11th Dangerous Consumptions Colloquium
University of Western Sydney
12 & 13 December, 2013

Hosted by
Institute for Culture & Society and the School of Social Sciences & Psychology

Convened by
Professor Stephen Tomsen and George (Kev) Dertadian
## Contents

Welcome ........................................................................................................... i
Program guide ............................................................................................... ii
Session guide ............................................................................................... iii
Session 1 .......................................................................................................... 1
Session 2 .......................................................................................................... 5
Session 3 .......................................................................................................... 9
Session 4 .......................................................................................................... 13
Session 5 .......................................................................................................... 16
Session 6 .......................................................................................................... 20
Session 7 .......................................................................................................... 24
Session 8 .......................................................................................................... 28
Notes .................................................................................................................. 31
Welcome

Dear delegates and attendees,

On behalf of the Institute for Culture & Society and the School of Social Sciences & Psychology at the University of Western Sydney the convenors would like to welcome you to the 11th Dangerous Consumptions Colloquium.

The colloquium brings together a diverse range of academics, students, practitioners and independent researchers for the presentation and discussion of research on myriad forms of contemporary consumption. The event continues a decade long tradition of drawing on social and critical theory perspectives for the dissemination of research on various forms of dangerous consumption. This year’s colloquium will include presentations exploring alcohol, tobacco, pharmaceuticals, illicit drugs, gambling, sex, public health policy and popular culture. The event is convened by Professor Stephen Tomsen and George (Kev) Dertadian from the University of Western Sydney.

The conveners would like to take this opportunity to thank the steering committee Associate Professor Peter Adams, Dr. Helen Keane, Dr. Charles Livingstone, and Dr. Anna Olsen for their guidance. Thanks are also owed to Christy Nguy, Helen Barcham and Simone Casey for their invaluable assistance in the logistics and promotion of the event.

Professor Stephen Tomsen,
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University of Western Sydney
Program guide

Day 1,
Thursday, December 12
Room, EA.G.36

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9:00 - 9:15 am</td>
<td>Registration</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:15 - 9:30 am</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Consumption, ethics &amp; public engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:30 - 11:00 am</td>
<td>Session 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:30 am</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:30 - 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Session 2</td>
<td>Consumption, theory &amp; politics</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 - 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Session 3</td>
<td>Consumption, crime &amp; the State</td>
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<tr>
<td>3:30 - 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
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<tr>
<td>4:00 - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Session 4</td>
<td>Consumption, alcohol &amp; gender</td>
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</table>

Day 2,
Friday, December 13
Room, EA.G.36

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tr>
<td>9:30 - 11:00 am</td>
<td>Session 5</td>
<td>Digital consumption</td>
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<tr>
<td>11:00 - 11:30 am</td>
<td>Morning Tea</td>
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<td>11:30 - 1:00 pm</td>
<td>Session 6</td>
<td>Injecting drug consumption</td>
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<tr>
<td>1:00 - 2:00 pm</td>
<td>Lunch</td>
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<tr>
<td>2:00 - 3:30 pm</td>
<td>Session 7</td>
<td>Alcohol consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:30 - 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Afternoon Tea</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:00 - 5:00 pm</td>
<td>Session 8</td>
<td>Smoking consumption</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:00 - 5:15 pm</td>
<td>Closing remarks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Session guide

**Session 1 – Consumption, ethics & public engagement**
**Chair: Charles Livingstone**

Public Opinion and Drug Policy: Engaging the ‘affected community’
Kari Lancaster, Alison Ritter, Laura Santana, Annie Madden

Is there a problem with the status quo? Debating the need for standalone ethical guidelines for research with people who use alcohol and other drugs
Anna Olsen, Julie Mooney-Somers

Biopedagogical Assemblages: Exploring school drug education in action
Peta Malins, Deana Leahy

**Session 2 – Consumption, theory & politics**
**Chair: George Dertadian**

The Ecstasy of German Re-Unification (Ostgut Ton)
Benjamin John Gook

Micro-liberalism
Charles Livingstone

Addiction Surplus: The add-on margin that makes addictive consumptions difficult to contain
Peter Adams

