



"A Delicious Leisure Activity?"

Spatial Resistance to Heteronormativity in Public Spaces

Maartje Bulkens
MSc thesis Leisure, Tourism and Environment
Supervisors:
Dr. Irena Ateljević and Drs. Ir. Karin Peters
Wageningen University

Wageningen, August 2009

“A Delicious Leisure Activity?”

Spatial Resistance to Heteronormativity in Public Spaces

Maartje Bulkens

Studentnr. 810710145050

MSc Thesis Leisure, Tourism and Environment

Coursecode: SAL 80433

Supervisors: Irena Ateljević & Karin Peters

Wageningen University

Foreword

"Don't know. Sorta feels good. Sorta stiff and that,
but once I get going... then I like, forget everything.
And... sorta disappear. Sorta disappear.
Like I feel a change in my whole body.
And I've got this fire in my body.
I'm just there. Flyin' like a bird.
Like electricity. Yeah, like electricity."
(Billy Elliot 2000)

A thesis is in a constant process of becoming, there is no end, it never feels as being finished. There is always room for improvement, for the incorporation and revision of insights, for criticality and reflexivity. However due to the constraints imposed upon us as students by the structures of the educational system at universities, a thesis needs to be finalised at a certain moment. Therefore I am proud to present to you my MSc thesis with as its title “A Delicious Leisure Activity?” Spatial Resistance to Heteronormativity in Public Space.

This thesis is not meant to represent the absolute truth, rather it is immanence, it is defined in the moment. Do not consider this thesis as an end, rather perceive of it as a beginning. This is not to undermine the process of writing a thesis; indeed it has been a valuable learning experience, a chance to gain new insights, to develop academic skills, to be critical, to challenge yourself and others, to explore worlds beyond your own.

The process of writing this thesis has been a blessing. It was a great chance to read those who have inspired and influenced me, to get familiarised with their thinking, and to get acquainted with them. For these reasons I first of all thank them.

Many thanks goes to those who were willing to be interviewed on a sensitive topic like this, for opening up to me, for giving me an insight in a world I did not know.

I thank my friends, colleagues and swimming pool buddies for their support during the writing of this thesis. I could always count on them when I needed a break. Those moments of plain fun are necessary to recharge the battery when little energy is left, and to create room in my mind to be able to keep going. Special thanks goes to Meike for helping me with structural problems, and to Tanja for reading through it at the moment I could not see my own spelling and grammar mistakes anymore.

Finally, I want to thank my supervisors Irena Ateljević and Karin Peters. For these past 22 months they were there to challenge me, to be critical on my work, to discuss all elements of my thesis, and to give me the motivation to continue in those discouraging moments we are all confronted with during the writing of a thesis, and I am grateful for this. Maybe I am even more grateful for their support during the past two years, which have not been without its hurdles. My body turned out to be the biggest constraint during the writing of this thesis. I thank them for creating an atmosphere of support, for the helpful and sometimes confrontational conversations, their empathy and understanding, and mostly their patience with me. In this sense the writing of this thesis has not only been an academic journey, it has given me valuable lessons for life.

“Rather than a tool of exclusion, difference can be a tool for connecting.
When we strive to become allies with those perceived as Other,
we are able to connect through difference. As allies,
we recognize the difference that exist between self and Other
and examine how our different lives and experiences are connected.
Allies are situated within the experience of each individual.
We recognize, respect, and value what each brings to the relationship
while working together to achieve some common ground.”

(Mary K. Canales 2000)

Index

Index	1
Executive Summary	4
Chapter 1	
Introduction	6
Research subject	7
<i>Historical context</i>	7
<i>Legal and institutional context</i>	8
<i>Spatial context</i>	10
Goals of the research.....	10
Research questions	11
Justifying the research	11
Structure of this thesis	12
Chapter 2	
Theoretical Framework.....	13
Power structures and discourses of everyday life.....	15
Gender, sexuality and performativity	20
Resistance and agency.....	27
The production and reproduction of space	41
Differential space and heterotopia	45
The sexualisation of space.....	49
Chapter 3	
Methodology	55
Framing the research	55
Research strategy.....	60

<i>Data collection</i>	60
<i>Selection of co-researchers</i>	62
<i>Data analysis</i>	63
Ethical considerations	65
Limitations of the study.....	67
The role of the researcher, or positioning myself	68
Chapter 4	
Letting the data do the talking	72
A Leisure Phenomenon	72
<i>Visitors</i>	72
<i>The spatial component</i>	73
<i>Communication and sociality</i>	74
<i>Motivations</i>	76
<i>A leisure activity?</i>	78
Family men	79
<i>Being open about one's sexual orientation</i>	79
<i>Coming to terms with one's sexual orientation</i>	80
<i>Self-classification</i>	81
<i>Acceptance of homosexuality</i>	83
State and police intervention	85
<i>Water-bed effect</i>	85
<i>Overt and covert measures</i>	86
<i>Visibility</i>	87
<i>Designating, tolerating and legalising</i>	89

<i>Gay bashing</i>	90
Chapter 5	
Discourse Analysis	97
Family men	97
Disgust, disease, filth, and bestiality	98
Sex in public.....	99
<i>Comparing homosexuals with heterosexuals</i>	100
<i>Children</i>	102
Acceptance of homosexuality.....	104
<i>Research on the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands</i>	105
Chapter 6	
Problematising the results	110
Spatial resistance to heteronormativity in public spaces	110
Personal acts of resistance	113
Challenging the discourse of sexuality	114
Reconstituting the discourse of sexuality	119
Chapter 7	
Discussion and conclusion	122
The phenomenon of gay meeting places	122
The discourse around gay meeting places	125
The acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands	127
Bibliography	128
Appendix 1: Internet discussion topics	136
Appendix 2: Quotes not used	143
Belonging to chapter 4: Letting the data do the talking.....	143
Belonging to chapter 5: Discourse analysis.....	160
Appendix 3: Leaflet ‘Blue at pink meeting place.’	170

Executive Summary

Within leisure studies and geographies of sexualities connections have been made between these two fields of research (e.g. Hubbard 2008; Pritchard et al. 2002). With this research I seek to contribute to this emergent body of work within this already established research inquiry by focusing on a sexually oriented leisure activity for which part of public space is appropriated. More particularly I focus on a leisure activity of 'homosexual' men; the use of outdoor public green spaces for sexually oriented encounters, also known as cottaging or cruising.

This research has two goals; on the one hand I provide an insight in the phenomenon of gay meeting places to reach a better understanding of and for these places as leisure places; and, I employ a critical analysis that aims to demonstrate the contested nature of this inherently spatial phenomenon, and so doing I explore deeper issues of the way how homosexuality is perceived in the Netherlands.

This research is founded on the theoretical insights of Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, Henri Lefebvre, and other theorists focusing on a diversity of concepts ranging from abstract notions of power, performativity and gender/sexuality to more concrete notions of space. I operationalise the first two abstract notions by applying them to space. Or in other words, I will show how the notions of power create discourses on sexuality and gender, and how these are inscribed in space. The reason for doing this is

that it gives the opportunity of critically reflecting on the construction of spaces as either homosexual or heterosexual in a context of power structures and discourses on gender and sexuality.

To provide an insight in this leisure phenomenon, for which within public space spaces of difference are appropriated to explore and enjoy their sexuality, I had in-depth interviews with the users of gay meeting places. To place the phenomenon within a broader social context, and critically analyse this, I did a discourse analysis of comments made about gay meeting places on the internet.

By drawing from the theoretical insights in combination with the results of the in-depth interviews, I show how these men spatially resist and challenge heteronormativity by an appropriation of public space for sexually oriented activities. Gay meeting places provide the men a place to transcend beyond the social roles they get assigned by heteronormative society. Besides, a discourse analysis of comments made about gay meeting places on the internet shows that, rather than subverting the dominant binary logic between heterosexuality and homosexuality, the spatial and sexual practices of the users of gay meeting places have in their effect a reinforcement of the dominant binary logic between heterosexuality and homosexuality.

This confrontation of the results obtained with the theoretical insights from leisure, sexuality and geography studies has enabled me to take abstract discussions of these fields of study into the empirical context, and capture these within our social realities. Through this I have created an

intersection between the aforementioned fields of study within an empirical context.

Keywords: leisure, public space, (homo)sexuality, Foucault, Butler, Lefebvre.

