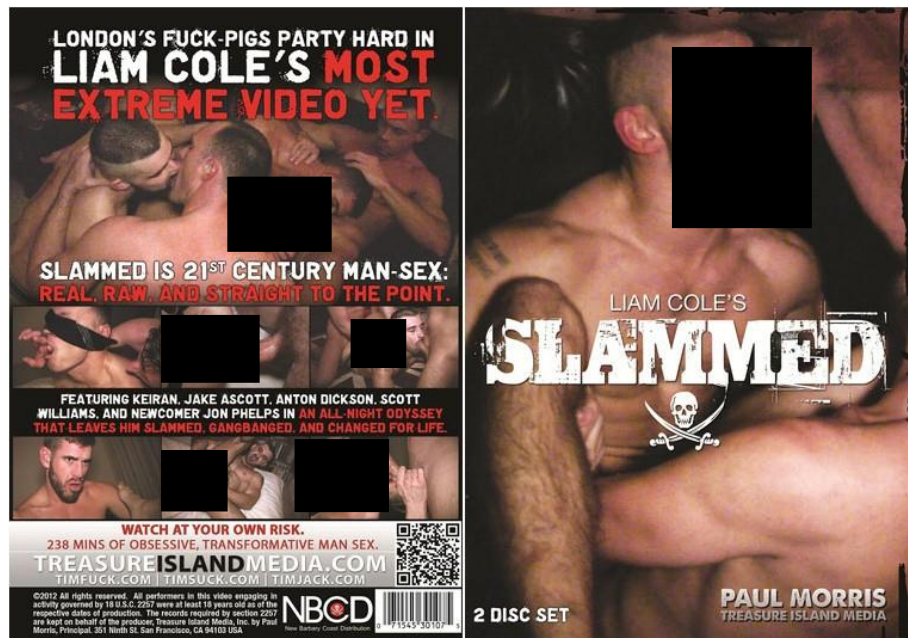
Figure 5.5. Packaging for Treasure Island Media's 'Slammed'.

The packaging for the two-disc set contains the following admonition: 'WATCH AT YOUR OWN RISK. 238 MINS OF OBSESSIVE, TRANSFORMATIVE MAN SEX' (Treasure Island Media 2012). The webpage also features a two-minute preview of the video. The preview opens with a shot of Phelps 'coughing'—as if to suggest he has just finished injecting crystal and that drug has entered his lungs[39]. I observed the preview, as described below:

> The preview begins with a quick succession of group sex scenes. The preview cuts to Phelps drinking an undisclosed liquid from a small glass; the assumption here is that Phelps has just taken a dose of GBL (suggested by the grimace on his face and his immediate 'chasing' from a bottle of Coca Cola). The next scene shows Phelps in the throes of ecstasy as he kisses Keiran. The preview accelerates into brief images of sexual voraciousness. Over these images a voice is heard: "I just slammed." The word 'REAL' flashes on the screen. More sex. The pace picks up. 'RAW'[40] flashes on the screen. Then, 'TO THE POINT'—almost imperceptibly. Another fleeting image—that of a faceless, bare-chested man holding a hypodermic needle to his arm—is shown. A hypodermic needle is discharged over three men. A webpage screenshot from the UK news site The Observer is briefly shown—a headline is shown: 'Gay lifestyle fuelled by drugs, research reveals'. A hypodermic needle. Fucking. Needle. Licking. Then, in a millisecond, a (subliminal?) message flashes on the screen: 'The weird and revolting behavior of addicts while under the sinister influence of drugs is authentically presented throughout this picture'. And then, 'Liam Cole's SLAMMED'. The preview then ends with porn actor Keiran turning towards the camera. His hair is drenched with sweat; the pupils of his eyes are enlarged; his speech is slurred. "I feel that now," he says. "Yeah?" says a voice off-camera. "Christ," says Keiran. "Whaddya mean? The fullness?" asks the off-camera

---

[39] A later version of the preview for *'Slammed'* has omitted this scene. No reason is given for *TIM's* removal of this scene from the preview.
[40] 'Raw' denotes condomless sex.

voice. "No, thuhhhhhh… drugs," Keiran responds. The off-screen voice chuckles. (field notes, 5 March 2014).

While the warning 'WATCH AT YOUR OWN RISK' at first seemed a bit overdramatic to me, I could not help but note the visceral response I had experienced after having watched the two-minute preview for 'Slammed'. Whether it was aversion or pleasure (or both), however, could not be immediately determined (in later viewings of the full movie—first with a female drug researcher and a men's sexual health researcher—we reached similar conclusions inasmuch as we were at the same time put off and [curiously] turned on by the film). Also, with respect to the 'authenticity' of drug use by the actors, it was unclear to me whether the actors had actually slammed (as the act of slamming is not seen, but rather inferred); however, I had the distinct impression that they were, indeed, 'high'. This was suggested by the intensity (dare I say 'carnality') of the interactions between the actors. It was also suggested by the dilated pupils of Phelps (an indication that he may have been under the influence of crystal and or GBH). Finally, as a middle-aged queer man, I was struck by the mixture of actors who were young and old; who were hairy and smooth; and who might have been described as 'twinks' and 'masculine'. This was not the stuff of other professionally produced gay pornographic movies—where the men are either similarly matched or where their differences are fetishized. Rather, the diversity of the men depicted in 'Slammed' seemed to suggest that all things and all scenes were possible while under the influence.

In his book, *Cultural Criminology and the Carnival of Crime*, Presdee (2000: 70) notes, 'all aspects' of our lives have become commodified such that 'violence, crime, humiliation and cruelty are [now] being created especially for consumption through the various sound, print and visual media outlets of television, radio, video and the Internet'. Indeed, gay male pornography is (now) one such outlet.

Mowlabocus (2007: 61) notes, 'pornography permeates [the] gay male subculture', and, 'some subcultures have developed specific relationships with pornographies that deliver different outcomes to those found elsewhere'. Although Mowlabocus does not specifically refer to the relationships of GBQM drug users to specific pornographies, the release of *'Slammed'* and *'Slamming Perverts'* would suggest that such a relationship is now emerging. In fact, through the releasing of such content, it would seem as though two forms of GBQM consumer culture have

121

now merged—that of GBQM pornography culture and that of GBQM drug using (sub)cultures. Furthermore, Mowlabocus (2007: 61) holds that, because 'the key structuring devices found within archetypal gay pornography have become increasingly integral to self-representation in many gay online spaces', we must 'consider the implications that this has both for those that conform and for those who "fail" to fit the typolog[ies] promoted'. As discussed in previous chapters, the marginalization of non-ideal GBQM within contemporary gay culture—as well the potential for stigma that may ensue—may offer explanations for the emergence of this new genre of pornography. In other words, such pornography may appeal to GBQM who are otherwise unsated by more 'metropolitan' genres.

The emergence of drug-themed gay male pornography is perhaps not surprising given the new trend among 'culture industries'—of which, as Mowlabocus might suggest, gay male pornography could be included. As Presdee notes (2000: 73):

> This is one of the most profound secularizations enacted by the modern world. Everything can become a commodity at least during some part of its life. This potential for anything, activity or experience, to be commodified or to be replaced by commodities perpetually places the intimate world of the everyday into the impersonal world of the market and its values. Moreover, while consumer culture appears universal because it is depicted as a land of freedom in which everyone can be a consumer, it is also felt to be universal because everyone must be: this particular freedom is compulsory.

This is compounded by the ease with which commodities (such as pornography) are now available on the Internet:

> Now in the seclusion and privacy of our own homes we can join in with the illicit and the grotesque as we consume humiliation shows, watch real death and destruction and converse daily through the Internet with others who share our felt oppression, our hates, our excitement or our revulsion (Presdee 2000: 73).

Indeed, the fact that cyberspace makes such commodities available 24 hours a day/seven days a week supports Castells (2002; 2004) assertion that the 'goods' delivered by culture industries (such as online pornography) must be experienced *now*, irrespective of how facile or unfulfilling they may be. Castells further asserts that such experiences are typical in societies with capitalist systems of government because—through the offering of a chance to experience something that appears to be unique, or that promises to whet the appetite of the consumer—they create diversions from the bland, 'one-size-fits-all' conundrum.

On his *Facebook* page, Liam Cole, director of *'Slammed'* states:

The 'Chemsex' documentary (2015) is on Vimeo now (iTunes too, I'm told). It's about drugs and sex in London's gay scene. I was involved in shooting the fly-on-the-wall sections, showing actual sex and drug use, including injecting crystal meth. The makers invited me to shoot this footage because they knew I'd made a porn video in 2012 called 'Slammed'. This also contains real drug use, focussing positively on the intensity of the sex. Working on 'Chemsex' gave me the opportunity to show the other side: sometimes funny, often harrowing. Between them, I think these two videos capture the best and worst of this phenomenon, which continues to play such a big part in gay scenes all over the world. I don't receive royalties from Vimeo. I'm promoting this because I want the documentary to be seen. If you're not involved in the chemsex scene, watching this might change your attitude. If you are involved, watching this might change your life (Liam Cole Facebook post, 13 January 2016).

Interestingly, Cole's thoughts on the positive aspects of the film *'Chemsex'* neither materialized in the film, nor were they mentioned by any of the film's reviewers. This is an interesting point to note inasmuch as, despite the positive agenda one may have in contributing to such projects, such motivations may be 'lost in the mix' of other agendas—agendas that do not necessarily seek to provide positive, informative messages, but rather, that seek to sell tickets through shock-and-awe tactics.

It should also be noted that, despite Cole's assertion that the movie *'Slammed'* depicts 'real drug use', the act of 'slamming' is never actually seen in the movie. Whether the actors actually ingested drugs prior to filming could not be confirmed either. Again, this raises questions concerning the authenticity of the subculture being represented. Moreover, for those who view GBQM drug use as a form of resistance to homonormative ideals (for example, as resistance to 'safe sex' and or the 'just say no to drugs' rhetoric), the production of professionally-made drug-themed gay male pornography—whether it depicts actual drug use or not—suggests, as noted by Ferrell et al. (2008: 19), 'that there can be no authentic resistance in any case, since everything—revolutionary tract, subversive moment, labour history—is now automatically and inescapably remade as commodity, re-presented as image, and so destroyed'.

The production of drug-themed pornography also raises questions concerning the ethics of 'reality-based' moviemaking that depicts (or suggests to depict) actual drug use—a behavior that could potentially cause harm. Indeed, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration in California (wherein *TIM* is located) recently rejected a measure that would require pornography

actors to use 'protective devices' such as condoms and dental dams (Associated Press 18 February 2016). One is left to wonder, then, if a similar measure allowing drug use by porn actors would pass similar muster.

Additionally, there are ethical considerations related to the actual or potential humiliation of the actors involved. Although speaking about the production of pornography involving women, Presdee (2000: 66) notes:

> women in particular are humiliated during the actual making of the product itself. In the consumption of pornography women in general are humiliated but the processes of production are hidden within the processes of desire and pleasure.

While it is not known whether any of the actors appearing in *'Slammed'* experienced humiliation—either during production or after having completed production—it is known that, at present, neither Keiran nor Phelps (the 'stars' of *'Slammed'*) have appeared in any further pornographic productions since the video's release. Nonetheless,

> the question then arises as to whether the producers of crime and violence commodities are actively involved in creating a *need* [emphasis in original] for the consumption of their cruel commodities in the same way that producers of all products create new needs everyday' (Presdee 2000: 66).

We must also consider the ramifications of combining two behaviors—drugs and sex—in mediums that are readily accessible in public spaces (such as cyberspace). In his book, *City Limits: Crime, Consumer Culture and the Urban Experience*, Hayward (2004: 158) notes:

> it is not my intention to suggest that consumer culture is criminogenic in any simplistic sense of direct correlation/causation, nor am I offering a crude materialist reading of the criminological literature. What I am suggesting instead is that consumerism as an economic activity and, crucially, a cultural ethos is propagating new (and often destructive) emotional states, feelings and desires that contribute to the crime problem in a number of new and novel ways.

Hayward (2004: 170-171) also notes that one of the potential consequences of these new and novel 'stylized images of crime' is that they can send 'mixed messages to a young audience who often taken their lead from popular and consumer culture'. Though not all young, as discussed below, others may indeed take the lead from drug-themed gay male pornography.

Self-Mediated Representations of GBQM Drug Users

In his book, *Media Rituals: A Critical Approach*, Couldry (2003) notes that in mainstream media the distance between 'ordinary' citizen and celebrity can only be bridged when the ordinary person gains access to the modes of representation of the mass media, making the transition from what Couldry calls 'ordinary worlds' to what he refers to as 'media worlds'. This is true of subcultures, as well, as noted by McRobbie (1989: 2002):

> Subcultures of today are also complicit in the (niche) marketing of their own identities. There is a vivid role for subcultural-related practices as an entrepreneurial engine for the new media, fashion and cultural industries, while many of these young producers themselves have subcultural origins.

Indeed, with the advent of cyberspace technologies (e.g., cell phone video cameras; webcams; photo- and video-sharing websites) GBQM drug users have begun to seize upon mass media's 'modes of representation' in order that they might represent *themselves*. The following discusses two forms of self-mediated representations of GBQM drug use. The first form consists of drug-themed videos that are shared on video-sharing sites (or, 'tube sites'). The second form consists of drug-themed image content that is shared on photo-sharing sites and apps.

GBQM Drug-Themed Video Sharing

Recently, there has emerged a number of 'reality-themed' gay male pornography websites that depict 'amateur' sex (e.g., *Amateurgaymovies*); or, sex in public spaces (e.g., *Voyerusexfilms*); or even 'straight' men engaged in what is purported to be paid sexual acts with gay men (e.g., *Str8upgayporn*). This is not surprising given the influence of reality television programs, which allow us

> to play at being deviant, at being collectively evil, and to share a collective thrill that stands outside of reality. The more real the experience, the more real the thrill, and the more we can act like a real evil person (Presdee 2000: 74).

Given the popularity of reality-themed gay porn websites, it is also not surprising, then, that GBQM drug users—who often incorporate sex with their drug-taking—would begin to eke out their own 'niche market' with respect to 'amateur' porn. Indeed, there are now numerous 'amateur' GBQM video-sharing websites that feature GBQM drug-themed sex videos—'virtual needle

sharing', if you will. Some of these sites include *Ghostvidstube*, *Tube4cum*, *Nesaporn* and, as described below, *ToxxxicTube*.

ToxxxicTube* is a subsidiary of *Treasure Island Media*, which, as discussed above, is one of two gay male pornography studios that have, to date, produced a drug-themed pornographic movie (i.e., *'Slammed'*). Although *ToxxxicTube* is set-up as a GBQM cyberspace social network, interestingly, dispersed amongst the amateur-uploaded videos on *ToxxxicTube's* video grid are *TIM's own* (non-drug themed) professionally-produced videos.

A member account is not required to view *ToxxxicTube's* video content. Upon accessing the site's homepage, visitors are presented with a list of user-uploaded video content. Videos are arranged in a grid formation of ten rows—each row featuring five videos (Figure 5.6). Of the video thumbnails that are shown in Figure 5.6, half of them depict individuals engaged in the act of 'slamming'. The videos have titles such as *'.5 Slam'* ('.5' referring to the amount of drug being injected: one-half gram), *'Slam Stroke'*, *'Hairy Chempig Slamming'*, *'Harness & Jock Slam'* and *'Point It In'*. Other titles (not shown in Figure 5.6) included *'Slam in the Car'*, *'First Time Slam'* and *'Let's PNP'*.
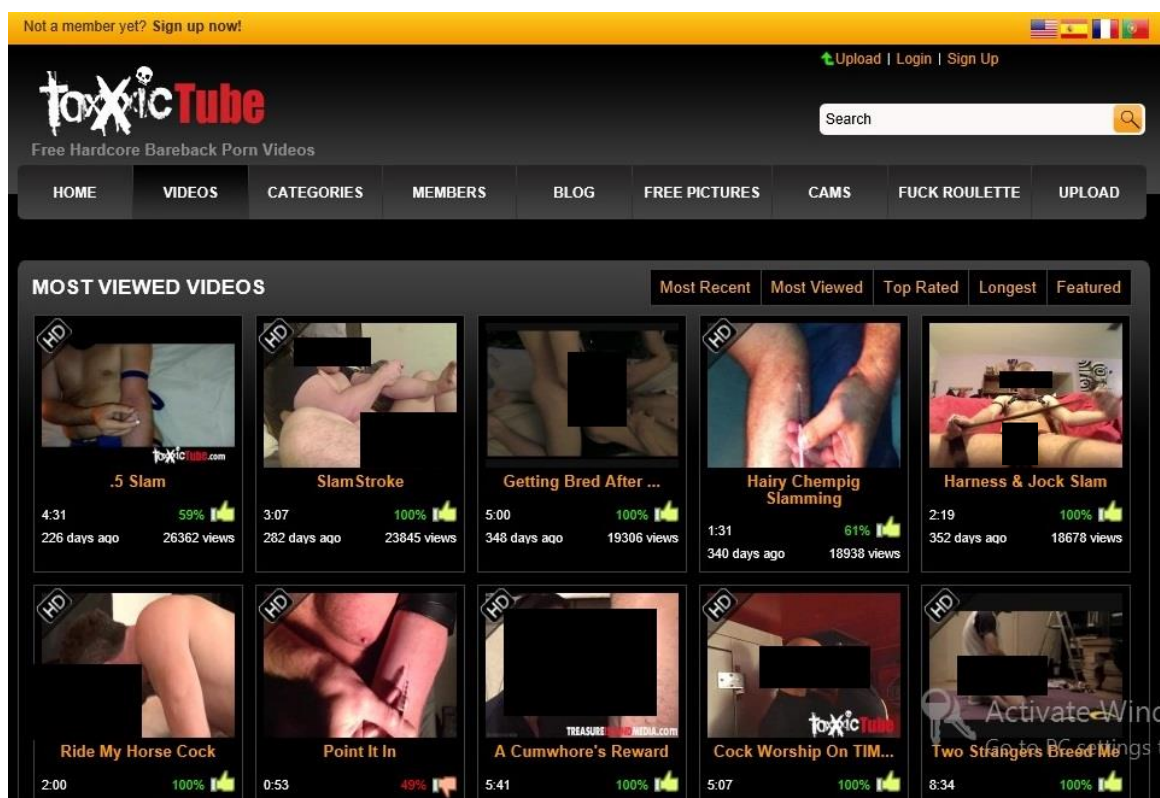

Figure 5.6. Screenshot from ToxxxicTube's homepage.

In addition to videos that depicted slamming, *ToxxxicTube* also featured videos of men smoking (i.e., 'blowing clouds') what was presumed to be crystal methamphetamine.[41] These titles (not shown in Figure 5.6) included *'Blowing Clouds'*, *'Hitting the Pipe'* and *'Party Smoke Clouds'*.

Beneath each video thumbnail on *ToxxxicTube* was found the video's length (average video length ≤ five minutes), as well as the number of 'days-ago' that the video had been posted. The percentage of viewers who had given the video a 'thumbs up' (to denote viewer satisfaction) was also shown. Finally, the number of views for each video were displayed—for example, the video *'.5 Slam'* had been viewed over 26,000 times; *'Slam Stroke'* had approximately 24,000 views; and, *'Hairy Chempig Slamming'* had been viewed approximately 17,000 times.

I observed and took notes on numerous videos that were posted on *ToxxxicTube*. One of them—a five-minute video titled *'2 HOT GUYS SLAMMING AND FUCKING'*, is described below:

> The 'scene' opens on two men seated on a mattress. Both men appear to be in their late twenties to early thirties. Both are nude; however, the bottom halves of their bodies are not shown at first. One of the men wears a leather chest harness. Dark dance music plays in the background.
>
> The full nude man hands the harnessed man an ammonia 'wipe' packet (often used to disinfect the site of injection).He, himself, takes an ammonia wipe packet, opens it, and rubs the small square in the bend of his right arm. Both men then fasten a cord of white rope around their arms. As they tighten their tourniquets, they look at each other and smile. The harnessed man applies his ammonia wipe to his arm while the other grabs two syringes. He uncaps one of the syringes and flicks it with his index finger several times (to remove the air bubbles). He passes the syringe to his partner and then proceeds to flick the air bubbles out of his own syringe. Both men then give a last glance towards the screen of the computer. They then turn to the task at hand.
>
> The full nude man inserts the syringe into a bulging vein. The harnessed man takes a bit longer, but then makes entry. Blood is drawn out of the full nude man's vein into his syringe (known as). He waits for his partner to draw his own blood. Then, slowly, both men inject the drug into their veins. Is it crystal? Mephedrone? MDMA? We are not told.
>
> Once each of the men has finished injecting, they remove their syringes. They then remove their tourniquets. The shirtless man recaps his syringe. He coughs several times—a sign that the drug has entered his lungs. He grabs a paper towel and places it over the injection site to blot any remaining blood. He raises his arm above his head (EXPLAIN WHY THIS DONE) and hands a paper towel to the harnessed man, who raises his arm, as well. The harnessed man lies back on the bed—his penis fully erect. "Fuuuuuck," says the harnessed man. He sits up again. "Oh fuck… oh fuck," says his partner. They both lie back on the bed together—they're right arms still

---

[41] Mephedrone and MDMA are not smoked.

raised above them[42]. The eyes of the man without the harness are wide open, his chest and face are flushed bright pink. He reaches for a bottle of lube and applies it to his non-erect penis. The harnessed man rubs his partner's inner thigh. Both men sit up again. What follows is a scene that is played out in similar videos: the men begin to touch and grab each other. They lie down, they get up. The harnessed man inserts his condomless penis into his partner's anus. The video ends (field notes, 5 January 204).

As with the movie 'Slammed', it was particularly challenging to view '2 HOT GUYS SLAMMING AND FUCKING' without also experiencing a visceral response. First, I found the video to be even more sexually-charged than other, more 'professionally-produced' gay male pornography. This may have been due, in part, to the fact(?) that '2 HOT GUYS' seemed to be more *real*—at least inasmuch as the two men in '2 HOT GUYS' were not (as far as I could tell) paid to have sex with one another; there was no cameraman or director; and, no 'stage names' were provided. Moreover, although the men in the video were 'sexy', they did not have the same polished unapproachable look of so many gay male pornography actors. For this reason, they seemed more 'approachable'—even more 'attainable'.

There was also a sense that, in viewing '2 HOT GUYS' I was being somewhat voyeuristic—as if I had unintentionally observed two neighbors through my living-room window. Drug use aside, I reflected upon my own experiences with dating and or 'hook-ups'. I felt as though much had been 'left out' of the interaction these men were portraying—as if what I had witnessed was a 'slice in time'. For this reason, I was left with questions such as 'How did they meet?'; or, 'If they had met on social media, how long had they 'courted' one another?; or even, 'Would they see each other again?' In other words, '2 HOT GUYS' lacked a 'back story', which, try as it may, even much professionally-produced pornography attempts to include.

What is also interesting to note about *'2 HOT GUYS SLAMMING AND FUCKING'* is that the 'two hot guys' featured in the video often looked into the lens of the video camera—as if they perceived that they were being watched by others. Perhaps the video was also being fed 'live' into a video chat—this could not be confirmed. Arguably, the men in the professionally-produced drug-themed movies *'Slammed'* and *'Slamming Perverts'* also looked into the camera; however, this may have been done in order to make contact with the films' cinematographers and or directors—

---

[42] It is customary for many slammers to raise their arm above their head after injecting. This is most likely done in order to limit blood flow to the injection sit (and, hence, limit blood loss at the injection site).

not other drug users. In this way, for the men in *'2 HOT GUYS'*, the lens of their video camera—not to mention the live video feed that they were most likely able to view on their computer monitor—became a 'mirror' into the virtual realm of cyberspace. Although not referring to cyberspace, Foucault (1967: 24) notes that mirrors often provide a shared, or reflective 'joint experience':

> I see myself there where I am not, in an unreal, virtual space that opens up behind the surface; I am over there, there where I am not, a sort of shadow that gives my own visibility to myself, that enables me to see myself there where I am absent. … it makes this place that I occupy at the moment when I look at myself in the glass at once absolutely real, connected with all the space that surrounds it…

Additionally, through the 'mirror' of their video camera, the men in *'2 HOT GUYS'* were also able to connect with other drug users inasmuch as they were given a sense of their own visibility—that is, a visibility that could be shared with others who viewed the video. Indeed, as will be discussed in the next chapter, GBQM drug users often seek to establish connections such as these with other drug users—not simply for the purposes of engaging in drug- or sex-related experiences, but also for the purpose of engaging in other meaningful experiences, as well.

At the time that I observed *'2 HOT GUYS'*, the video had been viewed 10,511 times. Below the video were the words 'Link to this video', which, when clicked, provided the video's URL address (for those who wished to place a link to the video on their social network profile(s) or on other websites). Below this link, the video's 'categories' were shown—'Blowing Clouds'[43] and 'Amateur'. Finally, below the video's windows were found the comments of those who had viewed the video—fifteen comments in all. One viewer wrote, 'Really nice, guys. Q: Where are you guys at? DC area here'. Another wrote, 'it's awesome … love you guys … good slam good fucking and their [*sic*] was chemistry between you 2'. Still another wrote, 'Just found this site ... and glad I did! Way fuckin HOTT vid guys!! Think I'll slam one down and hit the baths … Hell yeah!!' (ToxxxicTube member comments 25 January 2015). Indeed, through the video, connections to other drug users were established. Indeed, even I felt as though I had made a connection with these men. At the very least, I had been granted a stake in what might have otherwise been a very private, intimate moment between two men I had never met before.

---

[43] It is not known why *'2 HOT GUYS'* is listed under the 'Blowing Clouds' category, as the video very clearly depicts the act of slamming—in fact, no smoking is ever shown.

Like *ToxxxicTube*, both *NastyKinkPigs* and *Get2ThePoint* allow their members to upload

drug-themed videos that are viewable by all members. *NastyKinkPigs*, in particular, also provides a

video 'tagging' system with which members can more easily describe their video's content (Figure

5.7). Some of the drug-themed categories that were found included 'Chem', 'Clouds', 'Meth',

'Party', 'Pipe', 'PnP', 'Point', 'Rig', 'Rush', 'Slam', 'Slamming', 'Smoke', 'Smoking', 'T' and

'Tina'[44]. The use of tags such as 'Chem', 'Party' and 'PnP' demonstrates the potential for

(sub)cultural 'mixing' and or a global spreading of subcultural tropes among *NastyKinkPigs* drug

users in both Europe (where *chems* is more frequently used) and North America (where *Party* and

PNP are more commonly used [see also Barthes 2006]).

Figure 5.7. NastyKinkPigs' video tags.

The existence of drug-themed video-sharing sites is not without its critics. One website,

Str8upgayporn, wrote in its blog section:

> Controversial bareback studio Treasure Island Media recently launched their own
> tube site, ToxxxicTube, where they've uploaded hundreds of extended video clips
> taken from their films. It's the same garbage you get when you buy a membership
> to one of their sites, only free. What a bargain. In addition to the 'professional' clips
> (and I use that term looser than a Treasure Island Media bottom), the site hosts
> dozens of videos from community members engaging in what appears to be illegal
> drug use (Str8upgayporn 11 April 2014)

Str8upgayporn's blogger makes an important point: assuming that the activities depicted on

ToxxxicTube involve the actual use of illegal drugs, we must consider the legal ramifications for

those who engage in these behaviors. At present, national and international laws concerning the

---

[44] At the time this thesis was submitted, *NastyKinkPigs* had removed its drug-related video 'tags'; however, none of the drug-themed videos had been removed. No explanation as to why the drug-themed tags had been removed was offered by the network.

depiction of such material are ambiguous. What is known, however, is that many of the user-uploaded drug-themed videos on *ToxxxicTube* also depict *sexual* acts that—if professionally produced—might also be illegal. For example, in December 2014 the U.K. government passed Audiovisual Media Services Regulations 2014 (AMSR 2014), an act that specifies restrictions on the content of pornography produced and sold in the U.K. (Saul 2014). Some of the banned acts include 'facesitting' (or, 'rimming'[45]), 'fisting'[46] and 'watersports'[47] (when the act is performed on another individual). This begs the question as to whether the men who upload their amateur sexualized drug-themed videos are the victims of sexploitation by gay male porn producers such as *TIM*.

Sharing Drugs through Images

On one of the networks wa*s* found the profile of a member who stated, 'Fistsessions machen chemisch unterlegt erst richTig Spaß!' ('*Fist sessions[48] are especially fun on [i.e., under the influence of] chems!*' [member profile, 28 January 2014]). Rather than upload a photograph of himself to his member profile, however, the member chose instead to post a photograph of a white powdery substance—undoubtedly the *chem* he sought to be 'on' (Figure 5.8).
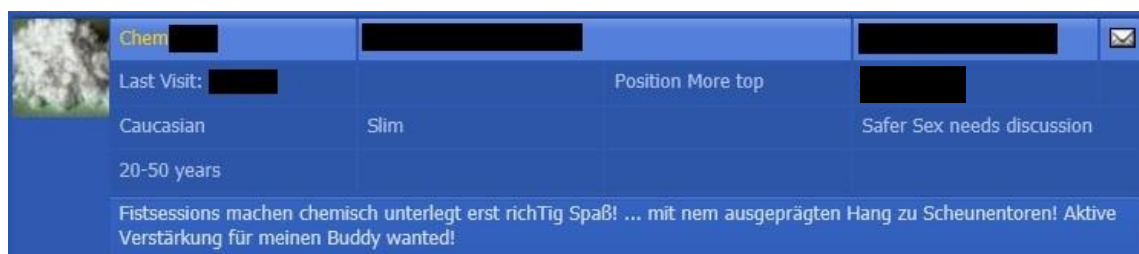
Figure 5.8. Photograph of drug-like substance in a network member profile.

Additionally, on another network I observed the profile of a 27-year old member in western Europe. His profile photograph showed him seated on a couch, his left hand gripping a cloth while his left arm was extended in what appeared to be a pre-injection pose (Figure 5.9). Finally, on another network, I observed two 'slamming' photos, each of which included 'instructions' for

---

[45] 'Facesitting' and 'rimming' refer to the sexual act of placing one's anus on the mouth of a partner.
[46] A sexual act in which an individual inserts his hand into the anus or rectum of another.
[47] The incorporating of urine into a sexual act.
[48] 'Fist session' refers to the sexual act of fisting.

novice drug users (for example, which angle to properly insert a syringe and how to draw blood into a syringe before injecting [Figure 5.10]). Numerous other examples of drug-themed photographs were found in network member profiles, as well as in network photo galleries. In addition to the types of images discussed above, photos of drug paraphernalia (e.g., bongs; glass pipes; syringes) were also observed.
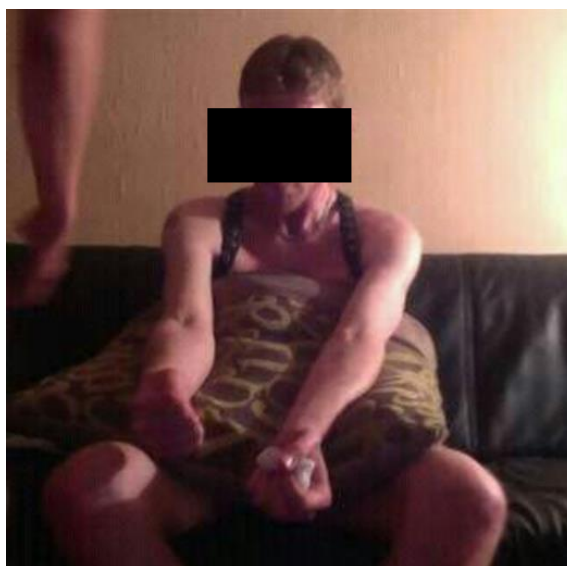
Figure 5.9. Photo of network member in a pre-slamming position.

Figure 5.10. Member-uploaded 'instructional' slamming photos.