**Session 3 – Consumption, crime & the State**
**Chair: Stephen Tomsen**

Health, Vaccines and State-Corporate Crime
Paddy Rawlinson

The Drone Fetish: Consumerism and pleasure in the militarisation of policing
Michael Salter

Making Sense of the ‘Addict-as-Victim’: How crime compensation case law performs the ontology of addiction
Kate Seear

**Session 4 – Consumption, alcohol & gender**
**Chair: David Rowe**

“Like when you’re drunk you’re allowed to eat whatever you want!”: Exploring the pleasures of eating ‘bad’ food on a girls’ night out
Rebecca Brown

Emotions and (Dangerous?) Consumption: Alcohol, gender and place
Fiona Hutton, Sarah Wright
Session 5 – Digital consumption  
Chair: Emilee Gilbert

Iconography and the Construction of Cultural Spaces of Gambling  
Fiona Nicoll, César Albarrán Torres

Party and Play: Present convergences of sex, drugs and online hook-up devices among gay men  
Kane Race

Alcohol and the Social Web: Affinity, activations and algorithms  
Nicholas Carah

Session 6 – Injecting drug consumption  
Chair: Anna Olsen

Dangerous Bedfellow: The fentanyl patch safety paradox  
Julie Latimer, Ian Flaherty, Stephen Ling

The Artist’s Instruments: Consuming danger, producing harm reduction  
Kenneth Yates

Descent into Deviance: Stories of transitioning opiate use  
George (Kev) Dertadian

Session 7 – Alcohol consumption  
Chair: Peter Adams

Risky Consumption: Pre-and-binge drinking and the new culture of determined intoxication  
Peter Miller, Phillip Wadds, Stephen Tomsen

Translation of Alcohol Advertising Research: Les liaisons dangereuses  
Sarah Yates

Homebrew: A systematic literature review and homebrew case studies in Tonga, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea and Marshall Islands  
Vili Nosa, Shavonne Duffy, Uma Amber, Avanoa Homasi-Paelate, Julia Alfred, Save Lavelio

Session 8 – Smoking consumption  
Chair: Michael Salter

Investing in Oneself: Smoking cessation in context  
Rodrigo Ramalho, Peter Adams, Peter Huggard

The Allure of Tobacco: Young women’s negotiation of cigarette smoking and gender identities  
Emilee Gilbert
Session 1

Consumption, ethics & public engagement

Chair: Charles Livingstone
Public Opinion and Drug Policy: Engaging the ‘affected community’

The notion that policy should be informed by the people it most directly affects is an important consideration for policy development. However, the voices of people who use drugs, and particularly those who inject drugs, have traditionally been marginalised from policy debate. The stigmatisation and criminalisation of drug use is a complex barrier but should not disqualify people who use drugs from participation. In Australia, the majority of public opinion data regarding attitudes to drug policy are collected at the population level and the voices of people who inject drugs remain largely marginalised and underexplored. This project aimed to investigate how people who inject drugs perceive drug policy in Australia, so as to generate better understandings of how the voices of people who use drugs can, and should, be included in drug policy debate. Building on quantitative research previously undertaken (Lancaster, Ritter, & Stafford, 2013; Lancaster, Sutherland, & Ritter, in press), qualitative focus groups were conducted to explore the opinions of people who inject drugs towards drug policy measures including treatment and harm reduction services, drug legalisation, and penalties for the sale or supply of illicit drugs. Using qualitative thematic analysis, this paper will examine the nuanced and heterogeneous opinions of people who inject drugs, including the interconnected (and sometimes conflicted) relationship between opinion, knowledge and lived experience. In doing so, this paper will critically consider the multiple ways in which drug policy constructs and represents target populations which, in turn, sends messages to population groups about their ‘deserving’ or ‘undeserving’ status (Schneider & Ingram, 1993).

