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1. Introduction

Like others in this volume, this chapter discusses how shifting forms of sociality generated by the forces associated with a leisure society challenge us to locate and calibrate the extent of new modes of harm. Taking as its cue the agenda sketched by Smith and Raymen (2016) to consider the distinctive elements of contemporary (leisured) culture and its multiple outcomes this contribution seeks to scrape away at the veneer of civility, narratives of declining violence (now quickly reversing it seems) and notions of tolerance to examine the kinds of harm associated with leisure pursuits in the form of extreme forms of pleasure and violence found within virtual spaces (pornography and videogames) and holiday leisure more broadly (sex tourism). Common to these examples is the way in which new media systems have generated new possibilities for creating more or less enclosed image and experience-spaces that operate along and underneath everyday displays of civility and good conduct. Yet many of these spaces are characterised by the soliciting of (un)willing subjects, subjugating and potentially dehumanising encounters with other people, or virtual renderings of them (Cacho, 2013). The wider consequences of these spaces is the focus of the discussion that follows, presented as a kind of open, concerned series of questions about where these socio-technical changes are moving human experience toward.

The folding of social media into daily life has provided newfound opportunities for harmful (Makin and Morczek, 2015), voyeuristic (Presdee, 2000) and sadistic encounters (Gossett and Byrne, 2002). Without acknowledging these new combinations of social conduct our sense of the limits and range of human behaviour in leisured societies is lacking and potentially negligent to those harmed by it. The core argument in this chapter (building on that offered in Atkinson and Rodgers, 2015) is that such spaces of cultural exception (exceptional in the sense of being more or less exempted from forms of social or legal regulation) are like boxes in which real and virtual harms are enacted without prohibiton or sanction. The logic of these virtual spaces (watching games or pornography on phones or computers) extends into the real spaces of organised sex parties, 'unregulated' cage fighting (Salter and Tomsen, 2012) and sites of sex tourism, much of which has been facilitated and co-ordinated using new media platforms. These 'murder boxes' may facilitate darker and instinctual elements of social behaviour, which are foregrounded and celebrated in these spaces and online cultures focused on them (Bray, 2011). This substrate of apparently contained activity is made deniable or capable of being suppressed in the domain of public life which looks towards notions of tolerance, social equity and progressive changes that include new attempts at consciousness raising around women, sexuality and ethnicity. More importantly, the drive-based associations of the kinds of activity witnessed in much male gaming (Salter, 2017) and pornography 'culture' act as a preventive for measures to reduce related harms for fear of checking the release of desire that such spaces represent. Denial lies at the heart of this culture and, finding echoes in the work of Sykes and Matza (1957), is further extended by the powerful mediating force of new technology platforms and digital culture more broadly in

which screen culture has come to be a seductive distraction and enveloping aspect of daily experience (Stiegler, 2011; Farman, 2013).

2. An atlas of the cultural substrate

As we have seen so far in this volume, the hedonism, excess and pleasures of today's leisure society is connected to a range of harmful impacts. Technology, politics, culture, economics and society operate in ways that rework or reformat social behavior, enabling the expression of desire through new media systems. Within this mélange of social life, technology and human desire is threaded a complex geography and experiences of real and simulated pain, humiliation, abuse and bloody violence that are relayed, copied and repeated. This world is also expanding in line with capitalist economic forces as our discrete desires responded to by algorhythmically tailored suggestions and pathways presided over by social media corporations who face little or no opposition or regulatory oversight by national governments. These forces are deeply connected to the emergence of complex leisure society and a culture firmly focused on high definition screens and networked media. It is a land of voyeurism that Presdee (2000) had presciently anticipated as a culture enabled by technology to generate heightened forms of exhilaration but also new forms of victimization. These formations have been given new momentum by aggregations of media infrastructures and technologies, new understandings of the capacity of cameras, simulations and the desire to attain pleasure and satisfaction regardless of its consequences. The apparent excesses of games like *Grand Theft Auto* have become everyday social reference points, played by young children and adults and recognized as part of a multi-billion dollar global industry whose boundaries cannot or will not be regulated, and certainly not by parents whose own childhoods are extended by new social norms of personal fulfilment (Hayward, 2013). Similarly pornography has become banal, sexuality emasculated by brief interactions with web media on mobile devices akin to the role of the orgasmatrons of Woody Allen's film *Sleeper* (1973) in which a machine space is engaged by couples for instant sexual gratification without the requirement of physical contact. The theme of constant climax is ever-present in a culture in which social actors easily scroll through music tracks to find the best bits, engage in unending orgiastic killing in videogames or witness pornographic phantasmagorias of unending release. Whatever you want, you can have it, whenever you want it.