Chapter 1

Introduction

In December 2005, I had to choose a topic for my BSc thesis Landscape Architecture and Spatial Planning. During those Christmas holidays I passed a gay meeting place while driving, a spatial phenomenon everyone knows, but only those coming there really know the how's and why's of gay meeting places. Fascinated by the phenomenon as I was at that time, I decided to take this topic for my BSc thesis. The BSc thesis assignment comprised the writing of a research proposal. During my research, I found out that gay meeting places are a highly contested spatial phenomenon in the Netherlands. News paper articles indicated that gay meeting places are often closed down or determent, and I began to wonder why? Why are these places closed down? What is so problematic about these places? Why is this happening in a country, which is thought of as liberal, where homosexuality seems to be accepted? I became more aware of the issue of homo-emancipation in the Netherlands due to a research on the attitude of Dutch inhabitants towards homosexuality conducted by the Social Cultural Planning Agency of the Netherlands (het SCP) in 2006 on the attitude of

“For, usually and fitly, the presence of an introduction is held to imply that there is something of consequence and importance to be introduced.”

(Arthur Machen 1863-1947)

Dutch inhabitants towards homosexuality (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006).¹ The research is titled ‘Gewoon Doen’ (Act Normal) referring to a general attitude within Dutch society that homosexuality is fine as long as homosexuals behave according to the rules of the dominant heterosexual society, especially involving particular ideologies on what is appropriate in terms of gender roles. The research showed that in general there is a more negative attitude towards homosexual men than to lesbian women. A question the researchers rightfully ask is whether statements made, e.g. ‘Lesbian sexuality does not fit within society’, ‘I disapprove of male homosexuality’, about sex between same-sex partners refers to a homo-negative attitude. The research shows that people who have a homo-negative attitude in general agree that sex between same-sex partners is unnatural (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006). Furthermore, within the Dutch national politics the issue of homo-emancipation was placed on the political agenda most clearly reflected in the policy document ‘Gewoon

¹ With the term homosexual is meant homo's, lesbians and bisexuals (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006).

Homo Zijn' ('Simply Being Gay'), which was written from the acknowledgement that:

“Although homo tolerance in the past decennia has improved, the government has serious concerns about the intimidation and acts of violence, the continuing reportings of discriminations and the expressions of homo-hatred on the Internet in the last years. The use of the word ‘homo’ as a term of abuse in schools and at the streets seems to be very normal. Many citizens experience the feeling of being unsafe more often recently.” (Ministry of OC&W 2007: 5).

Inspired by these problems in terms of the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands, taking the contested spatial phenomenon of gay meeting places as a topic for this research seemed a way to explore wider social issues on the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands.

Research subject

In this research I focus on what Lefebvre (1991) calls spatial practices, the dimension of space which is most easily studied within empirical social sciences. More specifically I focus on the spatial practices of men making use of public, outdoor space for sexually oriented encounters with other men. In other words, I focus on gay meeting places as a context to explore the spatial formation of a contested social phenomenon. I chose not to focus on gay meeting places indoor, like saunas, bars, movie theatres, etc., as these seem to be more generally accepted in the Netherlands. Following

Essers' (1994) argument, problems occur when the search for sexually oriented encounters and the possible sexual acts are in conflict with the needs, norms and values of other users of the same place. This does not occur in the context of indoor meeting places, but rather these problems occur around gay meeting places in public green spaces ranging from parks and recreational areas to parking places along highways. Places where space is appropriated for a particular kind of use within a broader context of other uses of the same place. Thus, the reason for focusing on gay meeting places in public space is that these places are a contested spatial phenomenon in the Netherlands, which will become more clear in the course of this thesis.

Historical context

Public sex between men has been part of life since the beginning of history. In other cultures male-houses could be found where men came together to enjoy same-sex sex. In the Greek and Roman era's sex between men served as a system of mastery, both between the master and his student, but also as a system of self-mastery. Sex between men was seen as appropriate and moral behaviour, which is for example reflected in the Ancient Greece sport facilities being used by men to have sexual encounters with other men. Nevertheless, as Hekma (1996), argues it was under a regime of rigid Christianity that sodomy became seen as a criminal offence, which was punished with the death penalty. However, the term sodomy was used to describe a range of sexual behaviours ranging from anal intercourse as the

worst kind to everything that did not fit within procreational sex. In European history predominantly men were accused of sodomy. Relatively little is known about the attitudes towards sodomy and the punishment for this in Europe for the period of 1300 till 1800. It is known that between 1400 and 1730 there were sporadic prosecutions of sodomites with about only twenty times the death penalty as its punishment. Nevertheless from 1730's onwards there were hundreds of prosecutions resulting in about one-hundred death penalties (Hekma 1996). In the Netherlands we see from that moment on that men start to use public space for their sexual encounters. In the Netherlands men visited bastions, parks, and public toilets. An example of a place used by men for hundred of years already is the Haagse Bos (Raeven 2008). Later men started to visit beaches and parking places for their sexual encounters (Bulkens 2005).

It is, according to Hekma (1996), not very likely that there was less sodomy before 1730. He argues that the non-existence of a well working police system, and the private and invisible character of the acts of sodomites could be possible explanations for this relative lack of sodomy before 1730. Another explanation is that within the era of Enlightenment thinking in which sodomy became medicalised and explained on the basis of comparisons with procreational sexual behaviours led to the increase of prosecution in the beginning of the 18th century. Nevertheless in 1870 the death penalty was completely abandoned from the penal code.

In the Second World War gay meeting places gained in importance. The fascist regime during those days made it even more impossible for

homosexual people to be open about their sexual orientation, and they were impelled to stay as anonymous as possible to avoid being deported. This led to men meeting each other at secret places where privacy and anonymity reigned, as one could never be sure who could be trusted. After the war the phenomenon of men having anonymous and secret sex slowly increased and spread to other and more places (Bulkens 2005). Moreover, due to changing sexual and social relations in the fifties a viable homosexual subculture developed out of nothing. What first were public meeting places slowly privatised into a secret and closed culture of dancings and bars (Hekma 1996). However, as will become clear in the following section this appropriation of public space is not straight-forward, and due to the criminalisation of homosexuality as described before police control and surveillance were and are used to ban the practices from place.

Legal and institutional context

As argued before it used to be the sodomite behaviour that was liable to penalty, nowadays the practices of the men are liable to penalty at the moment these violate virtue as described in article 239 of the Code of Criminal Law (Lochs and van Ommen 2008). With violation of virtue is meant wittingly behaving in such a way that under the given circumstances the normally developed feeling of shame is violated. This involves showing in public your personal intimate body parts (seksueelmisdrijf.nl 2009). The article consists of the following paragraphs:

Paragraph 1: on or at a place, destined for public traffic. With the word on or at is meant that the visibility of the actual act is decisive, in addition this also counts for visibility

Paragraph 2: on another, than mentioned in point one, public place, accessible for people with an age under sixteen years old. With this is meant places not publicly accessible, but places that are accessible for everyone, like cinemas, theatres, bars, etc.

Paragraph 3: on a non-public place, when someone else is there against one's will, or not aware of violating virtue.

Considering gay meeting places, especially paragraph one is relevant, as it involves a judgment of the supposed crime against the public moral (Lochs and van Ommen 2008). The crime should be deliberately committed (seksueelmisdrijf.nl 2009). When one is liable to penalty due to violation of virtue, one risks imprisonment of at most three months or a fine of the second category (seksueelmisdrijf.nl 2009). Following paragraph 1 of the article as described before, means for the police that they can only act upon the sexual practices of the men at gay meeting places when the activities are visible from the public road, thus they are not allowed to go into the bushes to track down men who are having sexually oriented encounters (Lochs and van Ommen 2008). Besides, not all sexual behaviour in public violates virtue. In the jurisprudence it is decided that questions concerning violation of virtue should be evaluated against the dominant virtues within society, which are defined by the dominant views of the Dutch population (Cleiren and Nijboer 2007 in Lochs and van Ommen 2008).

Another possibility besides acting from criminal law, is acting from administrative law. In this light it is the mayor who is responsible for maintaining public order. When sexually oriented activities are indeed disturbing public order the mayor can command the police to act. However, it is difficult to perceive the activities at gay meeting places as a disturbance of public order due to the secret and invisible character of the activities (Lochs and Van Ommen 2008). Another possibility is to act against the activities at gay meeting places by the use of the allocation plan (bestemmingsplan). This can for example be done by re-allocating a recreative area to a residential area, making it impossible for men to have sexual encounters. In the case of gay meeting places near high ways this is more difficult as most of them are under the policy of the Directorate-General for public works and water management (Rijkswaterstaat). The only possibility they have to act against gay meeting places is by closing down the parking places where the activities take place. However, this is in conflict with the need of automobilists for parking places or resting places next to highways. In addition, an important question in this sense is whether these measures will be effective, as there is a tendency when gay meeting places are closed down, these pop-up somewhere else (Lochs and Van Ommen 2008). This effect is also known as the 'waterbed' effect (Raeven 2007). Thus, different measures can be taken from criminal and administrative law based on the dominant norms and values within Dutch society.