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Is there a problem with the status quo? Debating the need for standalone ethical guidelines for research with people who use alcohol and other drugs

In 2011, the Australian National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) developed an issues paper and initiated a public inquiry to determine whether a specific ethical guidance framework is required for alcohol and other drug (AOD) research. A small number of submissions were received, few of which supported the call for an independent guideline for AOD research. In most submissions, authors argued that the ethical issues raised by the inquiry were not sufficiently different to other human research to support specific guidelines. Authors were critical of the inclusion of generic research methods (for e.g., recruitment of minors and online research) in the issues paper, and expressed concern about further stigmatising people who use AOD. In 2012, after consideration of the public submissions, the NHMRC recommended that no specific guidance is required. Neither the inquiry nor the NHMRC decision were widely publicised and we feel that there is a need for further discussion. In particular, we argue that in providing an issues paper for discussion the inquiry was primarily focused on critique of the document, rather than a discussion about any philosophical or practical adjustments we may need to consider assisting researchers and study participants. Some of these issues may not be distinctive of AOD research; this should not preclude discussion of these issues and how they play out in the context of AOD research. The general disinclination towards the NHMRC proposed regulatory approach should not snuff out development of strategies and tools to support the practice of ethical AOD research.

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Biopedagogical Assemblages: Exploring school drug education in action

School based drug education is one of a multitude of governmental sites that seek to shape the healthy conduct of the population in relation to drug use. Foucauldian scholarship has been extremely useful in critically examining such attempts to govern the population’s health, drawing attention to the ways in which particular knowledges and discourses are mobilised to produce subjects who are rational, autonomous and ‘empowered’ to make the ‘right’, healthy, drug-free choices (Wright, 2009; Leahy & Harrison, 2004). However this work has been less useful for exploring what actually happens, affectively, in classrooms when drug education biopedagogies are put into motion. In this paper then we explore how the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1978) might be used to productively build on and supplement these governmental approaches. Drawing on classroom observational data, we follow the analytical lead of Albrecht-Crane and Slack (2007) to map the lines of affect (molar lines, molecular lines, and lines of flight) that traverse the drug educational assemblage. We believe that by attending to the affective, desiring and embodied aspects of school drug education we will get a better of how it works and how it might impact upon health and well-being in ways not currently considered by discourses of public health, nor those of governmentality.

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Session 2

Consumption, theory and politics

Chair: George Dertadian
The Ecstasy of German Re-Unification (Ostgut Ton)

East and West Germans today report a divided unity after the jouissance of the Berlin Wall’s fall. Seeking to understand this disappointment and suspicion, the paper uses ecstasy as a conceptual link between experiences of the Berlin Wall’s fall and Berlin’s rave culture. In the first instance, subjects were initially ecstatic about the removal of the inner-German border and about making Germany whole again. In the second instance, ecstasy refers to the drug that circulated in the rave scene during 1989/90. This drug is, in regulatory schemes and the rhetoric of the scene, a drug of empathy and collective intimacy. Pharmacological and socio-political ecstasies both concern constituting a new whole by temporarily dissolving an earlier division. But both ecstasies harbour discontents. This project articulates the celebrated electronic music culture of Berlin to the re-unification of Germany. It explores the shift from ecstatic openness to the re-drawing of boundaries within both Germany and the music scene. Psychoanalytic critical theory and cultural analysis elaborate the connection between the subcultural and national ecstasies—and their discontents.

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Micro-liberalism

Neo-liberalism is not an economic project; its ‘purpose’ is political. It pursues the entrenchment of the interests of those who have, at the expense of those who have not. It is this politics that now sits at the forefront of ‘political debate’ in western countries, particularly (but not exclusively) the Anglophone nations. Resistance to reform of the finance industry, and the austerity programs of the UK, some of the EU, and the US ‘tea party’ Republicans provide examples of this in its macro form. Here it is focused on destroying collective arrangements for improvement of general wellbeing, in favour of the enhancement of individual greed as a motivating factor in maximising economic welfare (at the expense of welfare in general). Large-scale corporate greed is easy to observe and criticise, if not to penalize. More insidious, but equally neo-liberal ideologically, are institutions that inject neo-liberal discourse into more quotidian transactions. These are small, previously collective institutions that dilute communitarianism with self-interest, thereby transforming conceptions of wellbeing.