Although not referring specifically to the use of images by drug-users or drug subcultures, Ferrell et al. (2004: 1) hold that it is within such images (inasmuch as they depict criminal or deviant behavior[s]) that 'the true meaning of crime is often found'. Additionally, like the drug-

themed videos discussed above, such images, in effect, highlight the (sub)cultural dynamics at play—in particular, 'the contested processes of symbolic display, cultural interpretation, and representational negotiation' that may represent attempts by GBQM drug users—through mass media's 'modes of representation'—to wrest control of the ways in which they are represented. In this way, such images, as Ferrell et al. (2004: 1) note, become as '"real" as crime … itself'.

Whether the images described above depict actual drugs or actual drug use, images such as these serve to shape the (sub)cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use inasmuch as such images enable GBQM drug users to contest society's attitudes toward drug use by allowing them to convey their own 'meanings'. As Warde (1994: 888) notes:

> The 'marketplace' assumes the role of village square, a place for meeting and cultural exchange as well as ongoing creation and negotiation of shared identity. Gay and lesbian people(s) gather as 'neo-tribes ' … a small community to which people are intensely, if temporarily, attached by means of shared self- images.

Although the 'true' meanings that underlie the sharing of drug-themed images are difficult to extrapolate without asking individuals directly, I inferred that such images—especially when these types of images were the *only* images that were shared—represented things that were most important to the men who had uploaded them. In the examples given above, these might include preferences for specific substances; preferences for specific routes of administration; and, the importance of conveying proper methods to the uninitiated. From this, I also inferred that the use of drug-themed images can reveal parts of a person's identity. Indeed, as Browning (1993: 211) notes, 'All of us in the modern world of processed imagery are engaged, to some degree, in the self-conscious invention of our identities'. Notwithstanding the fact that the posting of drug-themed images convey one's identity as a drug user, such images may also say something about their perception of safety in a network. Or, if safety is not a concern, it may represent their willingness to resist the laws and or guidelines that dictate drug use. Finally—as with 'instructional' slamming photos—it may reveal a concern for the safety of others. Perhaps more importantly, such images also enable GBQM drug users to connect to others with whom they may be most compatible.

Presently, no research exists that addresses the sharing of drug-themed content by GBQM (specifically) in cyberspace. What little research that does exist is of a more general nature and involves more mainstream social media platforms such as *Twitter*. For example, Cavazos-Rehg,

Krauss, Fisher, Salyer, Grucza & Bierut (2014) analyzed the demographics of individuals who followed a marijuana-themed *Twitter* feed that contained a positive discussion around cannabis. The study found that the *Twitter* handle (i.e., the *Twitter* user's screen name) had almost 1 million followers and that the majority of followers (73%) were 19 years old or younger and female (54%). Another study (Hanson, Burton, Giraud-Carrier, West, Barnes & Hansen 2013) performed a six-month qualitative analysis of over 200,000 *Twitter* 'tweets' that contained the prescription drug name *Adderall*. The researchers analyzed these tweets for content related to motives, side effects, poly- use and normative influence.

Other studies have examined the presence of drug-themed video on *YouTube*. For example, Manning (2013) examined the link between *YouTube*, drug videos and drug education. The study included a content analysis of over 750 drug videos sampled from over 300,000 individual videos. Twelve percent of the analyzed videos were posted by government agencies; sixteen percent were found to be hedonistic. No celebratory videos for heroin or crystal methamphetamine were found. Numerous 'vernacular prevention' (i.e., 'cautionary') videos were identified, as well as 'Do-It-Yourself' (i.e., *DIY*) videos that, for example, provided instructions on how to grow cannabis). Another *YouTube* study explored the presence of *salvia divinorum* (i.e., 'salvia') videos (Lange, Daniel, Homer, Reed & Clapp 2010). The researchers found that they were able to analyze the effects and side-effects of salvia solely by viewing user-uploaded videos. Finally, in Walsh's (2011) study of *YouTube* salvia videos, he concluded that the existence of such videos had the potential to both increase public awareness of salvia, as well as to stimulate demand for it and other substances.

Some researchers have expressed concerns that exposure to drug-themed content within social networks may have the potential to impact individual drug-related behaviors and norms. For example, Lau, Gabarron, Fernandez-Luque and Armayones (2012) voiced concerns that the presence of drug-themed content on social networking sites might negatively influence normative behaviors regarding drug use, or, that such content may increase demand for illicit drugs, particularly among young people. Nevertheless, according to Thanki and Frederick (2016: 117):

> what is unclear [about social media drug-content studies] is the added impact that easier access to groups of *like-minded individuals* through online communities has on individual behavioural norms. This may be more pertinent for traditionally hidden

activities such as drug use and supply with individuals able to seek out online groups easily and anonymously [emphasis added].

The sharing of drug-themed photo content by GBQM may also represent a contested process inasmuch as such imagery distorts, for example, the highly stylized photos of the male models that are often used as marketing images for GBQM cyberspace social networks (Figure 5.11). Indeed, drug-themed photo content is also different from the photos of actual GBQM cyberspace network members who may try to emulate such likenesses. This is supported by Pfohl (1985: 381), who in his description of the 'punk' subculture notes that punks were characterized by an 'abrasive, destructive code' that often involved the 'outrageous disfigurement of commonsensical images of aesthetics and beauty'. Such 'disfigurements', according to Pfohl, 'acted as aesthetic inversions of the normal, or consensus-producing, rituals of the dominant culture's style' (1985: 381). Similar to the ways in which punks disfigured the aesthetics and beauty of the mainstream cultures from within which they emerged, some GBQM drug users—through their blatant use of images that represent potentially self-destructive drug-related behaviors—could, in essence, represent a similar destruction of the aesthetics and beauty of mainstream cyberspace gay culture.
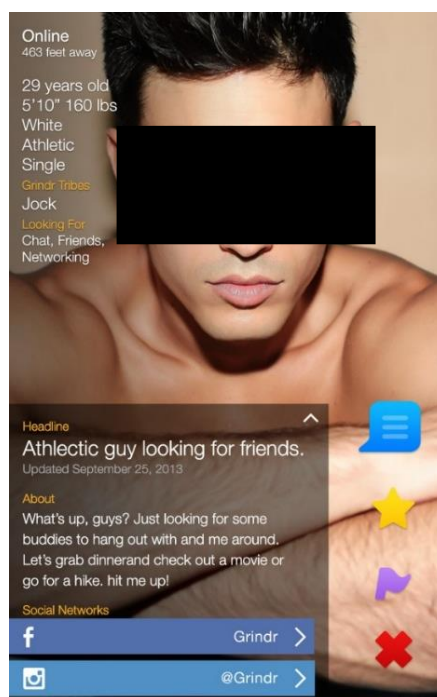
Figure 5.11. Highly-stylized Grindr member profile photograph.

Finally, the uploading of drug-themed photo and video content by GBQM drug users might represent a desire by some individuals to acquire new forms of *capital*. In his book *The Forms of Capital,* Pierre Bourdieu (1986) posits that lifestyles possess certain characteristics—or, as he referred to them, 'distinctions', 'tastes' and 'styles'—which have the potential to be more aesthetically pleasing than others (dependent, of course, upon the observer). Furthermore, Bourdieu holds that the 'aesthetic attitudes' that emerge as a result of such distinctions, tastes and styles can act as a means of distinction that produce non-financial capital, which he refers to as 'cultural capital' and 'social capital'. The different types of visual content that are most commonly shared (for example, by the 'general public') on mainstream social network platforms could thus be seen as representing examples of the different distinctions, tastes and styles that are found in mainstream (cyber)culture. Likewise, through the presence of tools such as 'likes' (often represented as a 'heart' icon) and or 'comments' (such as those that were observed for *'2 HOT GUYS'*), individuals who share images in cyberspace acquire new forms of symbolic (i.e., non-economic) *digital* cultural and or social capital. Indeed, the greater the number of 'likes' or 'comments' one receives, the greater the increase in the value of their social networks.

In addition to the drug-themed photo content that I observed in GBQM cyberspace social networks, I also observed GBQM drug-themed content on more mainstream, non-gay-specific photo-sharing social networks such as *Instagram*, *Tumblr* and *Twitter*. At times, these images were assigned a 'hashtag' which identified the images as drug-themed. One example of this is shown in Figure 5.12. The image shows a cartoon graphic of a syringe that is penetrating the inner elbow of an arm. The image was found under the hashtag #CHEMSEX which I discovered via the *Instagram* link in a *Grindr* profile from western Europe. The image had received numerous 'likes', thus suggesting that GBQM drug users are now competing for digital forms of capital in more mainstream cyberspaces, as well.

Figure 5.12. #CHEMSEX hashtag with injection cartoon graphic on Instagram.

From a criminological perspective, the sharing of drug-themed photo and video content is relevant because, as Becker (1963: 31) notes, 'one does not acquire a taste for "bondage photos" without having learned what they are and how they may be enjoyed'. At some point, some individuals who frequent cyberspace social networks wherein drug-themed photo or video content is present may become more curious about drug use. Indeed, as Anderson (1998: 248) notes, individuals 'learn about opportunities from the groups they encounter in everyday situations'. The potential to learn about drug use or drug using norms through such environments thus challenges previous notions that such norms are learned via 'regular face-to-face interactions' (Anderson 1998: 248). For GBQM who have never experienced drug use (or, for those who have experienced only one form of ingestion) websites and apps that allow (or turn a blind eye) to the sharing of drug-themed content can thus expose these men to new experiences—experiences they might not otherwise encounter 'face-to-face'.

Also relevant is the fact that, through performing 'reverse image searches' (such as that provided by *Google*), it is sometimes possible to reveal other websites to which a particular image has been uploaded. This can place individuals who upload drug-themed photo content at risk of law enforcement scrutiny—especially if personal information is included (e.g., traceable screen names;

email addresses) on other sites they may use. Nevertheless, some men may not have concerns about exposing themselves. Although referring to the boldness of homosexual men in the posting of early 'personal ads', Harris (1997: 46) notes,

> These subtle syntactical shifts reveal that the writer is no longer a frightened and lonely individual conducting blind fishing expeditions among an anonymous mass of gay men who constitute an unknown quantity, a nameless, faceless riddle. Rather, he considers himself a card-carrying member of a distinct sect whose habits and aspirations he shares and whom he is therefore able to address in a … new spirit of camaraderie that would have been impossible in an era in which homosexuals did not share any common culture, dispersed as they were in isolated pockets across the country.

CONCLUSION

Mediated representations are often the primary source of the public's knowledge about crime, deviance and other social problems. As a 'social problem', the same can be said of the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. Indeed, GBQM drug use is now represented by numerous and varied forms of media which, when analyzed alongside one another, can serve to highlight the cultural dynamics that shape and or otherwise inform one's attitudes concerning GBQM drug use. Indeed, some of these representations cast GBQM drug users in a negative light; others are more celebratory.

In addition to the representation of GBQM drug users by mainstream mass media outlets, representations are also found in 'pink press' news reports. As with mainstream reports, such reports can be further fueled by public events that concern *chemsex*. However, news reports are also common following the release of exposés—for example, documentaries such as *'Dancing with the Devil'* and *'Chemsex'*. Often, these types of mediated representations are given an authoritative voice that does not necessarily represent the subculture. Such authorities, or 'moral entrepreneurs', include addiction counsellors, ex-'addicts' and public health officials. Yet, as demonstrated, moral entrepreneurs can also include artists, film directors, playwrights, writers and others who attempt to construct 'moral enterprises' around GBQM drug use. When negatively framed, such representations can have a tendency to evoke 'moral panics' and thus shape the cultural dynamics that underlie This can serve to further marginalize and or stigmatize the very individuals they seek to address or assist.

Not all mediated representations of GBQM drug use are negative. Indeed, some can take more celebratory forms. Moreover, with the advent of digital imaging technology and photo- and video-sharing sites and apps, GBQM drug-users can now self-mediate their own behaviors. Indeed, many have.

Cultural criminology holds that subcultures cannot be studied apart from their mediated representations (Ferrell 2013). This chapter discussed and analyzed two general types of mediated representations that are specific to GBQM drug use—those that are potentially negative and those that are celebratory. Of the potentially negative forms of mediated representations, two forms were presented: documentaries and news reports. To these, a third form not previously discussed by cultural criminologists or subcultural theorists was added: public health agency and drug awareness organization campaigns. Examples of how each shapes the cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use were discussed and analyzed.

In my analysis of the documentaries *'Dancing with the Devil'* and *'Chemsex'*, some common themes emerged. The first theme was that of 'moral entrepreneurship' and 'moral enterprise'. While both documentaries claimed to paint a picture of GBQM drug use through the eyes of drug users, the stories of these men were often contested inasmuch as they were overshadowed by more authoritative voices. Additionally, underscoring both documentaries were narrative themes related to 'drama'; 'emergency and crisis'; 'cherished values threatened'; 'objects of concern, anxiety and hostility'; and 'evil forces or people to be identified and stopped'. Finally, while *'Chemsex'* featured active drug users, both *'Chemsex'* and *'Dancing with the Devil'* featured *former* drug users. Often, the self-descriptions of these men seemed to mirror the moral rhetoric and primary definitions that are commonly espoused by non-drug-using 'outsiders'.

In my analyses, I also noted that neither the directors of *'Chemsex'* nor *56 Dean Street's* David Stuart highlighted the harm reduction strategies that were employed by a group of drug-using men featured throughout the film. Moreover, I noted that while both *'Chemsex'* and *'Dancing with the Devil'* attributed externally-enacted (i.e., heterosexual) marginalization and oppression as a contributing factor in GBQM drug use, neither documentary mentioned the fact that similar stigmatizing processes also occur within the gay community. In other words, both documentaries

missed valuable opportunities to provide a more authentic account of the dynamics that underlie the GBQM drug subcultures they purported to portray.

Mainstream news reports of GBQM drug use were also discussed. Whereas *'Dancing with the Devil'* received little, if any, media attention (no reports could be found), since the release of *'Chemsex'*, numerous mainstream and 'pink press' news media outlets have reported on both the movie '*Chemsex'* and the *chemsex* phenomena. Often, these reports seem to fuel the fire of a 'moral panic' around GBQM drug use—many are even replete with the narrative themes postulated by Cohen. Despite calls from some to temper the discussion on GBQM drug use, such narratives nonetheless continue to dominate the present discourse.

Public health agency and drug awareness campaigns were also discussed and analyzed. Comparisons were made between campaigns that target a more mainstream heteronormative audience and those that target GBQM drug users specifically. Whereas the first type of campaign employs *fear* as an emotion-eliciting technique, the second tends to employ more *desire*-related approaches. Yet, the use of male models to elicit desire raises ethical concerns inasmuch as such likenesses to not necessarily represent the ages, ethnicities and physical likenesses of the broader GBQM drug-using demographic. Rather, such strategies seem to be geared more towards prevention in younger populations.

Finally, several forms of celebratory representations of GBQM drug use were discussed and analyzed. Such representations further serve to highlight the contested dynamics that shape GBQM drug use. For example, I suggested that the images of GBQM drug use produced by photographer Matt Spike were more simulations than actual depictions of the subculture. I also raised several ethical issues concerning drug use that is depicted in gay male pornography. One issue concerns the potential to inflict harm and or humiliation on the actors involved. Another concerns the unforeseen ramifications of sexualizing behaviors that are illegal or unlawful.

The chapter concluded with an analysis of the ways in which GBQM drug users now share drug-themed content via photo- and video-sharing websites ad apps. As discussed, these 'self-mediated representations' are often full of meaning for the men who upload such content inasmuch as the images that are shared may represent an attempt by GBQM drug users to take control of the ways in which they are represented. Nevertheless, there are ethical concerns related to the hosting

of such content by 'tube sites' (such as *ToxxxicTube*) that are owned and operated by gay male pornography studios (such as *Treasure Island Media*). Indeed, through such mechanisms, some GBQM drug users may, in effect, be 'sexploited'. There are also concerns that such images may be viewed by the uninitiated.

In her study of club cultures, Thornton (1995) discusses the symbiotic relationship between the media and subcultures. Thornton concludes that, while subcultures are not necessarily 'organic', neither do they emerge in the absence of any media discourse. Thornton's study has since led to an understanding of subcultures that are 'constructed *through* rather than existing prior to media discourse' ([emphasis added] 1995:162). In a hearkening back to Becker's (1963) concept of labeling, Thornton holds that the media 'create subcultures in the process of naming them and then draw boundaries around them in the act of describing them' (Thornton 1995:162). Whether the mediated representations of GBQM drug use create GBQM drug using subcultures, they do appear to name them. They also appear to draw boundaries around GBQM drug users by portraying only those images of the lifestyle that, they believe, are most relevant. Nevertheless, armed with the tools of the media, GBQM drug users are now actively naming themselves, as well.

With the above in mind, the next chapter explores the (sub)cultural dimensions and dynamics of GBQM drug use as played out in GBQM cyberspace social networks. The chapter begins with an overview of the 'safe spaces' that are provided for GBQM drug users by some GBQM cyberspace social networks—spaces that are used to establish connections with other drug users, as well as to form drug-using in-groups. The chapter also explores the rituals of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use, including the use of drug-related language and symbols; the role of sex; and the 'live' sharing of drug-using rituals and norms via 'dynamic' webcam networks.

CHAPTER 6 - EXPLORING THE SUBCULTURAL DIMENSIONS AND DYNAMICS OF CYBERSPACE-FACILITATED GBQM DRUG USE

> The pursuit of selfhood may involve seeking liberation through consumption by indulging in more extreme forms of experience, but in doing so one risks more conformity to the consumerist perspective … Within modern cultures there is a steady and increasing pressure towards emotionally exciting activities, as a source of transcendence and authenticity with which to offset the suffocation of an over-controlled, alienated existence within the mundane reality of modern life (O'Malley & Mugford 1994: 206).

Imagine for another moment that you return to the nightclub—many months later. You've lost some weight and 'trimmed up' a bit, so you decide to unzip your body suit down to your waist, leaving your chest exposed. As with before, you forego the paper bag over your head. You don your chalkboard; however, this time, you omit your age and your HIV serostatus. Before stepping into the club, you decide to update your 'Body Type'—from *Average* to *Toned.*

Within seconds of entering the club, three members rush up to meet you. The first member does not reveal any of his body. His head is covered by a paper bag. Neither is he wearing a chalkboard. "Hey," he says, "looking for fun?" You pause. "Umm… can you take off your paper bag?" you ask. "I'm not *out*," he replies. He then asks, "Do you have any other pictures of yourself?"

Meanwhile, the second member—also wearing a paper bag—grabs your attention by unzipping his body suit and turning his backside towards you. He bends over at the waist and asks, "Are you a top or a bottom?" "I'm versatile," you reply. "Hot!" he responds, "are you free next week?" "No, I'm…" But he's gone without another word.

"This is *boring*," you think to yourself.

Exasperated, you turn to the third member: no paper bag; his body suit is exposed. He's definitely attractive—sexy even. You notice his chalkboard, upon which he's written, *"I like to get to the point."* Next to this, he's drawn a picture of a syringe. "Hey sexy," he says, *"wanna fuck?"*

According to Baudrillard (1985: 126-34), contemporary society is 'hyperreal' inasmuch as it is chock full of 'connections, contact, contiguity, feedback, and generalized interface … a pornography of all functions and objects in their readability, their fluidity, their availability … their performativity … their polyvalence'. The same could be said of the dynamics that shape

142

contemporary GBQM cyberculture—this includes the social networks within which GBQM, in general, converge. Yet, as Bauman (2000: 120) points out, the dynamics that shape societal relations in contemporary society are also characterized by 'disengagement, elusiveness, facile escape and hopeless chase'. Indeed, it is not uncommon to come across social network member profiles that state, *'Bored'*, or *'Just looking'[49]*, or even, *'Not looking'*. From a cultural criminological perspective, this is important to note inasmuch as cultural criminologists are not only interested in the 'efflorescences of resistance and transgression', but also 'boredom, repetition, everyday acquiescence, and other mundane dimensions of society and criminality' (see also Ferrell 2004; Yar 2005).

As an idiom, 'get to the point' means to 'arrive at a discussion or explanation of the purpose of something (The Free Dictionary, n.d.). However, when used by a GBQM drug user, 'get to the point' typically refers to their preferred route of administration—that is, 'slamming'. Yet, as an idiom, 'get to the point' is also indicative of many GBQM drug users who seek sexualized drug experiences in GBQM cyberspace social networks: they do, indeed, get to the point—much quicker, it seems. With this in mind, the drug and sex rituals of some GBQM drug users can be thought of as little acts of resistance that transcend the mundanity of mainstream GBQM cyberspace courtship rituals—attempts, perhaps, to reap the full benefits of the hyperreal and its pornography of all functions and objects.

This chapter explores the (sub)cultural dimensions and dynamics of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use. This include an exploration of the types of cyberspaces in which GBQM drug users converge; their reasons for seeking out other drug users; and, the stylized activities—or, rituals—in which they engage. In particular, this chapter analyzes how these aspects and their meanings stand in contrast to the larger dominant and or parent cultures from within which they emerge.

Using theoretical concepts derived from cultural criminology, (sub)cultural studies and the study of GBQM drug use, this chapter describes and analyzes some of the text- and visual-based data that were collected in both static and dynamic GBQM cyberspace social networks. These data

---

[49] 'Looking' can refer to a member who is simply browsing profiles (as in, 'Just looking to see what's out there'. 'Not looking', on the hand, can mean that the member is not looking for sex.

were collected from GBQM cyberspace social network member profiles; in drug-themed network member 'clubs'; in network photo and video galleries; and through the viewing of shared drug experiences through real-time (i.e., 'live') webcam group chats.

This chapter is presented in three parts. Part One begins with a comparison of the rules regarding drug-related (or, illegal) activities and behaviors that are found in physical GBQM spaces and in GBQM cyberspace social networks. Part Two describes and analyzes some of the ways in which GBQM drug users utilize GBQM cyberspace social networks to establish connections with each other, as well as how some men construct drug-using in-groups using network tools. *PlanetRomeo's* drug-themed 'clubs' will be analyzed, as well as *NastyKinkPigs' 'Drugs'* profile category. Part Three of the chapter investigates the drug rituals that are associated with cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use. This includes an analysis of the ways in which GBQM drug users employ special drug-related text- and symbol-based language, and how some individuals may use tattoos as a form of body language. An analysis of the types of sex that are solicited by GBQM drug users is also provided. First, 'deviant' sex will be discussed and analyzed. This is followed by a discussion and analysis of transgressive sex—including 'swapping fluids' and 'blood slamming'. The chapter concludes with a description and analysis of a dynamic drug-themed GBQM webcam social network that was created using *Zoom.* Examples of the sharing of drug-related conduct norms will also be provided.

PART ONE: SAFE SPACES FOR GBQM DRUG USERS

According to Hayward (2012: 441), *space* is central to the study of criminology, not only because of its geographic and spatial dimensions, but also because of its 'power relations . . . [its] cultural and social dynamics, [and] its everyday values and meanings'. With respect to drug use, Zinberg (1984) also notes the importance of the spaces (or, 'settings') wherein drug use occurs. This is important to note inasmuch as drug use is often prohibited in the physical spaces that are frequented by GBQM. In fact, many GBQM establishments (such as bars, nightclubs, saunas and sex clubs) post their formal drug rules prominently (Figure 6.1). Often, these rules not only forbid the use of certain types of drugs, they specify the sanctions for rule-breaking, as well. One example of this is the express banning of GHB and GBL by many gay physical establishments— undoubtedly linked to the number of overdoses and fatalities that have occurred in gay nightclubs

and saunas in recent years. Such instances can often have repercussions for establishment owners in terms of legal sanctions (e.g., fines; closure) and increases in insurance premiums (see Daly 2015b).

Figure 6.1. 'No GHB' (London) and 'No Drugs' (New York City) signs posted in gay bars.

Similar to GBQM physical spaces, GBQM cyberspace social networks also post rules—or 'terms of use' (TOU; also known as 'user agreements' or 'member guidelines')—that serve to prohibit certain activities or behaviors by network members. Some networks display their TOU prominently on their log-in screens; others provide links to separate TOU pages.

With respect to drug use, *Grindr* was the only network that was found to expressly forbid drug-related activities: 'No photos or mentioning of firearms, weapons, drugs or drug paraphernalia. That kind of thing just causes trouble' (Grindr 2016). Others, such as *NastyKinkPigs* and *PlanetRomeo*, while not specifically forbidding drug use, forbade the promotion of illegal activities or even 'instructional information about illegal activities' (NastyKinkPigs 2016). Similarly, *Get2ThePoint's* TOU did not specify drug use, but rather articulated other 'unlawful' activities, such as 'abusive behavior', 'bestiality', 'child pornography' and 'incest'. *Get2ThePoint's* TOU further stated:

Why? It's the law. If disregarded when the moderators find it this site and our host network would be liable for its existence and this site could be shut down. That would mean 2000 of us would be without a clubhouse. The majority of us can work within these rules (Get2ThePoint 2013).[50]

Nevertheless, despite the TOUs of the other networks, I observed numerous 'violations' by network members. For example, on *Grindr*, drug-seeking members were found to circumvent *Grindr's* anti-drug policy through the use of drug-related argots or drug-suggestive images (Figure 6.2). On *PlanetRomeo*, members specified their drug-related predilections through direct non-coded language (some members even posted photos of what appeared to be actual drugs). Finally, on *NastyKinkPigs* and *Get2ThePoint*—in addition to the posting of direct non-coded drug language and drug-themed photos—members were also found to have uploaded drug-themed videos to the networks' video galleries. Members also shared drug ingestion experiences with other members via each network's webcam chat feature.

I also observed violations by the network's themselves. For example, despite *Get2ThePoint's* TOU that forbade unlawful activities, visitors to the network were presented with the following welcome message:

G2TP is an online clubhouse for Slamming enthusiasts governed by its collective membership. Upon approval, you will be personally welcomed to our fetish-fantasy fraternity by a member of our Team. Our dedicated moderators, administrators and support teams are onsite as we have guidelines and rules to keep the site operating smoothly; but the collective membership of G2TP provides the energy, the eroticism and the direction (Get2ThePoint 2015).

In other words, network TOU that govern illegal activities (or, that prohibit drug-related content specifically) seem to act more as *informal* rules inasmuch as drug-related activities and behaviors are not only tolerated, they are sometimes promoted. This problematizes GBQM cyberspace-facilitated drug use as rule-breaking behavior. Indeed, how can drug-related activities and behaviors break the rules if there are no sanctions for breaking them?

Still, it is important to note that cyberspace social network are spaces of consumption in which *men* (i.e., the network's members) make up most of the 'goods' that are consumed—for example, their profiles, their pictures, their chats. Additionally, on networks such as *NastyKinkPigs*

---

[50] During the fieldwork phase of this thesis, *Get2ThePoint* had over 4000 members.

and *Get2ThePoint,* the fact that members can also 'consume' drug-themed photos, videos and profile content often serves to create the very essence of these networks. What is more, those who ingest drugs that produce states of wakefulness are able to spend even more time consuming in these networks. Young (1971: 128) notes:

> Leisure is concerned with consumption and work with production; a keynote of our bifurcated society, therefore, is that individuals within it must constantly consume in order to keep pace with the productive capacity of the economy. They must produce in order to consume, and consume in order to produce. The interrelationship between formal and subterranean values is therefore seen in a new light: hedonism, for instance, is closely tied to productivity.

Like the rules found in GBQM physical spaces, then, the posting of rules in cyberspace social networks is perhaps more related to the need for network owners and operators to indemnify themselves. Additionally, as with the presence of 'amateur' videos that depict prohibited sexual content on *ToxxxicTube*, the sharing of drug-themed content by GBQM in cyberspace social network members—while perhaps adding to the excitement of a network—places the onus of legal responsibility on the members, thus potentially absolving the networks from any legal sanctions. Nonetheless, despite the perceived safety such spaces may offer, GBQM drug users may, in fact, be subject to exploitation inasmuch as these men can actually increase the value of these networks while at the same time placing themselves at risk.

PART TWO: DRUGS: THE 'COMMON DENOMINATOR'

On one of the networks that was observed, I found the profile of a northern European member who had stated 'chems gesucht … auch pnp/slammen' (*'chems sought, also PNP / slam'* [member profile, 30 January 2014]). Although the member went on to describe his preference for 'uncomplicated sex', what was most notable was the priority the member gave to *drugs* (i.e., *chems*).

According to Willis (1976), in drug subcultures, drugs have a tendency to impact everyday social interactions. For example, with the 'Hippies', Willis (1976: 88) held that drugs 'were just about the central topic of conversation on the scene'. The same can also be said of GBQM who seek drug-related experiences in cyberspace—this was apparent in their cyberspace social network profiles, in their photos and videos and in their 'real-time' webcam exchanges. Indeed, for GBQM

who engage in *chemsex* or who *party 'n' play*, the significance of drugs was perhaps most notable in the terms they used to state that which they sought (i.e., drugs); and, in particular, the order in which they sought it: *chems* before *sex* (as in *chemsex*); *party* before *play* (as in *party 'n' play*).

Willis (1976: 97) also notes that drug subcultures often share a 'common denominator' with respect to a particular drug that is most commonly used. For the Hippies, the common denominator was hashish:

> Used in the right manner, with the appropriate symbolic ascriptions of meaning, it was a genuine part of the head experience. But it was also recognised that many other groups used the drug in quite different ways, with quite different meanings (Willis 1976: 97).

As well, Willis (1976: 88) notes that within drug subcultures, great importance is given to the 'knowledge of various types of drugs'. Of all the drugs that are used by GBQM, much research attention has been given to their use of crystal methamphetamine—a research trend that dates back at least two decades. For example, in 1995 the U.S. National Institute for Drug Abuse reported that crystal had replaced alcohol as the most commonly used substance by U.S. GBQM; in 2008, it was reported that GBQM in the U.S. were reportedly using crystal at a rate twenty times higher than that of the general population (Mimiaga et al. 2008); and, by the year 2011, GBQM who lived in U.S. gay ghettos were reported as having a '293 percent increase in the odds of use' (Carpiano et al. 2011: 82). Similarly, in the United Kingdom, Stuart (2013) notes that between 2005 and 2012, GBQM who reported problems with crystal had also risen (from 3% to 85%).

Depending upon the location, cyberspace-located GBQM drug users were found to have other common drug denominators, as well. These common denominators varied according to geographic location. For example, in addition to the U.S., I observed crystal as a common denominator among drug users in many parts of Asia, Australia and the Philippines. In the United Kingdom and Europe, the common denominator was more often mephedrone[51]. For most locations, GHB and GBL were also quite common. Finally, with the exception of GHB and GBL (which must be taken orally), there also appeared to be common denominators among the routes of administration (Appendix B)—with 'blowing clouds' and 'slamming' seemingly among the most

---

[51] One of the likely reasons for this difference in common denominators is cost and availability. Crystal is more widely available in Australia and the U.S. and thus far less costly than it is in other countries. Likewise, mephedrone is less costly in the U.K. and Europe but is not as widely available in the U.S.

preferred. Although these drugs are often taken to enhance one's sexual state, as discussed below, some GBQM were found to use drugs as a way to establish non-sexual connections, as well.

Establishing Connections Among GBQM Drug Users

In the profile of a network member was found a short, but meaningful caveat: 'Love take-off together, but not without chat and connection' (member profile, 10 March 2014). Similar statements were found in the profiles of GBQM drug users across all of the networks that were observed. For example, one member stated, 'If you can't carry a conversation, we're not gonna get along' (member profile, 12 March 2014); and, another wrote, 'Love sex and then chat and then sex and then chat' (member profile, 20 January 2014). What is important to note is that, although these men sought *chemsex* or *PNP*, they did not *only* seek sex—a fact that is often overlooked in the academic research on GBQM drug use, as well as in its mediated representations. Sex aside, many GBQM drug users use GBQM cyberspace social networks as a conduit for encounters that often involve 'chilling'[52], 'chatting' and 'a range of other group and individual activities' (Race 2015: 267). This differs from more mainstream GBQM social networks—for example, *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo*—wherein I observed countless non-drug-identifying members with profiles that contained statements such as *'No Strings Attached'* (or, *'NSA'*—meaning, no commitment beyond sex), *'Looking for hook-ups'* (to denote quick sexual encounters), *'Not looking for endless chat'* and even *'Just sex, no chilling'*.

