

The Politics of Crystal Meth

**Gay Men Share Stories of
Addiction and Recovery**

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Universal Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida
USA • 2005

*The Politics of Crystal Meth: Gay Men Share Stories of Addiction
and Recovery*

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Universal Publishers
Boca Raton, Florida • USA
2005

ISBN: 1-58112-452-X

www.universal-publishers.com

This book is dedicated to the ten gay men who had the courage to come forward and share their personal stories about meth addiction. We as a community can only make a difference by working with, not against, each other in stopping this new epidemic in our community.

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Acknowledgments

The only people with whom you should try to get even are those who have helped you. ~John E. Southard

While an acknowledgement section of a book often sounds like an Academy Award acceptance speech, the clichés that follow should not distract from the sincerity of the feelings of appreciation contained therein.

As they say a friendship is not a big thing, but its a million little things. And I'm lucky to have some of the best friends in the world. However, it's impossible to acknowledge all their support and contributions throughout my many years. Specifically, I thank Bryan Hughes, for his longtime support and friendship. He is truly is the best DJ in San Francisco. Also, I thank Eric and Hilary Tatum for their love and years of encouragement. I thank Sergio and Tuc for always giving me advice and a couch to crash on when I'm in New York. Of course I need to say thanks to my two "Graces", Gina and Joanne for making my nine month Iowa experience somewhat tolerable, but the students at Drake University still need work on their homophobia issues. Truly, I feel for sorry for any gay student there. I thank Frank Clark, Dave Kaplan, Dave Mohr and Cassie Clemmons for everything each one has taught me. They've all been gifts in my life.

I must thank my partner Wayne. He has taught me that love is more than holding someone's hand, but it's looking outward towards a future, while still acknowledging the present. His support, kindness, humor, intelligence and strength is unwavering and still surprises me on a daily basis. Even when he is away we are close in heart. Simply, he is my best friend.

A Personal Note

I saw this project as an opportunity to reach out to a lot of gay men on a very important subject in our community. Crystal meth addiction is the pink elephant in the room that gay men are not talking about. Hopefully, books like this, along with websites, such as lifeormeth.com, are creating much needed dialogue in our community.

What I have found during my research was that gay men walk an interesting path when it comes to substance abuse. Some parts of our community support and encourage drug use. In fact, many of the younger men I interviewed spoke of a peer pressure to use meth at the clubs. Overall, gay men who use meth need to hear that they are not alone, they are not bad and that they can regain their lives. They shouldn't have to wear a Scarlet T on their brow if they ask for help. Also, our community needs to support gay men who don't use. So, if you're using meth, don't offer a bump to the guy next to you.

Having worked in academia and the financial fields, I discovered this book to be more than I ever dreamed. When I write academic papers they lack the human emotion a project like this develops. And getting to know the gay men I interviewed was a very empowering experience. These men are heroes. Each one has gone through so much. Most of them lost jobs and friends. Some lost everything they owned. A few of them ended in jail. All of them have gone a journey and emerged a better person for having done so. Each man who participated expressed one superseding concern: "If I could help someone else get sober or keep him from using meth in the first place; if I can reach one other person through my own hellish experience than at least I accomplished something."

I'm honored to portray their stories here.

I've always been a libertarian when it came to drug use, but not with meth. This one is wicked and insidious in the way it can damage your soul. Many of the men asked if I

ever used meth. The answer is yes. I did it mostly when I attended circuit parties in the mid to late 1990s. However, I no longer use meth, and haven't used it in a long time.

But I'm not unlike the men in this book. I didn't have better morals, upbringing, education, job, IQ or financial resources. In fact, there wasn't much dissimilarity at all in our growing up gay in America. All of us spent teenage years filled with shame, guilt, depression, hate and homophobia. And as this book demonstrates these issues add fuel to the out of control meth fire. Just as we learned from the AIDS epidemic in the early 1980s we can't depend on the heterosexual community to help us. So its time our community reaches out and embraces each one of us. Our community can no longer stand by and watch brothers die from the disease of addiction. It's time we fought back.

CHAPTER 1

21st Century New Epidemic

“If the devil had invented a drug to lure gay men, it would be crystal.” – Bob Hattoy – longtime AIDS activist and recovering crystal addict.