These small institutions articulate what we might term micro-liberalism. They form a neo-liberal ideal more hazardous to communitarian ideals than the obvious greed and self-interest of gigantic corporations. In this paper I examine the role of clubs operating gambling machines in the Australian context, arguing that these carefully undermine collective politics, and entrench greed and personal interest as the determinants of local and national wellbeing. The effects of this have been inequitable; unchecked, they are likely to further accelerate inequality both of social and economic capital, and of opportunity.

Charles Livingstone, Monash University
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Addiction Surplus: The add-on margin that makes addictive consumptions difficult to contain

I am seeking to discuss an idea regarding why governments and the economies find themselves so often enmeshed in the market dynamics of addictive consumptions. The power of these dynamics can be observed in the illicit drug trade in places like Mexico, the perennially weak responses to alcohol policy and the reneging on gambling reforms in Australia. The concept of ‘addiction surplus’ is posited as a way of understanding the drivers for key stakeholders, particularly governments, to find themselves enticed into pro-consumption activities. Neo-liberal economics with its emphasis on the freedom of individual consumers to access open markets, draws heavily on the ideal of informed rational consumers whose collective choices shape how markets evolve. However, addictive consumptions arguably operate in a very different manner than other non-addictive consumptions such as buying pizzas or automobiles. People consuming addictively by definition consume to excess and it is this extra irrational overlay to normal consumption that generates a significant add-on profit that makes addictive consumptions so enticing.

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Session 3

Consumption, crime and the State

Chair: Stephen Tomsen
Health, Vaccines and State-Corporate Crime

The much-lauded history of public health programmes designed to protect populations against diseases such as smallpox, diphtheria, some childhood illnesses including measles, mumps and rubella, and casually transmitted epidemics, for example, HIV/AIDS have nurtured an almost inviolable faith in the relationship between the State, medical research and pharmaceutical companies. Shaped by a narrative of altruism, scientific advancement and social progress, vaccine research in particular has been frequently likened to a ‘quest for the holy grail’ and the production of vaccines now accounts for one of the largest sources of income for the pharma-industry. Vaccine programmes are also increasingly entrenched in preventative health policy, to the point that in many countries they are becoming mandatory rather than voluntary options for citizens, carrying punitive responses for some of those who opt out.

Within the current neoliberal context of health and medicine in which state and corporate interests merge, questions arise as to the integrity of the vaccine programmes in which profits play such a substantial role. This is especially pertinent in relation to the growing concern around vaccine safety and attempts by powerful cohorts to stymie access to relevant data and open debate on adverse reactions to vaccines. The paper addresses some of these issues and asks, to what extent should the behaviours of these powerful actors be explained within a criminological framework, as state-corporate crime?

Paddy Rawlinson, Monash University
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The Drone Fetish: Consumerism and pleasure in the militarisation of policing

This paper argues that the various and contradictory rationales offered for law enforcement drones are symptomatic of a ‘weapons fetish’ evident in popular culture. This fetishisation imbues military technology such as the drone with masculine fantasies of control and domination that obscure the practical limitations and ethical implications of drones for crime control and prevention. By linking the pleasures of militarism to the rise of mass media and consumer culture, paper argues that counter-terrorism discourse functions to legitimate the militarised masculine subject positions of paramilitary policing specifically and the neoliberal state generally. In such a context, the drone features as a regressive ‘weapon-toy’ commodity that fuses state control with technological transcendence.

Michael Salter, University of Western Sydney
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Making Sense of the ‘Addict-as-Victim’: How crime compensation case law performs the ontology of addiction