This chapter is an attempt to think through the sociological and criminological consequences of this confluence of forces, but a warning before we proceed. If you are comfortable with the possibilities of our cultural-technological condition, you know little of its limits and the substrate of harms operating today. On the other hand, if you are already disconcerted or fearful of what those limits may be, it is important to realise it is very likely that we have only just begun to see what a networked society may do to allow the expression of violent and libidinal impulses. This chapter tries to locate and calibrate the extent of these changes and to start feeling our way, through steps of denial, acceptance and understanding. We may begin by considering the following:

- There are now around 422,000 youtube videos relating to various forms of filmed beheadings taken from film media shot staged by terrorists, as self-evident fakes or culled from footage taken from videogames;

- In March 2017 Swedish prosecutors began investigating the filming of a rape which was live-streamed on Facebook;
- In the same month the same platform had been used to broadcast a gang rape in Chicago in which around forty watched the act online but did not report it. It is now possible to locate hundreds of internet news items detailing rapes filmed using mobile phones that have not been broadcast;
- In August 2017 the Guardian newspaper reported at length the case of a woman who had committed suicide on a railway line outside Paris and which she had managed to live-stream via her phone;
- The ability to share footage of kills and peak moments in videogames is now hardwired into the controllers gamers use.

Such examples highlight the way in which a confluence of technology, social change and new harms are emerging. Their emergence indexes the way in which desires and drives focused on sexual and physically violent gratification have been facilitated by media systems and corporate providers. The financial gains to be made by facilitating a substrate of inhumane, violent and sexually motivated encounters brings to mind Packard's hidden persuaders (1957) raised to a new intensity of control and facilitation as they provide more or less 'free' services in exchange for the Faustian pact of information on almost all aspects of our most personal lives.

Documented cases of harms generated by new media hint at the volume of fleeting, troubling images and experiences, but also an awareness that there is a much larger undocumented problem. Like our unknowable subconscious the world of mediated horrors is similarly unscalable or capable of being apprehended by us. This economy of desire (Stiegler, 2011) generates spaces of fleeting images whose provenance is often not known but which bring us closer to a desire for the real, often characterised by the expression of our most inhuman and unchecked cravings.

No one needs to work hard to locate the most extreme aspects of our culture. What constitutes the edge of our conventions and norms has been reshaped dramatically by the interaction between technology, social media systems and human society. A quick Youtube search, accessible via any open access web terminal, will offer an instructive example through a family's large flat-screen domestic television and can be used to locate large numbers of beheadings, sadistic pornography or voyeuristic 'fail' videos. Our capacity to witness terror, subjection and violence is not only historically unprecedented but also comes at a time in which the dominant narrative of our time is the common diagnosis that we live in a period of historically unparalleled pacifity and humanity (Pinker, 2011). Despite such reassuring observations we are surrounded by, and accumulate, images of simulated and real enactments of absolute barbarism while various forms of abuse and violence permeate the experience of various social geographies and groups.

Recent treatments of the criminological project have stressed the need to engage with the deeper mechanisms that generate forms of harm, violence and human misery, many of which have been sidelined by conventional treatments (Hall and Winlow, 2015). Such an 'ultra-realist' criminology locates harm in often the hidden violence and destructive drives operating

at the core of contemporary capitalism. Such a criminology demands we stop denying the kinds of violence and harm that the prevailing political economy, inequality and ecological catastrophe generates, much of which lies uncharted or unacknowledged by social research. These concerns appear to have moved critical criminology away from some cultural framings that were seen to have engaged and banalised forms of transgression while arguably leaving intact the deeper structures driving social harm (see Ferrell, Hayward and Young, 2008, for example). Nevertheless, in the present moment it seems that there is utility in considering new and harmful cultural formations as well as how these have been animated by the combined effects of profit motives, technological advances and the offer of immediate and their combined offer of unending gratification (Atkinson and Rodgers, 2015). The allure of these conditions appears to be generating anti-social and damaging effects over which control provides significant challenges and over which corporations have an interest in denying the extent of such harms (Banyward, 2016).