Spatial context

Gay meeting places can be found in outdoor public spaces in different spatial contexts like parking places, parks and in recreational areas. Thus one general spatial characteristic of gay meeting places is that these take place in the appropriation and use of public green. The gay meeting places are similar in terms of the spatial lay-out. At gay meeting places a central part can be found. This is a concentration point in the middle of the meeting places where the group of men passing each other come together. These concentration points are often located a few meters from the routes the men use to enter a gay meeting place (Maatman and Meijer 1993). An essential element in spatial terms is that the activities taking place at gay meeting places remain invisible (as most men do not wish to be recognised as making use of gay meeting places). Thus one important spatial criterion is that the density and the amount of bushes is appropriate to keep the activities invisible (Maatman and Meijer 1993). This is also reflected in the areas that are appropriated by the men, as they only use places where they can remain invisible and pass unnoticed. In the case of gay meeting places in recreational areas this is also reflected in the fact that men have their sexually oriented encounters at places that are located at distance from the places used by other recreationists in the same area to cause as less disturbance as possible, and remain unnoticed and invisible for the general public (Maatman and Meijer 1993). Moreover, considering the use of gay meeting places at the different locations there is a difference in terms of

how they are used. The most important difference can be found in the times men visit these places, and the length of their visit. During the evening and night the use of gay meeting places at recreational areas is comparable to gay meeting places in parks and at parking places. While during the day the use fits within 'normal' recreational behaviour, of which the search for, and an actual sexual encounter, can be part. The recreation behaviour occurs in this sense in accordance with the dominant heterosexual norms and values around appropriate recreational behaviour (Maatman and Meijer 1993).

However, one important difference can be found, the degree to which the non sex seeking public experiences disturbances. This is related to the number and kind of visitors making use of the same place/area as the men visiting gay meeting places. Obviously at recreational areas and parks the presence of gay meeting areas is less desirable. Therefore the density of the green structures and the location play an essential role in the prevention of disturbance. The more dense the bushes and the further located the actual meeting place is, the lesser the activities are visible and the lesser disturbance is caused by non sex seeking users of the same place (Maatman and Meijer 1993).

Goals of the research

Taking into account the degree of homo-emancipation in the Netherlands, and the descriptions of gay meeting places and the disturbances these

cause, this research has as its goal making a contribution to intersectional work between leisure studies and geographies of sexuality, through:

- providing an insight in the phenomenon of gay meeting places, in order to reach a better understanding of and for these places as leisure places. In order to achieve this I will focus on the users of gay meeting places in terms of their perspectives concerning their motivations, perceptions, experiences and behaviour related to gay meeting places;
- and I will employ a critical analysis that aims to demonstrate the contested nature of this inherently spatial phenomenon. In order to achieve this I will focus on the perceptions and attitudes towards gay meeting places of the general public. In so doing I will explore deeper issues of the way how homosexuality is perceived in the Netherlands.

Research questions

In order to achieve the goals of this research several research questions have been developed:

- Who visits gay meeting places in terms of age, sexuality, and ethnicity?
- Why do people visit gay meeting places, in terms of their motivations and reasons?
- What happens at gay meeting places in terms of behaviour, communication, and rules of conduct?
- What is the importance of the spatial component?

- Are there conflicts between visitors of the places and non-sex-searching visitors? And if yes, what lies at the foundation of these problems? Where do these conflicts come from?

And as final questions:

- How do people perceive gay meeting places? What is their attitude towards, and their opinion about these places?
- How can the questions stated above be placed within the broader context of homosexuality and attitudes towards it?

Justifying the research

What is the contribution this research makes in scientific and social terms? In the Netherlands thus far only two researches have been conducted on gay meeting places. In 1993 the report 'Cruising als ruimteclaim' ('Cruising as a claim for space') was published, in this research Maatman and Meijer have focused on the ways in which within spatial planning and governmental policy is dealt with gay meeting places to come to conclusions on how the spatial planning instrumentation can be used to regulate cruising. They conducted surveys, observations, and interviews with both men making use of gay meeting places and the governmental institutions involved in the regulation of gay meeting places. The research, thus, is conducted from a policy and spatial planning perspective. A similar perspective can be found in the research conducted by Essers (1994) with as its title 'Homoseksualiteit als recreatievorm. 't Is maar wat je onder recreatie verstaat' ('Homosexuality as a form of recreation. It depends on

how you describe recreation’), however more focused on one particular area within the Netherlands. In this sense my research written from both an interpretative and critical perspective within leisure studies, socio-spatial analysis and sexuality studies provides other insights in the phenomenon and explores the broader social context of the phenomenon, rather than solely focusing on the policy side of gay meeting places.

Besides, the two researches as mentioned above take a practical stance towards gay meeting places, while this research makes a scientific contribution. Little scientific research has been conducted on gay meeting places in outdoor, public space. During my literature review, I only found one research conducted on the phenomenon ‘Tearoom Trade’ by Laud Humphreys published in 1970. This research is an ethnographic research into the anonymous sexually oriented encounters between men in public toilets. What became clear from his research is that these places were often visited by men who live for the outside world a heterosexual life, identified themselves as belonging to different categories of sexual orientation, while indulging in homo-sex at these public toilets. Humphreys focused on the married men visiting these places to argue that for these men there is an incongruence between their social selves and their private selves. Considering that this research was conducted within the context of the United States in the sixties, a different social climate than we supposedly have now, my research provides a contribution as it takes place within the contemporary social context of the Netherlands. Besides, Humphreys work has been intensively criticised due to ethical dilemmas involved in this

research, as Humphreys did not ask the men he observed and interviewed consent, and was not honest towards them about the goals and subject of the research. Moreover he tracked down the home addresses and names of the men he observed by the use of licence plate numbers.

Besides, although the spatiality of sexuality has been a focus point within the different fields of geography and within leisure studies, it is only since recently that intersectional research has been conducted exploring issues of spatiality and sexuality within the context of leisure. With this thesis I contribute to this intersectional research by exploring this leisure phenomenon, its inherently spatial nature and issues of sexuality.

Structure of this thesis

In chapter two the theoretical framework is discussed with as its core elements discussions on Power structures and discourse of everyday life; Gender, sexuality and performativity; Resistance and agency; The production and reproduction of space; Differential space and heterotopia; and, The sexualisation of space. In chapter three I present the methodology. In chapter four I present the data obtained from the interviews and let the data do the talking. This is followed in chapter five by a presentation of the data obtained from the Internet in the form of a discourse analysis. Consequently in chapter six I problematise the results by confronting these with the theoretical framework. To end this thesis, in the chapter seven a conclusion is given.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework

Although the spatiality of sexuality has been a focus point within the different fields of geography (e.g. (Bell 1995; Bell et al. 1994; Hubbard 2000, 2001, 2008; Kitchin & Lysaght 2003; Valentine 1993; Valentine & Skelton 2003) and within leisure studies (e.g. Hanson 2007; Johnston 1997, 2001; Kivel & Kleiber 2000; Visser 2003, 2008), it is only since recently that within leisure studies connections are being made between notions of spatiality, sexuality and leisure (e.g. Aitchison 1999, 2007; Browne 2007; Skeggs 1999; Pritchard et al. 2007). Due to this recent acknowledgement of the need to create intersections between the diverse range of geographies of sexuality, leisure studies and theories of sexuality “there is a lack of material that explicitly engages leisure studies, geography and sexuality” (Browne & Caudwell 2008: personal communication). With this thesis I contribute to this “lack of material” within leisure studies. Therefore, in this theoretical framework I explore issues of gender/sexuality and the production of (sexualised) space. This theoretical framework serves as a basis to confront the data obtained with to eventually create intersections between the issues of sexuality, leisure and the geography of

“Theory’s most important political offering is [the] opening up of a breathing space between the world of common meanings and the world of alternative ones, a space of potential renewal for thought, desire, and action.”

(Wendy Brown 2002: 574)

sexuality informed by theoretical insights on these. In this theoretical framework a diversity of concepts will be discussed ranging from abstract notions of power, performativity and gender/sexuality to more concrete notions of space. I operationalise the first two abstract notions by applying them to space. Or in other words, I will show how the notions of power create discourses on sexuality and gender, and how these are inscribed in space. The reason for doing this is that it gives the opportunity to critically reflect upon the construction of spaces as either homosexual or heterosexual in a context of power structures and discourses on gender/sexuality. It will become clear during the course of this framework how different concepts are interrelated to each other and how they matter in relation to gay meeting places.