Mr. Hattoy, a former Clinton administration official, wrote this statement in an article for Gay.com in Spring 2005. He concludes, “We have to hate the addiction, but help the addict.” His testimony demonstrates the hold of the drug crystal methamphetamine on some gay men's consciousness. Recently, gay men's stories of meth addiction and the havoc it caused in their lives are appearing in the media. Also, the same media only a few months ago reported of a "supervirus" case, involving a gay meth user in New York City who contracted a rare, drug-resistant strain of HIV through unsafe sex, shedding light on the connection between crystal meth use and rising HIV and STD infection rates among gay men. All over the country, HIV educators, politicians, AIDS activists, drug counselors and writers are sounding the alarm to the dangers of meth use. As the distressing personal stories of gay crystal meth addicts continue to arrive, and traditional safer-sex messages seem to be losing hold, the LGBTQ community is facing what has been termed "the other epidemic".

“This is the most destructive drug I have ever dealt with,” asserts Walter Odets, a Berkeley Clinical psychologist with over twenty-five years of experience specializing in gay men's health. “It gives people a sense of empowerment, but soon their lives just unravel,” he continues. “It's like sticking a knitting needle in their brain. Even the patients who use it very infrequently, once or twice a month, find that before too long, it starts to characterize their lives.”

Another layer to this epidemic is the role of HIV. Among gay and bisexual meth users seeking drug treatment,

HIV positive participants were more likely than HIV-participants to report medical problems, histories of genital gonorrhea, use of injection methods, and more sexual partners. (Shoptaw, Reback and Freese, 2002).

“I’ve heard from dozens of men who might not initially be bottoming that crystal makes people instant bottoms. It increases anal sensitivity. It puts them in a position where they can be at risk to getting the virus,” says Michael Shernoff, a professor at the Columbia University School of Social Work. Shernoff is author of the upcoming book "Without Condoms: Unprotected Sex, Gay Men and Barebacking”.

In this chapter, with the help of some of the leading physicians and researchers in the field, we’ll look at the statistics that detail crystal meth's impact on the contemporary gay male. We’ll then examine oppression theory as a possible reason why gay men abuse crystal meth.

The statistics that surround crystal meth abuse are staggering:

- More than 12 million Americans have tried methamphetamine, and 1.5 million are regular users, according to National Institute of Drug Abuse.
- Recent studies show that 15 to 17 percent of gay men have used meth in the last three months and as many as 20 percent have used in the last year, according to Centers for Disease Control & Prevention.
- In Los Angeles, nearly one out of three gay men who tested positive for HIV last year reported also using crystal, and that percentage has tripled since 2001, according to a new study of 19,000 by Los Angeles Gay Lesbian Center.
- In New York, 50 percent of gay men who admitted to using drugs or alcohol in the previous year had also tried crystal meth – up from 10 percent of gay men surveyed

in bars and clubs in 1998, according to research by the Center for HIV/AIDS Educational Studies & Training.

- Methamphetamine's high lasts for 6 to 12 hours, and 50% of the drug is removed from the body in 12 hours.
- Meth's street value is approximately \$3,000 per pound. An eight ball of meth or one eighth of an ounce is enough to get 15 people high.
- Meth is often used by gay men to initiate, enhance and prolong sexual encounters (Halkitus et al., 2001; Reback, 1997).
- Meth is commonly used by gay men who frequent locales that facilitate sexual behavior, such as bars, sex clubs, and large "Circuit Parties" (Mattison, 2001, Lewis & Ross, 1995; Waldorff et al., 1990).
- Meth is highly associated with risky sexual behavior (Molitor et al., 1998; Purcell et al., 2001; Reback and Grella, 1999; Shoptaw et al., 1998; Eggan et al., 1996).
- Meth use is related to increased numbers of sexual partners, decreased use of condoms, prostitution, sex with known IDUs (Molitor et al., 1998) and an increased likelihood of being HIV-infected or having a STD (Chesney et al., 1998, Molitor et al., 1998).
- 84% of HIV+ MSM reported engaging in risky sex (e.g., UAI, anonymous sex) while high on Meth (Semple, Patterson and Grant, 2002).
- High relative prevalence of amphetamine use among MSM/IDUs (66%) vs. heterosexual/ IDUs (24%). IDUs may be involved in this trend (Bluthenthal et al, 2001).