People who experience ‘problematic’ substance use or ‘addiction’ feature prominently in the criminal justice system: typically as offenders. Of course, ‘addicts’ and other ‘problematic’ AOD consumers also appear in criminal justice systems in other guises, including as the victims of crime. All Australian states and territories operate legislative schemes designed to compensate victims; schemes with explicitly remedial goals, aiming to provide care and support and to aid victims’ recovery from the effects of crime. In this paper, I explore what happens when people categorised as ‘addicts’ become victims of crime and seek access to compensation. Through an analysis of case law, I explore how courts understand drug consumption and ‘addiction’ and its apparent relevance to crimes compensation applications. I argue that ‘addicted’ victims are subject to considerable criticism, with their motives, relationships and trustworthiness disproportionately scrutinised. Although the express focus of crimes compensation schemes is remedial, ‘addicts’ must work hard to satisfy courts that compensation is deserved and to achieve the legal rights and benefits afforded to other Australian citizens who experience acts of violence. In the process of determining whether addicts deserve compensation, crimes compensation courts produce their own unique versions of addicted subjectivity, as well as the ‘origins’ and ‘effects’ of ‘addiction’. These accounts are generated through a constellation of factors, including the beneficial aims and objectives of the legislative scheme itself, and are often at odds with accounts of AOD and ‘addiction’ appearing in the criminal law. I conclude with a consideration of the implications of this.

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Session 4

Consumption, alcohol & gender

Chair: David Rowe
“Like when you’re drunk you’re allowed to eat whatever you want!”: Exploring the pleasures of eating ‘bad’ food on a girls’ night out

In this paper I explore the relationship between two forms of consumption that are often portrayed as ‘dangerous’ or ‘unhealthy’; drinking alcohol and eating takeaway food. Based on doctoral research that investigated young Australian and British women’s drinking practices, here I discuss the pleasures of eating ‘bad’ food at the end of a night out. Although there is much recent literature on women’s alcohol use in night-time economies, little work considers how eating fast food relates to intoxication. This is despite the ubiquity of takeaway outlets in such spaces. Work that does consider fast food interprets it to be a form of harm minimisation (Moore 2010). Based on semi-structured interviews with 20 women between the ages of 19 and 29, I demonstrate that gorging on fast food at the end of the night includes, but goes beyond, harm minimisation and/or alleviating hunger. Rather, it is one of the most enjoyable parts of a girls’ night out and is integral to the experience. Significantly, eating this type of food is pleasurable because the women recognise it as ‘bad’, ‘naughty’ or ‘disgusting’ and thus inappropriate. A night out provides women with respite from their everyday selves who would normally avoid such food because they find it undesirable or distasteful. I argue that this relates to one of the more broad pleasures - and purposes - of a girls’ night out which involves temporarily dispensing with postfeminist and neoliberal ideals of self-discipline, sophistication and sexiness.

Rebecca Brown, University of Sydney
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Emotions and (Dangerous?) Consumption: Alcohol, gender and place

This paper critically examines the relationships between emotions, alcohol consumption, gender and place. Much attention has been paid in the last decade to the “cultures of intoxication” [1] of modern western societies such as Britain, Australia, and New Zealand. For young women however, this “new” order is not divorced from older, conservative discourses of femininity with implications for how young women “should” behave (Plant & Plant, 2006; Day, Gough & McFadden, 2004). Young women within the nighttime economy are embedded in a changing social context, one of late modernity (Giddens, 1991), where the relationship between women and alcohol is complex. This paper aims to explore the practices of alcohol consumption through an understanding of the role of space and emotion in young women’s drinking practices.

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Session 5

Digital consumption

Chair: Emilee Gilbert
Iconography and the Construction of Cultural Spaces of Gambling

This article examines the role of visual iconography and soundscapes in constructing terrestrial and online cultural spaces of gambling. Processes of gambling deregulation and the explosion of online and mobile gaming applications have converged to transform cultural spaces of gambling over the past decade. Synergies between gambling and broader industries of entertainment have seen a proliferation of new spaces and products of gambling. One consequence of this has been a blurring of previously clear boundaries between agonistic (skill-based) and aleatory (luck-based) forms of identity and play. We bring together theories of gambling and play and cultural space in an analysis of three case studies of terrestrial and online gambling products to consider the implications of this development for gambling’s socio-cultural function in neoliberal societies.