I will adhere to a postmodernist-poststructuralist approach in this theoretical framework, as these approaches give the possibility to question and challenge naturalistic and essentialist notions of the subject and the dichotomies between gender and homosexuality and heterosexuality, which are a central focus of my thesis. The term postmodernism was first coined

by Lyotard in his book 'The Postmodern Condition' (1984) as an attack against the modern period characterised by Enlightenment thinking. It would go too far at this moment to fully introduce postmodernism, therefore, I will give a short introduction on its main principles. Within Enlightenment thinking the focus was on essentialist notions of the subject and the self. Within essentialism there is the general idea that people and phenomenon have an underlying and stable core, an essence, or Self. These essential notions created the possibilities for some to make a claim about themselves, as individuals, groups or citizens. The impossibility to claim a sense of self by some people and the notions of the self as stable, whole and fully knowable for ourselves and others were part of the critique of postmodernists against Enlightenment thinking. Rather, "poststructuralists argue that larger internal and external structures and processes, the rules by which large societal systems function – and, predominantly, the broader discourses and power relations within them – determine the social processes and the specific position of the subject in them" (Ernste 2004: 441). In this sense the individual should be seen as subjected. Therefore, they talk in the postmodernist/poststructuralist tradition about the subject, instead of person or individual, to underline the linguistic nature of our position within, what Lacan, calls the symbolic order. This symbolic order is the system of conventions and signs that determines what we come to perceive as reality (Felluga 2003). Therefore, postmodernist thinkers claim the death of the subject, by which they mean that the subject should not be

understood as a coherent, stable or fixed unity, but as ever changing, multiple and fluid (Bell 2008).

In addition, postmodernist thinkers rejected the grand narratives of modernity, which predict, explain, and describe the world. Following modernism, the grand narratives are universal, rational and represent the dissolute Truth. Instead, postmodernists perceive knowledge and truth as local, detached, historical and political. Postmodernists claim that the knowledge we are able to produce is dependent on our position in history, the instruments with which we measure and the subjectivities in flux (Bell 2008). In a similar vein, within post-structuralism a central matter of concern is the act of destabilisation through deconstruction. Deconstruction refers to the acknowledgement that no new elements serve to replace existing structures (Strohmayr 2005), and that meaning is the result of a chain of signification without an origin or an end (Bell 2008). Post-structuralism aims at deconstructing essentialist notions of the subject. In reaction to this I will adhere to a more anti-essentialist approach, in which it is believed that every entity is determined by other entities with which or whom it is in a relationship of power. The core or essence of an entity is constructed from the outside. The subject is composed out of elements that do not come from ourselves, but from our relationships with others, or as Foucault (1977: 149) argues "the species must realize itself as a species, as something--characterized by the durability, uniformity, and simplicity of its form--which can prevail in the perpetual struggle against outsiders or the uprising of those it oppresses

from within." Besides, the rejections made by postmodernist thinkers give the opportunity to reach beyond social roles as an answer to the question who we are. As with the rise of the postmodern and post-structural age in science this notion of fixed categories became challenged resulting in theories in which gender and sexuality became seen as discursive, by which is meant that the term female and male, homosexual and heterosexual are socially, or in a more disciplinary way discursively, constructed. This creates the opportunity to introduce more fluid notions of subjectivity, gender, and sexuality, by which more rigid notions of these categories can be challenged and possibly subverted.

Three key thinkers have framed my theoretical framework, the French historian/philosopher Michel Foucault, the post-structuralist philosopher Judith Butler, and the French sociologist/philosopher Henri Lefebvre. I will give key discussions and interpretations of their work, and show where they tend to converge with and diverge from each other. I will elaborate on their theoretical stance on the relevant key issues for this thesis of power and discourse, gender/sexuality and performativity, resistance and agency, and the (re)production of space. In this way they frame and inform my research with at its focus gay meeting places in the Netherlands. I will in the following sections respectively discuss the following issues: the power structures and discourses of everyday life; gender, sexuality and performativity; resistance and agency; the production and reproduction of space; differential space and heterotopia; and the sexualisation of space.

Power structures and discourses of everyday life

Both Michel Foucault and Judith Butler criticise structuralist notions of power as repressive, of power practiced through material forms of structures. Instead, they moved to a post-structuralist deconstruction of power focusing on power as discursive and productive. I will give an overview of their most important discussions on power in this section. I do this in order to be able to use these analysis's at a later stage to show how power produces certain constructions of sexuality and gender. Besides I will use these notions to show how power is inscribed in space leading to the labelling of places as either homosexual or heterosexual.

Important in Foucault's understanding of power is his notion of discourse, which he introduces in his work 'The Archeology of Knowledge' (1974). He argues that knowledge is produced within a system of power relations, and uses the term discourse to refer to "the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualisable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements" (1974: 80). This idea of discourse is based on the notion of Nietzsche that naming defines the essence of objects and subjects. Foucault argues that nothing has any meaning outside of discourse (1974). A discourse can be seen as a relatively well-bounded area of social knowledge. According to Hacking (2004) Foucault's notion of discourse gave us ways to understand what is said, what can be said, what is possible and what is meaningful, and this is separated from the unthinkable and the

unintelligible. In this sense discourses communicate the 'truth', and this truth becomes a function of what can be thought, said and written. In addition, Wylie (2007: 111) argues that "a discourse will establish some behaviours and identities as normal, approved and even natural, while making others appear unusual, marginal or [/and] unnatural." In his analysis Foucault argues that the truth is historically specific and things could, therefore, have been otherwise (1974). However, a discourse "tends to produce truth effects – certain beliefs are acted upon as true and therefore become partially true in terms of consequences" (Alvesson and Billig 1997: 40). Foucault's notion of discourse is important in order to understand the role power plays in the production of knowledge, which importantly includes self-knowledge. In this sense, power produces the truths we live by. Foucault's (1974) relation between power and knowledge is relevant as there is within society a 'regime of truth'. This truth is centred in the form of discourse and the institutions that produce these. Here we can see how Foucault introduces a productive form of power, and he states in 'The Order of Things' (1970:155) that "we must cease once and for all to describe the effects of power in negative terms [...] In fact, power produces; it produces reality." In this sense, discourse plays a crucial role in its capacity to produce and sustain hegemonic power. The concept of hegemony is the result of Anthony Gramsci's analysis of class relations, and points to the cultural dynamics through which a group claims and maintains a leading role in social life (Connell 2008). "[H]egemony is likely to be established only if there is some correspondence between

cultural ideal and institutional power, collective if not individual" (Connell 2008: 373). Hegemony refers to the cultural dominance present within society as a whole.

In his work 'Discipline and Punish' Foucault argues that it is within these regimes of truth that particular subjects are produced as effects of discursive and power relations. By means of discourse there is a particular punitive system of discipline and control set up, with a system for separating the normal and the abnormal, leading to the disciplining and exclusion of particular groups within society. In this way subjects are fabricated through normalising power mechanisms. This process is known as subjectification, which is the production of an illusionary notion of a stable subject originating from constitutive norms and discourses (Foucault 1989). This is in line with the anti-essentialist notion of subjectivity as introduced before. Power should in this process be seen as repressive as it works within a system of discipline exercised by the state to create good, docile and productive citizens. We fear this repressive power as it is a power that serves to constrain, punish and silence us (Foucault 1989).

This repressive, disciplinary power works through a hierarchical surveillance supported by a reward and punishment system that maintains and imposes norms of bodily functioning. A system in which people who obey to the norms are rewarded, those who reject the norms or do not comply are punished. He says about this "the exercise of discipline requires a device that constrains by the game of the gaze" (1989: 173). In this way norms of bodily management and behaviour are (re)produced. People are

in this way encouraged by self-surveillance in a response to the collective gaze, to behave in socially accepted ways, and conform to what is expected from us in different places by different people (Foucault 1989). This becomes clear through our fear of being transgressive or out of place, due to which we control ourselves by following the rules and regulations of normalisation (Bell and Holman Jones 2008). This notion of self-discipline and self-surveillance makes an understanding of why we adhere or compel to certain taken-for-granted regulations possible. Through the mechanisms of self-discipline and self-surveillance these repressive regulations do not need to be police controlled or surveilled. This form of power is “permanent in its effects if discontinuous in its actions” (Foucault 1989: 201). Thus, Browne (2007) argues, it is self-control and interactive surveillance that maintain for a large part the existing regulations, not simply by (re)creating the practices, embodiments and individuals as in place or out of place, but also as a result of how the Foucauldian gaze is understood and (re)established. The gazes of others can be used to police and control with the help of common sense norms as the boundaries of the self, “it is a normalizing gaze, a surveillance that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish” (Foucault 1989: 184).