In his book, *Meet Grindr: How One App Changed the Way We Connect*, Woo (2013: 47) notes that

> Just as men are reduced on Grindr to a single photo, a few statistics, a brief description, and their proximity, the language they use can also become mechanical. Aloof and detached, few people want to appear over-eager on Grindr. The language takes on a non-committal, dull air. Most people will launch a conversation with "Hi" or "Hey" or "Sup?" greetings rooted in bro culture and low in investment.

Moreover, Woo (2013: 48) holds that the language, or 'script', employed by *Grindr* members is often 'intentionally impersonal', and, that any elevated responses or deviations from this established script might signal 'the intent for a possibly more involved conversation' which, in

---

[52] Slang for relaxing; however, the term 'chilling' can also be used as drug-related code to signify a drug experience that results in relaxing.

turn, 'could also mean the end of the interaction'. For some GBQM drug users, then, the need to

chill and connect with other men can be viewed as a form of resistance to the more mundane,

anomic alternatives offered in mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks.

Notwithstanding the use of profiles to denote a preference for 'connections', one way in

which GBQM drug users can connect with one another is through a drug-related prescriptive

identity profile category. *NastyKinkPigs* was the only network that provided its members with such

a category—'Drugs'—which could be used to not only specify one's drug preferences (*Yes, No, You*

Can Do It, No Answer), but also to locate and establish connections with others who shared similar

predilections. Using *NastyKinkPigs* 'Advanced Search' feature, I was able to search for members

according to their responses to the 'Drugs' category' (Appendix C). I determined that, as of March

2014 the majority of *NastyKinkPigs* members (34842, or *42%*) had responded *Yes*. Comparatively,

only 7402 (*9%*) members had responded *No Thanks*. Almost one-third (22411, or *27%*) of

members had not provided a response—suggesting that even in a GBQM social network where

drug use is more common, some individuals may have nonetheless felt uncomfortable disclosing

this information. It could also signify that these members may have been less willing to 'commit'

to either a *Yes* or *No* response (thus making themselves available to both drug and non-drug

users).[53]

Some network members also included information in their profiles that directed individuals

to connect with them in other networks. For example, European *Grindr* members were often found

to include information concerning their *PlanetRomeo* account—this was often denoted by a 'PR'

(i.e., *PlanetRomeo*) or 'GR' (i.e., *GayRomeo* [referring to *PlanetRomeo's* mobile app version])

followed by their *PlanetRomeo* screen name. Similarly, some *Grindr* and *PlanetRomeo* members

included information regarding their *NastyKinkPigs* account. Finally, some *NastyKinkPigs*

members provided details concerning their *Skype* screen name, or, information that directed

individuals to an active *Zoom* group webcam chat. There are perhaps many reasons for including

this information. For instance, both *PlanetRomeo* and *NastyKinkPigs* allowed members to upload

---

[53] It is 'important to note that a *Yes* answer under a *Drugs* category (such as that found on *NastyKinkPigs*) or
even membership in a network that markets itself to drug users (such as *Get2ThePoint*) says nothing about an
individual's frequency of drug use; nor does it speak to the types of drugs he prefers or his preferred
method(s) of ingestion.

more photos to network profiles. Profile text space was also seemingly unlimited, as well. Also, *NastyKinkPigs* provided a webcam chat feature; for men who are isolated, such an option may be an attractive alternative. *Skype* and *Zoom* offered similar opportunities to connect in 'real-time'. Such methods enable GBQM—drug-using and non-drug-using alike—to learn about new networks wherein they may be able to establish new connections and engage in new experiences.

GBQM drug users have a long history of seeking connections in spaces wherein other drug users converge. The gay 'circuit party' provides an excellent example. Circuit parties are large-scale gay male social events that emerged during the 1980s AIDS epidemic. Often, circuit parties are held over the course of several days in settings such as nightclubs, warehouses or outdoor open-air spaces. Like other 'club cultures', circuit parties are centered around loud dance music, light shows and drug taking (Lee, Galanter, Dermatis & McDowell 2004: 48; see also Thornton 1995). In fact, circuit parties may explain why GBQM in the U.S. do not refer to drugs as *chems* (as they are called in Europe and the U.K.), but rather *party favors* or *party drugs.*

Westhaver (2005: 352) attended 35 circuit parties in the 1980s and 1990s and concluded that they were integral in helping to foster a sense of 'friendship, community, and bonding' among party attendees. Moreover, Westhaver held that circuit parties also allowed gay men to 'differentiate themselves from a larger heterosexual order' by giving them a space in which to confirm their 'stigmatized identit[ies]'. Additionally, in their study of Australian circuit parties, Lewis and Ross (1995: 34) noted the importance of circuit parties to a 'significant subset of inner-city young gay men' inasmuch as they provided them with an 'alternative social structure and . . . [a] sense of pride in belonging to a minority group'. As a result, the circuit party provides many GBQM,

> with a social safety-valve where they can escape their everyday reality and dissipate their accumulated existential anxiety by using mind-altering drugs or dancing through the night to non-stop music with thousands of patrons in a similar state- and context-dependent condition. This alternative reality may serve an important socio-psychological function by offering some of these stigmatized party patrons a symbolic universe where their gay identity (including their HIV serostatus) is authenticated or validated as a member of a significant subculture by contrast to their everyday lives (Lewis & Ross 1995: 164-5)

As with the spaces provided by circuit parties, some GBQM cyberspace social networks might also act as symbolic universes wherein some GBQM might feel more free to express their identities—

not simply their identities as GBQM or (for some) their HIV-seropositive identities, but also their identities around drug use.

Some networks featured other tools that enabled members to more easily locate one another. How these tools were found to be employed by GBQM drug users is discussed below.

Constructing Drug-Using In-Groups in GBQM Cyberspace Social Networks

Under the 'Clubs' tab on *PlanetRomeo's* main window is a search window that allows members to type search terms that might be associated with special interest groups—for example, groups or clubs one might expect to find at a local community center or on a university campus: 'travel'; 'sports'; 'hiking'; etc. *PlanetRomeo* featured numerous such clubs—all of which were created, maintained and populated by its members (e.g., 'Fitness-1st-Club'; 'Gay_wandern_OUTDOOR'; 'StarTrek'). Other types of clubs existed, as well. For example, there were *PlanetRomeo* member clubs that centered around specific fetishes (e.g., underwear; sportswear) and sexual acts (e.g., watersports, fisting). There were also clubs that had as their focus, drugs.

At the time of my observations, 11 drug-themed clubs existed on *PlanetRomeo* (Appendix D), which I discovered using search terms such as 'chem', 'chems' and 'slam'. Membership in a *PlanetRomeo* club is established in one of two ways. Often, those wishing to join a private club must first be approved by the club's administrator (i.e., the *PlanetRomeo* member who originally created the club). This is done by clicking the 'Apply for membership' link on the club's main page. Memberships are granted based on a club's 'rules'.

I was able to establish memberships in several of *PlanetRomeo's* drug-themed clubs. These clubs consisted of as few as 15 members to as many as 1136 members. Most of these clubs were specific to a geographic location—for example, more than half were 'located' in Germany, with the remaining clubs spread throughout central Europe (i.e., Italy, The Netherlands, Spain and Switzerland). As with other clubs, *PlanetRomeo's* member-created drug-themed clubs were organized according to a 'classification'—the majority of the drug-themed clubs that were observed were classified as 'Sex/Fetish'.

Some of *PlanetRomeo's* clubs appeared to act as a source for members to connect with others around the use of specific drugs and or drug ingestion preferences (for example, 'slamming'). Other clubs organized events in physical spaces—the invitations of which were sent

out to the club's members via *PlanetRomeo's* internal messaging feature. As an example, not long after joining the club 'Slammers_Holland, I received the following invitation to a sex party (in English):

> Fancy a party? Good! This saturday march 14th a colleague-club organises a party in the centre of Amsterdam. I co-organise this venue and members in this club are welcome to sign in. Boys that want to attend this openminded party need to be slim and between 18 and 35 years old. … It will be a private party (until 23h59) and I understand that you are curious about all the other members that have signed in. Therefor all boys that signed in will receive a guestlist so you can see who is coming. (Or check if you can drive with someone).You can bring your friends but they also need to sign in. You want to come? Send me a message now and I will send you all the details. Private party till midnight. After saturday 23h59 everybody is welcome. (Slammers_Holland message on PlanetRomeo, 15 January 2014).

Becker (1963: 37) notes that 'the final step in the career of a deviant is movement into an organized deviant group'. Becker used homosexual men as one example, who, he held—like other groups of (then largely-considered) 'deviant' individuals—shared 'a sense of common fate, of being in the same boat':

> From a sense of common fate, from having to face the same problems, grows a deviant subculture: a set of perspectives and understandings about what the world is like and how to deal with it, and a set of routine activities based on those perspectives (1963: 38).

This is supported by Anderson (1998), who notes that drug users, in particular, can be characterized by their tendency to construct drug-using 'in-groups'. Such groups, Anderson holds, not only serve to reveal the subcultures alternative meaning systems, they can also enable the members of drug subcultures to 'connect' with one another.

Additionally, Anderson (1998), Willis (1976), Zinberg (1984) and others note that drug-using subcultures can be characterized according to their specific drug-related rituals. With respect to GBQM drug users in cyberspace social networks, these rituals were found to take many forms. One ritual concerned the use of drug-related text and symbols in network member profiles. Other rituals GBQM centered around drug-enhanced sex—some of which were expressed through environments such as webcam chatrooms and webcam groups. The next section discusses and analyzes some of these rituals in more detail.

PART THREE: DRUG-RELATED RITUALS

On one of the networks was found the profile of a member from North America, who stated:

> Things I'm into: bareback, bastille sessions, bondage, breath control, catheters, chemmed control, cock & ball torture, controlled breathing, electro, flogging, fluid exchange, forced chems/slam, gags, gassing, gasmasks, goth attire & makeup, hoods, inescapable restraint, inhalants, intubation, leather, long term head to toe encasement in rubber and/or leather, medical s/m play, mind fucks, needle torture to my cock & balls, n/g tubes, piercing, piss, piss fucking, poppers, rape, relentless forced feeding of poppers, rimming, rocker attire & makeup, rubber, rubber clinic/medical torture, rubber doctor/surgeon torture, scat, sedation, sensory deprivation, shit, single tail whipping, sleep sacks, sounds, sport bike leather jackets and 1 & 2 piece racing leathers, strait jackets, toilet training, torture, tubing, unilateral consent to non-consensual sessions, urethral torture, watersports, whips. Looking for brutal/depraved/twisted tops that push me WELL beyond my limits in no way out/no limits/no safeword session(s). I 'need' to expand into: forced chems/slam, extreme breath control (bagging, rebreathing, gassing/gas play, inhalants), ng tubing/intubation, extreme sensory deprivation, prolonged encasement in rubber or leather, heavy needle torture to my cock and balls, unilateral consent to non-consensual sessions & heavy bastille/toilet sessions. any rubber doctors/surgeons looking for a "victim" to torture? i am very serious about the above, so please, serious responses only!!! No, i'm not an insane out of control bottom! i just love being pushed well beyond my limits, it's the endorphin & adrenalin rush i get from it (member profile, 20 February 2014).

Having viewed hundreds of similar profiles, I often reflected upon my own (and others') social media profiles—profiles wherein activities such as 'biking', 'reading' and 'travel' seemed to be more the *de rigueur*. Indeed, what struck me most about the above profile (and others like it) was the wide range of other, primarily *sexual* activities that were sought. I also noted an incredible sense of *willingness* to explore sexual activities that some might consider to be non-normative—or even transgressive. This differed from profiles on more mainstream networks, wherein only specific acts (e.g., 'fucking'; 'sucking'; 'jacking off') or specific types of men (e.g., 'Tops only'; 'Bottoms only') were sought.

I was also aware of the seemed indifference with which individuals (such as the one above) disclosed certain aspects of their identity—in particular, their physical likenesses—through images. Although, personally, I am comfortable including a photograph of my face in my social media profiles, many GBQM who utilize cyberspace social networks are not. Certainly, including strongly sexual language (such as that used) above may impact one's decision to further identify themselves (for example, through images); however, in many cases, I found the opposite to be true. Indeed, the above member had posted over a dozen nude photograph and two video—all of which

revealed his face—to his network profile. The member's screen name (withheld here), I found, was also traceable through a *Google* search which revealed his membership in at least five additional GBQM networks and one video sharing site—sites and networks wherein he had posted similar content.

Nevertheless, like the members of other drug-using subcultures, GBQM drug users such as the one described above can be characterized by the particular activities and behaviors that they share in common. Although the individual described above sought a laundry list of activities, GBQM who seek drug-related experiences share in common some (or many) of these (and other) activities. One of the benefits of GBQM cyberspace social networks, then—in particular, networks that take a more tolerant stance towards 'deviant' and or transgressive drug- and sex-related activities and behaviors—is that GBQM can post what they are 'into' in order to capitalize on the connections they make.

According to Hebdige (1979), a subculture's deviant actions—not to mention its re-appropriation of cultural signs—can be thought of as its 'rituals' (or, as Hebdige refers to them, its 'rituals of consumption'). With respect to drug subcultures, Willis (1976) notes that drugs play an important role in that they act as 'keys' to these rituals, which, in turn, can increase their use of drugs. For example, Willis (1976: 90) notes of the Hippies:

> drugs were only keys, they were still accorded a kind of sacred place and their use was surrounded by ritual and reverence. These rituals often increased the amount of the drug actually taken in, which provided a greater physiological response open to specific cultural interpretation.

Additionally, Zinberg (1984: 5-6) notes of drug using subcultures, in general:

> Social rituals are the stylized, prescribed behavior patterns surrounding the use of a drug. They have to do with the methods of procuring and administering the drug, the selection of the physical and social setting for use, the activities undertaken after the drug has been administered, and the ways of preventing untoward side effects. Rituals thus serve to buttress, reinforce, and symbolize the sanctions.

Often, there is a tendency to equate rituals and ritualistic behaviors with religion; however, as Kreinath (2005: 101) notes, religions are 'systems of symbols [and] meaning' and thus, 'rituals cannot be related primarily or exclusively to religion'. Kreinath's observation is bolstered by Geertz (1973: 13), who characterizes ritualistic behaviors as 'cultural performances' in which

individuals experience the convergence of themselves and the world. According to Geertz (1973: 127), rituals can serve to symbolically fuse a person's 'underlying attitude towards themselves' with, for example, 'their concepts of nature … self … and society'. Interestingly, when performed within the context of a religious rite, Geertz (1973: 104) holds that rituals can actually encourage suffering in that the ritual is perpetuated in an attempt to relieve the attendant 'anxiety or unease'. The same might be said of some GBQM who engage in drug use and drug-related rituals as a way of alleviating feelings around, for example, marginalization or stigma. Indeed, some of the rituals found in the above example—in particular, those that center around behaviors that are related to, for example, 'torture', 'whipping' or 'sensory deprivation'—seem to be, in some regards, symbolic *mea culpas*. For some, drugs may thus be needed as a 'key' to unlock one's willingness to engage in such rituals.

Rituals are found throughout worldwide gay cultures and subcultures. Indeed, for almost four decades gay communities have organized ritualistic 'parties, pageants and parades' (Browning 1993: 160)—many of which are focused on memorializing important events in gay history. For example, the *Christopher Street Liberation Day* commemorates the 1969 Stonewall Riots in New York's Greenwich Village; the *Gay Men's Health Crisis Mourning Party* remembers those who have fallen victim to AIDS; and, the Fire Island *Invasion* celebrates the rising up of drag queens at a gay bar in The Pines (a gay enclave on Fire Island, New York). There are also numerous worldwide LGBTQ 'pride' events, such as parades, festivals and street fairs that serve to celebrate the accomplishments of global LGBTQ communities, as well as to acknowledge and honor those who have committed themselves to LGBTQ equality and or HIV/AIDS activism. In fact, pride festivities, in particular, are the LGBTQ community's 'largest social event and . . . its most significant contribution to public life' (Kates and Belk, 2001: 393):

> these gay-pride celebrations possess a decidedly syncretic nature and may be usefully viewed as public carnivalesque festivals, culturally shared rites of passage, forms of politically motivated consumption-related resistance, and magnets for commercialization within the context of the festival.

These events are not only celebrations, they also act as the symbolic expressions of a community that is no longer willing to suffer the stigma of marginalization or oppression (Frederick 2013). Often, such events are very well attended, as Drucker (2015: 2) notes:

In the US, for example, between half a million and a million people turned out each time for national LGBT demonstrations in 1987, 1993, 1994 and 2000. In Paris in 2008, and Berlin in 2012, there were over half a million participants; over a million people took part in the final parade of Europride in Madrid in 2007. Over half a million took part in Rio de Janeiro's Pride in 2012; organisers in São Paulo claimed 4 million event-goers in 2011.

In addition to the ritualized activities and behaviors related to the ingestion of drugs (for example, the rituals related to drug injection and or smoking), there are numerous other rituals that are associated with GBQM drug use. These range from the ritualized use of language (both drug- and sex-related); rituals around sex; the sharing of drugs and drug-related experiences through 'live' webcam 'performances'; and, rituals and norms around harm reduction. The following describes and analyzes these rituals in greater detail.

GBQM Drug-Related Language: Text

According to Hebdige (1979: 103), a subculture's rituals can often reveal a subculture's 'secret identity' and 'communicate its forbidden meanings'. Becker (1963: 169) also acknowledged the importance of ritualistic secrecy for groups that did not enjoy the benefit of institutional protection—groups such as 'homosexuals, drug addicts, and criminals'. When exploring subcultures, then, it is important to understand the ways in which secret language is used to communicate subcultural knowledge (e.g., Spradley 1973). Indeed, research shows that such clandestine measures are common among deviant or criminal groups—for example, gangs, drug dealers and members of organized crime syndicates (e.g., Wright & Decker 1994; Decker & van Vinkle 1996).

Recalling Hebdige's (1979) concept of subcultural 're-appropriations', one of the ways in which gay men, in general, re-appropriate the signs of a dominant or parent culture is through their use of special language. Indeed, gay men have a history of employing hidden—or, 'coded'—language (e.g., Gudelunas 2012; Kates 2002; Kulick 2000; Sonenschein 1969). Harris (1997: 16) notes:

> Given that homosexuals are an invisible minority whose members are not united by obvious physical characteristics and who are indeed often unrecognizable even to each other, they had to invent some method of identifying themselves as a group or risk remaining in the politically crippling state of fragmentation that for decades kept them from organizing to protect their basic civil rights.

Sonenschein (1969: 282) notes that some gay men can even be considered 'bilingual' inasmuch as they can use either gay slang or 'everyday English', dependent upon whether the individuals or environments concerned are also gay. Gay language can also vary considerably, based on the country and or culture within which it emerges—for example, the U.K. (e.g., *Polari*[54] [e.g., Baker 2002; 2004]), the U.S. (e.g., *gayspeak* [Hayes 1976]) and South Africa (e.g., *Gayle* [Cage 2003] and *IsiNgqumo* [Rudwick & Ntuli 2008]) each have different forms of gay language. Some studies have even examined the use of gay language as a language of 'desire' (Milani 2013)—this is perhaps especially true of GBQM drug users who employ language in pursuit of drug-enhanced sex.

More recently, researchers have begun to explore the special use of language by GBQM in cyberspace (e.g., Payne 2007; Phua 2002); however, at present, there are no studies that explore the ways in which GBQM employ *drug-related* language in cyberspace. Yet, in my fieldwork, I observed numerous examples of special drug-related language (Appendix E). This usage was particularly textual—for example, in online chatrooms, in private messages, in emails and in social network member profiles. I also observed special language that was expressed verbally—for example, in live webcam chats.

Unlike gay language (which, as noted, can be culturally specific), the drug-related language that I observed in the networks appeared to be more universally understood. For example, the most common drug-specific words I observed among GBQM drug users (regardless of geographic location) were *party* (as in *party 'n' play*) and *chems*[55] (Figure 6.3). The origin of the term *party 'n' play* is unknown; however, as noted, because 'parties' are a familiar ritual within gay culture (inasmuch as they can serve as ritualistic escapes from heterosexual oppression), *partying* (i.e., celebrating) may enable some men to continue responding to their oppression. The use of the word *party* by those who *party 'n' play*, then, is perhaps employed by some as a way of reaffirming the

---

[54] Polari is a 'secret language' mainly used 'by gay men and lesbians, in London and other UK cities.
[55] I also observed variations on the use of the word chems. For example, the words 'chem', 'chems', or 'chemie' were common among European users (however, there were examples of North American *Grindr* users who employed the word 'chem' in their profiles [short for 'chemicals']; these examples were found in larger European cities, such as Amsterdam, Hamburg, London and Paris). Similar to *party 'n' play*, the origin of the word *chem* is also unknown. Although *chemsex* denotes the same activities that occur with *PNP*, use of the word *chem* seems to imply a more straightforward use of drugs that is not necessarily meant to imply a party. Interestingly, in GBQM cyberspaces, the word *chem* is more common among individuals in the United Kingdom and Europe. It could perhaps be related to the later emergence of drug-enhanced sex outside of U.S. gay culture.

importance of such a ritual in helping to overcome continued marginalization, stigma or oppression—whether due to HIV-seropositivity or other factors. Because large organized parties do not occur every day, though, *partying,* when used by those who engage in *PNP* (for example, to express that they are under the influence—as in, 'I'm partying') can thus be viewed as a way of keeping the spirit of the 'party' alive.
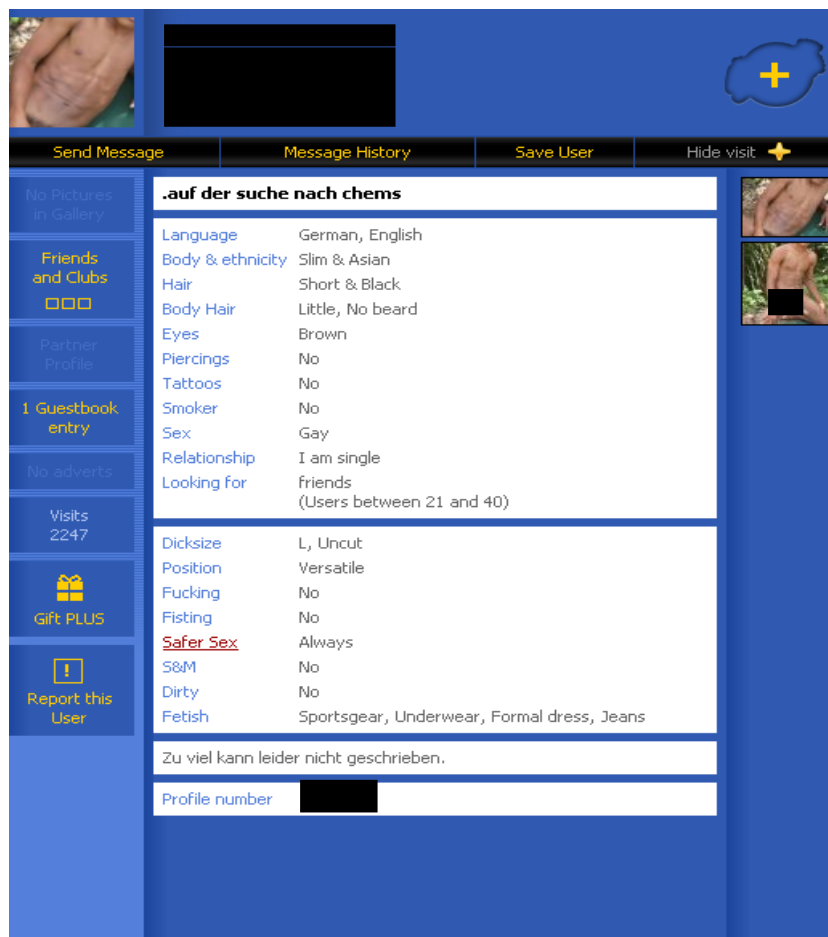
Figure 6.2. Profile of PlanetRomeo member seeking 'chems'

Some GBQM drug-specific language was found to be focused around women's names—in particular, female celebrities. Examples of these were 'Tina' (i.e., crystal), 'Gina' (i.e., GHB and or GBL), 'Judy' (i.e., cocaine) and 'Madonna' (i.e., MDMA)[56]. The name 'Tina' is most likely derived from 'teener', a term often employed by heterosexual users of cocaine and methamphetamine to denote one-sixteenth of an ounce of the drug (or half the size of an

---

[56] While the name 'Molly' is also used by some GBQM to refer to MDMA, this term is equally found among heterosexual users of the drug (see for example, Cromer 2013).

'eightball', which weighs 1/8 of an ounce or three-and-a-half grams [Urbandictionary 2016]). However, to some GBQM, 'Tina' also refers to Christina Crawford—daughter of Joan Crawford and a character in the popular gay cult-classic biopic *'Mommie Dearest'*. 'Judy' refers to gay icon Judy Garland, who reportedly died of a cocaine overdose[57]. Finally, 'Madonna' refers to the pop singer of the same name—very popular among contemporary GBQM. The use of female pop icon names to refer to drugs is not surprising given Harris' (1997: 17) assertion that gay 'fandom' is often an 'emphatic political assertion of … gay sensibility', one that does not 'emanate from some sort of deeply embedded homosexual "soul," but rather as 'a way of achieving a subcultural identity'. Moreover, Harris (1997: 3) notes that, whereas, historically, gay culture has been known for its affinity for actresses and songstresses, this 'essential element' of gay culture has changed such that 'the love of actresses has become the ridicule of actresses'. Harris' observation may reveal some truth about the use of female celebrities' names for substances that might be seen as harmful.

Perhaps owing to *Grindr's* anti-drug guidelines, I did not observe the use of the word 'chem' or 'chems' in *Grindr* member profiles. However, some *Grindr* members were found to have circumvented this obstacle by employing variations in the spelling of 'chems'. For example, one *Grindr* member in western Europe stated in his profile, 'I like c.hems' (Grindr member profile, 20 October 2012). In this way (i.e., the breaking up of words), such spellings avoid any automated profile screening by *Grindr* administrators[58]. Another example was found in the profile of a *Grindr* user who stated as his profile headline, 'FUN CH3MS', with the use of the number '3' replacing the 'E' (Grindr member profile, 18 January 2014)—also likely to have been employed as a strategy for evading automated detection.

Finally, I observed the use of single capitalized letters (e.g., 'G'; 'K'; 'M'; 'T'; 'V'; see Appendix E) within the context of other words in member profiles. For example, one *Grindr* member in western Europe stated, 'Fit guy looking to hook up with vers[59] & top guys for hoT sweaTy filthy fun' (Grindr member profile, 16 January 2014). Another *Grindr* member wrote,

---

[57] More common among gay users of cocaine in the United States.

[58] It is not known how *Grindr* screens for drug-related language in member profiles; however, it is assumed that, with six-million reported members, such screening is automated.

[59] 'Vers' (i.e., 'versatile') refers to an individual's willingness to be active or passive with respect to anal sex.

'Plays well with oThers' (Grindr member profile, 18 January 2014). Finally, a third member stated, 'Happily get to the poinT' (Grindr member profile, 18 January 2014). Notwithstanding the fact that capital letters are easier to spot in profiles, the use of capital letters within words allows members to indicate an affinity for specific drugs without having to use the chemical name of the drug in their names, profiles or messages—thus avoiding detection from network administrators (whose searches may seek definitive words or phrases). This allows individuals to continue their drug-seeking interactions without interruption. The insertion of capitalized letters can also save text space in networks that limit profile space, or, in cyberspace communications where brevity is key.

Lerman (1967: 211) argues that groups that do not provide evidence of 'special language usage'—or, 'argots'—cannot be considered subcultures; however, Lerman notes that it can often be difficult to establish criteria which distinguishes 'standard' (i.e., mainstream) from 'non-standard' (i.e., subcultural) language. Lerman articulates three forms of 'deviant' subcultural speech: 'colloquialisms', 'jargon' and 'argot'—the latter of which refers to the language of groups who are 'legally proscribed'. Drug users are one such legally proscribed group, as are other types of individuals, such as those who engage in deviant behavior. Many of these subcultures often employ deceptive language (especially argots) through indirect, or 'tacit' ways (Spradley 1973: 18). According to Johnson, Bardhi, Sifanek and Dunlap (2006: 46), such methods enable the members of a subculture to 'maintain secrecy so as to hide [their] communications from outsiders' (e.g., non-drug users and criminal justice agents [see also Becker 1963]). Moreover, the words and terms of which drug-related language are comprised often constitute 'highly expressive symbols' or 'important verbal threads that effectively connect participants [and] convey how participants feel and think about [their drug] use" (2006: 46). In this way, the use of drug-related language by GBQM drug users not only identifies them as drug users, it allows them to convey the importance they place on drugs. Moreover, the use of words that are specific to GBQM identify GBQM drug users as men who seek drug-related experiences with other men—regardless of whether they identify as gay, bisexual or queer.

In addition to the use of textual language to convey meaning around drugs, *symbols* were often found to be used by network members, as well. The following discusses some of the ways in which GBQM drug users expressed their preferences through symbols such as 'emojis'.

GBQM Drug-Related Language: Symbols

As noted, subcultural theorists (such as Hebdige) often discuss the propensity of subcultures to re-appropriate the signs and symbols of larger cultures. Written or spoken language can be construed as either (Bickerton 2003). Nevertheless, with the advent of cyberspace technologies—in particular, the smartphone—people now employ *actual* symbols in the course of their daily communications. One such symbol is the 'emoji'. Emojis are typically native to smartphones and are often downloadable as an app which is then used to supplement a smartphone's keyboard. Emojis are not language *per se*, but rather symbols that are used to replace language.

Some GBQM drug users were found to have made use of emojis to express their drug preferences. As shown in Figure 6.3, three examples that I observed repeatedly were the 'pill' (or, 'capsule'), the 'syringe' and the 'triumphant face' emojis. The 'pill' emoji might denote an individual's interest in pill-based substances (such as MDMA or Viagra); the 'syringe' emoji might suggest that one is seeking to inject drugs; and, the 'triumphant face' emoji may indicate an individual's desire to snort drugs (such as cocaine, crystal, ketamine and, again, MDMA)*.* As previously noted, some networks (e.g., *Grindr*) purported to ban references to drugs. Through the use of emojis, however, some GBQM drug users were able to adapt their drug-related language in order to meet the challenges of such constraints (Figure 6.4). Indeed, because emojis are not text-based, network moderators may not be able to detect them through automated profile scanning.

Figure 6.3. 'Pill' (or capsule), 'syringe' and 'triumphant face' emojis.
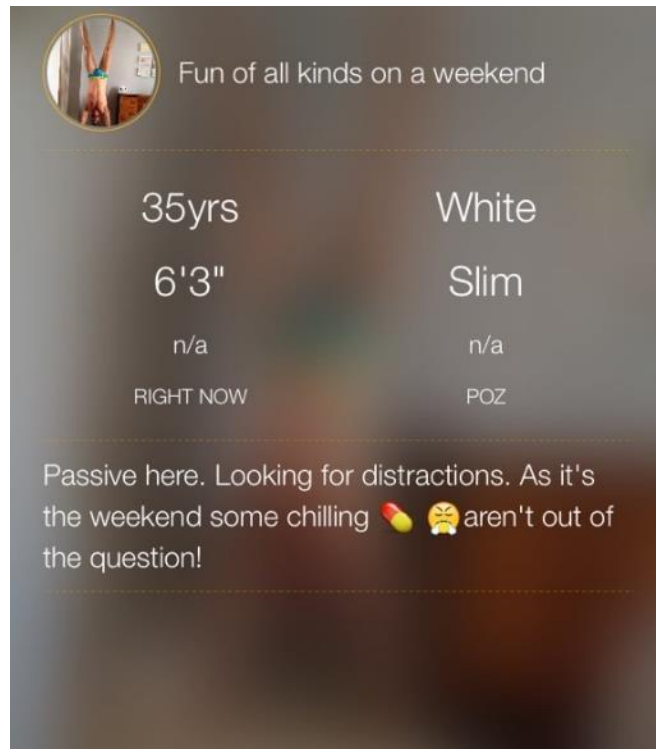
Figure 6.4. 'Pill' and 'triumphant' face emojis in Grindr profile.