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Party and Play: Present convergences of sex, drugs and online hook-up devices among gay men

This paper describes the emergence of a relatively new set of cultural practices and activities that are specific to gay sexual culture and that are dependent on relatively new material and sociotechnical arrangements, namely WIFI, 3G and the applications that make use of these devices in order to facilitate sexual and social encounters between men (“online hookup devices”). I locate these devices as relatively new infrastructures of the sexual encounter, by which I mean to draw attention to their material specificity and also to point out that they mediate the sexual encounter in new ways, making certain activities, relations, and practices possible while obviating others. The paper is particularly concerned with the emergence of what is known among participants Party and Play (or “PNP”, also known as Wired Play or Chem Sex), referring to the use of certain drugs to engage in sexual activity, generally in the home of a given participant. PNP and its correlates – internet use, crystal meth use, and sex with multiple partners – have largely been produced by the HIV epidemiological and behavioural literature as a pathogenic site, because of the associations with substance use and HIV transmission. But in this paper I attempt to demonstrate what might happen when we attend to this culture in its own terms. In other words, I affirm certain potentialities that are immanent within the concept of Party and Play, suggesting partying be understood as an event in which heterogenous elements come together in such a way that something new emerges.

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**Alcohol and the Social Web: Affinity, activations and algorithms**

This paper offers a critical argument about Facebook’s role as an institutional player in the promotion and management of alcohol consumption and branding. By the end of 2012 the top twenty alcohol brands on Facebook in Australia had 2.5 million fans. During 2012 they generated over 2.3 million interactions with those fans.

Facebook enables the alcohol industry to develop an extensive, real-time, and culturally-embedded mode of branding. Brands generate value on Facebook by attracting the attention of consumers, building affinity with their identities, and engaging with them in real-world cultural spaces. These activities are integrated with the calculative and predictive capacities of Facebook. If, for example, a brand establishes a themed “activation” at an event like a music festival and encourages audiences to interact with the space using their smartphones and social media profiles; then Facebook provides the technical capacity for that ‘real world’ interaction and mediation of identity and social relationships to be converted into media texts, an online social network and interactional data.

The challenge for researchers, critics and policy-makers is that Facebook organises branding within networks, algorithms and flows of communication that are difficult to observe and account for as part of public processes of analysis, debate and scrutiny. Furthermore, branding operates as an ongoing process of circulating attention and affect, and therefore can no longer be regulated by attempting to control particular meanings and representations. I draw on extensive analysis of the Facebook activity of twenty alcohol brands, participant-observation at music festivals, and interviews with consumers and cultural intermediaries like nightlife photographers.

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Session 6

Injecting drug consumption

Chair: Anna Olsen
**Dangerous Bedfellow: The fentanyl patch safety paradox**

Background: The Sydney Medically Supervised Injecting Centre (MSIC) has been operational since May 2001 with the aims to reduce death and injury from drug overdose, and to reduce harms associated with illicit drug use. This is achieved by supervising injecting episodes that might otherwise occur in less safe circumstances such as public places or alone. This paper reports on a retrospective clinical audit spanning September 2012 to August 2013 and reviews all cases where fentanyl was reported as the cause of opiate overdose. The fentanyl is extracted from a patch that is designated “transdermal use only.” This form of administration of an extremely potent opiate is designed to reduce the dangers, namely fatal depression of the respiratory system, associated with this medication. While there have been no fatal overdoses from any substance at MSIC, it seems paradoxical however, that this formulation appears to be more dangerous than its cousins.

Results: Between September 2012 and June 2013, the rate of overdose per injection of oxycodone and morphine was 0.004 (4:1000). The rate of overdose per injection of heroin was 0.01 (10:1000) and the rate of overdose per injection of fentanyl was 0.06 (60:1000). Between April and June 2013, there were 63 visits to inject fentanyl. Five of these injecting episodes resulted in overdose.

Conclusion: This audit shows an increased risk of overdose when injecting fentanyl compared with heroin or oxycodone/morphine. Using the lens of ‘safety paradoxes’ we critically examine the implications for the administration of this medication, with harm minimisation the key focus.