Thus, Foucault (1989) argues that the disciplinary power of the state combined with the social gaze became internalised in people through their self-control and adherence to shared moral codes. In his book ‘Discipline and Punish’ he argues that this self-surveillance and restraint is communicated through the disciplining gaze: “There is no need for arms,

physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze that every individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he [sic] is his own overseer, each individual exercising surveillance over and against himself.” (Foucault 1989: 155). The subject of surveillance starts in this way to discipline him or herself by means of self-surveillance. This process is a process of moral self-constitution. This is important as it introduces a new kind of power, Foucault (1989) starts to argue that power should not only be seen as solely repressive, but also as productive. He argues at his most political moment in ‘Discipline and Punish’ against the idea that “the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. [...] On the contrary it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power” (1989: 29). His notion of productive power is a Nietzschean one. Within this notion of power it is argued that people are being interpreted or interpret themselves, not by discovering their essence, but by being submitted to relationships of force, or by voluntarily applying these to themselves. This is known as the malleability of individuals (Harrer 2005) by which is meant that people are the malleable material on which the processes of subjectification are at work. It is at this point when Foucault gives a human face to structures of power and acknowledges the agency of humans within these structures giving the opportunity to resist or change these, which makes him a post-structuralist.

Thus, the process of self-constitution starts within relationships with others, producing a relationship to the self. We first practice the

constitution of self under the disciplinary gaze. This gaze eventually becomes internalised leading to moral self-constitution (Foucault 1989). After we internalise this disciplinary gaze we become our own means of discipline, we come under self-control. In this sense the disciplinary discourses lead to the constitution of a subject, not by means of punishment, but by means of control. Therefore, this productive power should rather be seen as something we perform, than something we simply have. Power should, according to Foucault (1984a), be seen as a verb rather than a noun, as power does something, it is productive, rather than something we can hold on to, as he says “I am not referring to Power with a capital P, dominating and imposing its rationality upon the totality of the social body. In fact, there are power relations. They are multiple; they have different forms, they can be in play in family relations, or within an institution, or an administration” (Foucault 1988: 38 in Mills 2003: 35).

Here we see how Foucault introduces a notion of power that works from the micro-level, a bottom-up model of power, in the sense that he sees power as networked, as something that circulates. He states: “[P]ower is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere.” (Foucault 1984a: 93). People within these relations or networks of power are not simply victims, but they are the carriers of power. For the same reasons he argues in his ‘History of Sexuality’ (1984a) that power should not only be interpreted in a negative way, as a system of oppression, constraints and restrictions, because even the most oppressive, constraining and restrictive measures are productive, making new ways of

behaviour possible, rather than excluding these. To under scribe his point he says in the same work “[...] if power was never anything but repressive, if it never did anything but say no, do you really believe that we should manage to obey it?” (1984a: 36). The conceptualisation of productive power as a system of networked relations functioning at the micro-level is important, because it is within these networks of power that possibilities for resistance can be found, as Foucault (1970: 123) states “as soon as there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance”, and in one of his later works (1984a: 95) he argues “[w]here there is power, there is resistance, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power.” It is within these networks of power that we as subjects have the capacity to act, to resist, to challenge, to create counter-discourses, and to subvert. It creates possibilities to analyse individuals as active subjects, as agents rather than the innocent victims of power (Mills 2003).

Judith Butler uses Foucault’s concept of discourse as the constitutive element of the subject in her theory of performativity. I will use her concept of performativity to argue that essentialist categories of heterosexuality and homosexuality are illusionary binaries. Therefore I will now shortly introduce her theory of performativity with reference to Foucault’s notion of productive power, and subjectification. In her book ‘Gender Trouble’ (1990) Judith Butler introduces performativity, as a productive power that works through the “reiterative power of discourse to produce the phenomena that it regulates and constrains” (Butler 1993: 2).

Butler understands a discourse as something contradictory and multiple, but always productive. A discourse has effects and this is where the power of discourse is located, which is a direct reference to the work of Foucault. According to Butler discourse should be seen as a force with which power is put into effect, this power produces and destabilises 'subjects' (1994). In a similar line of thought as Foucault, Butler argues that the enactment of discourse articulates already existing formations of knowledge and it is this articulation that produces social subjects. As Butler (1993: 95, original emphasis) herself argues "[p]erformativity cannot be understood outside of a process of iterability, a regularized and constrained repetition of norms [...] This repetition is not performed by a subject: this repetition is what enables a subject and constitutes the temporal condition for the subject" (Butler 1993: 95, original emphasis). The subject does not come into being through one act of invention or foundation, but through recitation and repetition. She then says: "So what I'm trying to do is think about performativity as that aspect of discourse that has the capacity to produce what it names. [...] the production actually happens through a certain kind of repetition and recitation." (Butler 1994: 33).

It is until this point that Foucault and Butler complement each other. As both argue that the subject is constituted through the productive power of discourse. They both use the process of subjectification to challenge essentialist notions of the subject, and show how the subject becomes constituted and constitutes itself by means of the internalisation of the discursive element of productive power. However, Butler and Foucault

diverge from each other at the point where Foucault argues that we should see these structures of meaning, these networks of power not only as solely repressive and/or productive, but we can use these same structures that repress us in our acts of resistance against these. While Butler argues that we are condemned to repeat these structures of meaning that make us as subjects possible. Or in the words of Nelson following Butler: "Subjects continually perform identities that are prescribed by hegemonic discourses." (1999: 337). In Butler's perception, we are as subjects unable to change these structures of meaning, these hegemonic discourses, that constitute us. Thus, Nussbaum (1999) argues, it is our best hope to thumb our noses at them and look for possibilities of freedom within them. In relation to this, she refers to the reasoning of Butler on performativity and argues that naming (with an insulting name) leads to the construction of us as social beings, and because we are in a certain way unchangeably connected to our existence, because we have some sort of narcissism that gives us our existence, we are compelled to embrace these terms that insult or harm us. In contrast Foucault argues that it is within these structures, these networked relations of power, where we find possibilities for resistance by formulating counter-discourses, by creating new structures of meaning. As one of the key conceptual pillars of this thesis is resistance and agency I will come back to these issues later in this thesis.

Gender, sexuality and performativity

The issues of gender/sexuality related to the introduction of the notion of Butler's theory of performativity is relevant for this thesis as she uses her theory of performativity to uncover the performative, proscribed and artificial nature of the gender/sexuality dualism. She does not only focus on the dualism between homosexual and heterosexual, but also on the dualism lying at the foundation of the earlier dualism, the distinction between men and women. This is relevant for this thesis as a way to under scribe the social constructed nature of categories of gender and sexuality, and to introduce how these social conventions are constraining and marginalising in their effects. However, I will start this section with an elaboration on how Foucault used sexuality as a means to analyse how power works within society, and how this resulted in the transformation of sexuality into a regulative discourse in the nineteenth century to the benefit of the hegemonic views of the bourgeoisie and structures of modern society.

The term sexuality refers to the dominant ideas about sex, in this sense, it is not only about the sexual activities per se, but also about the social meaning of sexual activity. Implicitly the term sexuality refers to the socially constructed and culturally defined character of human sexual behaviour (Knox and Pinch 2000), and how these regulative discourses are articulated, reflected and (re)produced within medicine, science, psychoanalysis, etc., resulting in definitions of certain kinds of sexuality as normal and others as abnormal, leading to the marginalisation and

exclusion of expressions of sexuality regarded as abnormal. I will hereafter refer back to the work of Butler to show how psychoanalytical theories of sexuality and gender in general, and Freudian in special, introduced the seemingly stable dichotomy between male and female with its exclusionary relationship heterosexuality. In contrast to the term sex the term gender was introduced. The introduction of the term gender was the result of acknowledging and emphasising the socially constructed nature of gender in opposition to the idea that it is a naturally given. This gender/sex distinction is, according to Johnston (2001) bleak, as it implies that one's biological sex shows, but does not define, the appropriate gender identity for that person. The reason for introducing both Foucault and Butler is that both analyse and make visible common sense understandings of gender and sexuality present within contemporary society in order to challenge and resist these. In addition, I will introduce Butler's concept of performativity again because she neatly shows how the regulative discourse of sexuality developed into a discourse of performativity in which subjects reproduce this as such.

According to Foucault (1984a) sexuality as a specific way of talking about, studying and regulating sexual desires with its fantasies and secrets appeared at a particular historical moment in western society, namely in the nineteenth century. He therefore characterises Western culture as sex-centric. He argues that sexuality is constructed along three axes; knowledges about sexual behaviour; systems of power that regulate sexual practices; and, "the forms within which individuals are able, are obliged, to

recognize themselves as subjects of this sexuality” (1984a: 4). In line with this and in terms of the rational and concerted compulsivities of modernity, Foucault (1984a) claims that the process of the transformation of sex into a regulative discourse was the product of the hegemonic mission of the bourgeoisie in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The middle classes pioneered the discursive deployment of sexuality, first to themselves, and eventually generalizing this to the whole social body (Foucault 1984a) as in this period the leading principle was the body of society. This social body needed to be protected, by means of quasi-medical interventions, therefore remedies and therapeutic devices were employed, such as the exclusion of delinquents, the segregation of the sick, and the monitoring of infectious diseases (Foucault 1975). This is what Foucault (1975) calls biopolitics, by which he means the governmental absent-mindedness of social security and wellbeing, the large scale management of life and death to the benefit of the state. Sex and sexual practices gained in importance as political issues in a society concerned with the management and direction of life-processes. Biopolitical rationality necessarily links the body to body politics, in order for the government to be able to have control over sexual behaviour, which will ensure the obeying stability to the capitalist system of production in modern society.