Oppression Theory

When presented with these statistics one wonders why gay men continue to use a drug that is so harmful and dangerous to themselves and our community. Central to our understanding of the 21st century gay man in terms of meth addiction is the realization that for the most part the gay individual is still oppressed. Thus, we still constitute an

oppressed minority in present day society. Therefore, I'll make the argument that often the majority of our behavioral and attitudinal responses, stereotypically considered reflective of gay personality traits, are in reality a response to societal oppression and persecution.

“So many gay men deal with prejudice and hate growing up,” says Dr. Joseph Neisen, Executive Director of San Francisco’s New Leaf. “Even when you live in an area like San Francisco, a gay Mecca, that self hate, or gay damage, still exists”.

Gay Damage

There are several reasons for “gay damage”. First, the refusal of mainstream America to accept the gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and questioning (LGBTQ) individual as a political equal in this society continues to divide the gay community. Next, mainstream America also declines to acknowledge that there exists repression of sexual identity. Hence, claims of discrimination are thought to be either “gross exaggerations” or “uncommon occurrences”. However, the truth is that they are neither. In fact, it is the reluctance of straight society to acknowledge the need for homosexual equality that often gives the rise to the continuance of negative gay stereotypes.

Additionally, American straight society’s hypocrisy in giving gays the tenants of civil rights and equal justice exacerbates and complicates the problem. For example, gays do not have the right to serve in the U.S. military as an out “gay individual”. Ironic, given that U.S. military personnel served alongside out gay British military in the on-going Iraq conflict. Also, gay individuals do not have the federal right to marry. Yet, at the same time the Religious Right condemns the gay lifestyle as being “too promiscuous”. Gays loose either way in the eyes of the Religious Right and, for the most part, those of the American straight society as well.

“For most of my patients who use meth it is about self esteem,” reports Odet. “It instantly gives gay men self esteem. A guy does a bump of crystal and then looks into a mirror and suddenly he feels like the most attractive guy in the world. That’s a hard reaction to fight.”

Oppression occurs when a person is made to feel worthless and inferior. Basically, oppression suppresses the natural self-expression and emotions of someone. It can be overt as well as covert attitudes and behaviors that inhibit a person from being themselves. The person feels restricted in behavior and speech and becomes powerless. Often those who have been, or are currently being oppressed, describe themselves as having a lack of rights and eligibility as well as feelings of low self worth, alienation, isolation and bullying.

“There is a clear relationship between depression and self medication,” says Julie David, executive director, CHAMP. “Whether its alcohol or drug abuse it’s clearly the result of chaos in one’s life.”

But with all the improvement in terms of gay representation and acknowledgement, gay men should be doing better in terms of oppression – right?

“It’s both the best and worst time of being gay,” adds David. “Gay men still live in the shadow of the AIDS epidemic. They continually live in a world of high risk for HIV. And we don’t ever talk about that. We sort of sweep it under the rug. But this has a long-term effect on gay men’s psyches - how they feel about who they are.”

“One of the big hurdles we must overcome is helping a generation or more that have lived years of trauma and years of loss,” says David. “The reality is, gay men are using meth to cope.”

As both Odet and David suggest, oppression develops out of a pattern of shame, guilt, and fear. All of us bring to the table some type of prejudice. However, most of us do not engage in violent or negative actions toward a particular group. In fact, most of us have lofty democratic

ideals about equality and freedom for everyone, regardless of race, gender, religious choice, sexual orientation, etc. For example, in my lectures my students always hear my mantra that diversity rocks! But the reality is that we live, work, and attend school in areas where we will have as little contact with groups different from ourselves as possible. Ironically, incapable of living up to our own ideals, we often find ourselves being stricken by strong guilt when we encounter members of other groups. For example, we might lower our eyes when we see them walking on the street – and unconsciously feel guilty for doing so. This guilt and fear in the oppressor generates anger and hostility patterns in the oppressed. This increase of anger in oppressed individuals can have devastating and long-lasting effects; as they, as a result of their sense of total rejection, often begin to strike out, surprisingly more against themselves than anyone else, in self-destructive behavioral patterns. The oppressor and the oppressed thus constantly produce each other and both end up as victims, yet only the oppressor possesses any authority to change the process. The oppressor will usually attempt to disclaim all responsibility by looking at extreme examples of oppression, such as the "Ku Klux Klan," "Nazis" "skinheads" etc. These extreme examples believe they've missed out on the "American Ideal" or the "American Dream" to justify their violent actions against the oppressed groups.