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The Artist’s Instruments: Consuming danger, producing harm reduction

One of the key concepts introduced by feminist science and technology studies scholar Karen Barad is the concept of ‘intra-action’. Within Barad’s theoretical framework of ‘agential realism’, the term intra-action is a way of conceptualising the ontological and epistemological primacy of process and interaction, or ‘phenomena’, rather than the common-sense ontology of objects and the distinctions between them as self-evident. This paper will explore the utility of such new materialist concepts, drawing upon them to analyse qualitative interview data produced as part of a larger evaluation of needle and syringe program (NSP) services in Western Sydney, Australia. The work of scholars such as Vitellone and Barad introduce a new complexity in our understandings of difference and the body. The paper will consider how useful these concepts are in developing new understandings of how people who inject drugs account for their equipment-related practices, and what role injecting equipment practices play with regard to client identities and relationships. How are harm reduction services and technologies co-produced with and by harm reduction subjects? How are each of these enacted through practices of consumption? How can we consider consumption as a performative act, both in terms of constituting harm reduction subjectivity, as well as materialising objects as harm reduction technologies?

Kenneth Yates, University of New South Wales
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Descent into Deviance: Stories of transitioning opiate use

Intravenous drug use is all but inseparable from stigmatizing stereotypes of street-based drug cultures that are characterized by dysfunction and criminality. However such stereotypes simplistically disguise the complex life histories that culminate in habitual drug taking, homelessness and criminal activity. The path to this kind of “transgressive lifestyle” is not always the same. For instance, among a significant minority the non-medical use of pharmaceutical opiates has become an identifiable pathway to intravenous use. This paper focuses on the life-histories of 3 people who have transitioned from oral to intravenous opioid use. The paper draws on life-history interview data gathered as part of a broader qualitative study on non-medical drug use, taking the sociology of deviance as an important theoretical frame. Instead of assuming a generic quality of deviance associated with non-medical use this paper will empirically demonstrate the significance of the narrative accounts of people who have transitioned from oral to intravenous opiate use. Focusing on moments of transition, from one kind of deviant consumption to another, the paper asks what the life-histories of these participants can reveal about important debates surrounding the concept of deviance.

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Session 7

Alcohol consumption

Chair: Peter Adams
Risky Consumption: Pre-and-binge drinking and the new culture of determined intoxication

Risky drinking is the subject of considerable community concern in Australia and internationally, particularly the dangerous consumption practices of young people consuming alcohol in the night-time economy. In Australia, one in four young people (aged between 15 and 24 years) reported that in the past year they had consumed alcohol at levels associated with short-term harm on a weekly to monthly basis. More than 40 percent of young people reported having consumed more than 20 standard drinks on a single occasion during that time (Chikritzhs & Pascal, 2004; Victorian Drug and Alcohol Prevention Council 2010). Pre-drinking and ‘binge’ consumption are central features of a new culture of determined intoxication and are key concerns when considering how to respond to such pernicious behaviour. However, there is a definitional confusion surrounding these two drinking forms that begs the question: is pre-drinking any different from binge drinking, or is it just one part of a binge experience? This paper will explore this question and compare the associations between pre-drinking, intoxication levels and alcohol-related violence across Australian sites. It is based on two major Australian studies with around 11,000 patrons that have examined the link between drinking and problematic leisure in both capital cities and regional centres across the country. It will also foreground future research planned by the authors.

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Translation of Alcohol Advertising Research: Les liaisons dangereuses

A cache of revealing letters now in the public domain hints at scandalous alcohol industry involvement in revisions of government guidelines on alcohol promotion. These documents imply guideline wording might actually matter, and that alcohol interests continue to be more enthusiastic consumers and translators of research findings on alcohol promotion than are government offices charged with protecting the public from alcohol-related harm.

Twenty-odd years ago in Australia, an associate professor at Curtin University noticed the alcohol industry had responded to his study of the Alcohol Beverages Advertising Code by revising it to protect key advertising practices. Bill Saunders had subjected alcohol advertising to public scrutiny, asking members of the public to rate ads using a scale based on the ABAC. Saunders urged researchers to enlist public support for more stringent codes by strategic use of media. However, public engagement by researchers involves the use of persuasive methods of communication, another way of translating research findings, and thus presents its own ethical risks.

In public engagement, researchers are exposed to certain communicative temptations: like advertisers, they must manage these themselves according to codes of practice like those implicit in only making comment in peer-reviewed publications. The common English expression ‘dangerous liaisons’ has obscured the better translation from the French ‘dangerous acquaintances’ inherent in a system where government regulators may find industry appeals more congenial than the exhortations of public health advocates. I use bibliographic documents manager Endnote to analyse these letters and other documents to explore ethical problems in research translation.