In his book ‘History of Sexuality’ Foucault (1984a) shows how sexual oppression in the Victorian Age became a mechanism for the formulation of discourses of sexuality, which he calls the ‘scientia sexualis’, in which sex became itself a discourse, rather than the creation of silence about sexuality.

Rather, silence was caught up in the discourse of sexuality. Power was not exercised through censorship, instead power was exercised through an incitement to speak about one’s sexuality to different experts on sexuality in order to regulate it. He gives different examples of this, one is the confessional, which according to Foucault (1984a) became an essential technique to make biopower function. People were forced into a practice of truth-telling in one of the areas of administration of life directed at sexual practices. Another example he gives is of secondary schools in the eighteenth century. In these institutions one was not supposed to talk about sex, nevertheless Foucault argues, there was a preoccupation with sex in these schools in all thinkable aspects: “The space for classes, the shape of the tables, the planning of the recreation lessons, the distribution of the dormitories [...], the rules for monitoring bedtime and sleep periods—all this referred, in the most prolix manner, to the sexuality of children.” (1984a: 28). Thus the regulative discourse of sexuality spread out over the whole social body in the Victorian age.

Sex and sexual subjectivity have become biopolitical issues because “[i]t was essential that the state know what was happening with its citizens’ sex, and the use they made of it, but also that each individual be capable of controlling the use he [sic] made of it” (Foucault 1984a: 26). In relation to this Howell (2007: 297) states: “Simply put, the modern state and its delineation of its field of operations cannot be divorced from sexuality, from a concern with reproduction, disease and deviancy; in short, biopolitics is geopolitics”, as a means to keep order and stability within

capitalist society. Therefore, sexuality has become essential for the structuring of modern society and its governmental apparatus. The deployment of sexuality was the predominant mode of power in modern times. Naturally, Foucault (1975) argues, it was medicine, which became the common denominator during the Enlightenment and after, as a hard core science establishing the absolute truth, which divested any mythological, religious speculations and suspicions as were common within the ages before the Enlightenment. The discourse of medicine started to circulate through the whole body of society during the ages after the dark ages. Theories developed within medicine and psychoanalysis had as their effect the function of control and normalisation as these disciplines had the power to produce 'regimes of truth' (Foucault 1975). It is within this context that sexuality became a regulative discourse. Because of these historical conventions, sex and sexuality became legitimate topics for research due to the seemingly stable nature of categories of sexual preference (Foucault 1984a). Since the nineteenth century this has had as an effect that people became in some sense their sexual preference, the sex of the person we have sex with determines to which category we belong (Mills 2003). This is best reflected in the explanation of homosexuality given by Karl Heinrich Ulrichs, the first openly homosexual and a pioneer in gay and lesbian activism, who explained in the midst of the nineteenth century homosexuality² in terms of men having feminine souls, who feel

² The word homosexual appears for the first time in 1868 in a letter from the author

attracted to men with masculine souls. This is what he came to call 'urning' (Hekma 2007). Most doctors adhered to the idea of Ulrichs, and what was seen as a sin, became perceived as a pathology of men with feminine souls. Accordingly, Freud, one of the founders of psychoanalysis, argues that we either identify ourselves with a particular sex or we are attracted to this particular sex, only these two relations are possible. If you as a man are attracted to other men, Freud would argue that this is because you identify yourself with women (Klages 1997). In a similar way lesbians were perceived as women with masculine souls. In the same time words were invented for other perversions, like masochism, fetishism, sadism, transvestite, paedophilia and exhibitionism. In addition, also the more general terms of sexuality and sexology came into being. With these terms also new theories and practices were developed. From that time on erotic preferences and sexual behaviour were seen as essential components of one's personal identity (Hekma 2007). These developments led to a conceptualisation of homosexuals as inverts, people who are pathologically perverse. Within a system of repressive discourses on sexuality and a system of biopolitics, homosexuality has become a social disease. The discourse of homosexuality was used to give a description of a group of people who

Károly Mária Kertbeny to Ulrichs. He derived the word homosexual from the Greek word 'homos' (the same) and the Latin root 'sexualis'. Later he used the word in two anonymous pamphlets in which he criticised the laws that criminalised same-sex sexual activities. The word heterosexuality appears for the first time in one of his writings in 1880 (glbtq 2004)

needed to be controlled and disciplined, that simultaneously led to marginalised groups becoming aware of their need for emancipation (Foucault 1984a).

This development of homosexuality as a category of sexuality starting with the naming and description of homosexuality by Ulrichs is an example of how naming leads to norming. It is through the adherence of others to his pathology of homosexuality, that the homosexual as a pathology enters the discourse of medicine to eventually be reproduced in its meaning, that in its turn leads to the re-establishment of the neutrality of normality. This process of naming as norming has proven to be persistent as it was only in 1973 after strong political pressure that the American Psychiatric Association (APA) removed homosexuality per se as a mental disorder from the DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders) II list. However in 1980 on the third edition of the DSM list a new diagnosis was introduced 'ego-dystonic homosexuality' characterised by a persistent lack of heterosexual arousal that interferes with wanted heterosexual relationships, and a persistent distress due to unwanted homosexual arousal. After criticism from mental health professionals, with as one of the arguments that the new category was yet another form of stigmatisation of homosexuals, and the acknowledgement by the APA that almost all homosexuals go through a phase of ego-dystonic homosexuality, it was in 1986 that homosexuality was completely removed from the DSM list. However, ego-dystonic homosexuality became classified in the revised

version of the list under Sexual Disorders Not Otherwise Specified, which includes persistent stress about one's sexual orientation (Herek 2008).

Both Foucault and Butler challenge these theories of biological determinism. Foucault shows through his analysis of sexuality as discourse that the common sense notions of sexuality and appropriate sexual behaviour and desires are the result of historical conventions. He explains sexuality not in terms of sex, but in terms of a historical construct associated with modernity, thereby destabilising these notions, as things could have been different. Or as McHoul & Grace (1993: 121) argue "Foucault's arguments open up the possibility that sexual difference can be something other than the sexualised version of it we have inherited, and that the bodily differences between men and women can be conceived as something other than sexual difference." Following the theories of Foucault on sexuality as described above, he and Judith Butler complement each other in this aspect. Judith Butler uses Foucault's notion of productive power to challenge the power of the symbolic to rework the psychoanalytical themes within a framework of heteronormativity (Thrift and Dewsbury 2000). In line with her post-structuralist perspective in which the grand narratives of modernism and structuralism are rejected, and in line with Foucault's rejection of a Freudian notion of sexuality, Butler perceives psychoanalysis as a grand narrative in which woman as a unitary concept comes into being. In her opinion, psychoanalysis is a story about origins and ends, which takes on certain aspects and excludes others. In this sense she mostly refers to the work of Freud, in order to illustrate how

the story of psychoanalysis starts with a utopian non-differentiation of the sexes, and it ends with the formation of difference and a compulsory distinction. The psychoanalytical narrative of sex and gender “gives a false sense of legitimacy and universality to a culturally specific and, in some cases, culturally oppressive version of gender identity” (Butler 1990: 329).

As a critique against these grand narratives of sexuality within psychoanalysis, Judith Butler (1990) introduces, the already mentioned, concept of performativity. Her theory is relevant, as she attempts to make gender trouble challenging the status quo to the benefit of marginalised identities, like the gay and lesbian identity, by uncovering the performative, proscribed, and artificial nature of gender identity. She rejects, in a similar vein as Foucault did, the naturalistic notions about an inherent gendered essence, stating that the differences between female-male, homosexual-heterosexual are symbolic constructions, which create in turn an illusion of stability. Butler instead defines gender as “the repeated stylization of the body, a set of repeated acts within a highly rigid regulatory frame that congeal over time to produce the appearance of a substance, of a natural sort of being” (1990: 33). In line with the criticism of essentialism and the naturalness of gender and sexuality distinctions, Butler defines performativity as “the disruptive mode by which ontological effects are installed” (Butler 1990: 112). This is an anti-essentialist idea; gender categories are not installed from the natural outside of society or culture, but are rather fundamentally formed by discourse.