Because emojis have only recently become popular, there is still little research into their many varied uses. One study, however, revealed that emojis are used as a way of expressing emotions (hence, 'emo'-ji [Kelly & Watts 2015]) At present, there is no literature that explores the use of emojis by drug users or drug-using subcultures. Thus, to characterize the use of emojis as subcultural re-appropriations may be premature. Indeed, according to the website *Bustle.com* (2016):

> With over 700 emoji currently available in the standard Unicode character set, it's definitely to be expected that you'll misuse an emoji every now and then. Our phones don't exactly make it easy for us to find the description of each emoji or how to use them; as such, there are probably a whole lot of emoji you're using wrong without even knowing it.

However, as Kelly and Watts (2015: 5) note, 'new meanings' can be created with emojis—often, the specific meaning which is implied 'depends on its role in a sentence and its interpretation, as anticipated within the relationship' between two individuals. Moreover, Kelly and Watts (2015: 5) note that individuals can use emoji 'to build forms of meaning that are uniquely interpretable within a particular relationship'. In this way, two 'slammers' (i.e., drug injectors) may more easily

identify each other through the use of a 'syringe' emoji in their network profiles—especially if other drug-related argots or language is employed.

It is important to note that GBQM drug-related language was also found to be employed by *non-drug users*—for example, as a way of signaling a disdain for drug use. Examples typically took the form of *'No PNP'*, *'Not into chemsex'*, or, simply, *'No drugs'*. Some non-drug-using individuals even employed the use of emojis, as in the profile of a western European *Grindr* user who used the 'syringe', 'pill' and 'cigarette' emojis to convey his disregard for drugs and smoking. Additionally, drug-specific language was also found to be used by men who, although they claimed to not use drugs themselves, identified themselves as *'PNP-friendly'* or *'chem-friendly'* (to denote their tolerance of those who might wish to use drugs during the course of sexual play). Numerous such examples were found across all of the networks. For example, a *Grindr* user in western Europe stated, 'Always up for some fun… playing bare only and also Chemsfr' (i.e., 'chems friendly' [*Grindr* member profile, 27 January 2014]).

The use of drug-related language—both text and symbols (such as emojis)—by non-drug users lends credence to Race's (2015: 256) observation that drug-related themes have now 'passed into everyday gay parlance in ways that are suggestive of [their] sedimentation as a recognizable cultural form'. This fact is also noted in the popular press—gay and non-gay alike. Indeed, a recent online article by *Vice* points out (also demonstrated in Figure 6.5):

> One of the most common profile names or sub-headings on Grindr has become 'GMTV' which implies that the person is using, has to share, or has to sell, G (GBL), M (mephedrone), T (Tina AKA crystal meth) or V (Viagra). By using colloquial slang for drugs, and using search fields on certain sites, you can hunt for the drug you're after, or people who are using it who might be willing to hook you up electronically with someone who'll get some for you (Vice 13 January 2015).

Such a widespread use of drug-specific language is important to note inasmuch as Lerman (1967) acknowledges the difficulties that might arise when trying to establish criteria that could distinguish standard (i.e., mainstream) from non-standard (i.e., subcultural) language. This could complicate efforts to study drug-users using only drug-specific language.
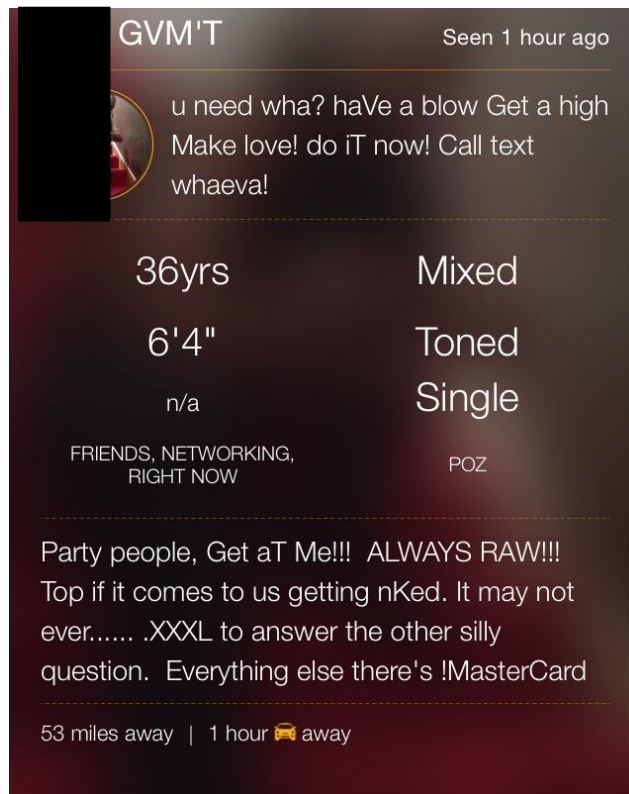
Figure 6.5. Employing drug-related abbreviations & capitalizations.

Tattoos

During my observations of the personal photos and videos of GBQM drug users (i.e., photos of

their bodies), I noted what appeared to be a disproportionate number of men who sported a 'skull

and crossbones' tattoo. It was not until I had viewed *Treasure Island Media's* (*TIM*) *'Slammed'*

that it became apparent to me that these tattoos were actually *TIM's* corporate logo. Upon further

exploration of *TIM's* homepage, I discovered a link to the company's 'Tattoo'd Men' page (under

its 'Community' tab [Figure 6.6]). The page featured a photograph of a tattoo artist in the process

of tattooing *TIM's* corporate logo to the body of an unidentified man. The tattoo—one of several

designs—featured the company's customary skull with crossbones fashioned out of two swords. To

the left of the skull was a capital 'T'; on the skull's forehead, a capital 'I'; to the right of the skull, a

capital 'M'. At the bottom right of the picture were two web-link boxes: 'Meet the Cult' and 'JOIN

THE CULT'. Finally, below the image was found the following message:

> Maybe you've seen it on one of our guys. Like T.I.M. Exclusives Damon Dogg,
> Brad McGuire, Keer, Dan Fisk, and admire it. Or maybe you met someone with it
> and envied him. It's as legendary as Paul Morris himself—the Treasure Island Media
> tattoo (Treasure Island Media 2015).

Figure 6.6. Treasure Island Media's 'Tattoo'd Men' webpage.

As symbols, tattoos can also be thought of as yet another way of conveying language—*body language* (e.g., Difrancesco 1990; Schildkrout 2004). When viewed on the bodies of GBQM drug users—for example, through their photo and or video content, or, through their 'live' webcam performances—such symbols can also serve to convey the subculture's meanings. Indeed, whereas Sanders (1988) refers to tattoos as 'marks of mischief', others have noted tattoos as 'badge[s] of commitment to subcultural values' (Muggleton 2000: 86; Moore 1994; Polhemus 1994; Schouten & McAlexander 1995). Additionally, tattoos can make the difference between the 'real' members of a subculture and those who are thought to be 'pretenders'. In this way, according to Fox (1987), the real group consists of the 'most highly committed' or 'hardcore' of members. Fox notes that hardcore punks, for example, completed their subcultural identity conversion through the use of tattoos and piercings, which served as permanent modifications to their bodies.

Although not to suggest that all men who tattoo themselves with the *TIM* logo are drug users, it is important to note that, at one time, *TIM* featured the ad for its tattoo alongside the preview for its video *'Slammed'*. The significance of the placement of *TIM's* tattoo ad within such a context can thus not be overlooked.

The following explores the importance of sex among GBQM drug-users in cyberspace. First, 'integral' and 'homological' relations will be discussed. This is followed by examples of 'deviant'

and transgressive sex that were found to be solicited by GBQM drug-identifying members in cyberspace social networks.

Understanding Sex in GBQM Cyberspace-Facilitated Drug Use

According to Willis (1976), certain artefacts often establish an 'integral relation' among members of subcultural groups. One example of this would be the motorbike within the motorbike subculture. Another example would be drugs within the Hippy subculture. In fact, Willis holds that 'drugs importantly mediated many areas of the Hippies' daily life, including its relation to music.

Additionally, Willis (1976: 88) held that there must be a 'homology' between the values and life-style of a group, its subjective experiences, and 'the various forms it adopts'. Willis uses music as an example of a form that is adopted by some drug-using groups (like the Hippies), which, he holds, has *meaning* inasmuch as it can strike certain chords with aspects of the group's day-to-day existence.

Whereas drugs establish the integral relation among GBQM drug users, *sex* often provides the homological relationship. Technology (i.e., computers, smartphones; webcams; cyberspace social networks) provides yet another example of a homological relationship. In fact, one study found that, since the advent of GBQM cyberspace social networks, sex parties and anonymous sexual partners have reportedly become more common among GBQM drug users (Center for Disease Control 2007). Other research has concluded that the use of cyberspace social networks has increased the likelihood that GBQM will encounter and or meet potential drug use partners (Aguilar & Sen 2013).

As noted, not all GBQM drug users seek primarily sexual connections with other men. For those who do, however, the use of *chems* or *party favors* can alleviate a 'struggle to connect emotionally and intimately' with other men ([emphasis added] e.g., Moeller, Halkitis, Pollock, Siconolfi & Barton 2013: 773). Others may use drugs to avoid emotional expression altogether (see, for example, Elder, Morrow & Brooks 2015; Halkitis, Parsons & Wilton 2003). This is important to note in that cultural criminologists often pay particular attention to the emotional and interpretive qualities of crime and deviance—sometimes over and above other factors, such as those related to structure, environment, genetics or rational choice (Hayward 2004). In fact, certain 'key individual emotions' such as humiliation, ridicule, pleasure and excitement are often

considered to be 'central to the criminal event' (Hayward 2004: 148). Such a viewpoint is rooted in the work of Katz (1988: 3), whose book *Seductions of Crime* focuses on 'the seductive qualities of crimes: those aspects in the foreground of criminality that make its various forms sensible, even sensually compelling, ways of being'. Absent this, Katz (1988: 3) holds, 'the social science literature contains only scattered evidence of what it means, feels, sounds, taste, or looks like to commit a particular crime'. Although Katz does not specifically refer to the emotions surrounding sex, Hayward notes (2004: 150), 'a similar argument might be developed in relation to some drug-using subcultures':

> There can be little doubt that the subculture is inextricably linked with emotion: from the social circumstances in which the majority of … drug use takes place (e.g., bars, clubs and raves); to the anticipation involved in the 'scoring' process; continuing with the heightened sensations experienced prior to and during ingestion of the drug; and, finally, the rollercoaster of emotions one feels following the resolution of the process and the psychopharmacological high.

As previously noted, some GBQM use drugs (a crime in most jurisdictions) to avoid or enhance sex-related emotions. This was most evident in network member profiles that solicited sexual emotions such as 'desire', 'excitement', 'pleasure' and others. For example, one individual in North America stated in his profile, 'I have some filthy desires and fantasies I am craving to be fulfilled' (member profile, 30 January 2014). Similarly, another North American member stated, 'With all the hot cock on this site I'm dizzy with excitement' (member, 30 January 2014). Finally, a member in eastern Europe stated:

> Looking for slim/normal guys who loves to suck longer and deep in any position. I love being a little dominant and having the control but I'm not rude. Pleasure for both is the key. Love chems, weed, poppers ... and looking to buy some G (member profile, 30 January 2014).

Other men were found to solicit emotions around humiliation and ridicule. For example, a North American member stated, 'have your sick twisted fun at my expense … service pig to be used, abused, humiliated and ridiculed for your darkest pleasures. Proud to be used in public on display (member profile, 20 January 2014). Another, a 32-year old member in central Europe stated,

168

'Twisted vers[60] fucker into rough play, humiliations, abuse, and more' (member profile, 24 January 2014).

It is important to note that—irrespective of drug-use—the pursuit of sex in GBQM cyberspace social networks is common. Thus, drug user and non-drug user alike can be expected to experience the same or similar emotions around sex. Perhaps more important to note, then, is the fact that most of the drugs that are associated with GBQM drug use can serve to *further enhance* sex-related emotional states. Indeed, crystal alone causes 'feelings of *hyper*sexualization' ([emphasis added] Bourne et al. 2015); however, when combined with other *chems* or *party favors* these feelings can be even more enhanced. Moreover, because drugs such as amphetamine, crystal, cocaine, MDMA and mephedrone have a stimulant effect, the type and amount of drugs ingested can serve to keep individuals awake for long periods of time, thus making these drugs a perfect accoutrement for GBQM who seek extended sexual encounters in cyberspace—a space that is open 24 hours a day/7 days a week:

> A wide selection of drugs are popular in the London scene, including ecstasy in both pill and powdered MDMA (3,4-methylenedioxy-methamphetamine) form, cocaine, ketamine, γ-butyrolactone (GBL), and speed. In 2009, use of another drug, mephedrone (part of the cathionone family), also exploded onto the club scene. More recently, methamphetamine (known as crystal meth or tina) has been growing in popularity but is regarded as more hardcore by many clubbers because it can lead to users binging for days at a time without sleep, and indulging in high-risk sexual practices as they smoke, snort, or inject the crystal, before suffering a heavy comedown ([emphasis added] Kirby & Thornber-Dunwell 2013: 1; see also Bourne et al. 2014: 10; Parsons, Kelly & Weiser 2007).

These 'protracted periods of sexual activity' (Bourne et al. 2014: 10; see also Lyons, Chandra, Goldstein & Ostrow 2010) are more commonly referred to GBQM drug users as 'long sessions':

> A preference for 'extended sessions' may be stated on one's profile or during chat [which] specifies a desire to engage in sexual play for quite a while—often with more than one partner, or a sequence of partners, over several hours or even days. (Race 2015: 267).

I made numerous observations of men who sought to engage in 'long sessions'. This was typically articulated in their member profiles, such as a *Grindr* member in central Europe who wrote, 'Not into brief encounters. Long sessions only' (Grindr member profile, 12 January 2014).

---

[60] vers = 'versatile'

Others specified which drugs in particular they sought in order to pursue extended periods of sexual play. For example, a member in northern Europe stated: 'Looking for a long weekends with me and Tina? Send me a message' (Grindr member profile, 24 January 2014).

In addition to enhanced and prolonged sexual-emotional states, GBQM drug users were also found to articulate specific preferences for non-normative ('deviant') and or transgressive sex. Examples and analyses of these types of rituals are discussed below.

Deviant Sex Among GBQM Drug Users

In a recent article titled 'The 12 Things Your Gay Friends Don't Want You To Know About Our New Epidemic, Crystal Meth', Sharp (2014: para. 1) notes that crystal, in particular, is

> the perfect sex drug for gay men because, not only does it provide the unbridled energy of a teenager again, it instantly relieves all sexual inhibitions—such as any residual guilt from internalized homophobia we might have from our childhood. Imagine how alluring a drug would be that promised you intense sexual pleasure for hours. Strange love, indeed.

'Uninhibited sex' or sex with 'no limits' was a common theme among the social network profiles I observed For example, one individual in western Europe stated (in Dutch), 'Spontaneous & open minded. … ik hou van relaxed, en ongecompliceerde sex , raw en versa sex van wild te vanilla en chems vr … alles mag nieks moet. plezier is nemen en geven'; and then, in English,

> longer versatile dates in relaxed uninhibited way. Mild to wild and chems ... I prefer bare versatile but open minded—I go with the flow that anything can happen but nothing is a must. pleasure is taking and giving. … Love meeting new people … Making friends but not wanting marriage (member profile, 27 January 2014)

I also observed a significant number of men who solicited specific non-normative or 'deviant' sexual experiences, such as one individual in western Europe, who stated:

> Maybe realising our mutual fantasies. Can be also into ff[61] (out-of-practice), cbt[62], ws[63], bd[64], exhibitionism, voyeurism...etc...etc.. The sleazier and more mind-blowing the better!! (member profile, 20 January 2014).

---

[61] 'ff' refers to 'fist fucking'—the act of inserting one's hand (or hands) into the rectum of another.
[62] 'cbt' refers to 'cock and ball torture'.
[63] 'ws' refers to 'watersports'—the practice of incorporating urine into a sexual act.
[64] 'bd' refers to 'bondage and discipline'.

According to Katz (1988: 312), there is a hidden aesthetic in the disorderly which results in a 'delight in being deviant': 'Pleasure, leisure and desire become central to non-work life whilst the disorder of destruction becomes in itself a 'delight' to be sought and savoured'. For the men described above (not to mention many others who were observed) drugs may provide a mechanism to help alleviate some of the guilt or shame associated with sexual desires that others might label as deviant. This is not surprising given the fact that, historically, homosexual sex was often criminalized and or pathologized by numerous systems of social control (e.g., criminal law, canon [church] law, medicine, public health, behavioral sciences). The criminalizing and pathologizing of GBQM has thus led to unique experiences with labeling—for example, 'deviants'; 'criminals'; 'perverts'; 'sexual inverts' and so on (see Pearce 1973). Homosexual men have also been the object of pejorative epithets by others who simply find their lifestyles contemptible —for example, 'faggots' or 'queers' (U.S.); 'poofters' (Britain); 'Schwuler' (Germany); 'tante' (France); etc. Even those who do not identify as gay or queer, *per se*, can often be the object of labels—for example, 'repressed homosexual' or 'closet case' (see Dollimore 1991).

Often, labels can be internalized negatively (e.g., Anderson 1993; see also Bochow 1994; Fasoli, Maass & Carnaghi, 2015; McConnell-Ginet 2003). With respect to GBQM drug users, this was apparent in the self-descriptions of the former drug users who were featured in the movies *'Chemsex'* and *'Dancing With the Devil'*: "I was a *monster"*; "I would just do things that were *not human-like*"; "It made me free and *savage*." Such labels, however, appear to be contested by some active drug users who, in effect, 'own' these labels and project them outward. For example, one network member from North America stated, 'The rush and the desire to be a pig with no limits brings me back. LeTs get as fucking nasty as you want' (member profile, 30 January 2014).

Transgressive Sex: 'Swapping Fluids'

On one of the networks was found the following profile:

> Junky pig and sex addict. love it raw, wet, messy, kinky, raunchy, you name it. looking for fellow pig slammers who (like me) don't care what meth whores they become, and need just two things: a rig and a dick/cumhole (both can be shared btw) groups, gangbangs, anonymous breeders. love piss, sweat, ripe armpits and smell of a kinky session. swapping fluids (member profile, 2 February 2014).

What is notable about the member's profile is that, in addition to labeling himself as a 'junky pig and sex addict', and, in addition to his seeking of sexual acts that might be considered 'deviant' (e.g., *kinky*, *raunchy*, *gangbangs*, *piss*), the member also noted his preference for 'anonymous breeders' and 'swapping fluids'. 'Breeder' refers to his preference for someone to infect him with HIV through semen [e.g., Grov 2004]); 'swapping fluids' refers to his preference to give and receive 'fluids' such as blood, saliva, semen and urine (see Moskowitz 2010).

Browning (1993: 84) notes that during the 1980s AIDS epidemic, gay men were warned that if they 'press[ed] the body beyond its limits as an organism, [they would] violate the rules of self-preservation'. It was within this 'bionormative' context, he continues, that '"safe sex"—as a slogan, as an approved list of behaviors—was born' (1993: 84). This list of behaviors, according to Browning (1993: 84), consisted of the following guidelines:

1. Do not exchange bodily fluids.
2. Reduce the number of sexual partners.
3. Avoid anal intercourse (or, at least, use a condom).
4. Do not engage in fisting (anal penetration by the fist and, sometimes by the forearm as well) or rimming (oral-anal contact).

Contrast these guidelines with a recent press release for *TIM's* gay pornographic movie *'Viral Loads'* (Morris 2015):

> Mansex is a virus, one that uses men as its host. Some try to resist it. Others embrace it as the source of life and meaning. We live to breed the sex-virus, to pass it on to every random anonymous dude we meet and fuck. It's how we reproduce, man (Treasure Island Media 2014).

Indeed, while most of the guidelines articulated by Browning are still suggested by public/sexual health agencies and organizations, over the past two decades researchers have documented the emergence of behaviors that not only contravene these guidelines, but that seemingly *transgress* them (e.g., Gauthier & Forsyth 1999; Grov & Parsons 2006; Tomso 2004). Although the member described above does not specifically identify as a 'bug chaser' or a 'gift giver', these terms have been used by some GBQM who seek intentional infection with HIV, or, by those who seek to pass the virus to others, respectively. Grov and Parsons (2006: 492) note that bug chasers 'perceive HIV infection as inevitable, and rather than living in "fear" of (not *if* but *when*) infection will happen, bug chasers empower themselves by taking control of their own infection' [emphases in original].

Yet, in the language of 'moral panics', these men have been described within the context of both academic and popular press narratives as men who are *'death-crazed'* (Sullivan 2003), or *'in search of death'* (Freeman 2003), or, who pass the *'gift of death'* (Gauthier & Forsyth 1998).

In addition to bug chasing and gift giving, I also observed GBQM drug users who specified a preference for exchanging blood with a partner. For example, a 34-year old individual in western Europe stated:

> Twisted fucked up an ready to be abused. Into BB, raw, scat, piss, spunk, blood, chems, slam, extreme filthed up twisted sex. I am a Deep Filth Filter awaiting men's bodily fluids to be filtered into me. Ready to obsorb all your waste (member profile, 5 February 2014).

Another, a 44-year old from North American stated that he was 'Very much up for blood slamming … blood is not a no go—it's a turn on' (member profile, 4 February 2014). Although a reference to 'blood' does not indicate the method by which an individual seeks to engage in such an activity, 'blood slamming' refers to the act of mixing a sex partner's blood with a drug and then injecting (or 'slamming') the combined mixture.

Recently, a spokesman from the *56 Dean Street* clinic in London stated that the clinic was experiencing 'a mixture of people [who are] HIV and/or HCV [i.e., Hepatitis-C] positive and negative people' who were also 'injecting and sharing needles, potentially creating a public health disaster' (Kirby & Thornber-Dunwell 2015:102). To this he added, 'While most so-called slammers inject the drugs dissolved in water, some are withdrawing their blood with a needle, adding either crystal meth or mephedrone to that blood, and then re-injecting it into themselves or someone else' (Kirby & Thornber-Dunwell 2015:101). At present, there is no research concerning these practices; however, in light of my observations, as well as those of *56 Dean Street*, it is clear that these phenomena are occurring with at least some regularity.

While the *56 Dean Street* spokesman does not offer any reasons for behaviors such as 'blood slamming', such behaviors imply yet another method by which some GBQM drug users may seek to establish a connection with others. Recalling again that some GBQM drug users refer to themselves (pejoratively and positively) in terms of their *non-human* or *animalistic* qualities, Baudrillard (1993: 131) notes that 'savages' have

173

no biological concept of death. Or rather, the biological, that is, death, birth or disease, everything that comes from nature and that we accord the privilege of necessity and objectivity, quite simply has no meaning for them.

Moreover, Baudrillard (1993: 131) notes that 'we have de-socialised death by overturning bio-anthropological laws, by according it the immunity of science and by making it autonomous, as individual fatality'. Indeed, HIV/AIDS is no longer socialized to the extent that it was in the 1980s and 1990s—an era that was characterised by candlelight vigils and memorials. Today, death from HIV/AIDS can be seen as more of an *individual* fatality. As discussed, GBQM drug users often seek meaningful connections with others—connections that involve both one-on-one interactions and group interactions around not only sex, but also 'chatting', 'chilling' and 'long sessions'. Furthermore, they do so within networks that allow them to identify as drug users. Some networks, such as *PlanetRomeo*, allow members to form drug-themed clubs. Others, such as *Get2ThePoint*, liken themselves to a *fraternity*. Thus, some GBQM drug users who valorize behaviors such as 'bug chasing' and 'gift giving' may, in essence, be searching for ways in which to rekindle socialization around their bodies—especially where HIV and or HCV is concerned. For some, this may even be viewed as a ritual akin to that of *initiation*:

> Initiation is the accented beat of the operation of the symbolic. It aims to neither conjure death away, nor to 'overcome' it, but to articulate it socially. As R. Jaulin describes in La Mort Sara [Paris: Plon, 1967], the ancestral group 'swallows the koys' (young initiation candidates), who die 'symbolically' in order to be reborn. … Further, instead of a break, a social relation between the partners [the ancestors and the living] is established, a circulation of gifts and counter-gifts … where death can no longer establish itself as end or agency. By offering her a piece of flesh, the brother gives his wife to a dead member of the family, in order to bring him back to life. By nourishing her, this dead man is included in the life of the group. **…** The important moment is when the moh (the grand priests) put the koy (the initiates) to death. … After having been 'killed', the initiates are left in the hands of their initiatory, 'cultural' parents, who instruct them, care for them and train them (Baudrillard 1993: 131).

Using Baudrillard's account as a template, in this way, men who are HIV-seropositive become the 'moh', while those who are seeking infection become the 'koys'. Again, the use of drugs may act as a 'key' that enables these men (both 'bug chasers' and 'gift givers') to obviate any guilt or shame associated with such rituals.

Another explanation for the transgressive sex-related rituals of GBQM drug users may be found in Bakhtin's (1984) concept of the 'second life'. Presdee (2001: 8) describes the Bakhtinian concept of the 'second life of the people' as the locus for most transgressions:

> It is the realm of resentment and irrationality par excellence and also the realm of much crime. It is that part of social life that is unknowable to those in power and which therefore stands outside their consciousness and their understanding. They cannot understand it or indeed even 'read' it as real life, but only as immoral, uncivilised, obscene and unfathomable social behavior .

In this way, some GBQM cyberspace social networks can be viewed as virtual realms of transgression inasmuch as, within these realms, GBQM drug users (and others) can live out their second lives—lives that are characterized by 'freedom, equality and abundance'(Bakhtin 1984, as cited in Presdee 2001: 9). These lives stand in contrast to 'official' lives, though, which Presdee holds, are often characterized by inequality and oppression. It is from the second life that 'carnival' also springs forth, seeking to 'assert itself every day and through the everyday, making the second life the only real life with any meaning' (Presdee 2001: 9).

Presdee (2001: 18) also notes that it is also within the 'second life' that *transgressive* crime 'stands separately from *resistant* [emphasis added] crime' in that transgressive crime 'breaks through boundaries in order to shock and stand outside of the existing rules, regulations and rhythms of the social world'. This is interesting to note inasmuch as in many jurisdictions, behaviors such as 'blood slamming', 'breeding' and 'swapping fluids' do not only transgress norms around 'safe sex', they may also transgress laws. In fact, many states in the U.S. have enacted laws that criminalize the intentional transmission of HIV (e.g., Kaplan 2012). To date, at least 80 HIV-positive people have been arrested and or prosecuted for consensual sex, biting, and [even] spitting' (Center for HIV Law & Policy 2010:1; see also Galletly & Pinkerton 2004; Kaplan 2012). While some states have used their penal statutes to criminalize transmission (e.g., aggravated assault), 'others have created a separate crime of intentional HIV exposure, passed statutes that enhance criminal penalties when someone who is HIV-positive [*sic*] commits a crime, or applied general sexually transmitted infection statutes to HIV exposure' (Waldman 2010: 553–554). Supporters of these laws argue that persons who are aware that they are HIV-seropositive and who expose others

through 'unprotected' sexual contact are participating in 'indefensible conduct [that is] . . .

negligent at best and homicidal at worst' (Burris et al. 2007:40).

Moreover, in Germany, the transmission of HIV—whether intentional or negligent—is

classified as a 'bodily injury' and is thus punishable by law (Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe 2015). In

France, although HIV transmission is not criminalized, HIV infection can still be subject to

criminal sanctions under an existing law that criminalizes the administration of 'a harmful

substance causing disability or permanent disability' (AIDSmap 2015). Finally, in England and

Wales, two sections of the Offences Against the Person Act 1861 that relate to 'grievous bodily

harm' can be used to prosecute HIV transmission: 'intentional transmission' (Section 18) and

'reckless transmission' (Section 20 [Terrence Higgins Trust 2015; see also AIDSmap 2015]).

Sharing Drug Use Rituals via Webcam

In the U.K. medical journal, *The Lancet*, Kirby and Thornber-Dunwell (2013: 101) note:

> Now, more of London's MSM[65] seem to be engaging in high-risk practices,
> including crystal meth use … Injection of crystal meth or mephedrone to get a bigger
> rush or high—known as slamming—is also increasing. … The result is a perfect
> storm for transmission of both HIV and HCV, as well as a catalogue of ensuing
> mental health problems. A slamming community, *largely hidden to the rest of the
> gay scene, exists behind closed doors in London* [emphasis added].

Indeed, many of London's 'MSM' (i.e., London's GBQM) are now 'slamming behind closed

doors'. So, too, are *Berlin's* MSM, *Johannesburg's* MSM, *Los Angeles'* MSM, *New York City's*

MSM, *Paris'* MSM, *Sydney's* MSM, and so on. But these men are not 'hiding'. Nor are they

'hidden', as suggested by Kirby & Thornber-Dunwell. In fact, one only needs to know where to

look for them.

In February 2014, I observed a *Zoom* webcam 'meeting' in which thirty men were

participating (Figure 6.7). First, I noted the general atmosphere of the group:

> Each of the participants are in various states of undress. At least half of them are
> nude or semi-nude. Some of the men are masturbating. One of the webcam feeds
> shows two participants on a bed engaged in anal sex. Another feed shows two men
> sitting on a bed—one is lying on his stomach with his face close to the webcam. He
> looks into the camera and then looks at the other webcam feeds. His partner sits on
> the bed nearest a nightstand loading the 'bowl' of a glass pipe with a white

---

[65] 'MSM' is an abbreviation for 'men who have sex with men'—a term commonly used by epidemiologists
and others who study 'high risk' sexual behaviors.

substance—unsure of the which substance. A few of the men are 'off-cam' or busying themselves in their bedroom (Field notes, 10 February 2014).

Later, during the same meeting, as I was observing the text-based group chat window I made the following observation:

A participant has just typed, "Getting to the point in a minute … who's ready?" The participant can be seen in his webcam feed as he waits for a response. Then, a message from another participant appears: 'Wait for me!'. A third appears: 'I just did one about an hour ago … do you think I should do another?' 'Fuck yeah!', the first participant replies, 'Be right back'. 'I aint goin anywhere', says the third participant. The first participant's webcam feed then goes black… what's he doing?