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Homebrew: a systematic literature review and homebrew case studies in Tonga, Tuvalu, Papua New Guinea and Marshall Islands

Homebrew is becoming a major issue in the Pacific region because of its inability to be monitored and regulated. The aim of this research is to discuss, explore and examine relevant literature regarding homebrew in the Pacific region and New Zealand. The second aim is an exploratory study analyzing a survey questionnaire of homebrew data collated from a homebrew questionnaire in Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Tuvalu, Tonga and Marshall Islands. A questionnaire was developed to investigate the participant’s history of homebrew as well as the reasons why they consume homebrew. The key questions that were asked in the surveys were based on the: history, reasons, effects of consuming homebrew and their perceptions towards homebrew. The data analysis included a review of common key themes and similarities. The literature shows that an increase in taxation or total prohibition of alcohol can lead to an increase in production and consumption of homebrew. Both parts one and two showed that homebrew is consumed at a young age. It is generally consumed in deserted areas such as bush, abandoned homes or in private dwellings. There are various reasons why the participants started consuming homebrew such as it being cheaper than commercial alcohol. Homebrew is also perceived as allowing people to become relaxed and enjoy themselves. Participants highlighted how it can also lead people becoming violent and starting arguments. Participants also stated they experienced heartburn, stomach aches and headaches as a result of consuming homebrew. Further research is needed to identify the impact of homebrew.

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Session 8

Smoking consumption

Chair: Michael Salter
Investing in Oneself: Smoking cessation in context

Motivation is portrayed as a key element in the success or failure of attempting to quit smoking. Moreover, some therapeutical approaches have been developed based on this assumption. This paper argues that motivation is theoretically structured around an artificially isolated and, hence, socially decontextualised individual. The concept of investment, from Second Language Acquisition, is proposed as an alternative. In order to do so, the theoretical background is first outlined. On the one hand, both tobacco smoking and abstinence maintenance are described not as individual affairs, solely related to biological features, but as social practices, i.e. activities involving participation in a community of practice. On the other hand, subjectivity is presented as multiple, changing, and a site of struggle, and identity as socially negotiated, rather than representing fixed, stable and unitary entities. In addition, social practices, subjectivity, and identity are all framed in a socially structured system of power relations. Then, the participation in a social practice driven by its potential profitability is introduced as an investment. This practice is further related to the aspirations of a changing identity, continuously repositioning itself in the network of power relations, struggling for the maintenance or improvement of the positions taken. Furthermore, a particular investment is explained as related to other, at times conflicting, investments, and to the continuous construction of an individual's identity. Finally, the implications of these conceptual shifts are explored.

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The Allure of Tobacco: Young women’s negotiation of cigarette smoking and gender identities

Cigarettes are a central part of consumer culture and are highly visible statements of identities: cigarettes are a fashionable prop that enables young women to ‘try on’ identities. Drawing on interview data with Australian young women smokers, I demonstrate that many of the young women buy, and will only smoke, ‘feminine’ packaged cigarettes, and they adopt gender-specific smoking styles that are informed by historical, yet still dominant, social constructions surrounding ‘appropriate’ smoking behaviour for women. Whilst cigarettes enable contemporary women to don an identity of glamorous femininity, fashionability, assertiveness, (hetero)sexuality, and confidence, the anti-smoking discourse has destabilised the place of cigarettes in the construction and performance of femininity. Taking a Foucauldian approach, I argue the vehement promotion of smoking as dangerous and unhealthy by the anti-smoking discourse, has the tacit effect of positioning smoking as a legitimate way to resist the authoritative claims of medical experts, and the characterisation of smoking as bad and deviant intensifies the allure for young women, who become attracted to a practice that is both hazardous to health and increasingly socially unacceptable. To conclude, I suggest that contemporary women smokers are engaged in a struggle around the effects of dissonant discourses on gender identity: smoking practices represent to themselves and others both a lack of femininity and idealised femininity.

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