Butler (1990) argues that we as subjects are constituted by the very act of performing gender. Gender is not something we automatically have, it is rather something we perform in certain contexts, something composed out of discursive practices. In a similar way as the repetition of linguistic conventions governs our perception of reality, performing gender roles has real effects, including the constitution of our subjectivity. Gender does not come or exist before the subject, instead, gender has as an effect the constitution of a subject, which seems to exist or come before gender, or as Nash states: “Gender does not exist outside its ‘doing’ but its performance is also a reiteration of previous ‘doings’ that become naturalized as gender norms.” (2000: 295). In other words, gender is in a continuous process of becoming. Gender is constituted through the repetition and recitation of discourses regulating sexuality. This repetition and recitation takes place under conditions of cultural constraint, or as Butler calls these “regulatory regimes” (Butler 1990: -), which reinforce certain appearances of femininity and masculinity while others become prohibited (Brickell 2005). Thus, through our performances within regulatory regimes “the illusion of a primary and interior gendered self” is constructed (Butler 1990: 138). In this sense we are not self-willed, but condemned to enact social conventions that create the illusion of our subjectivity, of our identity. By arguing this Butler is able to avoid a notion of stable identities. However, she also denies by this avoidance, the agency of us as humans. Her denial or neglect of human agency leaves us little stable ground to work from, as reality becomes only an abstract concept with human beings as nothing

more than pure social constructs performing unconsciously a role they got assigned through discursive practices and regulatory regimes by society. I will come back to this issue later, as this is the point on which Michel Foucault and Judith Butler diverge from each other.

Both Foucault's and Butler's accounts of sexuality and gender as historical, cultural, discursive constructs are relevant, as they both challenge through their analysis's the hegemonic position heterosexuality has in society. Because of his theorising about the discursive nature of sexuality, Foucault is one of the most influential thinkers considering the question whether homosexuality is biologically given or socially constructed (Knox and Pinch 2000). Foucault (1984a) argues that there have always been forms of sexual behaviour, which we now call homosexual. But the 'homosexual' as a specific kind of social subject, was produced, and could only make its appearance, within the earlier described, moral, legal, medical and psychiatric discourses, practices and institutional apparatus of the late nineteenth century, with their particular theories of sexual perversity. Thus, homosexuality as a category is, according to him, the result of the repressive discourse of sexuality. He argues that the repressive discourses on sexuality in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had as their effect the constitution of seemingly perverse forms of sexuality, and maybe more importantly, as desirable forms of sexual behaviour due to their prohibited nature, rather than the exclusion of certain forms of sexuality. Through the repressive discourses on sexuality opportunities were created for marginal, non-heterosexual, perverse modes of sexual being.

Thus, as Halperin (2008) argues, the homosexual created by discourse is an impossible contradictory creation, not a natural reality but a phantasmatic projection, an incoherent construction that functions to stabilise and consolidate the cultural meaning of heterosexuality through capturing everything different or other. The homosexual is defined by the negotiation and contradiction of everything the heterosexual is not. The homosexual is an identity without an essence. Thus, homosexual activity has been perceived as sexual practices in which one could participate only through the exclusion of other practices, because there was a general consensus that sexual attraction could only exist between opposites, between man and woman. This process is known as 'othering'. According to Weis (1995: 18) this is "that process which serves to mark and name those thought to be different from oneself" (in Canales 2000: -). Canales (2000) divides this process of othering into two categories; inclusionary and exclusionary othering. Both categories exist within a network of power relations. The difference between the two can be found in the sense that inclusionary othering uses power within relationships for coalition building and transformation. However, more importantly in the light of this thesis, is her conception of exclusionary othering, in which power within relationships is used for subordination and domination. This form of othering has as its possible consequences marginalisation, alienation, internalised oppression, decreased opportunities, and exclusion.

Sothorn (2007) in his article in which he discusses the sexuality of the disabled body shows with reference to Foucault the influence of these

discursive conceptions of sexuality on the regulation and acceptance of sexuality on 'marginalised' forms of sexuality, like the disabled. He argues that the disabled body is under pressure of being sexualised in hegemonic ways to protect the discursive production of sex, this is what Foucault calls the truth of the self, a current modality of liberal identity formation. Arguments have been made about the structural similarities between the queer body and the disabled body, both in queer and disability studies. So, Sothorn (2007) argues that the sexualised disabled body, like the queer body, unveils the fear of the instability and unrepresentability of disabled sexual practices (as a queer other).

Butler, in line with Foucault, also criticises and challenges the position of heterosexuality as being the central point of reference, the normal, and the original sexuality. Following this, Butler (1990) argues that, to be intelligible as human beings, we need to adhere and perform within the common sense dichotomous heterosexual norms of gender. Butlers critique is part of her project to subvert dominant notions of sex, gender and sexuality, which assumes that there are two bodies, two genders with heterosexuality as the indisputable relation between these. Or in other words, Butler (1990) attempts to destabilise the heterosexual matrix, which is according to her "[...] that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders and desires are naturalized [...]" (Butler 1990: 115), it is through this heterosexual matrix that "gender hierarchy and compulsory heterosexuality" (Butler 1990: xxviii) is supported. With the introduction of the heterosexual matrix she emphasises the clear coherence between

heterosex, where the binary structure of gender finds its addition in the opposite-sex attraction. Thus, the heterosexual matrix excludes certain identifications, while others are made possible. People who do not seem to fit within this heterosexual matrix possibly become marginalised through the fiction of the heterosexual ideal placed against the abnormal homosexuality (Butler 1990). Although non-heterosexual regulations can be out of place in Butler's theory, they are not completely removed from it, as she says "[n]ot to have social recognition as an effective heterosexual is to lose one possible social identity and perhaps to gain one that is radically less sanctioned, the unthinkable is thus fully within culture but fully excluded from dominant culture" (Butler 1990: 77).

By conceptualising gender and sex as regulated fictions, which are maintained by repeated and stylised performances, she attempt to denaturalise the heterosexual matrix. It follows from Butlers (1990) theory of performativity that the dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality is as much performative as gender is. However, Butler (1994) argues, heterosexuality is often wrongly perceived as the original and homosexuality as the copy. This idea of copy and original is problematic, according to Butler (2008), as the one is seemingly the precondition for the other. In this sense, Butler (1990) argues that heterosexuality asks for an understandable idea of homosexuality to remain intact. This conceptualisation of heterosexuality as dependent on homosexuality challenges the simplistic dominance-resistance dichotomy and how this continuously leads to the production of sexuality within a

structure of power relations. This seemingly stable and contradictory stability of heterosexuality can be understood as a precondition for the inherent cohesion of gender categories (Butler 1993). In relation to heterosexuality, Butler says “I think one of the reasons that heterosexuality has to re-elaborate itself, to ritualistically reproduce itself all over the place, is that it has to overcome some constitutive sense of its own tenuousness” (1994: 34). This can be understood as a system of dualisms, in which the most important term of the self defines itself with the exclusion of the other. The construction of dualisms is inherent to the construction of the other and the other as its opposite is mostly inferior (Aitchison 2001). Here we see how she emphasizes one of the most important aspects of De Beauvoir’s theorising on gender; its dualistic structure, as Butler states: “One is one’s gender to the extent that one is not the other gender.” (Butler 1990: 22).

Therefore, Butler (1994: 34) states: “I think that crafting a sexual position, or reciting a sexual position, always involves becoming haunted by what’s excluded. And the more rigid the position, the greater the ghost, and the more threatening it is in some way.” Following Butler’s critique, Nussbaum (1999) argues, there is no reason to believe that heterosexuality is the natural connection between genders, as Butler’s theory of performativity shows there is no real reason why there are only two gender categories and not three, five or an infinite number of gender categories, or in the thought of Foucault things could have been otherwise. Through the conceptualization of gender as socially constructed, the hegemonic position

of heterosexuality is challenged, and at the same moment space is created for the introduction of more than one relation between different genders. Or as Scott (1997: 65-66) states: “As it’s finally sinking in that if gender is fluid, how can sexual “orientation” not be as well? How can you be rigidly orientated toward something that is amorphous, shifting, fluid, tricky, elusive? Basing your identity on sexuality is like building your house on a foundation of pudding.” (in Browne 2006: 885).

In short, both Foucault and Butler argue that heterosexuality is perceived as the natural and privileged sexual relation in society. To challenge this hegemonic heteronormative perception they both argue that heterosexuality and homosexuality are historical and social constructs produced within a repressive regime of truth regulating sexuality. Homosexuality as a category is invented in order to stabilise and reaffirm the hegemonic position of heterosexuality, it is constructed as the perverse, unnatural, inauthentic other. However, it is this constructed nature of both categories of sexuality, which creates the opportunities and possibilities for destabilisation through various forms of resistance.

Resistance and agency

In the sections above Foucault and Butler have for the large part complemented each other in their theorizing on issues of power, the constitution of the subject, and sexuality and gender. In this section, however, I will show how they diverge in a very important sense from each other. I will discuss the issues of resistance, specifically the power of

agency, by relating this to the materiality of the body and the concept of embodiment. I will do this to eventually introduce into this thesis an embodied agent with the capacity to act and resist. I will first introduce how both Foucault and Butler perceive the body, as Butler and Foucault diverge from each other at this point. For Butler the body does not have an ontological status, while for Foucault the body is the site of control, and therefore, resistance. Thereafter, I will focus on the question of agency and resistance. To make my argument more coherent, I will first introduce Butler's notion of the body and agency, as I will use Foucault's notions to complement Butler's theorising.