3. **The edges of our culture**

In the film, *Touching the Void* (2003) two climbers relate their over-confident foray into some of the most extreme mountaineering known globally. Counterposing interviewed talking heads with recreated scenes the, now older and perhaps wiser, climbers argue that they had regularly put themselves in extreme danger because everyday life appeared to offer so little to them in terms of experience and meaning. Such feelings are closely aligned with Lyng's (1995) argument that modes of leisure and existence that push against the boundaries of human life, despite their obvious risks, have become important aspects of social life in affluent, consumer societies. The film's climbers, seeking the purity and simplicity of the mountain environment, express a desire, however foolish or not, to push what might be regarded as a kind of secular goal of transcendence in which the body and mind seek out the edges of the possible and the real. As Shields (2011) suggests, social and creative endeavor is often driven by a hunger for the real and a desire to experience what is possible within life-worlds that are increasingly shaped by corporate messaging and a detachment of human subjectivity from a sense of meaning or authenticity. Faced with the decline or effectiveness of religious metanarratives both our finitude and socially competitive lives appear to drive more possessive and materialistic modes of being in which life is what we might take from it (Winlow and Hall, 2013). Such norms and behaviours are also implicated in a kind of denial of mortality or its bracketing-off, particularly through forms of conspicuous consumption activity (Fromm, 1973).

The pursuit of consumption, social excess and experience can be interpreted as a kind of attempt at refusing the possibility of death, or the terrors that its acknowledgment generate for us. Nevertheless, the occasional glance at our mortality provokes yawning moments of anxiety and meaningless which propel the subject to abandonment and excess in the name of realizing a, however brief, position or status among others experiencing a similar fate (Smith, 2014). These ideas can be related to the thesis of our article (Atkinson and Rodgers, 2015) in which we argued that the reality of harm today should, at least in part, be engaged through considering the extremities of conduct facilitated by the virtual spaces of interactive videogaming and pornography. In such spaces, we observed, social rights and human identities may be suspended in order that the pursuit of pleasure is enabled and stripped of

its social reference points. One of the key points of that article was to reflect on what we saw as some of the more uncomfortable realities underlying these spaces and their increasing embeddedness within everyday social life. Criticism of these developments is regularly framed in terms of social prudishness or as a form of technological Ludditism by those are immersed users. Nevertheless, the darker aspects of new cultural spaces in which exception (see here Agamben, 2005) and the sacrifice of others appear as frequent script devices in a range of popular films and media, such as films like *Hostel, Player One* or Haneke's *Benny's Video*.

Much thrill-seeking today is located in a denial of harm, in forms of emotional glaciation and a diminishment of the recognition of humanity. To return to the story that *Touching the Void* offers, the search for 'thrills' and an abandonment of the self link to the themes of gross forays into excess and violence provided by Ballard. Ballard, as we know, was fascinated by how forms of psychopathology might be embraced under conditions that might otherwise be superficially deemed as utopian or highly desirable spaces and lifestyles. His work offers images of rape squads emerging from elite gated communities in the south of France (Ballard, 2000), residents of a new high rise block (1975) bloodily fighting those on other floors or of mass violence and empty consumption in shopping malls (2006). The dystopian components of these visions was strongly rooted in Ballard's own internment in the second world war and life lived during a time of camps, mass slaughter, concentrated homicide and gendered violence. Yet, viewed today, his ideas increasingly mesh with the puncturing of our sense of reality generated by periodic news coverage of online beheadings, torture, sexual slavery and basement violence (Atkinson and Blandy, 2017). An apparent decline in lethal violence, while ignoring its continuation in many places, also belies the way in which we see and understand violence in ways that offer a complex reweaving of the social experience in ways that we have not yet fully understood. One way of thinking about these changes is to understand the persistence of a geography of violence and abuse in many districts globally while the affluence of the north is associated with a search for reality (Seltzer, 1997) in film, news, internet and videogame representations, a reality that much of the world is seeking to escape.