Several minutes later, I noted:

First participant's webcam feed is back up. He's holding a syringe up to the webcam for all to see. Syringe appears to be loaded to the .05 level with a clear unknown fluid. He types into the group chat window, 'Ready?' The group chat window comes alive. One man types, 'Fucking hot'. Another, 'Do it!!!'. A third, 'I'm ready'. The first participant moves his camera to focus solely on his right(?) arm and places a white band around his upper right arm. Tightens band. Sticks needle into a vein in inner elbow. Meanwhile two other men do same. Most participant appear to be watching their computer screens. First participant draws plunger back. Blood shows. He moves his arm closer to the webcam. 'Fuck yeah!' someone types. Other two men do same. A voice is heard (unknown who): 'I'm doing it!' First participant plunges plunger into vein slowly. One of the other men appears to be having difficulty finding a vein. Someone coughs… who? First removes syringe and swings his right arm above his head. Removes tourniquet. Starts to breathe rapidly. 'Fuuuuuuck'. Second man has found vein. Third coughs. First recaps syringe and lays back in bed. Up again. Grabs lube and applies to dick and starts to masturbate. Stops. Meanwhile, other men continue to type into the group chat window: 'Fucking hot'. 'How much did he do?'
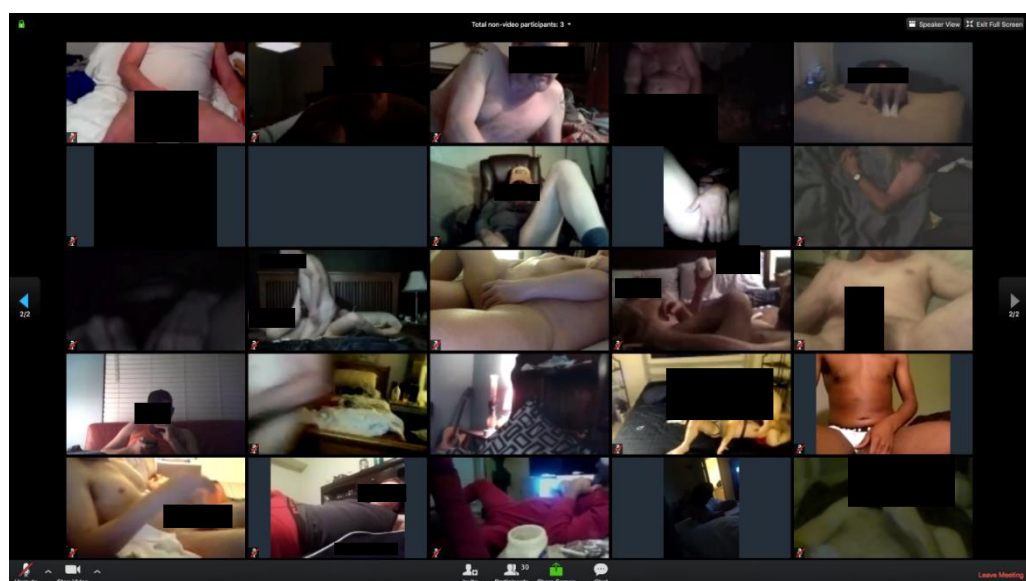

Figure 6.7. Main window of Zoom webcam 'meeting'.

I viewed numerous such group interactions throughout the course of my fieldwork and—like the viewing of professionally-produced drug-themed gay male pornography, or even the viewing of amateur-uploaded drug-themed sexual activities—I also experienced a very noticeable visceral response. Having already become slightly desensitized to images of sexualized drug-ingestion, though, my response seemed to be more attributable to my having been somehow 'connected' to the men in these groups—this, despite the fact that I was not engaged sexually (or, for that matter, drug-wise). Indeed, it seemed as though I was still very much a part of the spirit of camaraderie that was a feature of these groups inasmuch as these men seemingly felt free to engage in their activities without fear of reprisal from me or others 'in the room'. Moreover, I seemed to exist within these groups as 'just another one of the guys'—meaning, my awareness of my own age and physical appearance seemed to be suspended. In other words, I, too, felt comfortable.

Baudrillard (1995, in Perrone 2010: 78) notes, 'essentially, in modernity, social relations are disembedded—'lifted out' of their local context of interaction—across space and time, and spanning far beyond local communities'. In a way, dynamic webcam networks such as the one described above enable members of a subculture to connect with others in a space (and at a time) that is more safe. Perhaps some men are fearful of interacting with others in their own community—wherein a risk of victimization (such as blackmail or assault) may be more likely. Or, maybe some of these men may have 'worn out their welcome' with other drug users in their local group. They may also be reticent to physically travel (for example, to meet a potential partner in a bathhouse, a private residence or a hotel) for fear of arrest, or, for fear that someone they know may see them in a drug-induced state. Webcams may thus provide the opportunity to engage in the rituals of drug use without placing themselves at further risk.

Additionally, like the utopistic dancefloors associated with 'rave culture' (Malbon 1999), 'club culture' (e.g., Thornton 1995) and gay 'circuit party' culture (e.g., Lewis & Ross 1995; Browning 1998), live group webcam chatrooms such as the one described above can act as virtual spaces wherein 'real-time' (i.e. 'live') drug-enhanced energy and playfulness is more easily expressed and more readily accessed. In general, webcams have become increasingly popular among those who utilize cyberspace technologies. Webcam experiences are facilitated through desktop software (such as *Skype*), as well as through web-based programs (such as *ooVoo* and

178

Zoom). Most smartphones with video capability also enable individuals to connect with others in 'real-time'—Apple's 'Facetime' app is one such example. While these technologies are often used to connect friends and family members, as demonstrated, they are also used for other purposes, as well.

Countless sex-based webcam sites now exist in cyberspace. Some of the more mainstream webcam sites include *Cam4*, *Chaturbate* and *DirtyRoulette*—each of these sites provide options for both heterosexual and homosexual encounters. Other sites target GBQM exclusively, such as *GayChatRoulette* and *GayConnect*. Recently, GBQM porn producer *Treasure Island Media* has added a webcam chat option, as well (*TimFuckRoulette*). These sites provide spaces for individuals to connect with others for the purpose of viewing and or exhibiting 'live' sex acts. These experiences are typically shared in either 'one-on-one' encounters (i.e., webcam 'sessions' involving two individuals; also known as 'cam-to-cam', or simply 'C2C') or, as in the above example, among groups of individuals.

In light of the above, it is perhaps not surprising that some GBQM have begun to engage in sexualized *drug-related* interactions via webcam—indeed, a way in which they, too, can stake their own claim in gay webcam-based sex (sub)cultures. At present there is no research into the use of webcam technology by GBQM drug users, and yet I observed drug-related behaviors on webcam— on numerous occasions and across several cyberspace settings.

Among the static networks that were selected for observation for this thesis, both *Get2ThePoint* and *NastyKinkPigs* offered a webcam chat option. Whereas *Get2ThePoint's* webcam chat appeared to be seldom used, *NastyKinkPigs* 'Video Chat' feature was quite popular, averaging from about 20-50 members at any given time. In order to access *NastyKinkPigs'* 'Video Chat', individuals must have an 'upgraded' membership. Memberships are available from 7 days ($5.95) up to one-year ($75).

Upon clicking the 'Video Chat' link, I entered the main 'Pig Room' webcam chat room wherein I was presented with a window that displayed a list of 'Users' and a thumbnail of their member profile photos (see Figure 6.8). Users are not required to use a webcam while in the chat room; however, users who do not wish to participate are identified by a small video camera icon

179

displayed to the right of their network member name. Once in the 'Pig Room', users can elect to begin a private chat with other members; or, they can participate in the main group chat (or both).

I did not directly observe drug usage while in *NastyKinkPigs'* video chat. In fact, members who announced that they were about to smoke or inject drugs would often turn off their webcam feeds. Others would leave their webcam feed 'on' and then (it was believed) ingest drugs 'off-camera'. This, I assumed, was due to the fact that overt displays of drug use were discouraged by *NastyKinkPigs'* owner-operator.

While in the 'Pig Room', I received numerous private chat requests from members asking me if I had been *slamming* (or, that asked me if I wanted to slam—for example, in a private webcam session using *Skype*). Others asked if I wanted to 'blow clouds' with them. I also observed group chat messages such as, "Loading a bowl … anyone smoking?" or, "Who's slamming?" These I took to be invitations for others to join them 'off-site' (again, in a private one-on-one or group webcam conference/meeting). Often, users who wished to engage in one-on-one or group chats on other services (such as *Skype* or *Zoom*) would provide their *Skype* user name or *Zoom* 'room number' in the group chat window. Some users noted the quantity of drugs they were about to 'slam'. This was usually expressed in forms such as "Getting ready to slam .05," or, "Loading the biggest one I've ever done."
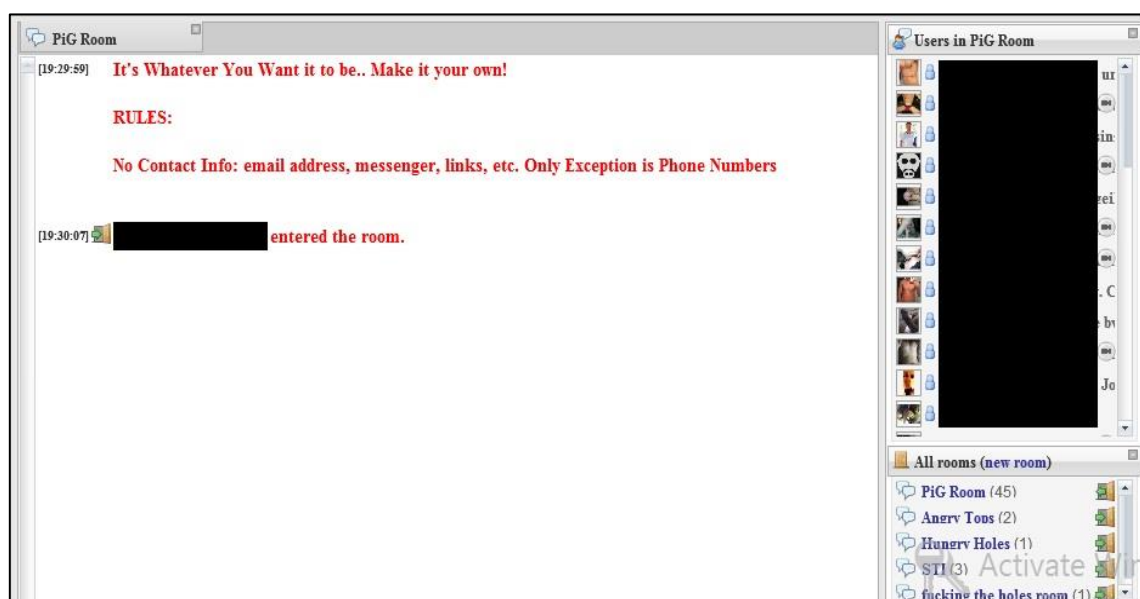
Figure 6.8. NastyKinkPigs' 'PiG Room' Video Chat window.

On the contrary, unlike *NastyKinkPigs* (wherein I was only able to infer that individuals were seeking to engage in webcam drug use), I did observe what appeared to be drug use in both *Skype* and *Zoom* group webcam chats. I observed numerous such drug-themed dynamic networks, which I learned of through my observations of *NastyKinkPigs'* group chat window and also by invitations via private messages. I also learned of these networks through the monitoring of *Google Groups* pages (Figure 6.9), the names of which I discovered in the profiles of *NastyKinkPigs* and *Get2ThePoint* members
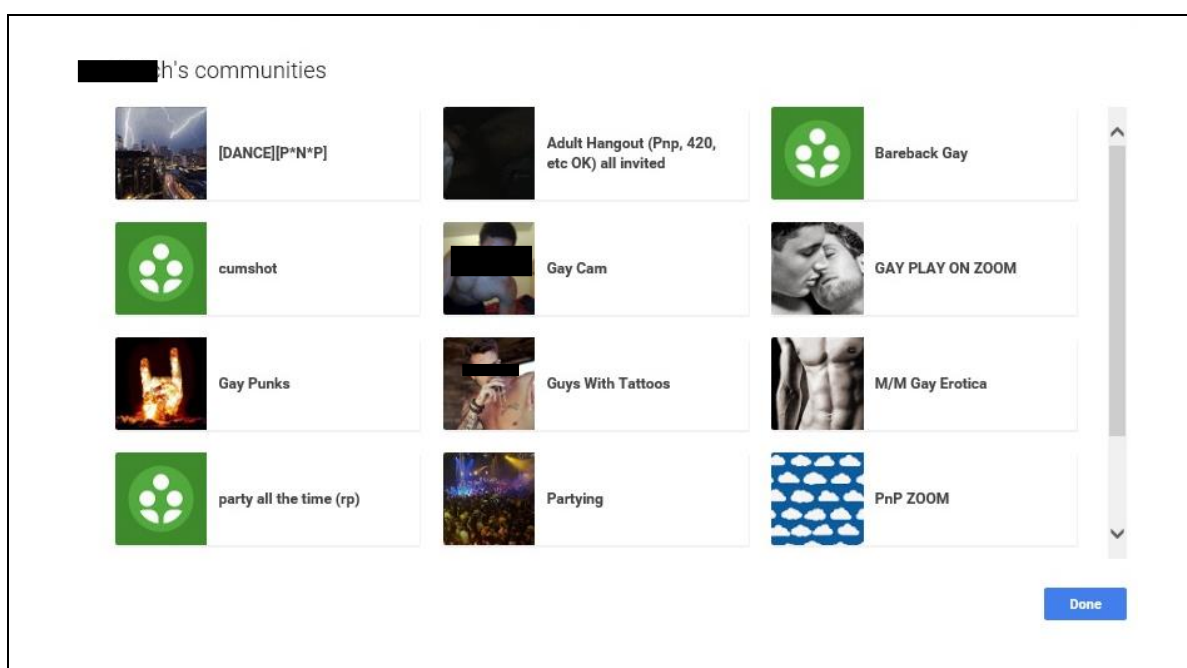
Figure 6.9. Drug-themed GBQM 'Google Groups'.

During my observations of *Skype* group calls and *Zoom* meetings, I took copious notes—many of which had to be taken quite quickly in order to be able to account for the fast-paced nature of drug-using 'performances' (in later observations, I recorded my notes using the 'Voice Memos' feature on my Apple *iPhone*). In this way, as noted by Ferrell et al. (2008: 181), I was able to view the 'contested performances' of GBQM drug users who engaged in crime and 'deviance' in their own 'dangerous little everyday theatres'. These performances, like the counternormative drug-themed photos that some GBQM drug users post in GBQM cyberspace social networks (as well as on other mainstream photo-sharing sites), were different from other sex-based webcam groups. Indeed, with these men, the emphasis seemed to be placed on drugs first, *then* sex.

181

As noted earlier, what I took from my observations of dynamic GBQM drug-using webcam networks was a spirit of camaraderie—most often (but not always) around drugs. Indeed, certain drugs and drug-ingestion methods often formed the 'spirit' of each network—whereas some networks were geared more towards those who liked to 'blow clouds', others existed as networks for those who 'slammed'. Recalling Willis' description of drug-using subcultures, for these men—inasmuch as many of them seemed to frequent webcam networks over the course of several days—drugs seemed to impact their everyday social interactions. Even when these men were not online, for many, their online presence—that is, their cyberspace social network profiles—identified them as drug-users who were 'looking' to 'slam' or to 'blow clouds' with other men on 'cam'. In other words, at any point during their daily existence, many of these men left the option open for others to contact them as a fellow drug user.

Live webcam performances also allow GBQM drug users to engage in 'symbolic body language', a form that is often cited as providing the cues for subcultural behaviours. One example of 'live' symbolic body language that I observed was the use of one's hand to 'tap' his inner elbow—signaling that he was a drug injector and or that he was ready to inject. Goffman (1963: 33) notes that such language is idiomatic in that 'individual appearances and gestures … call forth in the actor what it calls forth in others'. Moreover, Goffman (1963: 34) notes that with symbolic body language both parties are obliged to 'convey certain information when in the presence of others and an obligation not to convey other impressions'. Although drug-related symbolic body language is also expressed in photos and videos, through webcams GBQM drug users can *respond* to the cues of 'live' symbolic body language. This, in turn, can make their interactions even more meaningful. In fact, I came to discover that such gestures often elicited a visceral effect inasmuch as—having viewed such gestures (and the resultant increase in energy throughout the rooms)—I came to anticipate a change in the room's energy even before any drug ingestion had occurred.

Several years later, Goffman (1966: 35) refined his work on symbolic body language, acknowledging that 'no one in society [was] likely to be in a position to employ the whole expressive idiom . . . everyone will possess some knowledge of the same body symbols'. Expressions of symbolic body language through webcam can thus also serve to convey new forms of body language. Nonetheless, while the meanings underlying certain expressions of symbolic

body language among GBQM drug users may be understood within their subculture, 'outsiders' (e.g., academic researchers; law enforcement agents; non-drug users) may not always understand these forms.

Given that private webcam chat groups and meetings are constructed by individuals, they are, in effect, *autonomous* from outside intervention. In other words, whereas these networks are created using third-party software, they are not monitored by the companies that provide the software. Nor would law enforcement action be likely, given that participation is granted on an invitation-only basis. These spaces are also temporary inasmuch as they only remain open for a matter of minutes or hours—sometimes one or two days. For this reason, Bey's (2003: 145-146) concept of the 'temporary autonomous zone' (or, 'TAZ') is useful for understanding why some GBQM drug users may form more private networks:

> If History IS 'Time', as it claims to be, then the uprising is a moment that springs up and out of Time, violates the 'law' of History. If the State IS History, as it claims to be, then the insurrection is the forbidden moment, an unforgivable denial of the dialectic—shimmying up the pole and out of the smokehole, a shaman's maneuver carried out at an 'impossible angle' to the universe. History says the Revolution attains 'permanence', or at least duration, while the uprising is 'temporary'. In this sense an uprising is like a 'peak experience' as opposed to the standard of 'ordinary' consciousness and experience. Like festivals, uprisings cannot happen every day— otherwise they would not be 'nonordinary'. But such moments of intensity give shape and meaning to the entirety of a life.

Using Bey's description of the TAZ, GBQM dynamic webcam networks that center around drug-related activities can be viewed as momentary 'uprisings' wherein GBQM drug users can attain their drug-related peak experiences without fear of intervention. However, in contrast to Bey's assertion that such 'revolutions' cannot happen every day, for many GBQM drug users, they do, indeed, happen every day.

An understanding of the use of webcam technology by GBQM drug users is important—not only because such a mechanism allows these men to engage in more clandestine methods of drug use, but also because of the potential for such methods to expose the uninitiated—especially those who are desirous of spaces that are free of intervention or outside monitoring (even more so, perhaps, for those who desire to experience new forms of sexual play). Presdee (2001: 5) notes that 'desire becomes the engine that drives us to seek out certain cultural acts whilst the resulting pleasure drives desire once again'. Thus, GBQM who encounter drug use or other non-normative

behaviors in webcam environments might be exposed to activities they did not foresee as existing outside the desires of their own mind. As Mowlabocus (2007: 64) points out, 'this engagement may be proactive, or reactive, the inaccuracy of many listings resulting in exposure to pornographies completely different to what the consumer anticipated'.

Additionally, webcam drug networks may provide opportunities for individuals to learn the techniques of drug use without *physical* face-to-face interaction. This is supported by Anderson (1998: 248), who notes that 'individuals learn about [drug] opportunities from the groups … they encounter in everyday situations'. Groups settings—such as those provided by live webcam networks—could thus influence and help to create 'drug-related meaning systems and identities' among the young and or inexperienced (Anderson 1998: 237). Anderson bases this assumption on Bandura's theory of 'modeling', wherein 'individuals often model or do what people around them do—for example, drugs' (Anderson 1998: 239). Indeed, in his book *The Drugtakers: The Social Meaning of Drug Use* Young (1971: 39) notes,

> It is impossible to make generalizations about the effects of drugs in a vacuum. For the effects of drugs are shaped by the culture of the user and are learned by the novice from the more sophisticated drugtaker. To this extent, the effects of a particular drug form a role in that group, in so far as they are shaped in terms of certain permitted and prohibited behaviour and that other drug users have a set of expectations vis-à-vis a person under the influence of a particular drug.

Young's observation is bolstered by Goffman's (1966: 11) thesis on public gatherings, wherein Goffman suggests certain 'rule[s] of behavior' applied that could lead some to feel an obligation to 'fit in'. Indeed, for some GBQM, webcam drug networks may evoke a 'felt pressure of propriety' to comply with the de facto demands of the network's 'host' (Goffman 1966: 11). At the very least, Goffman holds that individuals must 'keep within the spirit or ethos of the situation; [and they] must not be *de trop* [emphasis in original] or out of place' (1966: 11). In fact—regardless of the 'improprieties' that may occur—to *not* conform would be the true punishable offense. Thus, some GBQM who wish to 'fit in' in drug-related webcam interactions might experience a 'felt pressure' to begin drug use; or, to experiment with different methods; or, to even increase their use of drugs—especially if they believe that other webcam participants approve of such behavior; or, if they perceive that a refusal to participate would be an offense.

Sharing Conduct Norms Around Harm Reduction

In addition to rituals, Hebdige (1978: 46) notes that 'conduct norms' can also 'define and constitute a subculture'. This is supported by Zinberg (1984: 5), who holds that the social setting 'through the development of sanctions and rituals' can actually bring the use of drugs 'under control':

> The use of any drug involves both values and rules of conduct (which I have called social sanctions) and patterns of behavior (which I have called social rituals); these two together are known as informal social controls. Social sanctions define whether and how a particular drug should be used. They may be informal and shared by a group … or they may be formal, as in the various laws and policies aimed at regulating drug use (see also Zinberg, Harding & Winkeller 1981; Maloff, Becker, Fonaroff & Rodin 1979).

In my observations of drug-sharing cyberspace social networks, I noted that some individuals engaged in informal social sanctions around drug use. For example, participants who did not turn on their webcams in webcam groups were sometimes expelled from the chat. I interpreted this as a way in which 'lurkers'[66] were prevented from viewing the activities of otherwise 'private' and participatory groups (again, Goffman's thesis on public gatherings comes to mind). It could have also been a strategy based upon a fear of being monitored by law enforcement agents.

Other informal sanctions were expressed in terms of care or concern (or annoyance) with participants who had appeared to 'pass out' from overuse of drugs. In many cases, the group's administrator left the participant's webcam feed 'on'—perhaps as a way of 'keeping an eye' on such individuals. Still other informal sanctions took the form of admonishments towards participants who appeared to be 'twacked-out' or 'G'd-out' (signaling that the participant had taken too much of one drug or another).

Other social rituals centered on drug-using norms. For example, in one *Skype* group webcam call, I observed an interaction between a participant in Norway and a participant in the U.S. During the interaction, the participant in Norway provided verbal instructions to the other on how to draw blood into a syringe before injecting the (unknown) drug into his arm. The Norwegian participant also informed the U.S. participant as to the effects he could expect once he had slammed: "As soon as you cough[67], just lie back and enjoy the ride."

---

[66] 'Lurkers' are individuals who regularly inhabit chat rooms, but who never contribute to the group dynamic.
[67] As noted in Chapter Four, upon injecting crystal many individuals will 'cough'—a sign that the drug has entered their lungs.

Such drug-related norms were not always performed, though. Indeed, some men provided evidence of drug-using norms in their social network profiles. For example, a 51 year-old individual member in western Europe (member profile, 26 January 2014) stated that 'the perfect slam companion',

- knows how to slam himself
- knows how to slam his partner just in case
- respects the hygiene and security
- has no compulsive behaviour when high (looking for another partner, for the porn to turn him on, speaking too much, being paranoid)
- share the fees for chems or have his own material
- safe or bare (better) but no HCV... and if Syphilis+ is treated (as I am).
- gets high for sex, not just to get high.

As discussed previously, researchers have documented increases among GBQM drug users worldwide. Some research suggests that the number of GBQM who inject drugs is also increasing. It is not known to what extent the presence of drug-themed photo and video content has impacted these numbers. Neither is it known how the emergence of drug-themed webcam drug-sharing may play a role. Nevertheless, I would argue that the ability of GBQM drug users to specify and perform norms around drug use—including their ability to share these norms via 'real-time'—can serve, in some regards, to convey unexplored strategies for reducing harm.

CONCLUSION

According to Goffman (1963: 137), 'the individual's real group … is the aggregate of persons who are likely to suffer the same deprivations as he suffers because of having the same stigma'. Although it is difficult to speculate the numerous reasons why some men may seek out more 'deviant' or transgressive GBQM cyberspace social networks, Mowlabocus (2007) and others note that some GBQM—as a result of their inability to express themselves in more mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks—may seek environments that allow them to more fully participate in gay culture. From a criminological perspective, this is supported by Hayward (2004: 154), who notes that individuals who cannot construct a sense of identity through the 'established norms and codes of modernity' will seek 'alternative avenues'. Static networks such as *PlanetRomeo*, *NastyKinkPigs* and *Get2ThePoint* offer such alternatives, as do the many dynamic webcam

networks that are created using software such as *Skype* and *Zoom.* Additionally, there are other resources—such as *Google+ Groups* and *ToxxxicTube*—that may provide additional spaces for the exploration and expression of GBQM identity. Such spaces can be 'seductive' inasmuch as they offer an escape 'from the mundane routines of everyday life' (Hayward 2004: 152). Indeed, for some GBQM drug users, these other spaces may offer more than the 'hopeless chases' they may experience in more mainstream networks. This chapter explored the dimensions and dynamic of these alternative spaces, as well as some of the drug-related activities, behaviors, norms and rituals that occur therein.

Because *space* is central to the study of criminology, the chapter began with a discussion on the dynamics that exist between GBQM physical spaces (wherein drug use is often forbidden), and GBQM cyberspace social networks (wherein drug-related actions are more often tolerated). Although there are rules that govern 'illegal' behaviors in most static GBQM cyberspace social networks, unlike GBQM physical spaces, these rules appear to be contested in the absence of any formal sanctions for the of breaking of said rules—at least not with respect to drug-related activities. This was apparent not only in the explicit and coded drug-related solicitations that were found in member network profiles, but also in the presence of drug-themed photos, videos and webcam interactions. Some networks seemed to even break their own rules. This was evident in network mechanisms that allowed members to form drug-themed 'clubs'. It was also apparent in built-in profile tools that enabled members to specify their drug preference. Through such mechanisms, GBQM drug users are able to connect with one another while keeping the spirit or 'ethos' of these networks alive. Moreover, for GBQM drug users who are socially or culturally isolated, these connections—for example, through chat or through webcam—can play an integral part in helping them to stave off emotions related to depression, isolation, marginalization and or stigma.

The 'connections' sought by GBQM drug users are not always sexual, though. In fact, many drug users seek others with whom they can 'chill' or 'chat'—in person or on webcam. This challenges representations of GBQM drug users as 'hedonistic' or 'orgiastic'. On the contrary, through the establishment of connections with one another, GBQM drug users can create opportunities to share their lived experiences with others.

Cultural criminologists are often interested in subcultures because a subculture's *responses*—that is, their crimes, their deviance and their transgressions—can often reveal much about their experiences in society. Although the meanings that underlie an individual's drug use are unique, GBQM drug users often reveal much about their shared experiences through their responses—that is, their *rituals*. One example of this was found in the ways in which GBQM drug users crafted certain styles of drug-related language—especially when using recognized gay cultural tropes (e.g., female celebrity names) as 'code' for drugs. Perhaps a better example, however, was in the types of sex they sought: some sought 'deviant' sex, while others sought sex that was more transgressive. In some jurisdictions, some of these acts—especially those which carry a risk of passing HIV—might even be considered crimes.

Nevertheless, given the global membership of many GBQM cyberspace social networks, drug-related connections between GBQM drug users do not always result in 'in-person' encounters. This challenges researchers to rethink the connection between drug use and HIV and or HCV infection. For some drug users—especially those who engage in drug use via cyberspace webcam networks—the only harms they may incur may be in their actual use of drugs. Even so, many GBQM drug users use these opportunities to share drug-related norms that can actually serve to reduce harm—from informal sanctions to actual harm reduction strategies.

The following chapter presents my concluding thoughts on the present research. The chapter begins with a summary of the key contributions of the present study to the research on GBQM drug use. This is followed by a discussion concerning the limitations of the study, as well as my suggestions for future research directions. The chapter concludes with some thoughts on the implications of the present research for policy and reform.

CHAPTER 7 - EVALUATING THE (SUB)CULTURAL DYNAMICS OF GBQM CYBERSPACE-FACILITATED DRUG USE

Over the past two decades, research has documented increases in the use of drugs by GBQM in numerous worldwide cities. Research has also revealed that GBQM drug users are changing their routes of administration; and, that the average age of GBQM drug users is decreasing. In light of these increases and changes, researchers have begun to focus on GBQM cyberspace social networks for explanations.

Meanwhile, the media has begun to turn its attention towards GBQM drug users, as well. This is most likely due to recent studies that cite the links between GBQM drug use, the rising rates of HIV and Hepatitis-C infections among GBQM, and, their increased use of social media. Recent increased media attention is perhaps also related to the 2015 release of the *Vice* documentary *'Chemsex'*—an exposé that portrays GBQM drug users as a hedonistic, orgiastic 'subculture on the edge'.

Whereas the study of GBQM drug use—not to mention its mediated representations often describe GBQM drug users as existing within a 'subculture', rarely are such descriptions deconstructed. This is problematic inasmuch as GBQM drug users interact with one another across the globe and from within numerous cultures. Neither are the personal meanings and motivations that underlie GBQM drug use fully explored, much less the cultural dynamics that may create and or shape these meanings. Or, where these meanings, motivations and dynamics *are* explored, they are typically framed within narratives that focus on 'drama'; 'emergency and crisis'; 'cherished values threatened'; 'objects of concern, anxiety and hostility'; and 'evil forces or people to be identified and stopped'.

Finally, because the studies and representations of GBQM drug use are most often concerned with the link between drugs and HIV/HCV infection, little attention, if ever, is given to the fact that drug use—in of itself—is a crime. Neither are the behaviors associated with GBQM drug use explored using theories that seek to explain deviance and or transgression. At the same time, GBQM subcultural crime, deviance and transgression are also neglected by criminology. This is not surprising given mainstream criminology's tendency to view sexuality as normatively heterosexual. It is also not surprising inasmuch as mainstream criminologists tend to separate

crime, deviance and transgression from culture. For this reason, *cultural criminology* offered a more suitable approach to the study of GBQM drug use and its related phenomena.

Cultural criminologists view crime, deviance, and transgression as part of an ongoing process that is interwoven with the dynamics of culture and all of its attendant meanings. Because cultural criminologists are also interested in the emotional and interpretive qualities of crime and deviance, cultural criminology provided an attractive framework for the study of GBQM drug-related behaviors—behaviors that are often driven by drug-enhanced emotional states. Yet, like mainstream criminology, to date, neither have cultural criminologists explored the cultural dynamics of LGBTQ crime, deviance and transgression—much less the cultural dynamics that impact GBQM drug use. This thesis thus sought to bridge the gap between the study of GBQM drug use and the cultural criminological study of crime, deviance and transgression.

This thesis utilized a theoretical framework based on three premises that typically drive cultural criminological inquiries: that crime and deviance and transgression often erupt out of social processes related to marginalization and oppression; that these phenomena are often subcultural in nature; and, that subcultures cannot be studied apart from their mediated representations. Complementing this framework was a research design that employed several methodologies that are often used by cultural criminologists and subcultural theorists alike: (virtual) ethnography, instant ethnography, ethnographic content analysis and visual content analysis. Critical discourse analysis was also employed in an effort to analyze the underlying power differentials that are present in some of the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. Using these methods, I was able to participate in the activities and understandings of GBQM drug users who are situated in cyberspace—a convenient environment for observing behaviors that may otherwise be 'hidden' behind closed doors. Using such a framework allowed me to analyze and draw conclusions as to the cultural dynamics that may drive the activities, behaviors, language, norms, rituals and values that are associated with GBQM drug use. These dynamics, I found, were comprised of a diverse range of 'pleasure(s), connection(s), eroticism and intimacy' (see Race 2015: 256). These, in turn, were consumed and or otherwise experienced within distinct spaces wherein unique expressions of drug-related identities and styles were created, contested and re-created. Finally, these dynamics were also subject to the 'interactional norms and pressures that

circulate in these milieux' (see Halkitis 2006: 319)—norms and pressures that are undoubtedly influenced, on one hand, by ideal gay cultural tropes, and, on the other, by both negative and 'celebratory' (self-)mediated representations of GBQM drug use.