Power Drug

“Speed is a male drug,” says Odet. “In a phallic sense, generally, the drug is about power, sexual ability and potency. That’s why gay men take to it so easily.”

If we look at crystal meth in terms of power, we see that oppression is the result of privilege or those with power. Privilege is the rights, advantages, and immunities enjoyed by a small, usually powerful group or class, especially to the disadvantage of others. Unearned privilege is the privilege or advantage one gets just because one belongs to a valued

group in society; not because of individual efforts which earned them, but simply because of involuntarily membership in a privileged group. In America it is those individuals, who make up a minority to the majority, that we identify as being oppressed. For example, ethnic groups, women, the elderly, the handicapped, HIV positive individuals, religious groups, lower class or impoverished individuals, lesbians, gay, bisexual, and trans-gendered people can be described as oppressed because they're all members of socially identified minority groups. Therefore, if drug use is a response to oppression than we can reason gay men's meth use is in reaction to having a minority status in straight majority world.

“We are talking about a margined group,” says Yves-Michel Fontaine, project coordinator for Gay Men Health Crisis. “You have to talk about meth in that context. Plus, we are a fragmented community and meth provides an instant connection. Its not a real connection, but it seems like one for the user.”

Are Gays a Minority?

In the early 1970s, pioneering gay activist, Frank Kamey described the homosexual as a member of a minority group. Kamey's legendary work suggested that gays fit the criteria of minority group because they possess distinguishing minority characteristics, that they experience prejudicial and discriminatory treatment on the basis of individual identity, and they are often reacted to in a depersonalized manner. Hence, as a consequence, gays have developed a distinctive subculture with a sense of community and acceptance among its members. Yet, at the same time this community condones hypersexual behavior and drug use.

Today many gays argue whether our community actually possesses a distinctive subculture. I argue that if one views this as an essential characteristic to the definition of gays as a minority group, it becomes necessary to define

the gay community with its own subculture. This can be debated. However, what is not debatable is the fact that the aggregate gay individual experiences, and continues to experience, significant social discrimination simply because of their sexual identity. I believe all members of the gay community exist in an environment that views gays as being incompatible with other minority status groups.

American straight society still reserves the possibility to deny gays status, rights, privileges and entitlements that any other minority status group can hold.

“Oppression of gays is a reality,” adds Michel Fontaine. “But it’s a matter of degrees. And it’s not a physical oppression, which other groups experienced, because we are oppressed in our minds. We are still being told we are second rate when we can’t marry or serve in the military openly.”

Some gay men, especially those of color, might disagree with this notion of minority and oppression status. I’m not trying to lessen what other minority groups have suffered through to get where they are today. I would be the first to argue that while things have improved for many minority groups, there remains, sadly, a decidedly negative racial element which still casts an ugly shadow in today’s society—no matter how much anyone tries to deny it, we all know it’s there.

Notwithstanding, I think it’s important to discuss the continual exclusion of gays by straights. Having said that, let’s review what appears to be the general “straight attitude” about gays, and analyze the potential patterns of exclusion faced by a gay individual as an after effect of outing themselves to straight society.

Several studies detail that the general straight attitude towards gay people is still stereotypically negative. When I was researching another book on gay conservatives, I often found that gays were lumped into the category of “deviant”. Gays were described as sexually abnormal, perverted, effeminate, and pedophiles. I even discovered one study

from the 1970s, which detailed that gays were ranked 39th as an outside or deviant group. The only group described as worse was the Nazis, ranked at number 40.

While the gay individual, or any other individual described as possessing a deviant trait, doesn't have to share the negative assessment with the surrounding community, they cannot help but be aware of the evaluations and their implications. In fact, one stereotype of a deviant characteristic could be used as the basis for exclusion for rights often held by other minority holders. Add on the characteristic of drug addict and the exclusion of the individual becomes greater.

Exclusion

Patterns of exclusion appear to take form in three ways. First, there is the denial of federal legal rights. Yes, I do know several states, such as California offer domestic partnership protection; however, this can vary from state to state. Nonetheless, most gays don't always have federal legal protection in terms of getting benefits and privileges from being in a committed relationship, in the way that straights can. For example, visiting a partner in hospital when he or she is sick can prove to be a problem for the non-family, significant other in a gay committed relationship.