Searching for the reality of violence today forces us to consider the harms and calibrate what we see in the kinds of voyeurism and immersion in increasingly spectacular and immersive realms in which images of social distress and online victimisation are apparent. One way of thinking about the image-saturated times we live in is to acknowledge its freedoms, new modes of social exchange and the possibilities of political mobilisation, as well as new knowledge of elites and their practices. Yet this liberal position may also appear tyrannical. This is because it effectively denies the possibility of harm that may stem from the repositioning of our psychic needs, held by Freud (1939) to have been successfully and necessarily checked in our pursuit of civility, which has not arrived through our capacity to casually express hate, sexual desire and violent intent.

4. The murder box

How might we develop a framework for understanding these new territories as zones of exception in which others are encountered in instrumental terms as available and willing to engage in our own fantasies, whether or not they are complicit or willing to do so? One way

of reading this situation is to suggest that economic forces, facilitated by technological change, are generative of new forms of abuse. New platforms effectively harness, enhance and otherwise facilitate sexual or subjugating and violent desires. As Winlow and Hall (2013) have argued, there is an important place within criminological work to consider how desire and unconscious demands within social actors are captured and shaped by market societies. Using Zizek's corpus they argue that an injunction to enjoy, rather than disparate forms of prohibition, are central to forms of contemporary political economy and predicated on channelling desiring subjects into consumption of various forms. One of the results of these complex relationships is the way in which new zones of consumption and normative suspensions are realised, within night-time economies, the tacit support of fraudulent behaviour or the centering of criminal identity within culture more broadly.

Within the rise of what Wallerstein has called a geoculture (1991) we have seen rapid shifts in cultural forms, experiences and identities. A key question connecting these changes is the question of the extent to which these changes are harmful or problematic. One of the key tenets of psychoanalysis is that, lurking within the human psyche, lies a sense of trauma and at least partial or reoccurring predispositions toward aggression, rage and the damage of other objects. Yet these are not only personal or interior features of the mind and can be traced in cultural, literary and mediated lives more broadly (Sanchez-Pardo, 2003). For Freud a fundamental tension lay between violent, aggressive and sexual desires and variably successful attempts at suppressing these aspects of human nature in order to enjoy some degree of civility (1939). At a time of what many continue to see as an established decline in crime across much of the western world there has been periodic celebrations of a significant triumph of humanity against violence and the darker side of human nature (Pinker, 2011). Of course, such neat analyses avoid the need for an uncomfortable confrontation with the multiple leakings of violence, voyeurism and networked harm that have emerged under our newly intermediated social condition and ongoing situations of homicidal violence, low intensity conflict, starvation, murderous assault and gender violence.

Writers like Winlow and Hall (2013) identify a process of pacification of traditionally street-oriented and periodically violent men into a domestic stupor of private soft drug use, cheap alcohol and hardcore pornography. This may suggest that impulsive or drive-directed behaviour has been 'switched-off' or blunted by screen-based experiences home-based leisure pursuits that extend deeply into domestic life today. Yet this is to deny the more diffuse forms of harm generated by these activities and pastimes. The idea of the murder box is an attempt at thinking about how we are able to privately engage in what are simultaneously mass experiences of harm, extreme and sadistic pleasures. We can be connected by networks and new media to the experiences we would most like to seek out. The idea of a 'box' here is used to refer to our capacity to enter virtual spaces in which the rights and humanity of the others we encounter there are suspended and against whom any act is rendered invisible in social terms. The physical analogue of this is the capsules in the film *Hostel* in which punters pay to do what they want to prostitutes and, later, the payment by the affluent to do whatever they want to victims in sealed cells for torture in a factory-like setting in Eastern Europe. In virtual terms the logic persists in the massed aggregations of chat-rooms, live-cams and request-based sexual services operating now as a globally

networked economy that is predicated on gender and material inequalities that drive the availability of 'willing' participants.

In the interviews we (Atkinson and Willis, 2007) conducted with players of Grand Theft Auto a regular feature was the idea of simply going crazy and enjoying the game space for what it offered, a killing spree that would eventually end with the increasingly matched aggressivity of the police. In both game spaces and 'gorno' film culture our excitement lies in our experience of 'real' horror or, more provocatively, the possibility of attaining experimentally extreme and pleasurable experiences. The fear (often expressed by gamers) is that such media may be accessed by the 'wrong' players or viewers. But, too late. We know that these and countless examples are now some of the most popular, in cash terms, cultural forms today. What perhaps could be glossed over as subcultural pursuits and bedroom leisure activities is now a mass industry and the pastime of many millions. But surely we can put down our toys and play nicely outside, even so? Without being needlessly prudish or offering some panicked response to these phenomena the answer to this question is not yet entirely clear.