The present research was at times perplexing inasmuch as I was often exposed to phenomena that I had not previously encountered and, thus, was uncertain how to approach—not only theoretically, but reflexively, as well. Some of these phenomena—in particular, drug-themed gay male pornography, amateur-uploaded drug-themed sex videos and live webcam drug injecting— were also challenging inasmuch as they were also, at times, exciting. On the other hand, some of the phenomena I encountered—specifically, the 'blanking' or 'ghosting' that often occurs within GBQM cyberspace social network interactions; the discriminating language around age, body type, HIV/AIDS; the use of 'ideal images'—were challenging inasmuch as, personally, I have often been on the receiving end of such interactions and encounters. Finally, I often experienced frustration and helplessness over the often-negative manner in which GBQM drug users are represented by the media, as well as how they are represented by those who position themselves as moral entrepreneurs in the fight against GBQM drug use (e.g., documentarians; drug counselors; men's sexual health agencies). Needless to say, suspending my own emotionality around these and other issues was often taxing and required much reflection before commencing to analyze and write-up my findings.

PART ONE: SUMMARIZING THE KEY CONTRIBUTIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following summarizes the key contributions of the present research. First, the key findings will be highlighted. These include the discovery of new forms of drug-related activities that occur within cyberspace; the discovery that drug-tolerant GBQM social networks are growing; and, the discovery of drug-themed 'amateur' pornography. This will be followed by a summary of the contributions of the present research to the literature in such areas as criminology, cultural criminology, GBQM drug use and social media/network studies.

Key Findings

This thesis asked the question, 'What are the (sub)cultural dynamics of GBQM drug use?' To explore these dynamics, I focused on three areas wherein these dynamics are perhaps most evident.

The first—*situations*—was explored as a way of situating GBQM drug as emerging from and or existing within the contemporary social processes that are specific to GBQM. In particular, this thesis investigated the sources of marginalization and or stigma that exist within contemporary gay culture—both offline and in GBQM cyberspace social networks. Recalling that marginalization is a process that involves the privileging and or valorizing of certain people and ideas over others, I discovered numerous examples wherein gay 'ideals' appeared to be privileged or valorized. One example was found in the use of ideal gay images by GBQM cyberspace social networks—images that seemed to reify the 'metropolitan gay male': *masculine*; *sexy*; *young*; *White*. Another example was found in the design of a network interfaces—in particular, the use of 'prescriptive identity' profile-building categories and attributes that further served to countenance homonormative ideals—not only concerning image and masculinity, but also concerning HIV-serostatus. A third example was found in the form of 'preferences' in GBQM cyberspace social network member profiles—preferences around age (*young*), body type (*fit*), ethnicity (*White*), masculinity and sexuality ('no camp') and HIV-serostatus (*negative*).

The second—*mediated processes*—focused on the cultural dynamics that are at play in the mediated representations of GBQM drug use. To this end, I analyzed the power differentials that exist within some of the more traditional forms, such as news reports and documentaries; however, because the term 'mediated representation' is sometimes used as a rubric for describing and analyzing other forms of representations, I also explored self-mediated forms. One of the keys findings, then, was in the discovery that GBQM drug users are now sharing drug-themed visual content in mainstream social media networks such as *Instagram, Twitter* and *Tumblr*—a finding that not only counters claims that GBQM drug users 'hide', but that illustrates how—through images of sexualized drug use—GBQM drug users contest the ideal images that are found in contemporary gay culture. Related to this finding is the fact that many of those who share such content are traceable through simple Internet searches. One way in which these men can be traced is through the screen names they use (many of which are used across numerous networks). Some men can also be traced using Internet 'reverse image searches' of the photos they upload within cyberspace (drug-themed and non-drug-themed). This poses a risk for these men inasmuch as it

makes them vulnerable to law enforcement monitoring efforts. It could also place them at risk of victimization by others.

Drug-themed gay male pornography was also a finding—a topic that has not yet been addressed in the literature. At present, two such professionally-produced films exist: *Treasure Island Media's 'Slammed'* and *3rd World Media's 'Slammin' Perverts'.* It is unknown whether similar films will be produced in the future; however, given the popularity of such content, future productions of this particular genre can be expected.

Another finding under this area was in the presence of drug-themed 'amateur' pornography on Internet 'tube sites'. Although video content is not (yet) searchable using reverse-search technology, those who upload such content face a similar dilemma should law enforcement be made aware of such sites—especially if personal information or other traceable content is provided. Moreover, because a membership is not required to view *ToxxxicTube's* content, these videos are viewable by anyone. This raises ethical concerns over the ease with which such content can be accessed. The fact that *ToxxxicTube* is owned by a gay male pornography studio (*Treasure Island Media*) raises another ethical concern—one that concerns the legality of such sites and the potential for sexploitation of the 'amateurs' featured therein: in addition to their drug use, many of these men depict themselves in sex acts that, if professionally-produced, would be legally-proscribed in some jurisdictions.

Finally, the third foci—*subcultures*—was used to explore the subcultural dynamics and dimensions of GBQM drug use. Such an approach was useful for understanding the social aspects of GBQM drug use—in particular how GBQM drug users interact with one another in cyberspace, wherein their actions are more easily observed. Originally, this thesis had sought to investigate the solicitation of in-person GBQM drug-related activities via cyberspace social networks. These solicitations, it was thought, were limited to the seeking out of drug-related experiences through text-based solicitations in social network profiles, as well as in drug-related discussions in GBQM cyberspace social network chat rooms. During the fieldwork phase of this thesis, however, several new forms of cyberspace-facilitated drug use were discovered. For example, I found that GBQM drug users are now engaging in shared sexualized drug ingestion experiences via 'real time' webcam conference calls. I also discovered that several static GBQM cyberspace social networks

target GBQM drug users specifically (for example, *Get2ThePoint* and *ToxxxicTube*). Finally, I discovered that over the course of the present research, the membership numbers for at least two of the static networks that were observed had grown significantly in size; one had even doubled in size—from approximately 40000 members to just over 85000 members. While this does not suggest that these numbers are comprised solely of drug users; it does suggest—inasmuch as drug use is openly expressed within these networks—a growing tolerance for drug use among the members of these networks.

The fact that many GBQM drug users seek 'connections' to other drug users—irrespective of whether sex occurs or not—was also a key finding under this area. This challenges the representation of GBQM drug users as men who are solely interested in the pursuit of drug-enhanced sex or 'drug-fueled orgies'. It may even suggest that GBQM drug users actively seek others with whom they can share and or confirm their stigmatized identities.

Finally, the sharing of drug-related experiences via webcam—including 'blowing clouds' and 'slamming'—was a significant finding. Such a finding not only also counters the claim that GBQM drug users 'hide', it confounds the debate over the link between drug use and sexually-transmitted infections inasmuch as it forces us to redefine our understanding of what is meant by a 'face-to-face' encounter—especially when discussing the sharing of drug-related rituals and norms.

Contributions to the Literature

The present research contributes to the literature in several general areas of inquiry. First, it contributes to the literature in both mainstream and cultural criminology inasmuch as it provides a criminological investigation of drug-related crime, deviance and transgression. Specifically, the present research offers a new way of envisaging the criminogenic aspects of cyberspace—above and beyond more traditional 'cybercrime' inquiries. Similarly, the present research adds to the body of subcultural literature in that its applies some of the theories and concepts associated with the study of subcultures to a relatively unexplored group: GBQM drug users. Finally, according to Ferrell and Sanders (1995: 318), 'in the same way that "queer theory" now must come a part of sociological theory, "queer criminology" must be part of any cultural criminology'. The present research thus attempts to answer this call by queering the theories and concepts utilized by cultural criminologists.

Another contribution of the present research is in its conceptualization of the cultural dynamics that may impact GBQM drug use—irrespective of whether the drug use is expressed offline or in cyberspace. In particular, the present research explored two areas wherein these dynamics are contested and or played out—the first was in the mediated representations of GBQM; the second was comprised of numerous apps, networks and sites wherein GBQM seek out and or otherwise engage in drug-related activities and behaviors. These dynamics were explored and analyzed using a cultural criminological framework that, for example, sought alternative sources of marginalization and stigma; that investigated alternative forms of mediated representations; and, that employed subcultural theories and concepts to an analysis of cyberspace-facilitated GBQM drug use.

With respect to marginalization and stigma, this thesis explored several potential sources that may be experienced by GBQM—sources that are found both offline and in GBQM cyberspace social networks. These sources, it was suggested, may cause some men to seek 'safer spaces' in which they can express themselves. These sources may also contribute to an individual's decision to engage in drug use and or other behaviors. First, I suggested that some men may experience marginalization as a result of being socially excluded from mainstream gay culture. I attributed this social exclusion to the growing commercialization and normalization of contemporary gay culture, which, as suggested by the literature, has a tendency to valorize attractive, young, non-queer Caucasian men (i.e., Mowlabocus' 'metropolitan gay male'). Second, I suggested that some men may experience marginalization within GBQM cyberspace social networks as a result of network marketing images and interfaces that reify gay 'ideals' concerning attractiveness, age, masculinity, sexuality and HIV-serostatus. Third, I presented data that articulated some of the ways in which stigmatization might be experienced by men who utilize mainstream GBQM cyberspace social networks in locations outside the U.S. (where studies of cyberspace discrimination are typically performed). These data were based on observations I made of social network member profile 'preferences' that were constructed using discriminatory language—language that had the potential to stigmatize older men; men with bodies that do not 'fit'; ethnic men; non-masculine men; and, men who are HIV-seropositive. While some of these sources have been cited as contributing to behaviors such as anonymous sex or condomless sex, as of yet, none of these sources have been

195

cited in studies that address GBQM drug use specifically. It is hoped that the present research will help to broaden the scope of studies that explore the connection between marginalization, stigma and the use of drugs by GBQM.

The present research also contributes to the literature on mediated representations inasmuch as it identified several additional forms of mediated representations that have not been previously examined. For instance, in addition to the more 'traditional', potentially negative sources that represent GBQM drug use, I suggested that public health agency/drug awareness organization campaigns also negatively frame GBQM drug use. While such campaigns have been explored within the context of other studies—for example, studies that examine the potential of these campaigns to stigmatize and or exclude certain populations—analyses of these campaigns as forms that mediate GBQM-related crime and deviance have not yet been performed. I also suggested that, through the uploading of drug-themed photo and video content to networks and other sites/app, GBQM drug users are now 'representing' themselves.

Additionally, the present research demonstrates that mediated representations do not necessarily have to be negatively-framed. Indeed, through artistic expressions of GBQM drug use, such representations can take on a more celebratory form. Among the artistic forms of mediated representations that were explored, I analyzed GBQM drug use in photography; in theatrical productions; and, finally, in gay male pornography. Although there is much commentary on these forms in the popular press and in blogs, as of yet there is no research into the effects of such representations on the attitudes and behaviors of GBQM drug users. Neither is there any research that explores the effects of these representations on societal attitudes concerning GBQM drug use.

Finally, the present research contributes to the literature that explores the ways in which social media/networks are constructed and or used. First, I offered a new way of conceptualizing social networks with respect to temporality (i.e., 'static' vs. 'dynamic' networks). Second, I demonstrated that social media/networks are not only used to facilitate in-person 'high risk' encounters (such as drug use), but rather, they can also be used to facilitate encounters within cyberspace, as well.

PART TWO: LIMITATIONS OF THE PRESENT RESEARCH AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The following discusses the limitations of the present study with respect to the methods and theories that were used. This is followed by suggestions for potential research directions—not only for those who study GBQM drug use, but also cultural criminologists and those who seek to *queer* criminology.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitations of the present research concerns the absence of interviews. Ideally, in studies that involve the exploration of the meanings that underlie behavior that is presumed to be collective, it is best to have direct communication with the individuals of whom the group is comprised. Interviews would have been able to shed additional light on the meanings that underlie GBQM drug use. These meanings could have then been used to more accurately determine the extent to which GBQM drug users jointly construct their criminal, deviant and or transgressive responses (i.e., their drug use; their sex; their seeking out of alternative cyberspace environments). Because this research has not been previously done, though, I approached the research as the beginning of an ongoing process—the first step of which was to acquire a better understanding of the cultural dynamics that impact GBQM drug use, as well to explore how and where these dynamics originate and how they are contested and or played out. Nevertheless, I found that it was possible to extract potential meaning using other techniques—for example, by observing how GBQM drug users present themselves in cyberspace environments, as well as by observing how these men interact with one another in 'real-time'. I used my unique insights into GBQM culture as a starting point for my analyses, which I supported with past and present research.

Another limitation of the present research lies in the fact that subcultural theory may not be sufficient for explaining the broad range of activities, behaviors, interests, norms, values, etc. that are characteristic of GBQM in general—whether drug users or not. Gelder (1997) notes that, in its study of subcultures, the Chicago School often explored homosexuals. Yet, it is difficult to locate a Chicago School study that addresses homosexuality *specifically*. This is not surprising given Becker's (1963: 167) assertion that the theories that had been developed in the study of subcultural

deviance were 'likely to be quite inadequate' for the study of homosexual men if, he added, we started from the view 'that all homosexuals are more or less confirmed members of homosexual subcultures'.

Still, from a Beckerian perspective, there is much evidence to suggest that GBQM drug users share a *common life* (e.g., social spheres; [cyberspace] social settings) with *common problems* (e.g., boredom; depression; drug [ab]use; fatigue; low self-esteem, HIV seropositivity) and *common enemies* (e.g., negative media portrayals; unaccepting 'others'). For this reason, there are other schools of thought that could have been applied to the present research. For example, *post-subcultural studies* arose out of a shared discontent by many subcultural researchers with what was thought to be an outdated 'modernist' or 'structuralist' mode of thinking with respect to group formations in contemporary societies. Like the CCCS, post-subcultural theorists tend to investigate the relationship of youth, culture, politics and music; however, this is done using a more post-modern and post-structuralist approach—one that takes into account 'the shifting terrain of the new millennium, where global mainstreams and local substreams rearticulate and restructure in complex and uneven ways to produce new, hybrid cultural constellations' (Weinzierl & Muggleton 2003:3). For this reason, post-subcultural studies are often characterized by their re-conceptualizations of sub-cultural group formations—a result of some theorists' dissatisfaction with modernist interpretations of subcultures as 'discrete' or 'clearly identifiable' (see Weinzierl & Muggleton 2003). Some of these re-conceptualizations could thus be applied in future research, as discussed below.

Future Research Directions

If there is any truth to the claim that recent increases in GBQM drug use are closely tied to the rising popularity of GBQM social networks, then, as the popularity of GBQM social networks continues to grow, it is feasible to assume that GBQM drug use will also continue to grow, as well. Continued research into how drug use is facilitated within GBQM cyberspace social networks is thus certain, and, there are several directions which future researchers might take.

First, researchers who study GBQM drug use should consider the use of ethnographic methods. For those who conduct primarily quantitative studies (such as epidemiologists and public health researchers), mixed methodologies may provide useful alternatives. Similarly, for those who

already employ ethnographic methods (including virtual ethnography), additional methods such as instant ethnography may be useful, as well.

Second, researchers who explore the group dynamics of GBQM drug use might consider employing some of the conceptualizations that are characteristic of post-subcultural studies. Some of these include Tonnies' (1887) 'Gemeinschaft' (i.e., 'community') ; Turner's (1960) 'communitas'; Willis' (1990) 'proto-communities' or 'serial communities'; Hannerz' (1992) 'micro-communities'; Atkinson's (2003) 'figurations'; Wittels (2001) 'networks'; Irwin's (1997) 'scenes'; Maffesoli's (1996) 'tribes'; and, Bennett's (1999; 2000) 'neo-tribes'.

Third, researchers who explore the link between stigma and or marginalization and GBQM drug use might consider expanding their inquiries to include the types of social exclusion that occur within contemporary gay culture. To that end, future studies may benefit from further investigation of any direct links that may exist between GBQM peer-enacted stigma and GBQM drug use; and, it is my opinion that Anderson's *Cultural Identity Theory of Drug Abuse* would provide a useful framework for pursuing such a line of inquiry. First, Anderson's theory suggests that multiple sources of stigma, when combined, increase the likelihood that individuals will undergo a drug-related identity change. As communities of GBQM can be somewhat insular (especially within gay ghettos, but also given the propensity of GBQM to seek out other men on closed GBQM cyberspace social networks), the propensity of drug use to be encountered is somewhat elevated. Second, Anderson's theory explores other factors, such the role of popular culture and the processes that impact an individual's identification with a drug-using subculture. Such studies should seek to obtain interviews, however, in order to uncover the subjective meanings that may underlie drug-related identity changes.

Fourth, because some GBQM drug users may internalize the labels derived from negative mediated representations, future research into GBQM drug use may benefit from querying GBQM drug users as to the sources of their self-descriptions. This could be done in an effort to determine (as Thornton [1995] might suggest) if GBQM drug using subcultures are constructed *through* rather than existing *prior* to media discourses. At the same time, researchers who seek to understand the mediated representations of GBQM drug use might consider exploring the

numerous other forms of mediated representations that exist—including those that are celebratory and those that are self-mediated by drug users themselves.

Fifth, future research of GBQM drug use may benefit from a better understanding of the new ways in which drug using norms (including harm reductions strategies) are shared through such forums as static and dynamic webcam networks. Such an understanding may shed light on the differences in meanings that are held by, for example, older GBQM (i.e., men who may have directly experienced sexual-identity-related marginalization or stigma) and younger GBQM (i.e., men who may not have experienced sexual-identity-related marginalization or stigma).

Sixth, while there is much criminological research concerning the victimization of individuals through 'cybercrimes' (e.g., identity theft; phishing scams), there is little criminological research concerning how deviance (such as drug use) is facilitated in cyberspace. To assist criminologists in this area, more research needs to be conducted into the laws that govern activities such as the sharing of drug-themed photos and videos, and or the sharing of drug-related experiences via webcam. Research attention should also be given to the legality of websites and services that promote (or 'tolerate') these behaviors.

Seventh, criminologists may benefit from future research into the harms associated with subcultural crime and deviance—especially those which occur in cyberspace environments. For example, in addition to the harms attributable to drug use (e.g., emotional; physical; social), there are potential harms for those who succumb to an 'illusion of anonymity' (Zheleva & Getoor 2009) on social media and in cyberspace social networks. As well, criminologists might consider exploring the possibility of (s)exploitation by drug-themed cyberspace social networks— particularly, those networks that charge fees for membership and or that receive monies for advertising. This would include exploring the potential for sexploitation by pornography studios that produce drug-themed content; and, it would also include exploring the potential harms associated with photo- and or video-sharing websites that permit 'amateurs' to upload sexualized drug-themed content.

Finally, criminologists should continue to heed Groombridge's (and others') call to queer the "malestream" of criminology (1999: 545). This can be accomplished through the application of an

otherwise heteronormative lexicon of criminological concepts and theories to the study of how LGBTQ individuals intersect with issues around crime, deviance and crime control.

PART THREE: IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FOR POLICY AND REFORM

There are several areas in which the present research could inform policy and reform. These areas include the funding of pre-exposure prophylaxis (i.e., PrEP) for HIV; laws that govern the depiction of specific sexual acts in pornography; and, laws that govern the uploading and or sharing of drug-themed content on the Internet.

HIV infection rates are rising in many worldwide gay ghettos. Drug use (and, in particular injection drug use) is also on the rise—not only among older men, but among teenage men and young adult males. The use of PrEP treatments (such as Truvada) for GBQM in 'high risk' categories (e.g., barebackers; drug users) is thus crucial. This view is supported by Emma Davis, a consultant in infectious diseases at Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, who calls for 'targeted education' to 'high-risk groups such as GBQM drug users:

> we're never going to change people's behaviour. Sex parties are not going to stop. Closing the saunas in San Francisco in the 1980s did not prevent group sex occurring or change the HIV epidemic there. Treating everyone with HIV with ARVs68 could be the best way to prevent onward transmission including in these high-risk environments. But where will we get the resources to deliver that? (Kirby & Thornber-Dunwell 2013: 295).

As noted in Chapter Four, since beginning work on this thesis at least one of the networks that was observed (i.e., *NastyKinkPigs*) now permits members to specify that they are *'Negative on PrEP'*. This demonstrates that GBQM are interested in such a method as an alternative to condom usage— or even as an extra safety measure for those who use condoms (but who engage in other behaviors that carry risk of infection). Yet, some governments are not willing to fund such methods. For example, one week prior to the submission of this thesis, the U.K.'s National Health Service announced that it was still not ready to fund PrEP treatment, stating 'NHS England is not responsible for commissioning HIV prevention services' (NHS England 21 March 2016). Other countries, such as Germany and Italy do not provide PrEP either. Notwithstanding the fact that drug use has been linked to increased HIV infection rates (inasmuch as drug use can lower one's

---

[68] *ARV* = antiretroviral medication (i.e., medication used to treat HIV infection).

inhibitions or judgments concerning sex), the present research demonstrates that there are also those who seek to intentionally transmit HIV. Moreover, there are those who seek to intentionally infect themselves with HIV. It is hoped that the present research will help inform the current debate over the funding of such an important HIV safeguard.

Similarly, in many countries, public funding of new Hepatitis-C (HCV) treatments—in particular, those that do not require the use of *interferon* (which has a very low tolerance rate)—has not been approved for all individuals. Injection drug use is increasing among GBQM worldwide. For drug users with HCV, adherence to old HCV treatments may be difficult. This thesis demonstrated that *slamming* is a very visible phenomena in cyberspace—not only in GBQM cyberspace social networks. Hopefully, these findings will serve to inform the current debate for public funding of new HCV treatments, as well.

Additionally, it is hoped that the present research will inform the debate on legislation that sets guidelines on the content of pornography (including Internet pornography). For example, in December 2014, the U.K. government passed Audiovisual Media Services Regulations 2014, a law that bans British pornography producers from depicting acts such physical or verbal abuse, physical restraint, humiliation, facesitting (i.e., 'rimming') and urolagnia (i.e., 'water sports'). In Australia, internet pornography that is considered offensive or illegal is prohibited. And, in the U.S. there is still debate over what is referred to as 'secondary producers' of pornography (of which the user-uploaded videos on *ToxxxicTube* might be considered). As demonstrated in this thesis, GBQM—drug user and non-drug user alike—are now uploading their own sexualized content to cyberspace social networks and 'tube sites'. Although none of the above examples of regulations mention drug use specifically, the present research demonstrates that some GBQM—especially those who are under the influence of drugs—may act as 'proxies' for the production of sexual content that is otherwise forbidden in some countries.

It is foreseeable that the present research might also inform discussions concerning the portrayal of drug use in professionally-produced pornography. At present, there is no research in this area. As well, how existing laws might be used to regulate or prohibit such content is vague. Nevertheless, such a discussion might be included as part of a greater discussion on worker safety.

Finally, the present research revealed that GBQM drug users are now sharing drug-themed visual content in numerous cyberspace social networks. This is occurring not only within GBQM cyberspace social networks, but also within mainstream networks such as *Tumblr* and *Twitter*. This is not specific to GBQM drug users, however, as reported by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC). Neither is the fact that social media-sharing sites/apps do not monitor and or remove drug-themed content (BBC Trending 2013). There has been growing acknowledgement of the need to incorporate digital monitoring of drug-related content on social media apps and sites; however, such monitoring cannot be expected in virtual environments wherein drug-themed content is encouraged. The present research may thus inform the discussion on the development of new methods that ensure that social media/social network owners are monitoring such content.

REFERENCES

Acland, C. (1995). *Youth, Murder, Spectacle*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Adam, B. D., Murray, J., Ross, S., Oliver, J., Lincoln, S. G. and Rynard, V. (2011). HIVStigma.com, an innovative web-supported stigma reduction intervention for gay and bisexual men. *Health Education Research*, 26(5), 795-807.

AIDS-Hilfe Schweiz. (2014). Retrieved 20 August 2014 from: http://www.aids.ch/en/what-we-do/campaign/lovelife.php

AIDSmap. (2015). Western Europe. *HIV and the criminal law*. Accessed 1 December 2015 from http://www.aidsmap.com/law-country/Western-Europe/page/1444983/

AIDSmap. (2015). Northern Europe. *HIV and the criminal law*. Accessed 1 December 2015 from http://www.aidsmap.com/law-country/Northern-Europe/page/1444965/

Altheide, D. (1987). Ethnographic content analysis. *Qualitative Sociolog*y, 10(1), 65-77.

Amirthalingam, K. (2009). Criminal law and private spaces: Regulating homosexual acts in Singapore. In B. McSherry, A. Norrie, & S. Bronitt (Eds.), *Regulating deviance: The redirection of criminalisation and the futures of criminal law*. Oxford: Hart Publishing.

Anderson, D. A. (1993). Lesbian and gay adolescents: Social and developmental considerations. *The High School Journal, 77*(1/2), 13-19.

Anderson, T. L. (1994). Drug abuse and identity. *The Sociological Quarterly*, *35*(1), 159-174.

Anderson, T. L. (1998). A cultural-identity theory of drug abuse. *Sociology of Crime, Law, and Deviance*, *1*, 233-262.

Ashford, C. (2009). Queer theory, cyber-ethnographies and researching online sex environments. *Information & Communications Technology*, 18(3), 297-314.

Associated Press. (2016, 18 February). California safety board rejects condom requirement for porn films. *The Los Angeles Times*. Retrieved 19 February 2016 from: http://www.nyt.com/art1326758.

Atkinson, P. and Hammersley, M. (1994). Ethnography and participant observation. In: Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. eds. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Los Angeles: SAGE, pp. 248-61.

Atlantic Centre for Qualitative Research and Analysis. (2006). *2007 Program.* Retrieved 12

    January 2013 from: http://w3.stu.ca/stu/sites/qualitatives/2007_program.html.

Attwood, V. (2001, December 4). New twist in gay murder. *KwaZulu-Natal.* Retrieved 25th May,

    2013 from: http://www.iol.co.za/news/south-africa/kwazulu-natal.

BCCC Mugging Group (1975). Some notes on the relationship between the societal control culture

    and the news media, and the construction of a law and order campaign. In Hall, S. &

    Jefferson, T. [eds.] *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (pp.

    75-79). London: Hutchinson & Co.

Baams, L., Jonas, K.J., Utz, S., Bos, H.M.W. & van der Vuurst, L. (2011). Internet use and online

    social support among same sex attracted individuals of different ages. *Computers in Human

    Behavior*, *27*, 1820-27.

Baker, P. (2003*). Polari-the lost language of gay men*. Routledge.

Bakhtin, M. (1984). *Rabelais and His World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Ball, M. (2014). Queer Criminology, Critique, and the "Art of Not Being Governed". *Critical

    Criminology*, *22*(1), 21-34.

Ball, M. (forthcoming). *Criminology and queer Theory: Dangerous bedfellows?* Basingstoke:

    Palgrave Macmillan.

Balsam, K. F., & Mohr, J. J. (2007). Adaptation to sexual orientation stigma: A comparison of

    bisexual and lesbian/gay adults. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, *54*(3), 306.

Banks, J. (2014*). Online gambling and crime: Causes, controls and controversies*. Ashgate

    Publishing, Ltd.

Barthes, R. (2006). Myth today. *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: A Reader*, *3*, 293-302.

Basit, T. N. (2003). Manual or Electronic: The role of coding in qualitative data analysis.

    Educational Research, 45, 143-54.

Bataille, G. (1962). *Erotism*. City Lights Books.

Bataille, G. (1989). *The tears of Eros*, trans. Peter Connor. San Francisco: City Lights.

Baudrillard, J. (1993). (1993). *Symbolic exchange and death*. London: Sage.

Bawer, B. (1993). *Place at the table: The gay individual in American society*. New York: Simon

    and Schuster.

BBC Trending. (2013). Instagram blocks some drugs advert tags after BBC probe. Retrieved 24 March 2016 from: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-24842750.

Beaver, W. (2000). The dilemma of Internet pornography. *Business and Society Review*, *105*(3), 373-382.

Becker, H. S. (1963). *Outsiders: Studies in the sociology of deviance*. New York: The Free Press.

Beemyn, G., & Eliason, M. (2016). "The intersections of trans women and lesbian identities, communities, and movements": An introduction. *Journal of Lesbian Studies*, *20*(1), 1-7.

Bell, K., Salmon, A., Bowers, M., Bell, J., & McCullough, L. (2010). Smoking, stigma and tobacco 'denormalization': Further reflections on the use of stigma as a public health tool. A commentary on Social Science & Medicine's Stigma, Prejudice, Discrimination and Health Special Issue (67: 3). *Social Science & Medicine*, *70*(6), 795-799.

Bennett, Andy (1999) Subcultures or neo-tribes? Rethinking the relationship between youth, style and musical taste. *Sociology: The Journal of the British Sociological Association*, *33* (3), 599-617

Berg, R.C. (2008). Barebacking among MSM Internet users. *AIDS Be*havior, *12*, 822-33.

Berger, P. L., & Luckmann, T. (1976). *The social nature of reality*.

Bey, H. (2003). *TAZ: The temporary autonomous zone, ontological anarchy, poetic terrorism. Autonomedia*. Chicago

Bickerton, D. (2003). Symbol and structure: a comprehensive framework for language evolution. *Studies in the Evolution of Language*, *3*, 77-93.

Biener, L., Nyman, A.L., Kline, R.L., & Albers, A.B. (2004). Adults only: the prevalence of tobacco promotions in bars and clubs in the Boston area. *Tobacco Control*, *13*(4), 403-408.

Blevins, K. R., & Holt, T. J. (2009). Examining the virtual subculture of johns. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *38*(5), 619-648.

Blumer, H. (1969). *Symbolic interactionism: Perspective and method*. Berkeley : University of California.

Bochow, M. (1994). *Schwuler Sex und die Bedrohung durch AIDS-Reaktionen homosexueller Männer in Ost-und Westdeutschland: Ergebnisbericht zu einer Befragung im Auftrag der Bundeszentrale für gesundheitliche Aufklärung*. Berlin: Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe (DAH).

Bochow, M. (1998, June). Are youth and drug use risk factors among German gay men. In *Oral presentation to XII World AIDS Conference* (Vol. 28).

Bolding, G., Davis, M., Hart, G., Sherr, L., & Elford, J. (2005). Gay men who look for sex on the Internet: is there more HIV/STI risk with online partners?. *AIDS*, *19*(9), 961-968.

Bolding, G., Davis, M., Hart, G., Sherr, L., & Elford, J. (2007). Where young MSM meet their first sexual partner: the role of the Internet. *AIDS and Behavior*, *11*(4), 522-26.

Boldt, B. (2011, December 30). Gay male claims he was drugged and raped. *Out & About Nashville.* Retrieved 25th May, 2013 from: http://www.outandaboutnashville.com/story/gay-male-claims-he-was-drugged-and-raped#.UlFnN3_Fj2M.

Bourdieu, P. (1990). *The logic of practice*. Stanford University Press.

Bourdieu, P. (2011). The forms of capital.(1986). *Cultural Theory: An Anthology*, 81-93.

Bourdieu, P., & Passeron, J. C. (1990). *Reproduction in education, society and culture* (Vol. 4). London: Sage.

Bourgois, P. (1989). In search of Horatio Alger: Culture and ideology in the crack economy. *Contemporary Drug Problems*, *16*, 619.

Bourgois, P. (2003). *In search of respect: Selling crack in El Barrio* (Vol. 10). Cambridge University Press.

Bourne, A., Reid, D., Hickson, F., Torres Rueda, S., & Weatherburn, P. (2014). *The Chemsex Study: drug use in sexual settings among gay and bisexual men in Lambeth, Southwark and Lewisham*. London: Sigma Research, London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. 2014.

Bowden, G. (6 December 2015). Tyson Fury makes another homosexuality and paedophilia comparison. *The Huffington Post UK*. Retrieved 6 December 2015 at http://www. huffingtonpost. co.uk/2015/12/06/tyson-fury-makes-another-homosexuality-and-paedophilia-comparison_n_8732518.html

Brake, M. (1985). Comparative Youth Culture: The sociology of youth culture and youth subcultures in America, Britain and Canada. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

Braquet, D., & Mehra, B. (2006). Contextualizing internet use practices of the cyber-queer: Empowering information realities in everyday life. *Proceedings of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, *43*(1), 1-10.

Britt, L., & Heise, D. (2000). From shame to pride in identity politics. *Self, identity, and social movements*, 252-268.