Next, there is the denial of occupational safety if a gay individual was out about their sexual orientation at work; such as self-identified gays not having the right to openly serve in the military while other minority groups can.

Last, there is a denial of one's basic humanity. A good example of this is gays not having the federal right to marry, while other groups do. Although Massachusetts does allow same-sex marriage for gay individuals, other states do not have to recognize those marriages like those of heterosexual couples.

Oppression and Capitalism

In the 1970s, Bob McCubbin, in his book, *The Roots of Lesbian & Gay Oppression: A Marxist View*, clearly showed that all oppression is firmly established in the restraints of private property and the handcuffs of class society. His historical research reviews patriarchal periods and examines eras before classes existed. Since most scholars believe homosexuality wasn't an identity until the 1800s, it wasn't till then that homosexuality began to be stigmatized by society.

He explains how capitalism, along with racism and sexism, all played a role in the oppression of gays. In fact, he believes capitalism has oppressed gays in particular, because of the "closet", which he views as the outcome of a social system of ostracism and circumstantial repression.

McCubbin believes that the oppression of gays and lesbians, just like the oppression of women, is fixed in the nature of capitalist society and the issues it promotes. He adds that capitalism depends strongly on the straight family, which furnishes responsibility for the workers, the sick, the elderly and obviously the next generation of workers. Thus, the hostility towards gays begins from the notion that the gay man exaggerates the idea that there is only one possible form of family. Specifically, it weakens the argument that sex is only for reproduction. Homosexuals are denounced as unnatural because their sexual activity cannot create children. Finally, the marketing of hatred (homophobia) for gays is also a very effective way of separating and ruling the workers and the poor. He theorizes a time when a socialist revolution, in which liberation of all oppressed people, joining together (including gay individuals), will be a fundamental prerequisite for overthrowing the majority. Also, one can take McCubbin's argument to another level by stating that by keeping the oppressed (or worker) intoxicated it allows the oppressor (or ruling class) greater control.

McCubbin believes that the essence of gay oppression is in the class system; therefore capitalism might

not be the best way to end gay oppression. In fact, he would question the “boosting” of gay "business power" or the uniting of all classes within the "gay community". He believes the appearance of capitalists in the gay movement is a serious problem, and not part of the solution. He theorizes that gay middle class not only defends capitalism, but also uses it as way to keep gay individuals oppressed. For example, it redirects the struggle into safe business networks, like advertising in magazines, marketing of gay consumer products, and/or trying to make gay pride marches into innocuous celebrations. This could explain the gay political movement’s disappointment with the LGBTQ Washington DC lobbying group, the Human Rights Campaign, for spending more money on a new building and fund raising dinners during a period when the President advocated a federal amendment to ban same sex marriage.

Another example is the recent complaints toward the gay news magazine, the *Advocate*, for featuring young shirtless actors who play gay on television on their covers. In fact, as of this writing, neither the *Advocate* nor *Out* magazine has ever done a cover story on the meth problem in the gay community – only features, and usually ones concerning an actor’s drug problem. These examples give merit to McCubbin’s claim gays are no longer a political threat to the capitalist establishment--as long as they can march and consume products at same time. Again, conspiracy theorist could make the leap of faith that gay men who are high on meth no longer present a political threat to the establishment.

I should also note that gay historian, John D’Emilio, in his 1980 essay, *Capitalism and Gay Identity*, argued that the gay individual developed as a result of capitalism. He posits that capitalism required a system of labor based on wages, rather than on either a largely self-sufficient household or slavery. Salary gave individuals relative autonomy, which was the necessary material condition of the making lesbianism and gayness. Nevertheless, before we

begin debating which point of view is the correct one, it's very important that we spend time gaining an understanding of oppression theory.

Oppression Characteristics

Multiculturalism finds its origins in Marxist writings based on the so-called "Oppression Theory." Oppression Theory assumes that the rise of western culture was due to ethno-centrist, colonialism, imperialism, and racism."¹

A major focus of oppression theory research has involved attempts to delimit the empirical relationship between membership in a marginal situation and the development of psychological traits said to characterize the marginal man. That is, under what circumstances is ambivalence inherent in the individual's social position reflected in the form of psychological disease or ambivalence? In seeking answer to this question, attention has focused both upon the individual's feeling of commitment or identification with significant social groups in his life and his perceptions of barriers which prevent his full participation within these groups.