Many experiences are now shaped in what feel like enclosed and private spaces that allow us to do away with the idea that we are morally obliged to others or that we risk some kind of infraction. This may be witnessed in the gendered-baiting or abuse of female journalists, the rise of hate speech and incitements through mainstream social media and news sites or the frequent misjudging of expressions online which come back to haunt public figures. Often we are encouraged to express our desires and sentiments. A quick read of the straplines for many pornographic websites reveals a world in which we are invited to do what we want, to experience anything with an unending supply of avatars, actors or passive (mostly female) participants who are there just for us, to do whatever we want to them – they need it and they enjoy it (DeKeseredy and Olsson, 2010). In the world of videogaming the trope of the all-powerful, hyper-masculine destroyer is too frequent even to be noticeable, as is the vague use of a background state of emergency that justifies extreme violence and torture to 'terrorists' or assassination style dynamics of many others.

Whether we might be concerned about these experiences is another question. Who is being harmed? Who cares? Could such outlets for raw violent expression help to reduce 'real' violence? Kids get old pretty quick these days, they can handle this. My kids are exposed to it through other kids, what can I do anyway? Such common responses suggest we are in denial about the relationship between our new-found freedoms to do what we want online and retaining a hold on notions of humanity, reciprocity, altruism or behaviour that is conducive to a sense of togetherness and positive identity (yet again we might add, who cares?). Some years ago I would tell criminology students that 'snuff' movies were not real, but that the possibility that one had been made was an open question. Infamous cases of online paedophile movies being sold and which include scenes of devastating torture of babies and young teenagers do exist and have been sold or exchanged in ways that make their continued existence more or less assured. The possibility of broadcast murder from online 'red rooms' resonates more widely in a wound culture (Seltzer, 1997) that sees the huge popularity of films like Videodrome, Saw and Hostel containing popularised elements of enclosed or secret spaces of rendition, torture and pay-to-view murder. The wider resonance of these cultural

products lies in their sense of a culture whose emotional repertoires have become truncated or 'glaciated' (as the director of Benny's Video, Michel Haneke describes it) by the easy availability of images and videos of sadistic and destructive acts in content that has no moral or social framing. The ability to immerse oneself in a culture that celebrates and depicts such inhumanity raises new questions for ideas of social control, regulation and censorship of media. The amplification of perversion and anti-social deviance become new possibilities where validation and peer support are offered through networked media systems.

Today it is possible for a child with a wi-fi connection to watch beheadings with ease. The desensitising and traumatising implications of such a world remain open questions to which easy answers are the enemy of a criminology that seeks to critique and dig beneath a complacent diagnosis that all is well. For one thing, profit motives propel uncomfortable or cruel forms of pornography (choking, fisting, spitting, binding have become everyday aspects) which are produced for sale via monthly subscriptions across globally networked internet systems, are uploaded by vengeful partners, or simply gathered in online forums for free download. The idea that simply nothing is wrong here or that this is just 'ok' seems hard to sustain but the question of what cultural forms actually do is much muddier and takes us back to traditional and important questions in the sociology of deviance. We must also recognise that, as our exposure to these phenomena rises, the question of how we calibrate what is harmful will change.

5. Networks, technologies and harms

Technological change, in the form of miniaturisation and connectivity, have enabled an unbounding of the taboo. In this context generational norms around ages of exposure to (un)suitable material have all but evaporated. Here the idea of controlling 'age-appropriate' material has all but disappeared. It is also critical to note that previously more or less contained expressions of desire have been reaggregated and become major consumer niches and new cultural formations. The recent moral panic regarding online pornography and its accessibility belies the reality of a variegated landscape of providers, intermediaries and user-producers. The capacity to endlessly copy, paste and reproduce digital images means that much online pornography is recycled, tagged and circulated without any paywall restrictions. Despite the challenges that this condition presents can we begin to accept that many forms of everyday gratification and leisure pursuits have deeper, systemic impacts and harms?