Brittian, A. S., Toomey, R. B., Gonzales, N. A., & Dumka, L. E. (2013). Perceived discrimination, coping strategies, and Mexican origin adolescents' internalizing and externalizing behaviors: Examining the moderating role of gender and cultural orientation. *Applied Developmental Science*, *17*(1), 4-19.

Bronski, M. (2002). The real Harry Hay. *ThePhoenix.com.* Retrieved 20 October 2012 from: http://www.bostonphoenix.com/boston/news_features/other_stories/documents/02511115.htm.

Browning, F. (1993). *The Culture of Desire: Paradox and Perversity in Gay Lives Today*. New York: Vintage Books.

Brydum, S. (28 August 2015). ISIS executes nine more 'gay' men. *The Advocate*. Retrieved 30 September 2015 from http://www.advocate.com/world/2015/08/28/reports-isis-executes-nine-more-gay-men

Buckmaster, J. (2008, April 21). Conversations from the corner office. Marketplace Morning Report with Jeremy Hobson (K. Ryssdal, Interviewer). American Public Media. Internet Broadcast, Los Angeles. Retrieved 11th November, 2012 from: http://www.marketplace.org/marketplace-podcasts.

Buist, C. L., & Stone, C. (2014). Transgender victims and offenders: failures of the United States criminal justice system and the necessity of queer criminology. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 35-47.

Bury, R. (2003). The X-Files, 'online fan culture, and the David Duchovny estrogen brigades. *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, 269-283.

Buttram, M. E., & Kurtz, S. P. (2013). Risk and protective factors associated with gay neighborhood residence. American Journal of Men's Health, *7*(2), 110-118.

Butler, J. (1990). Gender trouble, feminist theory, and psychoanalytic discourse. *Feminism/Postmodernism*, 327.

Butler, J. (1993). Critically queer. *GLQ: A journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *1*(1), 17-32.

Cage K. (2003). Gayle: *The language of kinks & queens: A history and dictionary of gay language in South Africa*. Johannesburg: Jacana Press.

Calvert, C., & Richards, R. D. (2006). Gay pornography and the first amendment: Unique, first-person perspectives on free expression, sexual censorship, and cultural images. *American University Journal of Gender Social Policy & Law*, *15*(4), 687.

Campbell, C. (2004). Creating environments that support peer education: experiences from HIV/AIDS-prevention in South Africa. *Health Education*, *104*(4), 197-200.

Carey, J. W., Mejia, R., Bingham, T., Ciesielski, C., Gelaude, D., Herbst, J. H., ... & Stall, R. (2009). Drug use, high-risk sex behaviors, and increased risk for recent HIV infection among men who have sex with men in Chicago and Los Angeles. *AIDS and Behavior*, *13*(6), 1084-1096.

Carpiano, R. M., Kelly, B. C., Easterbrook, A. and Parsons, J. T. (2011). Community and drug use among gay men: The role of neighborhoods and networks. *Journal of Health and Social Behavior*, 52, 74-90.

Cash, P. (2015). *The clinic.*

Cassels, S., Menza, T. W., Goodreau, S. M., & Golden, M. R. (2009). HIV serosorting as a harm reduction strategy: evidence from Seattle, Washington. *AIDS* (London, England), *23*(18), 2497.

Cassidy, E. M. (2013). *Gay men, social media and self-presentation: managing identities in Gaydar, Facebook and beyond.*

Castells, M. (2004). *The network society*: A cross-cultural perspective.

Cavanagh, A. (2007). *Sociology in the age of the Internet*. Berkshire, England: Open University Press.

Cavazos-Rehg, P. A., Krauss, M., Fisher, S. L., Salyer, P., Grucza, R. A., & Bierut, L. J. (2015). Twitter chatter about marijuana. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, *56*(2), 139-145.

Centers for Disease Control. (2007). Methamphetamine use and HIV risk. Retrieved 20 October 2015 from www.cdc.gov/hiv.

Center for HIV Law & Policy. (2010). Retrieved 4 March 2016 from: http://www.hivlawand policy.org/

Chasin, A. (2000). *Selling out: The gay and lesbian movement goes to market*.

Chesney, M. A., & Smith, A. W. (1999). Critical delays in HIV testing and care the potential role of stigma. *American Behavioral Scientist*, *42*(7), 1162-1174.

Chibbaro, L. (2012, February 23). D.C. police target men in online gay sting. *Washington Blade.* Retrieved 25th May, 2013 from: http://www.washingtonblade.com/2012/02/23/d-c-police-target-gay-men-in-online-sting/.

Clarke, J. Hall, S., Jefferson, T. & Roberts, B. (1975). Subcultures, culture and class: A theoretical overview. In Hall, S. & Jefferson, T. [eds.] *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain* (pp. 9-74). London: Hutchinson & Co.

Clarke, J., Hall, S., Jefferson, T., & Roberts, B. (1976). *Resistance through rituals.*

claritu. (29 September 2014). Apple iPhone App Store review.

Cloward, R. A., & Ohlin, L. E. (2013). *Delinquency and opportunity: A study of delinquent gangs.* (1960). (Vol. 6). Routledge.

Coates, J. (1999, October 3). Taking America Online competitors for test drives. *Chicago Tribune.* Retrieved 20th August, 2013 from: http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1999-10-03/business/99100301 24_1_earthlink-and-mindspring-america-online-aol-software.

Coffey, A. (1999). *The ethnographic self, fieldwork and the representation of identity*. London: Sage.

Cohen, A. K. (1966). *Deviance and Control*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Cohen, S. (2002). *Folk devils and moral panics* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

Cole, L. (Director). (2012). *Slammed*. USA: Treasure Island Media.

Cole, S. (2000). *Don we now our gay apparel: Gay men's dress in the twentieth century*. Bloomsbury Academic.

Collins, S. (5 October 2015). Review: 5 Guys Chillin' [Review]. *British Theatre.com.* Retrieved 20 October 2015 from: http://britishtheatre.com/review-5-guys-chillin-kings-head-theatre-4stars/.

Conrad, P. (1992). Medicalization and social control. *Annual review of Sociology*, 209-232.

Cornwell, B. & Linders, A. (2002). The myth of 'moral panic': An alternative account of LSD prohibition. *Deviant Behavior*, *23*(4), 307-30.

Craigslist. (2013). Retrieved 10th January, 2013 from: http://www.craigslist.org.

Crimp, D. & Rolston, A. (1990). *AIDS demo graphics* (p. 138). Seattle: Bay Press.

Cromer, A. (2013). Molly: The Not So Convincing Truth of MDMA. *Sound Ideas.* University of Puget Sound.

Crooks, R. N. (2013). The rainbow flag and the green carnation: Grindr in the gay village. *First Monday*, *18*(11).

Daly, M. (2015a). The future of drugs according to Vice. *Vice*. Retrieved 12 October 2015 from http://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/the-future-of-drugs-max-daly-according-to-vice-531.

Daly, M. (2015b). A history of GHB, the club drug at the centre of London's serial killer case. *Vice*. Retrieved 15 March 2016 from: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/dark-side-of-ghb-narcomania-003.

Daneback, K., Cooper, A. & Månsson, S. (2005). An Internet study of cybersex participants. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *34*(3), 321-28.

Darney, P. (2015). *5 guys chillin'.*

Dasgupta, R. (2012). Queering the cyberspace: Towards a space/identity discussion. *Bhatter College Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies*, *2*, 115-23.

Davidson, J. (2006). Covert research. In Jupp, V. (ed.). *The Sage dictionary of social research methods.* London: Sage.

Davis, M., Hart, G., Bolding, G., Sherr, L. & Elford, J. (2006). E-dating, identity and HIV prevention: theorising sexualities, risk and network society. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, *28*(4), 457–78.

Decker, S. H., & Van Winkle, B. (1996). *Life in the gang:: Family, friends, and violence*. Cambridge University Press.

Dennegar, M. (Director). (2000). *Slammin' Perverts*. USA: 3rd World Video.

Dermody, S. S., Marshal, M. P., Cheong, J., Chung, T., D. Stepp, S., & Hipwell, A. (2016). Adolescent sexual minority girls are at elevated risk for use of multiple substances. *Substance Use &* Misuse, 1-12.

Deutsche AIDS-Hilfe. (2015). Criminal law. Accessed 1 December 2015 from http://www. aidshilfe.de/en/living-hiv/law/criminal-law

Difrancesco, C. (1990). 'Dermal body language' among prison inmates: The multiple-unprofessional tattoo (Doctoral dissertation).

Donovan, R. (1995). The plaguing of a faggot, the leperising of a whore: Criminally cultured aids bodies, and 'carrier 'laws. *Journal of Australian Studies*, *19*(43), 110-124.

DouchebagsofGrindr. (2015). Retrieved 13 August 2015 from http://www.douchebags ofgrindr.com/

Drucker, P. (2015). *Warped: Gay normality and anti-queer capitalism*. Leiden, The Netherlands: Brill.

Duffy, N. (7 December 2015). *Pink News*. Police arrest potential suspects after string of homophobic attacks. Accessed 7 December 2015 from http://www.pinknews.co.uk/2015/ 12/07/police-arrest-potential-suspects-after-string-of-horrific-homophobic-attacks/

Duncan, D. T., Hatzenbuehler, M. L., & Johnson, R. M. (2014). Neighborhood-level LGBT hate crimes and current illicit drug use among sexual minority youth. *Drug and alcohol dependence, 135*, 65-70.

Dwyer, A., Ball, M., & Crofts, T. (2016). Queering criminologies. In *Queering criminology* (pp. 1-11). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Elder, W.B, Morrow, S.L. & Brooks, G.R. (2015). Sexual self-schemas of gay men. The *Counseling Psychologist*, *43*(7), pp. 942-969.

esMadrid. (2013). *Fiestas del Orgullo Gay 2016*. Retrieved 16 June 2013 from: http://www. esmadrid.com/agenda/fiestas-del-orgullo-gay-madrid.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2008). *EMCDDA Thematic Papers — GHB and its precursor GBL: an emerging trend case study*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction (2008). *Report on the risk assessment of ketamine in the framework of the joint action on new synthetic drugs*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (2016a). *Amphetamine*. Retrieved 15 January 2016 from: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drug-profiles/amphetamine.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (2016c). *MDMA*. Retrieved 15 January 2016 from: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drug-profiles/MDMA.

European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction. (2016c). *Methamphetamine*. Retrieved 15 January 2016 from: http://www.emcdda.europa.eu/publications/drug-profiles/ methamphetamine.

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Language and power*. Pearson Education.

Fan, D.P. & Holway, W.B. (1994). Media coverage of cocaine and its impact on usage patterns. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research*, *6*(2), 139-62.

Faris, M. and Sugie, M. (2012) Fucking with fucking online: Advocating for indiscriminate promiscuity. In: Sycamore MB (Ed.) *Why Are Faggots So Afraid of Faggots?* Edinburgh: AK Press, pp. 45–52.

Fasoli, F., Maass, A., & Carnaghi, A. (2015). Labelling and discrimination: Do homophobic epithets undermine fair distribution of resources?. *British Journal of Social Psychology*, *54*(2), 383-393.

Faugier, J., & Sargeant, M. (1997). Sampling hard to reach populations. *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, *26*(4), 790-797.

Ferrell, J. (1995). Culture, crime, and cultural criminology. *Journal of Criminal Justice and Popular Culture*, *3*(2), 25-42.

Ferrell, J. (1995). *Toward a cultural criminology* (pp. 297-326). Northeastern University Press.

Ferrell, J. (1999). Cultural criminology. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *251*(1), 395-418.

Ferrell, J. (2004). Boredom, crime and criminology. *Theoretical Criminology* 8(3), 287-302.

Ferrell, J. (2006). *Empire of scrounge: Inside the urban underground of dumpster diving, trash picking, and street scavenging*. NYU Press.

Ferrell, J. (2009). Kill method: A provocation. *Journal of Theoretical Criminology*, 1(1), 1-22.

Ferrell, J. (2013). Cultural criminology and the politics of meaning. *Critical Criminology*, *21*(3), 257-271.

Ferrell, J., Hayward, K. and Young, J. (2008). *Cultural criminology: An invitation*. London: SAGE.

Ferrell, J., Hayward, K., Morrison, W., & Presdee, M. (Eds.). (2004). *Cultural criminology unleashed*. London: Routledge.

Ferrell, J. and Sanders, C.R. (1995). Cultural criminology. In Ferrell, J. and Sanders, C.R. [eds.] *Cultural criminology* [pp. 297-326]. Boston: Northeastern University Press.

Ferrell, J. and Young, K. (2011). Introduction. In: Ferrell J. and Hayward, K. eds. *Cultural Criminology: Theories of Crime.* Farnham, England: Ashgate, pp. xi-xxv.

Fileborn, B. (2014). Accounting for space, place and identity: GLBTIQ young adults' experiences and understandings of unwanted sexual attention in clubs and pubs. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 81-97.

Flynn, P. (22 November 2015). Addicted to chemsex: 'It's a horror story'. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 20 November 2015 from: http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/22/addicted-to-chemsex-gay-drugs-film.

Forgacs, D. (1988). *A Gramsci reader. Selected writings 1916-1935*, 189-221.

Foucault, M. (1954). Friendship as a Way of Life. (interview with R. de Ceccaty, J. Danet and J. Le Bitoux). *The Essential Works of Foucault, 1984*.

Foucault, M. (1967). Des espaces autre [Of other spaces]. *Árchitecture, Mouvement, Continuité* (5): 46-49.

Foucault, M. & Sennett, R. (21 May 1981). Sexuality and solitude. *London Review of Books*, *3*(9), 3-7. Retrieved 20 March 2016 from: http://www.lrb.co.uk/v03/n09/michel-foucault/sexuality-and-solitude.

Fox, K.J. (1987). Real punks and pretenders The social organization of a counterculture. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *16*(3), 344-70.

Fradella, H. F. (2002). Legal, moral, and social reasons for decriminalizing sodomy. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice*, *18*(3), 279-301.

Fradella, H. F. (2003). Lawrence v. Texas: Genuine or illusory progress for gay rights in America?. *Criminal Law Bulletin-Boston*, *39*(5), 597-607.

Franklin, C. A. (2007). Male peer support and the police culture: Understanding the resistance and opposition of women in policing. *Women & Criminal Justice*, *16*(3), 1-25.

The Free Dictionary. (2016). *Get to the point.* Retrieved 20 March 2016 from: http://idioms.thefree dictionary.com/get+to+the+point.

Freeman, G. (6 February 2003). In search of death. *Rolling Stone.* Retrieved 15 March 2016 from: http://www.rollingstone.com/culture/features/in-search-of-death-20030206.

Frederick, B.J. (2012). *Partying with a purpose: Finding meaning in an online "party 'n' play" subculture* [Master's thesis]. California State University, Long Beach.

Frederick, B. J. (2014). "Delinquent Boys": Toward a New Understanding of "Deviant" and Transgressive Behavior in Gay Men. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 139-149.

Frederick, B. J., & Larruskain, P. (2016). Cultural criminology. *The Encyclopedia of Crime & Punishment.* Wiley-Blackwell.

Frederick, B. J., & Perrone, D. (2014). "Party n play" on the Internet: Subcultural Formation, Craigslist, and escaping from stigma. *Deviant Behavior*, *35*(11), 859-884.

Freitas, A., Kaiser, S. & Hammidi, T. (1996). Communities, commodities, cultural space, and style. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *31*(1/2), 83-107.

Fuss, D. (1991). *Inside/out: Lesbian theories, gay theories*, 1-10.

Galletly, C. L., & Pinkerton, S. D. (2006). Conflicting messages: how criminal HIV disclosure laws undermine public health efforts to control the spread of HIV. *AIDS and Behavior*, *10*(5), 451-461.

Gauthier, D., & J. Forsyth, C. (1999). Bareback sex, bug chasers, and the gift of death. *Deviant Behavior*, *20*(1), 85-100.

Gay Activists Alliance. (1970). *Lambda*. Retrieved 15 March 2016 from: http://legacy. www.nypl.org/research/chss/1969/images/large/1696848.jpg.

Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network. (2013). *Out online: The experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender youth on the Internet.* Retrieved 9 March 2016 from: http://www. glsen.org/sites/default/files/Out%20Online%20FINAL.pdf

GayCities. (2013). *Melitta Sundström.* Retrieved 15 June 2013 from: http://berlin.gaycities.com/ bars/1460-melitta-sundstr-m

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

Get2ThePoint. (2013). Retrieved 5th January, 2013 from: http://www.ynotmingle.com.

Gilet, A. (2014). Matt Spike's Raw photo series sparks chemsex debate. *Cocktails and Cocktalk*. Retrieved 17 February 2016 from: http://cocktailsandcocktalk.com/2014/08/matt-spikes-raw-photo-series-sparks-chemsex-debate-nsfw/.

Giorgi, G. (2002). Madrid en tránsito: travelers, visibility, and gay identity. *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies*, *8*(1), 57-79.

Girard, G. (2014). Sexualité et émotions. Les émotions. *Une approche de la vie sociale*, 109-124.

Glazer, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*. Chicago: Aldine.

Gledhill, C. (2014). Queering state crime theory: The state, civil society and marginalization. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 127-138.

Goffman, E. (1959). *The presentation of self in everyday life*. New York: Anchor Books.

Goffman, E. (1963). *Stigma: Notes on the management of spoiled identity*. London: Penguin Group.

Gogarty, M. & Fairman, W. (directors). (2015). *Chemsex.* UK: Peccadillo Pictures.

Golub, A., Johnson, B.D., & Dunlap, E. (2005). Growth in marijuana use among American youths during the 1990s and the extent of blunt smoking. *Journal of Ethnicity in Substance Abu*se, *4*(3-4), 1-21.

Gosine, A. (2007). 8. Brown to Blonde at Gay. com: Passing White in Queer Cyberspace. *Queer Online: Media Technology & Sexuality*, *40*, 139.

Gottschalk, P. (2011). *A dark side of computing and information sciences: Characteristics of online groomers.*

Green, A.I. & Halkitis, P.N. (2006). Crystal methamphetamine and sexual sociality in an urban gay subculture: An elective affinity. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, *8*(4), 317-33.

Greer, P. L., & Morrow, D. F. (2006). Words and symbols of GLBT culture. Sexual Orientation and Gender Expression in Social Work Practice: Working with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender People, 471.

Grindr. (2013). Retrieved 10 October 2013 from http://www.grindr.com.

Groombridge, N. (1999). Perverse criminologies: The closet of Doctor Lombroso. *Social and Legal Studies*, *8*(4), 531–548.

Grov, C. (2004). "Make me your death slave": men who have sex with men and use the internet to intentionally spread HIV. *Deviant Behavior*, *25*(4), 329-349.

Grov, C. (2010). Risky sex- and drug-seeking in a probability sample of men-for-men online bulletin board postings. *AIDS Behavior*, 14, 1387-92.

Grov, C. (2011). HIV risk and substance use in men who have sex with men surveyed in bathhouses, bars/clubs, and on Craigslist.org: Venue of recruitment matters. *AIDS Behavior*, 16, 807-17.

Grov, C. (2011). HIV risk and substance use in men who have sex with men surveyed in bathhouses, bars/clubs, and on Craigslist.org: Venue of recruitment matters. *AIDS Behavior*, *16*, 807-17.

Grov, C. (2010). Risky sex- and drug-seeking in a probability sample of men-for-men online bulletin board postings. *AIDS Behavior*, *14*, 1387-92.

Grov, C. (2011). HIV risk and substance use in men who have sex with men surveyed in bathhouses, bars/clubs, and on Craigslist.org: Venue of recruitment matters. *AIDS Behavior*, *16*, 807-17.

Grov, C., DeBusk, J. A., Bimbi, D. S., Golub, S. A., Nanín, J. E. and Parsons, J. T. (2007). Barebacking, the Internet, and harm reduction: An intercept survey with gay and bisexual men in Los Angeles and New York City. *AIDS Behavior*, 11(4), 527-36.

Grov, C. & Parsons, J.T. (2006). Bug chasing and gift-giving : The potential for HIV transmission among barebackers on the Internet. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, *18*(6), 490-503.

Gudelunas, David. (2012). There's an app for that: The uses and gratifications of online social networks for gay men. *Sexuality & Culture*, *16*, 347-65.

HabibiNYC. (2016). Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: http://habibinyc.com/.

Haeberle, E. J. (1981). Swastika, pink triangle and yellow star: The destruction of sexology and the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany. *The Journal of Sex Research*, 270-187

Hakim, J. (December 2015). We need to stop the moral panic around chemsex. *Transformation*.

    Accessed 4 January 2015 at: https://www.opendemocracy.net/transformation/jamie-

    hakim/we-need-to-stop-moral-panic-around-chemsex.

Halberstam, J. (1998). *Female masculinity*. Duke University Press.

Halkitis, P. N., & Palamar, J. J. (2006). GHB use among gay and bisexual men. *Addictive*

    Behaviors, *31*(11), 2135-2139.

Halkitis, P.N., Palamar, J.J. & Mukherjee, P.P. (2007). Poly-club-drug use among gay and bisexual

    men: A longitudinal analysis. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *89*(2), 153-160.

Halkitis, P.N. , Parsons, J.T. & Wilton, L. (2003). An exploratory study of contextual and

    situational factors related to methamphetamine use among gay and bisexual men in New

    York City. *Journal Of Drug Issues*, *33*(2), 413-432.

Halkitis, P. N., Fischgrund, B. N., & Parsons, J. T. (2005). Explanations for methamphetamine use

    among gay and bisexual men in New York City. *Substance Use & Misuse*, *40*(9-10), 1331-

    1345.

Hall, S., & Jefferson, T. (1993). *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*.

    Psychology Press.

Halperin, D. M., & Traub, V. (2009). *Gay shame*. University of Chicago Press.

Hanson, C. L., Burton, S. H., Giraud-Carrier, C., West, J. H., Barnes, M. D., & Hansen, B. (2013).

    Tweaking and tweeting: Exploring Twitter for nonmedical use of a psychostimulant drug

    (Adderall) among college students. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *15*(4), e62.

Harding, W. M., & Zinberg, N. E. (1977). *The effectiveness of the subculture in developing rituals*

    and social sanctions for controlled drug use. Drugs, rituals and altered states of

    consciousness. Rotterdam: Balkema, 111-133.

Harlan. (14 March 2016). What if you started a sex cult and no one cared? [Web log post].

    Retrieved 26 March 2016 from: http://gaypornblog.com/treasure-island-media.htmlPosted

Harris Interactive. (2010). *Gay and lesbian adults are more likely and more frequent blog readers*.

    Retrieved 9 March 2016 from: http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/gay-and-lesbian-

    adults-are-more-likely-and-more-frequent-blog-readers-98317299.html

Harris, D. (1997). *The rise and fall of gay culture*. Toronto: Random House of Canada.

Hayward, K. (2002) *Crime, consumerism and the urban experience*. (PhD thesis). School of Law, University of East London.

Hayward, K. (2004). *City limits: Crime, consumer culture and the urban experience*. London: Glasshouse.

Healy, M. (2014). *Gay skins: Class, masculinity and queer appropriation*. Bread and Circuses Publishing.

Hebdige, D. (1979). *Subculture: The Meaning of style*. New York: Routledge.

Heck, N. C., Livingston, N. A., Flentje, A., Oost, K., Stewart, B. T., & Cochran, B. N. (2014). Reducing risk for illicit drug use and prescription drug misuse: High school gay-straight alliances and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender youth. *Addictive Behaviors*, *39*(4), 824-828.

Helliger, J. (2 February 2016) Happy birthday, Grindr! Thanks for taking the 'fun' out of sex. *HuffPost Queer Voices.* Retrieved 10 February 2016 from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jeremy-helligar/happy-birthday-grindr-thanks-for-taking-the-fun-out-of-sex_b_5028974.html.

Hennessy, R. (2006). Returning to reproduction queerly: Sex, labor, need. *Rethinking Marxism*, *18*(3), 387-395.

Heredia, C. (4 May 2003). Dance of Death: First of three parts: Crystal meth fuels HIV. *SF Gate*. Retrieved 2 February 2016 from http://www.sfgate.com/health/article/DANCE-OF-DEATH-First-of-three-parts-CRYSTAL-2650370.php

Hetzer, H. & Rajagopalan, S. (16 February 2016). The war on drugs is taking center stage at the United Nations: United Nations General Assembly to hold special session on drug policy. *AlterNet* New & Politics. Retrieved 16 February 2016 from: http://www.alternet.org/news-amp-politics/war-drugs-taking-center-stage-united-nations.

Hine, C. (2000). *Virtual Ethnography*. London: Sage.

Hodkinson, P. (2003). Net. Goth: Internet communication and (sub) cultural boundaries. *The Post-Subcultures Reader*, 285-298.

Holt, M., & Griffin, C. (2003). Being gay, being straight and being yourself: Local and global reflections on identity, authenticity and the lesbian and gay scene. *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, *6*(3), 404-425.

Horvat, M. (2006). *Dancing with the devil.* USA: Michael Horvat.

Houlbrook, M. (2006). *Queer London: perils and pleasures in the sexual metropolis, 1918-1957*. University of Chicago Press.

Huddleston, T. (30 November 2015). Chemsex [review]. *Timeout* . Retrieved 28 January 2016 from: http://www.timeout.com/london/film/chemsex.

Human Rights Campaign (2016). *Donald Trump: Opposes nationwide marriage equality*. Retrieved 10 February 2016 from: http://www.hrc.org/2016RepublicanFacts/donald-trump.

Ibañez, G. E., Purcell, D. W., Stall, R., Parsons, J. T., & Gómez, C. A. (2005). Sexual risk, substance use, and psychological distress in HIV-positive gay and bisexual men who also inject drugs. *AIDS*, *19*, S49-S55.

Ilan, J. (2011). Reclaiming respectability? The class-cultural dynamics of crime, community and governance in inner-city Dublin. *Urban Studies*, *48*, 1137-1155.

Ings, W. (2012). Trade talk: the historical metamorphosis of the language of the New Zealand male prostitute between 1900–1981. *Women's History Review*, *21*(5), 773-91.

Jenkins, P. (2001). *Beyond tolerance: Child pornography on the Internet*. New York: New York University Press.

Kakietek, J., Sullivan, P. S. and Heffelfinger, J. D. (2011). You've got male: Internet use, rural residence, and risky sex in men who have sex with men recruited in 12 U.S. cities. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, 23(2), 118-27.

Kaplan, M. (2012). Rethinking HIV-exposure crimes. *Ind. LJ*, *87*, 1517.

Kates, S.M. (2002). The Protean Quality of Subcultural Consumption: An Ethnographic Account of Gay Consumers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *29*(3), 383-99.

Kates, S. M. (2002). The protean quality of subcultural consumption: An ethnographic account of gay consumers. *Journal of consumer research*, *29*(3), 383-399.

Kates, S. M., & Belk, R. W. (2001). The meanings of lesbian and gay pride day resistance through consumption and resistance to consumption. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *30*(4), 392-429.

Kelly, B.C., Carpiano, R.M., Easterbrook, A. & Parsons, J.T. (2011). Sex and the community: The implications of neighbourhoods and social networks for sexual risk behaviours among urban gay men. *Sociology of Health & Illness*, 34(7), 1085-102.

Kelly, R., & Watts, L. (2015). Characterising the inventive appropriation of emoji as relationally meaningful in mediated close personal relationships. *Experiences of Technology Appropriation: Unanticipated Users, Usage, Circumstances, and Design*.

Keshaviah, M. (2006). The Tina dance [review]. *LA Weekly*. Retrieved 20 February, 2016 from: http://www.laweekly.com/arts/theater-reviews-2143862

Killick, A. P. (1995). The penetrating intellect: On being white, straight, and male in Korea. In: Kulick, D. and Willson, M. eds. *Taboo: Sex, Identity and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork*. London: Routledge, pp. 76-106.

King, A. (4 December 2015). Chemsex is a modern fable of the collision between sex, drugs and technology: Interview with co-director Max Gogarty. *Huck Magazine*. Retrieved 6 February 2016 from http://www.huckmagazine.com/art-and-culture/film-2/chemsex-modern-fable-collision-sex-drugs-technology/.

Kirby, T., & Thornber-Dunwell, M. (2013). High-risk drug practices tighten grip on London gay scene. *The Lancet*, *381*(9861), 101-102.

Kirby, T., & Thornber-Dunwell, M. (2013). New HIV diagnoses in London's gay men continue to soar. *The Lancet*, *382*(9889), 295-295.

Klein, H. (2011). Substance use and abuse among men using the Internet specifically to find partners for unprotected sex. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, 43(2), 89-98.

Klitzman, R. L., Greenberg, J. D., Pollack, L. M., & Dolezal, C. (2002). MDMA ('ecstasy') use, and its association with high risk behaviors, mental health, and other factors among gay/bisexual men in New York City. Drug and alcohol dependence, 66(2), 115-125.

Kreinath, J. (2005). Ritual: Theoretical issues in the study of religion. *Revista de Estudos da Religião*, *5*, 100-7.

Kulick, D. & Willson, M. (1995). The sexual life of anthropologists: Erotic subjectivity and ethnographic work [introduction]. In: Kulick, D. & Willson, M. eds. *Taboo: Sex, Identity and Erotic Subjectivity in Anthropological Fieldwork.* London: Routledge, pp. 107-39, pp. 1-28.

Kulick, D. (2000). Gay and Lesbian Language. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, *29*, 243-85.

Kurtz, S.P. (2005). Post-circuit blues: Motivations and consequences of crystal meth use among gay men in Miami. AIDS and Behavior, 9(1), 63-72.

Laclau, E. & Mouffe, C. (1985). *Hegemony and socialist strategy: towards a radical democratic politics.* London: Verso.

Laing, R.D. (1971). *The politics of the family*. London: Tavistock.

Lambert, A. (2006). Stats please: gay men as mimics, robots, and commodities in contemporary cultural spaces. In Kendall, C. & Martino, W. [eds.] *Gendered Outcasts and Sexual Outlaws: Sexual Oppression and Gender Hierarchies in Queer Men's Lives* [61-78]. New York: Routledge.

Lange, J. E., Daniel, J., Homer, K., Reed, M. B., & Clapp, J. D. (2010). Salvia divinorum: Effects and use among YouTube users. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *108*(1), 138-140.

Lau, A., Gabarron, E., Fernandez-Luque, L., & Armayones, M. (2012). Social media in health-what are the safety concerns for health consumers? *Health Information Management Journal*, *41*(2), 30.

Lea, T., Mao, L., Bath, N., Prestage, G., Zablotska, I., de Wit, J., & Holt, M. (2013). Injecting drug use among gay and bisexual men in Sydney: prevalence and associations with sexual risk practices and HIV and hepatitis C infection. *AIDS and Behavior*, *17*(4), 1344-1351.

Lea, T., Reynolds, R., & De Wit, J. (2011). Mephedrone use among same-sex attracted young people in Sydney, Australia. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, *30*(4), 438-440.

Leblanc, L. (1999). *Pretty in punk: Girls' gender resistance in a boys' subculture*. Rutgers University Press.

LeDepotParis. (2016). Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: http://www.ledepot-paris.com/.

Lee, S. J., Galanter, M., Dermatis, H., & McDowell, D. (2004). Circuit parties and patterns of drug use in a subset of gay men. *Journal of Addictive Diseases*, *22*(4), 47-60.

Lemert, E. M. (1969). *Primary and secondary deviation*. DR Cressey y.

Lerman, P. (1967). Argot, symbolic deviance and subcultural delinquency. *American Sociological Review*, 209-224.

Lewis, L. A., & Ross, M. W. (1995). The gay dance party culture in Sydney: a qualitative analysis. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *29*(1), 41-70.

Liebenberg, L., Didkowsky, N. and Ungar, M. (2012). Analysing image-based data using grounded theory: the Negotiating Resilience Project. *Visual Studies*, 27(1), 59-74.

Lister, M., & Wells, L. (2001). Seeing beyond belief: Cultural studies as an approach to analysing the visual. *Handbook of visual analysis*, 61-91.

