

# DRUGS, CLUBS AND YOUNG PEOPLE: SOCIOLOGICAL AND PUBLIC HEALTH PERSPECTIVES

Bill Sanders (ed)

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This book brings together ten papers which aim to 'contextualise club drug use in the lives of ... young people', and 'explore and analyse behaviours common at raves and nightclubs through sociological and public health perspectives' (p.xii). Drugs, commonly used in clubs, include ecstasy and amphetamines, as well as LSD, ketamine, GHB and cocaine. Bill Sanders, in his Editor's Foreword, argues that this is an important area of study because: (1) 'clubbing' is very popular amongst young people; (2) clubbing defines a new youth culture; (3) there is a close relationship between clubbing and 'normalised' drug use; and (4) there has been a range of health and regulatory responses to club drug use.

The book is loosely divided into four sections. In the first of two introductory chapters, Sanders argues that clubbing should be seen as the latest in a long line of youth cultures. It is unique, however, because its adherents are not drawn from particular class locations and do not adopt a distinct, unambiguous style. Rather, it is a culture defined by the centrality of music. In Chapter two, Fiona Measham and Karenza Moore provide an account of the origins of rave research: its methods, politics and funding. They explore how, for rave and club researchers, the intertwining of personal and professional biographies has been important in the production of 'insider' knowledge.

The second section comprises three papers focusing on club drug use in New York. In the first, Dina Perrone (Chapter three) examines club drug use amongst a relatively affluent sample of young people. She outlines the norms, identities,

folk knowledge, and changing patterns and consequences of drug use, arguing that club drug use 'allowed the club kids to enter a carnivalesque reality where they forgot about their daily concerns' (p.37). The second New York paper, by Brian C. Kelly (Chapter four), focuses on suburban youth who frequent clubs in Manhattan. Kelly identifies and contrasts two types of risk assessment: that by 'professionals' and the 'folk models' developed by drug users. Professionals privilege danger in their risk assessments and therefore 'obscure the potential for rational decision making in the face of such danger' (p.63). In the third New York paper, Adam Isaiah Green (Chapter five) argues that club drug use is a strategic adaptation to urban gay sociality, which is characterised by casual sex, sexual competition and fleeting social ties. Club drug use reduces inhibition, increases sexual performance and facilitates a sense of community.

The third section of the book examines drug use in non-club settings. In the first of two papers, Stephen E. Lankenau (Chapter six) provides an overview of a relatively new and under-researched drug, ketamine. He traces its origins in the US and outlines current knowledge regarding the forms in which it is available, its patterns and modes of use, the profile of typical users, its effects and the range of harms related to its use. In the second paper, Zhao Helen Wu (Chapter seven), describes a survey of illicit drug use amongst young low-income women in Texas. She finds that those who use ecstasy are at high risk of substance use, are usually polydrug users, tend to use in private homes rather than in clubs or at raves, and indicate higher levels of stress than the users of other illicit drugs also surveyed in the study.

The final section comprises three papers dealing with club drug use outside the US and in the context of 'post-rave' culture, or the diversification in music, drug use and venues. Karen Joe Laidler and her colleagues (Chapter

eight) focus on the articulations between global dance culture and its local expression in Hong Kong. While the dance scene originated in large-scale organised events, problems of space and police opposition led to a range of smaller venues opening. They also explore the emergence of Cantonese pop music, the role of organised crime and the ways in which class distinctions are made. In his empirical contribution to the book, Sanders (Chapter nine) argues, on the basis of his research in a London nightclub, that ecstasy use is unequivocally normalised and club security staff play a central role in its supply. Finally, Silverstone (Chapter ten) problematises the notion of the 'night-time economy', which, he argues, is actually three distinct economies: rave space, pub space and urban space. He urges an analytical re-prioritising of race, gender and class, and compares and contrasts the three spaces according to their relationships with capitalism, violence, policing and social control.

There is much to admire in this book. Measham and Moore's standout contribution on personal/professional intersections opens up a new area of investigation that, as they rightly argue, is central but unacknowledged in club studies. Kelly's methodological innovation – investigating the large club scene in Manhattan through preliminary mapping followed by more in-depth investigation

– provides some key pointers to future studies. Likewise, the chapters by Green and Sanders more than adequately fulfil the book's aim of contextualising club drug use through sociological perspectives, and Lankenau's chapter is an informative introduction to ketamine.

It is also, however, a somewhat disappointing book. As someone who has published in both youth studies and the drug field, I was looking forward to reading it but found the quality and focus uneven. Perhaps one of the problems with a field like clubbing, which has received a lot of scholarly attention in recent years, is finding something new to say; a state of affairs evident in several of the chapters. I had also hoped for greater critical engagement with various literatures. For example, in a book about young people and drugs, there are only passing references to youth studies. 'Risk' is also central to several papers but they ignore key references in both the drug literature (on 'risk priorities') and in sociology more generally. And Silverstone's criticism of the analytical invisibility of gender and class in club studies is equally applicable to several of the papers in this collection. Despite these reservations, however, the strengths identified above make the book a useful contribution to the literature on drugs, clubs and young people.

## BREAST CANCER AND THE POST-SURGICAL BODY: RECOVERING THE SELF

Samantha Crompvoets

*Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan 2006, 177 pp, GBP 45, ISBN 1403999007*

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This book sets out to explore the lived experience of Australian women who have had breast cancer surgery, in particular how they (re)construct and 'perform' their post-surgical bodies. The book starts from the position

that women who have had breast surgery are offered no space by the dominant breast cancer culture, or by a broader sexist society, to redefine their post-surgical bodies as complete or feminine without two matching breasts. The author argues that, in the prevailing cultural context, women are expected to regain two breasts by either wearing prostheses or by undergoing breast reconstruction.

The book is organised in five main chapters, followed by a concluding chapter. The literature review in Chapter one frames the rest of the book