A key social change, now almost so pervasive as to be utterly banal, is our immersion in a network society (Castells, 1997) and the increasing sophistication and miniaturisation of communication devices and technologies. One of the more promising avenues for thinking about these changes is to consider the possibility of emerging and potentially monstrous recombination of perversity that is now also networked (Durkin et al, 2006) and which offers possibilities for new economies predicated on harm and gender-based violence. The solicitation and enforcement of women within a global archipelago of web-cams (Paasonen, 2010) watched by those that choose to pay to have their fantasies realised echoes Orwell's (1933) encounters with lounge lizards in 1950s Paris. One character observing the exquisite pleasure of paying a madam to have total freedom with a young girl in a private room despite her cries and protestations. Our disgust or excitement at such possibilities belies the openness

and saturation of public culture to the kinds of violent and sexually predatory tropes of a hundred 'perversions' (organised alphabetically on a porn image sharing service) or the hundred million virtual murders and militarised killings enacted globally in videogames.

One of the points to make here is that the value of a cultural criminology built on the need to identify forms of emotion, momentary engagement and resistance or group participation barely makes the grade in trying to read and calibrate the question of where the harms lie in these shifts. What can we say about societies in which gladiatorial combat has become a global movement (Heilbron and Bottenberg, 2009), in which immediate access to videos of beheadings, rape (simulated or otherwise) and accidents (fatal or serious) can be electively engaged and cumulatively accreted over time on a globally shared platforms that are unbounded by age restrictions? How will immersion in such an image-based culture truncate or re-work our emotional life? Here the idea of regulation, control or suppression looks quaint, the debates about censorship giving way to a recognition that the beast that was created is more powerful than all of us combined. Like the 'monster of the Id' in the film *Forbidden Planet*, our attempts at destroying it merely give it more energy as it harnesses the deeper energies of our own embedded yet unacknowledged perversions, lest we are forced to leave them behind. In this sense the protestations of gamers that violence in games is harmless increasingly sound like the whines of children whose time with a favourite toy is about to be wrenched away from them (Salter, 2017). Alongside this it is interesting to consider how inter-generational changes have emerged so rapidly – the adult community has been neglectful or ignorant of its passing of networked social media and devices with little or no control over usage and without any interpretive manual via which tropes of extreme violence, casual blood-letting, torture and predatory harm might be understood and assimilated.

The potential to create wallpapered worlds built around user-orientations is increasingly apparent. The 'intrusion' of formal or state-based news media can be switched off or selectively engaged. The use of pornography and any variant of it can be accessed via the devices we carry in our pockets. A thousand bleak worlds of unending combat and meaningless violence and callous uber-masculinity can be entered for endless hours. Of course to make such points is to be cast as naïve, out of touch and to forget the enormous creativity and variegated nature of these cultural forms. This may, in many ways, be true and is acknowledged. Yet it also seems possible that our popular culture and technological changes are creating more possibilities in which object others can be sub-ordinated, damaged or destroyed via whatever personal scripts and phantasies we might care to enact. Some of this might be through new and 'extreme' (the term feels increasingly laboured and more of a selling point than expressing an anxiety about content) games and pornography in which our victims are simulated or paid. In many other cases extreme libertarianism underpinning injunctions to enjoy are facilitated by media corporations and communications providers.

All of this brings us to what might be an important question – to what extent can we understand or condemn a culture in which harm, violence and subjugation appear mainstays of public, private and cultural life? This question relates to what many now observe to be the bleeding into everyday life of 'inappropriate' terms and references, sexual explicitness and of course violence in its myriad forms (Horvath, 2013). The liberal response is to suggest that it

was ever thus. While in many respects there are of course continuities in our present condition with that of the past it would seem that a qualitative step-change can be identified in the scale and impact of these influences. The threading of communication technologies through everyday life has added remarkable energy and force to social change by allowing connection, emancipation as well as communication. Such forces have also enabled what many feel or hope to be rare or unusual forms of conduct to become networked forms of participation in spaces of cultural exception (Atkinson and Rodgers, 2015) in which not only does anything go but acts of aggression and sexual gratification are actively encouraged by participants or given added force and impetus by the emergent properties of these systems. Here it is possible to focus not only on issues like videogame violence or the varying taste boundaries that dictate what is desirable or arousing within pornography, both of which are arguably important contemporary leisure modes or forms, but also holidays in which the denial or submission of others is apparent.