In general, it can be hypothesized that the greater the individual's identification with conventional society and the greater his perception of barriers to full participation in that society, the greater the degree to which he will display evidence of being oppressed.

Characteristics of oppression, then, will be most pronounced in those individuals who identify with the larger, conventional society while simultaneously perceiving a barrier to their full acceptance in that society. Thus, they are socially constructed as being worthy. On the other hand, those who believe gay men represent an oppressed group would argue that they are a politically weak group. This

¹Amin, Samir, *Neo-Colonialism in West-Africa* 197.

Basically, he states that the United States became what it is by taking advantage of other countries.

weakness impacts individuals who will feel the most uncertain about the stability of their significant social relationships, an uncertainty that should be reflected in their psychological characteristics.

While both the patterns of identification and the perception of barriers are necessary for the development of oppression characteristics, the effects of these variables can best be examined separately. To the extent that the individual with oppression characteristics accepts the perspectives or values of the larger society, he or she should feel more uncomfortable with his or her own situation. Thus, it can be hypothesized that the greater the identification with conventional society, the greater the degree to which the individual will show evidence of oppression.

In addition to the patterns of identification, one can also examine the effects of barriers to acceptance on the development of oppression theory. The existence of barriers provides actual or potential evidence of the oppression characteristics' lessened evaluation in the eyes of the larger society and calls into question the individual's place within the conventional social order.

I believe barriers are of two types, those that are anticipated, and those that are actually experienced by the individual. These need not be empirically related in that the anticipation of barriers may be sufficient to constrain the individual's behavior so that he will be ready, if he is to ever experience actual discriminatory sanctions directed against him. Both, however, threaten the stability of the individual's social position, and thus it could be suggested that the greater the perceived barriers (anticipated or experienced) to full acceptance in conventional society, the greater the evidence of oppression as demonstrated by drug use. Therefore, when an LGBTQ person is told that they cannot serve openly in the military they feel less about themselves.

While both identification with conventional society and the perception of barriers should be associated with

increased signs of oppression, it should not be forgotten that these individuals are also involved with a non-conventional social group. By shifting his primary allegiance to the out-group, the individual should be less affected by the possibility of rejection from the larger society. It can therefore be suggested that the greater the individual's identification with non-conventional others, in this case, with the gay community, the less evidence of oppression. But if the community supports or tolerates drug abuse the greater the likelihood an individual will use drugs.

While recognizing the significance of the exclusion from social groups as being basic to gaining an understanding of the psychological situation of the oppression theory, it's suggested that this uncertainty is most severely experienced by the individual in situations where conflicting cultural prescriptions also exist. However, the theory has failed to look at cultural conflict, focusing instead upon identification with, and exclusion from, the dominant social group. It can be hypothesized that the greatest evidence of oppression will be found in those individuals who identify with both the conventional and non-conventional social groups simultaneously.

External Effects of Oppression

Privileged Group

Better education
Better employment opportunities
Better job satisfaction
Better pay
Less unemployment

Oppressed Group

Worse education
Worse employment opportunities
Worse job satisfaction
Worse pay
More unemployment

Internal Effects of Oppression

Privileged Group

Greater visibility
More positive role models
Less negative stereotypes
More acceptance
Less isolation

Oppressed Group

Less visibility
Less positive role models
More negative stereotypes
Less acceptance
More isolation

Social Participation

While attention has been focused upon the individual's subjective view of his situation in accounts of the development of oppression, relatively little attention has been given to patterns of social involvement as being a variable intervening between occupancy of a marginal situation and consequent attitudinal responses. It is assumed that these patterns of social participation represent attempts to cope with the tensions engendered by occupancy of a marginal situation, as well as it can be assumed that they are differently effective in achieving their goal. To the extent that this is true, they may be seen as significant influences affecting individuals' attitudes towards the self and other social objects. That is, varying patterns of social involvement with both conventional and non-conventional subculture can be seen as having a differential effect on the appearance of oppression, in addition to influencing the individual's overall level of adjustment and the pattern of attitudes he holds towards significant objects in his environment.

The role of participation within the gay community has been the subject of some discussion. Autobiographical accounts and the writings of gay activists, such as Michelangelo Signorile, have stressed the importance of sub-cultural involvement in proving that the individual with the ideological and social supports is necessary to neutralize the negative evaluations of the larger society. By means of participation with like others, the individual not only acquires a more positive sense of identity, but is able to