Lemert, E. M. (1969). *Primary and Secondary Deviation*. DR Cressey .

Levine, M. P., & Kimmel, M. S. (1998). *Gay macho: The life and death of the homosexual clone*. NYU Press.

Lewin, P., & Williams, J. P. (2009). The ideology and practice of authenticity in punk subculture. *Authenticity in Culture, Self, and Society*, *65*-83.

Lewis, L.A. & Ross, M.W. (1995). A Select Body: The Gay Dance Party Subculture and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. New York, NY: Cassell.

Lister, M. & Wells, L. (2001). Seeing beyond belief: Cultural studies as an approach to analyzing the visual. In: van Leeuwen, T. and Jewitt, C. eds. *Handbook of Visual Analysis.* London: SAGE, pp. 61-91.

Lombardo, A. (2009). Sex and cyberspace: The Internet in the sexual lives of men who have sex with men. University of Toronto.

Long, T. L. (2000). Plague of pariahs: AIDS 'zines and the rhetoric of transgression. *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, *24*(4), 401-411.

Lopez-Rocha, S. (2010). Nethnography in context: Methodological and practical implications of virtual ethnography. *International Journal of Interdisciplinary Social Sciences*, 5(4), 291-301.

Lyons, A., & Hosking, W. (2014). Health disparities among common subcultural identities of young gay men: Physical, mental, and sexual health. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *43*(8), 1621-1635.

Lyons, T., Chandra, G., Goldstein, J, & Ostrow, D.G. (2010). Breaking the bond between stimulant use and risky Sex: A qualitative study. *Substance Abuse*, *31*(4), 224-30

madbrain. (20 March 2013). You can't be HIV+ on Grindr [Msg 47907]. Message posted to http://askus.baker.edu/a.php?qid=32188.

Malbon, B. (1999). *Clubbing, dancing, Ecstasy and vitality.* London: Routledge.

Maloff, D., Becker, H. S., Fonaroff, A., & Rodin, J. (1979). Informal social controls and their influence on substance use. *Journal of Drug Issues*, *9*(2), 161-184.

Mann, C., & Stewart, F. (2000). *Internet communication and qualitative research: A handbook for researching online*. London: Sage.

Manning, P. (2013). YouTube 'drug videos' and drugs education. *Drugs: Education, Prevention and Policy*, *20*(2), 120-130.

Marlatt, G. A. (1996). Harm reduction: Come as you are. *Addictive Behaviors*, *21*(6), 779-88.

Marsh, J. (2012). Drugs, sex and gay identity. Retrieved 5 October 2012 from: http://www.qxmagazine.com/feature/drugs-sex-gay-identity.

Marshal, M. P., Dermody, S. S., Shultz, M. L., Sucato, G. S., Stepp, S. D., Chung, T., ... & Hipwell, A. E. (2013). Mental health and substance use disparities among urban adolescent lesbian and bisexual girls. *Journal of the American Psychiatric Nurses Association*, 1078390313503552.

Martin, G. (2009). Subculture, style, chavs and consumer capitalism: Towards a critical cultural criminology of youth. *Crime, Media, Culture*, *5*(2), 123-145.

Martinez, O., Wu, E., Shultz, A. Z., Capote, J., Rios, J. L., Sandfort, T., ... & Moya, E. (2014). Still a hard-to-reach population? Using social media to recruit Latino gay couples for an HIV intervention adaptation study. Journal of Medical Internet Research, *16*(4), e113.

Martino, W. J. (2012). Queering masculinities as a basis for gender democratization: toward embracing. In Grieg, C.J. & Martino, W.J. [eds.] *Canadian Men and Masculinities: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives* [205 -26]. Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press.

Mathy, R. M., Kerr, D. L., & Haydin, B. M. (2003). Methodological rigor and ethical considerations in Internet-mediated research. *Psychotherapy: Theory, Research, Practice, Training*, *40*(1-2), 77.

Maxfield, M.G. and Babbie, E.R. (2011). *Basics of Research Methods for Criminal Justice and Criminology*. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.

McClure, A.C., Dal Cin, S., Gibson, J., & Sargent, J.D. (2006). Ownership of alcohol-branded merchandise and initiation of teen drinking. *American Journal of Preventive Medicine*, *30*(4), 277-283.

McConnell-Ginet, S. (2003). What's in a name?' Social labeling and gender practices. *The handbook of language and gender*, 69-97.

McKirnan, D., Houston, E. & Tolou-Shams, M. (2007). Is the web the culprit? Cognitive escape and Internet sexual risk among gay and bisexual men. *AIDS Behavior*, *11*, 151-60.

McRobbie, A. (1989). Second-hand dresses and the role of the ragmarket. In *Zoot Suits and Second-Hand Dresses* (pp. 23-49). Palgrave Macmillan UK.

Meeker, M. (2001). Behind the mask of respectability: Reconsidering the Mattachine Society and male homophile practice, 1950s and 1960s. *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, *10*(1), 78-116.

Meikle, K. (3 November 2015). Chemsex rise prompts public health warning. *The Guardian*. Retrieved 4 February 2016 from http://www.theguardian.com/society/2015/nov/03/chemsex-rise-public-health-warning-drugs.

Merton, R. K. (1968). *Social theory and social structure*. Simon and Schuster.

Meyer, D. (2014). Resisting hate crime discourse: Queer and intersectional challenges to neoliberal hate crime laws. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 113-125.

Milani, T. M. (2013). Are 'queers' really 'queer'? Language, identity and same-sex desire in a South African online community. *Discourse & Society*, 0957926513486168.

Mileham, B. L. A. (2007). Online infidelity in Internet chat rooms: An ethnographic exploration. *Computers in Human Behavior*, *23*(1), 11-31.

Milovanovic, D. (1997). *Chaos, criminology, and social justice: The new orderly (dis) order*. Greenwood Publishing Group.

Mimiaga, M. J., Fair, A. D., Mayer, K. H., Koenen, K., Gortmaker, S., Tetu, A. M., ... & Safren, S. A. (2008). Experiences and sexual behaviors of HIV-infected MSM who acquired HIV in the context of crystal methamphetamine use. *AIDS Education and Prevention*, *20*(1), 30.

Moeller, R.W. , Halkitis, P.N., Pollock, J.A., Siconolfi, D.E. & Barton, S. (2013). When the emotions really started kicking in, which ended up being a problem: Sex, HIV, and emotions among young gay and bisexual men. *Journal of Homosexuality*, *60*(5), 773-795.

Moore, D. (1994). *The lads in action: Social process in an urban youth subculture*. Aldershot: Arena.

Morris, P. (Director). (2015). *Viral Loads.* USA: Treasure Island Media.

Morrison, S. (19 January 2014). Experts warn of rise in gay 'slamming'. *The Independent.* Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/crime/experts-warn-of-rise-in-gay-slamming-9069571.html.

Morton, D. (1995). Birth of the cyberqueer. *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, 369-381.

Morton, M. & Aroney, E. (2016). Journalism, moral panic and the public interest. *Journalism Practice*, *10*(1), 18-34.

Moskowitz, D. A. (2010). Unlimited intimacy: Reflections on the subculture of barebacking. *Archives of Sexual Behavior*, *39*(5), 1201-1203.

Mowlabocus, Sharif (2007) Gaydar: gay men and the pornification of everyday life. In Paasonen, S., Nikunen, K., & Saarenmaa, L. [eds.] *Pornification: sex and sexuality in media culture*. Oxford: Berg, 61-71.

Mowlabocus, S. (2010). *Gaydar culture: Gay men technology and embodiment in the digital age*. Ashgate.

Narcotics Anonymous (1986). *NA White Booklet*. Van Nuys: Narcotics Anonymous Worldwide Services Inc.

Nash, C. J., & Bain, A. (2007). 'Reclaiming raunch'? Spatializing queer identities at Toronto women's bathhouse events. *Social & Cultural Geography*, *8*(1), 47-62.

NastyKinkPigs (n.d.). Retrieved 5th January, 2013 from: http://www.nastykinkpigs.com.

National Institute of Drug Abuse. (1995). *The sixth triennial report to Congress*. Retrieved 20 October 2015 from http://archives.drugabuse.gov/STRC/Forms.html on 7-16-12.

Nixon, R. (1971). Special message to the Congress on drug abuse prevention and control. *The American Presidency Project*. Retrieved 5 February 2016 from http://www. presidency. ucsb. edu/ws.

NHS England (21 March 2016). Update on commissioning and provision of Pre Exposure Prophylaxsis (PREP) for HIV prevention. *News*. Retrieved 22 March 2016 from: https://www. england. nhs.uk/2016/03/prep/

Nodin, N., Valera, P., Ventuneac, A., Maynard, E. & Carballo-Diéguez, A. (2011). The Internet profiles of men who have sex with men within bareback websites. *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 13(9), 1015-29.

O'Malley, P. & Mugford, S. (1994). Crime, excitement, and modernity. *Varieties of criminology*, 189-211.

OnlyLeon. (2013). *Forum bar*. Retrieved 16 June 2013 from http://onlyleon.fr.

OutSavvy. (2015). *5 guys chillin'*. Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: http://www.outsavvy. com/event/27/5guyschillin

Oxford, T. (2009, December 26). Getting connected: a history of modems. *Techradar*. Retrieved 25 September, 2012 from: http://www.techradar.com/news/internet/getting-connected-ahistory-of-modems-657479.

Paasonen, S., Nikunen, K., & Saarenmaa, L. (2007). Pornification: Sex and sexuality in media culture. Berg Publishers.

Paine,C. (2012, September 19). Exposed: The seedy underbelly of hook-up apps. *News*. Retrieved 25th May 2013 from: http://www.news.com.au/technology/dating-danger-the-safety-risks-of-hook-up-apps/story-e6frfro0-1226477312222.

Panfil, V. R. (2014). Better left unsaid? The role of agency in queer criminological research. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 99-111.

Paradis, E. (2009). Bodies, boxes, and belonging: A review of queer online. *Journal of LGBT Youth*, *6*(4), 446-451.

Parsons, J. T., Kelly, B. C., & Weiser, J. D. (2007). Initiation into methamphetamine use for young gay and bisexual men. *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*, *90*(2), 135-144.

Payne, R. (2007). 'Str8acting'. *Social Semiotics*, *17*(4), 525-38.

Pearce, F. (1973). How to be immoral and ill, pathetic and dangerous, all at the same time: Mass media and the homosexual. In Cohen, S. & Young, J. (eds.) *The manufacture of news: Deviance. Social problems & the mass media* (pp. 284-301).

Peccadillo Pictures (2015). 'Chemsex' Extra: Matt Spike's Photo Exhibit. Retrieved 14 February 2016 at http://faizantube.com/watch/wFUvOQ-uxN8/chemsex-extra-matt-spikes-photo-exhibit.html.

Pedrana, A., Hellard, M., Gold, J., Ata, N., Chang, S., Howard, S., ... & Stoove, M. (2013). Queer as F** k: reaching and engaging gay men in sexual health promotion through social networking sites. *Journal of Medical Internet Research*, *15*(2), e25.

Perrone, D. (2010). *The high life: Club kids, harm and drug policy*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Riemer.

Perry, B., & Dyck, D. R. (2014). "I don't know where it is safe": Trans women's experiences of violence. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 49-63.

Phua, V. C. (2002). Sex and sexuality in men's personal advertisements. *Men and masculinities*, *5*(2), 178-191.

PlanetRomeo. (2013). Retrieved 30 November 2013 from https://www.planetromeo.com/

Platt, S. (1995). Moral panic. *New Statesman and Society*, *24*, 14-15.

Polhemus, T. (2010). *Streetstyle*. London: Pymca.

Portwood-Stacer, L. (2012). Anti-consumption as tactical resistance: Anarchists, subculture, and activist strategy. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *12*(1), 87-105.

Potter, G. R. (2010). *Weed, need and greed: A study of domestic cannabis cultivation*. London: Free Association.

Presdee, M. (2000). *Cultural criminology and the carnival of crime*. London: Routledge.

Prestage, G., Jin, F., Kippax, S., Zablotska, I., Imrie, J., & Grulich, A. (2009). Use of illicit drugs and erectile dysfunction medications and subsequent HIV infection among gay men in Sydney, Australia. *The Journal of Sexual Medicine*, *6*(8), 2311-2320.

The PROUD Study. (2014). Retrieved 13 August 2014 from: http://www.proud.mrc.ac.uk/

Race, K. (2015). 'Party and Play': Online hook-up devices and the emergence of PNP practices among gay men. *Sexualities*, *18*(3), 253-275.

Ranker. (2013). *The top LGBT social networks.* Retrieved 20 October 23013 from:

> http://www.ranker. com/list/lgbt-social-networks/dot-commander?utm_expid=16418821-
>
> 179.KRPALXGNSrOvUccMmL8oRg.0&utm_referrer=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.google.
>
> co.uk%2F

redeeeemer28. (29 September 2014). Apple iPhone App Store review.

Reinarman, C. (1979). Moral entrepreneurs and political economy: Historical and ethnographic

> notes on the construction of the cocaine menace. *Contemporary Crises*, *3*(3), 225-54.

Rhodes, F., Deren, S., Wood, M. M., Shedlin, M. G., Carlson, R. G., Lambert, E. Y., ... & Weir, B.

> (1999). Understanding HIV risks of chronic drug-using men who have sex with men. *Aids*
>
> *Care*, *11*(6), 629-648.

Rice, E., Holloway, I., Winetrobe, H., Rhoades, H., Barman-Adhikari, A., Gibbs, J. … Dunlap, S.

> (2012). Sex risk among young men who have sex with men who use Grindr, a smartphone
>
> geosocial networking application. *AIDS & Clinical Research*.

Riggs, D. W. (2013). Anti-Asian sentiment amongst a sample of white Australian men on Gaydar.

> *Sex Roles*, *68*(11-12), 768-778.

Riley, D., & O'Hare, P. (2000). Harm reduction: History, definition, and practice. *Harm Reduction:*

> *National and International Perspective*s, *1000*, 1-26.

Rimington, D. D., & Gast, J. (2007). Cybersex use and abuse: Implications for health education.

> *American Journal of Health Ed*ucation, *38*(1), 34-40.

Robey, T. (3 December 2015). Chemsex review: 'seriously sobering'. *The Telegraph*. Retrieved 10

> December 2015 from http://www.telegraph.co.uk/film/Chemsex/review/.

Rosenblum, D. (1994). Queer intersectionality and the failure of recent lesbian and gay 'victories'.

> *Law and Sexuality*, *4,* p. 83-122.

Roth, Y. (2014). Locating the "Scruff guy": Theorizing body and space in gay geosocial media.

> *International Journal of Communication*, *8*(21), 2113-2133.

Rudwick, S., & Ntuli, M. (2008). IsiNgqumo–introducing a gay Black South African linguistic

> variety. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies*, *26*(4), 445-456.

Sanders, C.R. (1988). Marks of mischief: Becoming and being tattooed. *Journal of Contemporary*

> *Ethnography*, *16*(4), 395-432.

Saul, H. (3 December 2014). UK porn legislation: What is now banned under new government laws. *Independent*. Accessed 1 November 2015 from http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-porn-legislation-what-is-now-banned-under-new-government-laws-9898541.html.

Schildkrout, E. (2004). *Body art as visual language*. RO Selig, MR London, PA Kaupp. Washington DC: Smithsonian Books.

Schmitt, M. T., Branscombe, N. R., Postmes, T., & Garcia, A. (2014). The consequences of perceived discrimination for psychological well-being: a meta-analytic review. *Psychological Bulletin*, *140*(4), 921

Schouten, J.W., & McAlexander, J.H. (1995). Subcultures of consumption: An ethnography of the new bikers. *Journal of Consumer Research*, *22*, 43-61.

Schulman, S. (2012). *The gentrification of the mind: Witness to a lost imagination*. University of California Press.

Semple, S. J., Zians, J., Grant, I., & Patterson, T. L. (2006). Methamphetamine use, impulsivity, and sexual risk behavior among HIV-positive men who have sex with men. *Journal of Addictive Diseases*, *25*(4), 105-114.

Sharp, E. A., SoRelle-Miner, D., Bermudez, J. M., & Walker, M. (2008). "The glass ceiling is kind of a bummer": Women's reflections on a gender development course. *Family Relations*, *57*(4), 530-541.

Sharp, J. (2014). The 12 things your gay friends don't want you to know about our new epidemic, crystal meth. *Thought Catalog*. Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: http://thoughtcatalog.com/joseph-sharp/2014/03/the-12-things-your-gay-friends-dont-want-you-to-know-about-our-new-epidemic-crystal-meth/.

Shaw, D. F. (1997). Gay men and computer communication: A discourse of sex and identity in cyberspace. In Jones, S.G. [ed.] *Virtual Culture: Identity and Communication in Cybersociety* (pp. 133-45). London: SAGE.

Shernoff, M. (2005). The sociology of barebacking. *The Gay & Lesbian Review Worldwide*, *12*(1), 33.

Shidlo, A. (1994). Internalized homophobia: Conceptual and empirical issues in measurement. In *Some of the information in this chapter was presented at the meeting of the American Psychological Assn, New York, 1987*. Sage Publications, Inc.

Shuckerow, D. (2014). *Take off your masc: The hegemonic gay male's gender performance on Grindr.*

Schulman, S. (2012). *The gentrification of the mind: Witness to a lost imagination*. University of California Press.

Siegel, K., Lune, H., & Meyer, I. H. (1998). Stigma management among gay/bisexual men with HIV/AIDS. *Qualitative Sociology*, *21*(1), 3-24.

Silverstone, C.C. (2012). Duckie's gay shame: Critiquing pride and selling shame in club performance. *Contemporary Theatre Review*, 22(1), 62-78.

Signorile, M. (1997). *Life outside: The Signorile report on gay men: Sex, drugs, muscles, and the passages of life*. HarperCollins.

Simmons, T. (2013). 12 Cyberqueer perspectives on rights and activism. *Digital World: Connectivity, Creativity and Rights*, 176.

Skype. (2013). Retrieved 15 December 2013 from http://www.skype.com/en/

Smith, R. (2015). The media's moral panic over chemsex demonises gay men. *Vice*. Retrieved 20 December 2015 from: https://www.vice.com/en_uk/read/media-moral-panic-chemsex-demonises-gay-men

SocialParody. (2012). Retrieved 5th January, 2013 from: http://www.socialparody.com.

Soho Theatre (2015). *Matthew Todd and guests: The rise of 'chemsex'*. Retrieved 5 February 2016 at http://www.sohotheatre.com/whats-on/attitude-magazine-editor-matthew-todd-with-pat-cas/.

Solomon, T. M., Halkitis, P. M., Moeller, R. M., Siconolfi, D. E., Kiang, M. V., and Barton, S. C. (2011). Sex parties among gay, bisexual, and other men who have sex with men in New York City: Attendance and behavior. *Journal of Urban Health: Bulletin of the New York Academy of Medicine*, 88(6), 1063-75.

Sonenschein, D. (1969). The Homosexual's Language. *The Journal of Sex Research*, *5*(4), 281-91.

Sorainen, A. (2003 August). Queering criminology [Conference paper]. The European Society of Criminology, Crime and Control in an Integrating Europe, University of Helsinki, Finland.

Spradley, J. P. (1979). *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich College Publishers.

Speaker, S.L. (2001). The struggle of mankind against its deadliest foe: Themes of counter-subversion in anti-narcotic campaigns, 1920-1940. *Journal of Social History*, *34*(3): 591-610

Stacey, J. (2006). Gay parenthood and the decline of paternity as we knew it. *Sexualities*, *9*(1), 27-55.

Stallybrass, P. & White, A. (1986). *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression.* London: Methuen.

Steinmetz, K. F. (2012). Message received: Virtual ethnography in online message boards. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, 11(1), 26-39.

Sterling, B. (1992). *The hacker crackdown: Law and disorder on the electronic frontier*. New York: Bantam Spectra.

The Stigma Project. (2015). Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: http://www.thestigmaproject.org/.

Stogner, J. M., & Miller, B. L. (2013). Investigating the 'bath salt' panic: The rarity of synthetic cathinone use among students in the United States. *Drug and Alcohol Review*, *32*(5), 545-49.

Strate, L. (1999). The varieties of cyberspace: Problems in definition and delimitation. *Western Journal of Communication*, *63*(3), 382-412.

Stuart, D. (2013). Sexualised drug use by MSM: background, current status and response. *HIV Nursing*, *13*, 1-5.

Stychin, C. F. (1998). *A nation by rights: National cultures, sexual identity politics, and the discourse of rights.* Temple University Press.

Sullivan, A. (24 January 2003). Sex- and death-crazed gays play viral Russian Roulette! *Salon.* Retrieved 15 March 2016 from: http://www.salon.com/2003/01/24/rolling/.

Swidler, A. (1986). Culture in action: Symbols and strategies. *American Sociological Review*, *51*, 273-86.

Taylor, I., Walton, P., & Young, J. (2013). *The new criminology: For a social theory of deviance*. Routledge.

TechTarget. (2016). *peer-to-peer (P2P).* Retrieved 20 February 2016 from http://searchnetworking. techtarget.com/definition/peer-to-peer.

Terrence Higgins Trust. (2015). *How the law works*. Accessed 1 December 2015 from http://www.tht.org.uk/myhiv/Telling-people/Law/How-the-law-works

Thanki, D. & Frederick, B. (2016). 'Social media and drug markets', *The internet and drug markets* (European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction: Insights 21), Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg.

TheGaysian. (2016). Retrieved 20 January 2016 from: https://thegaysian.wordpress.com/articles/ amplifier-new-gay-asian-club-night-in-birmingham/

Thornton, S. (1996). *Club cultures: Music, media, and subcultural capital*. Wesleyan University Press.

Thrasher, F. M. (1927). *The gang*. Chicago/London.

Timmermans, S. and Tavory, I. (2012). Theory construction in qualitative research: From grounded theory to abductive analysis. *Sociological Theory 30*, 167-86.

Toch, E., & Levi, I. (2012, September). What can 'people-nearby' applications teach us about meeting new people? In *Proceedings of the 2012 ACM Conference on Ubiquitous Computing* (802-3). ACM.

ToxxxicTube. (2013). Retrieved 30 November 2013 from http://www.toxxxictube.com/

Treasure Island Media (2012). *Slammed*. Retrieved 14 July 2015 from: http://store.treasureisland media.com/SLAMMED.html

Treasure Island Media (2015). *Viral Loads*. Retrieved 20 February 2016 from: http://store.treasure islandmedia.com/VIRAL-LOADS.html

Tsang, D. C. (1994). Notes on queer's n Asian virtual sex. *Amerasia Journal*, *20*(1), 117-28.

Vaid, U., Duggan, L., Metz, T and Hollibaugh, A. (2013). What's next for the LGBT movement? *The Nation*. Accessed 1 November 2015 from http://www.thenation.com/article/whats-next-lgbt-movement/

Vimeo. (2015). *Chemsex*. Retrieved 20 November 2015 from: https://vimeo.com/ondemand/ chemsex.

Wakeford, N. (2002). New technologies and "cyber-queer" research. *Handbook of Lesbian and Gay Studies* [115-44]. London: SAGE.

Waldman, A. E. (2011). Exceptions: The Criminal Law's Illogical Approach to HIV-Related Aggravated Assaults. *Virginia Journal of Social Policy and the Law*, *18*(3).

Walsh, C. (2011). Drugs, the Internet and change. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, *43*(1), 55-63.

Warde, A. (1994). Consumption, identity-formation and uncertainty. *Sociology*, 28(4), 877-898.

Watney, S. (2000). *Imagine Hope: AIDS and Gay Identity*. London: Routledge.

Waterston, A. (1997). *Street addicts in the political economy*. Temple University Press.

Weatherburn, P., Schmidt, A. J., Hickson, F., Reid, D., Berg, R. C., Hospers, H. J., & Marcus, U. (2013). The European Men-who-have-sex-with-men internet survey (EMIS): design and methods. *Sexuality Research and Social Policy*, *10*(4), 243-257.

Webopedia. (2016). *TCP/IP - Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol*. Retrieved 20 February 2016 from: http://www.webopedia.com/TERM/T/TCP_IP.html.

Weidner, R. R. (2009). Methamphetamine in three small Midwestern cities: Evidence of a moral panic. *Journal of Psychoactive Drugs*, *41*(3), 227-39.

West, C., Ferguson, R., Gever, M., & Minh-Ha, T. T. (1990). *Out there: Marginalization and contemporary cultures.* MIT Press.

Westhaver, R. (2005). 'Coming out of your skin': Circuit parties, pleasure and the subject. *Sexualities*, 8(3), 347-74.

Wilkins, L. T. (1964). *Social deviance*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Williams, M. (2006). *Virtually criminal: Crime, deviance, and regulation online*. New York: Routledge.

Williams, T. (1992). *Crackhouse: Notes from the End of the Line*. New York: Penguin.

Willis, P. (1976). *The class significance of school counter-culture. The process of schooling*, 188-200.

Willis, P. (1976). The cultural meaning of drug use. In S. Hall & Jefferson, T. [Eds]. *Resistance through rituals: Youth subcultures in post-war Britain*. London: HarperCollins Academic.

Wilkins, L.T. (1964). *Social devia*nce. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Wilson, D., & Jones, T. (2008). 'In my own world': A case study of a paedophile's thinking and doing and his use of the Internet. *The Howard Journal of Criminal Justice*, *47*(2), 107-120.

Winchester III, W. W., Abel, T. D., & Bauermeister, J. (2012). The use of partner-seeking computer-mediated communication applications by young men that have sex with men (YMSM): uncovering human-computer interaction (HCI) design opportunities in HIV prevention. *Health Systems*, *1*(1), 26-35.

Wittgenstein, L., & Anscombe, G. E. M. (1958). *Philosophical investigations* (Vol. 255). Oxford: Blackwell.

Wright, J. (8 February 2016). Michigan senate puts pet hamsters before gays, reaffirms sodomy ban. *Towelroad*. Retrieved 8 February 2016 from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/you-could-go-to-prison-for-performing-oral-or-anal-sex-in-michigan_us_56b8fbc1e4b04f9b57dab07c.

Wright, R. T., & Decker, S. H. (2011). *Armed robbers in action: Stickups and street culture*. UPNE.

Woo, J. (2013). *Meet Grindr*. Lulu. com.

Woodland, R. (1999). 'I plan to be a 10': Online literacy and lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender students. *Computers and Composition*, *16*, 73-87.

Woods, J. B. (2014). Queer contestations and the future of a critical "queer" criminology. *Critical Criminology*, *22*(1), 5-19.

Woolgar, S. (1991). The turn to technology in social studies of science. *Science, Technology & Human Values*, *16*(1), 20-50.

Yar, M. (2005). The novelty of 'cybercrime': An assessment in light of routine activity theory. *European Journal of Criminology*, *2*(4), 407-427.

Young, J. (1971). *The drugtakers: The social meaning of drug use*. MacGibbon and Kee.

Young, J. (1973a). The amplification of drug use. In Cohen, S. and Young, J. (eds.) *The manufacture of news: Deviance, social problems and the mass media* (pp. 350-359). London: Constable.

Young, J. (1973b). The myth of the drug taker in the mass media. In Cohen, S. and Young, J. (eds.)

The manufacture of news: Deviance, social problems and the mass media (pp. 314-322).

London: Constable.

Young, J. (1999). *The exclusive society: Social exclusion, crime and difference in late modernity*.

Sage.

Young, J. (2003). Merton with energy, Katz with structure: The sociology of vindictiveness and the

criminology of transgression. *Theoretical Criminology*, *7*(3), 388-414.

Young, J. (2004). Voodoo criminology and the numbers game. *Cultural Criminology Unleashed*,

13-27.

Young, S. D., Szekeres, G., & Coates, T. (2013). The relationship between online social

networking and sexual risk behaviors among men who have sex with men (MSM). *PloS one*,

8(5), e62271.

Zheleva, E., & Getoor, L. (2009, April). To join or not to join: the illusion of privacy in social

networks with mixed public and private user profiles. In *Proceedings of the 18th

international conference on World wide web* (531-540). ACM.

Zinberg, N. E., Harding, W. M., & Winkeller, M. (1977). A study of social regulatory mechanisms

in controlled illicit drug users. *Journal of Drug Issues*, *7*(2), 117-133.

Zoom. (2013). Retrieved 15 December 2013 from https://zoom.us/

APPENDICES

A - APPEARANCE-RELATED PRESCRIPTIVE IDENTITY CATEGORIES IN THE

NETWORKS

Network	Network Category	Network Attributes
Grindr	*My Grindr Tribes*	*Bear, Clean-Cut, Daddy, Discreet, Geek, Jock, Leather, Otter, Poz, Rugged, Trans, Twink*
	Body Type	*Do Not Show, Toned, Average, Large, Muscular, Slim, Stocky*
	Ethnicity	*Do Not Show, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, Mixed, Native American, White, Other, South Asian*
PlanetRomeo	*Body*	*No entry, Slim, Average, Athletic, Muscular, Belly, Stocky*
	Ethnicity	*No entry, Caucasian, Asian, Latin, Mediterranean, Black, Mixed, Arab, Indian*
NastyKinkPigs	*Build*	*Slim, Average, Athletic, Muscular, Bodybuilder, Heavy*
	Ethnicity	*American Indian, Asian, Black, Latino, Middle Eastern, Mixed, Pacific Islander, White, Other Ethnicity, No Answer*

B - DRUGS AND ROUTES OF ADMINISTRATION

Drug	Method(s) of Ingestion
amphetamine	Snorted, swallowed
3-MMC	Injected
cocaine	Injected, snorted, smoked
crystal methamphetamine	Inserted rectally ('booty bump'), injected, smoked, snorted, swallowed
GHB/GBL	Swallowed
ketamine	Injected, swallowed
MDMA	Injected, snorted, swallowed
mephedrone	Injected, swallowed

Yes	*You Can Do It*	*No Thanks*	*No Answer*	**Did not respond**	**Total**
34842	5776	7402	11681	22411	82112
(42%)	*(7%)*	*(9%)*	*(14%)*	*(27%)*	*(100%)*

Club Name	Location	No. of Members	Club Classification
Chem-Sex-Italia	Italy	1136	*Sex, Fetish; Other*
chems_sex_muc	München, Germany	896	*Sex, Fetish; Just Sex*
CHEMS_FRIENDLY_BER	Berlin, Germany	866	*Sex, Fetish; Other Sexual Practices*
chem-young-de	Berlin, Germany	598	*Sex, Fetish; Just Sex*
chems-bare-fuck-ffm	Frankfurt, Germany	566	*Sex, Fetish; Bareback*
Chems-Italia	Italy	274	*Sex, Fetish; Other*
chemsfriends	Gran Canaria, Spain	159	*Sex, Fetish; Groups, Parties*
chemslam	Berlin	142	*Sex, Fetish; Other*
CHEMS_FRIENDLY_CH	Zürich, Switzerland	110	*Sex, Fetish; Other Sexual Practices*
ChemsPartyMiddenNL	Arnhem, Netherlands	38	*Sex, Fetish; Groups, Parties*
Chemikerclub	Berlin	15	*Politics and Society; Education*
Slam-Bare-Club	Hamburg, Germany	635	*Sex, Fetish; Bareback*
slam-FFisters	Berlin, Germany	199	*Sex, Fetish; Other Sexual Practices*
Slammers_Holland	Netherlands	164	*Sex, Fetish; Other Sexual Practices*
Slam_Bare_Mannheim	Mannheim, Germany	29	*Sex, Fetish; Bareback*

Term	Meaning
Clean	No sexually-transmitted infections; or, no drugs
DDF	Drug and disease free
G (or *Gina*)	GHB
H&H	High and horny
K	Ketamine
M	Mephedrone
Madonna	MDMA
Molly	MDMA
PNP, or Party and Play	To use drugs and have sex
Special K	Ketamine
T (short for *Tina*)	Tina (crystal methamphetamine)
V	Viagra