The argument advanced here is that technology, leisure and economy need to be foregrounded in questions of harm because in combination they have become productive of new and complex experiences that are seen as being both emancipatory, from sexually repressive social conduct norms say, or which are increasingly understood to produce real and intensely disturbing forms of victimisation. Looking at how we live today the capacity to slip into screen time the free and more or less unregulated supply of a phantasmagoria of images, films, clips, shared thoughts and discussions allows desire-filled bodies and minds to find new forms of expression, both anti and pro-social.

One area that we did not elaborate in the original development of the idea of the murder box is the role of international sex tourism as a globalised form of cultural exception, operating within key districts in many urban and zoned destinations globally (Jeffreys, 2009). The scale of this economy is significant and involves many who make choices to become prostitutes coerced by poverty or male gangs predating on women. Estimates suggest that around 2 million children are globally employed and the OHCR has estimated that around 1.8 billion sex tourists will be involved in this economy by 2030. In countries like Kenya the tourist 'offer' is now closely associated with prostitution which brings with it questions of male power, pornography and trafficking and it is global regional inequalities that help to drive this economy. In the Phillipines it is now estimated that between 40 and 60% of tourists visit for sex while European countries like Spain and the Netherlands now have established reputations for their sex industries. Thailand is estimated to have around 3 million sex workers, of whom roughly a third are children. It may come as little surprise that the basis of the narrative offered in the film *Hostel* is derived from stories of children sold for torture and murder by natives of these countries as recounted by its director Eli Roth.

Many of the zones involved in the global tourist sex trade are the destinations of male 'stag' parties as well as individual (mostly) men. The promise of zones in which sexual licence is enhanced is a key element of these economies and connects to masculine codes of sexual prowess and conquest alongside the carnival nature of the night-time economies of the cities involved (Briggs, 2013). These economies are linked to global inequalities but also to wider flows of migration implicated in people trafficking and smuggling run by organised criminal networks (Cacho, 2013). These economies have become important mainstays in national and

urban contexts characterised by extensive poverty or criminal opportunism. Alongside these material preconditions exists the promotion of spaces of exception – sex zones in which the denial of harm is enabled by the identification of temporary holiday experiences in which ordinary conduct is morally suspended. The masculinised pursuits of the night-time economy (Smith, 2014) and many holiday settings offers a logic of pursuit and release to which poorer national settings generate important opportunities. The possible pursuit of regulation is muted by the poor economic power of either the nations involved and weaker power of those involved in these trades.

6. Leisure societies and networked harm: The challenge for criminology

A key feature of many social forms today is the way in which some forms of social prohibition have given away to the mass availability of contact with experiences that would hitherto have been difficult or proscribed within conventional society. Among progressive changes in the boundaries of conduct around acceptability and conduct, such as in relation to sexuality and the reconsideration of harms in some jurisdictions regarding drug use, others include unregulated contact with essentially any sexual and violent image or film currently indexed on the internet (Atkinson and Rodgers, 2015). What do these shifts mean for questions of harm, crime and deviance? The rise of affluent societies with increasing time and interest in leisure have combined with the availability of networked media to produce new territories of harm, or the virtual witnessing and enacting of harm in the areas of tourism, social media and videogaming. The wealth and boredom of Ballard's characters and narrative devices seem illuminating here in regularly presaging elective engagements with extreme violence, forced sex and, ultimately, self-destructive conclusions. As Stephenson (2007) suggests, these themes highlight the violence that lies as much within the territories and lifestyles of the wealthy as in the poorer, disorderly zones of the wider world. In subtle ways these forms of harm become embedded within contemporary sociality (Pemberton, 2016).

As cultural criminologists like Hayward (2012) argue, the range of acceptable behaviour has shifted and excitement and energy in various forms of 'deviant' behaviour are the mainstay of much economic activity. To draw on Lea's (2002) analogy, crime is both the engine and exhaust of the engine of the societies of which we are a part. This centrality is increasingly visible, not least because of the intermediation of social actors via the web and its regular release of global reports and the capacity of masses to monitor and investigate social, political and economic elites, but also the pursuit of badness in what seems like an unending series of online media 'boxed sets' dealing with questions of drift and elective perversion. The result of this context is a sense in which deviance and criminality are the normal running conditions of corporate life, where indeed fraud is prevalent in political life, drug use is common across social classes and groups and in which elective forms of deviant behaviour can be linked to that of other individuals via the internet to form new aggregate identities with significant consumption power. We have perhaps grown-up and caught-up with the fact that our elders and betters are no better than anyone else but this knowledge retains the capacity to corrode our culture more broadly in the absence of ideas of honour, altruism or indeed service to humanity and each other.

Around us today we see the mainstreaming of more extreme forms of sexual and violent conduct, whether these be a witnessing of the capturing of 'real' events on news media or their orchestration in film, television or game media. Access to these extremities, themselves dulled by repeated viewing and open access, comes through multiple interfaces that include video game consoles, mobile phones, tablets, networked televisions whose regulation by age or suitability is essentially a lost battle. Alongside these means of accessing media the content of these spaces is not only more explicit, violent and often presented in interactive formats (webcams pointed at compliant women, girls, men and boys in a global archipelago of small rooms; requests placed in pornographic image forums and so on) but, in the case of videogames, representations that are more or less photo-real.

These spaces are relatively new, but more importantly they invoke a different kind of engagement with others that invokes a deep capacity to engage, direct and connect with our desires - to rampage, to rape, to degrade, to observe (Bray, 2011; Salter 2017). Whether we believe the impact of these engagements with real and virtual environments and actors is another question. Spaces of cultural exception, what may be described as more or less enclosed experience spaces (or murder boxes), raise important questions about who 'we' are and where as a globally linked culture, we are going and the harms involved in these technologically mediated social changes. As this chapter goes to press the alert by the UK National Crime Agency that 72,000 referrals had been received regarding child sexual abuse imagery reinforces concerns about where we are moving towards (the figure in 2010 was 6,000).

7. Conclusion

A combination of technology and economics is interacting with our culture to create spaces of exception – places and experiences that allow us to dehumanise and exert our total will over others, or representations of others. Criminology has moved slowly perhaps to accept and measure the kinds of distress, violence and human harm generated by conditions of mediated sociality, miniaturised technology and the role of human desires for what are, in many cases, anti-social expressions that also have material consequences and harms. Many accounts of crime and harm have stressed the decline in the volume of crime and in homicide globally. These trends are well evidenced but belie the fact that many forms of violence persist, have enormous variability between countries and key victim groups as well as being frequently under-reported. The idea that we are becoming more civilized can be undone fairly swiftly by some easy web searching, the new question is perhaps how do we measure our civility? What does the massed and voluntary witnessing of recorded murder, rape, robbery or degrading acts against others in structured ways say about us? What harms are being enacted, by whom and onto who? Do we care, and, even if we do, what do we do next?

Cultural criminology has been keen to locate forms of social transgression as forms of cultural resistance. Yet what might be considered the basest layer of human misery is now an easily accessed, indexed and porous image-space control over access to which has become all but impossible. Image-spaces in which sadistic violence and harm is experienced and indeed celebrated are important aspects of our culture today. The secondary question arising from such an observation is to ask - what does criminology have to say about such phenomena?

The liberal response is simple and invokes a discourse of liberation or denial at the extent of an underlying problem. Yet the bifurcation between an apparently more civil and humane society and one whose networked image content is suffuse with suffering and exploitation requires further consideration and theorisation. We also need to recognise that attempts at regulating or engaging these spaces as places of potential harm will run against difficulties in a culture in which the denial of harm by those with interests in unchecked freedom (and this includes major corporations and masculine desire) is considerable. In all of this we have moved firmly from the idea that the edgework of reality-hunting found in various cultural forms has been reworked to form an interwoven aspect of our daily experience and constitution of our identities and values more broadly that expresses elements of the death drive – the destructive and sadistic impulse bound-up with human identity. The reality or fabrication of infinite spectacles of violence and social harm around us via online media appear a form of social or libidinal liberation as much as they do an infinite multiplication of the fascists boot crushing a face imagined in Orwell's 1984. Its analogue today is the climactic point of a million pornographic films or the unending 'headshots' of the global constellation of gamers. Weaving a complex and useful assessment of the wavering movement between the possibilities of edgework of various kinds and the death-fixated harms of an increasingly mediated age offers what appears to be a major research horizon for criminology within contemporary leisure societies.

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