Butler (1990) argues through her theory of performativity that gender is independent of the bodily materiality. Gender is inscribed onto the body. As Fraser argues “[t]he implication here is that gender is written on the body and therefore visible in a way that sexual identities and activities are not” (1999: 109). Butler takes the performative nature of gender as far as to question the feminist distinction between sex as a biological given, and gender as a historical construct. She states in her book ‘Bodies That Matter’ (1994: 2-3) that even sex is not “a bodily given on which the construct of gender is artificially imposed, but [...] a cultural norm which governs the materialization of bodies.” Sex is materialised in the body through the repetition of bodily norms. The body is not a fact, the body “has no ontological status apart from the various acts which constitute its reality” (Butler 1990: 136). The repeated inscription of the norms of sexuality on the body, and the continuous experiencing of these norms,

lead to the creation of the idea of a stable identity. She repeatedly insists, that there are no identities before the performance, and the successful copy can never trust the seemingly trustworthy reproduction which it cites (Gregson and Rose 2000). Butler contradicts the idea that the practices which produce gendered subjects are the places from which critical agency is possible. Gender similarly is a place for productive activity and a mechanism of constraint (Butler 1990). This double relation comes, according to Lloyd (1999) from three groups of claims. The first is Lacanian, the failure of the embodiment of an ideal is inevitable, subjects can never reach a stable gendered identity. The second group of claims is Derridean, the repetition, which is central in the maintenance and construction of gender is always a repetition of differences. The third is Foucauldian, repetition creates opportunities for change. The performativity of gender is inevitable, but gender identity is always incomplete and open. Or as Hawks argues about complying with certain internalised codes “is at one and the same time unconscious and profoundly managed” (1995: 26 in Lloyd 1999: 200).

Butler herself says in an interview (1994: 32): “I wanted to work out how a norm actually materializes a body, how we might understand the materiality of the body to be not only invested with a norm, but in some sense animated by a norm, or contoured by a norm.” She does not only mean to say that the body is constituted on the basis of social norms about how women and men should appear; she also wants to say that the fact there is a binary distinction between the sexes is a fundamental one. This is

the fundamental basis on which whole society is structured, and therefore it is itself a social idea, which is not given in bodily reality. However, at this point Butler moves beyond the mere facts of biology. We simply do have different physical characteristics on which the distinction between male and female is based, it seems impossible to move beyond this recognition. This notion of the performativity of the body has been criticised. Vasterling argues that Butler reduces the notion of the human body to nothing more than an ontological constructed entity (Vasterling 2003). With this Butler neglects the fact that a body is not the same as any other entity in reality. As embodied beings we are our bodies, and Vasterling (2003), therefore, rejects the idea that the human being is nothing more than a speaking subject, but we are human beings with and in a body. A question concerning this dilemma of the performativity of the body, is a question of agency, as Barad (2003: 821) also argues “[u]nfortunately, however, Butler’s theory ultimately reinscribes matter as a passive product of discursive practices rather than as an active agent participating in the very process of materialization.” As can be seen Butler’s theorising is not without its problems. Her denial of the body and a conscious subject constructed through the performativity of gender, leads to problems with a notion of agency. This neglect of agency makes Butler’s theory of performativity difficult to work with. If there is no doer behind the deed, then no one is responsible for her/his own deeds? Are we all just the innocent victims of the power structures at play within society? Or as

Brickell (2005: 34) asks “if the existence of a subject in possession of agency is problematic, who or what are “we”?”

However, Butler does not completely deny the possibility of resistance in her theorising. Lloyd (1999) argues that for Butler subversive actions always in some ways signify unexpected ways with unmeant effects. It is impossible in Butler’s perspective to draw a line of all subversive actions coming from discourses, practices and actions. This perspective is exemplary for the lack of agency in Butler’s theorising as indicated before, for Butler the possibilities for resistance and subversion lie beyond the capacity of humans to act. In opposite to Foucault, Butler (1990) argues that we can only be outside of discourse when we are aware of dominant discourses. It is within the changes within discourses that constitute and constrain our selves, our identities, that possibilities for change can be found. In Butler’s theory the only possibilities for subversion lie in the possibility that the repetition and recitation fails. In this sense, she does not completely diminish the capacity of the subject to act. Thus, in Butler’s perception power is productive of us as subjects, but the productive power is repressive in its effect. We are unable to break free from this productive power, and we have no opportunities of changing it, while Foucault argues we can use this repressive power as a means to resist its effects. In contrast to Foucault in Butler’s theorising it is not the subject who actively formulates counter-discourses, rather the possibilities for change can be found in the slippage in the repetition and recitation of (gendered) norms, as argued before a process that constitutes and constrains us as subjects, a

process over which we can not concede any influence (Butler 1990). For Butler we are nothing more than the carriers of language, we are nothing more than just (re)citing, we have no opportunities to be outside of discourse, to reflect, to analyse, and to eventually challenge and resist dominant discourse. This is an opposite position from the position Foucault takes as I will introduce later. For Butler it is within the productive repeated actions of discourse, where possibilities for subversion can be found. There is no guarantee, Butler states, that a repetition is successful, its disciplining capacity could fail (Butler 1990). The notion of recitation and repetition does not mean that the meaning of certain words can not change. We use words in particular temporal and spatial contexts that are constantly changing. These changes in contexts do necessarily lead to the same words having different meanings in different contexts, which give the opportunity that the meaning of words and discourse can change, however these changes in meaning are beyond our control (Butler 1990).

Another means to subvert hegemonic notions of gender and sexuality, related to the idea of slippage, Butler introduces is parody. This notion of parody as will become clear later is closely related to Foucault's idea of crossing-over and the formulation of counter-discourses, however the main difference between the two theorists remains the question of human agency. For Butler the means of resistance can be found in people challenging and subverting sexual conventions and gendered norms through parodying these. Butler (1990) argues that when we act and speak in gendered ways we do not only report on what is fixed in this world, but

we actively constitute a copy of it, meanwhile reinforcing it. We are able to remake or deconstruct these preconceived notions of reality by doing these performances in a slightly different manner, or in other words, by parodying them. These parodic performances do not come from the outside of regulatory regimes, but operate within the system. This explains why these practices are tamed or repaired by dominant discourse, as she says “[by] working in the context of [...] traditional categories, the simulacrum may seek to destabilize; but in practice, the categories are simply stretched and reproduced” (1993: 125). Because performance operates through signs, which already have standardised meaning, recovery remains always a realistic reality (Butler 1990). We can see these parodic performances as a kind of slippage in performance similar to the slippage in repetition and recitation of discourses as described before. The making despicable of marginalised identities is besides oppressive also productive of different forms of transgressive identities that challenge the taken-for-granted naturalness of social norms of gender (Butler 1990, 1993). In a similar line of thought as mentioned before on resistance and subversion through slippages in discourse, Butler (1990) suggests that the repeated inscription of norms of sexuality leads to the possibility of resistance, as in the same process a subject is constituted, which is able to reject these bodily norms. The subject from Butler's perspective is constituted in submission, but can not be reduced to submission.

By constantly parodying, challenging, subverting the norms of sexuality, Butler (1990) suggests, the dominant discursive regimes of society can

possibly change. The most famous example Butler gives in relation to this is cross-dressing as a parody of a sexual identity, which both reaffirms the idea of sexual differences and shows the eventuality of a performance and thus its openness to (discursive) change. The drag, whose 'natural' identity does not conform to the symbols within the performance, is an example of how dominant discourses and performativity can be challenged and disrupted. The drag shows that all gender and sexual identifications are ritualistically performed in daily life (Nelson 1999; Martin 2005). In addition, in an interview in 1994 she argues that another means of resistance can be taking on a comic sexual position. With comic she means that you take on the sexual position you thought was impossible, as taking on one sexual position implies that other positions become impossibilities from the perspective of the position one takes (Butler 1994). Butler argues that these moments in which you take on two positions, or when you are not completely sure about your position, that those are the moments that make the ground shake, "[t]hat's where resistance to recuperation happens. It is like a breaking through to a new set of paradigms" (Butler 1994: 38). Finally, it is important to note that Butler in her latest work (2008) speaks about resistance in reference to the lesbian identity, however she continues to reinforce our dualistic thinking, Butler argues in her contribution to 'The New Social Theory Reader' (Alexander & Seidman 2008) in relation to sexual positions that a possible specificity of lesbian sexuality turned out to be an important counterpoint against the claim that lesbian sexuality is like heterosexuality once it is removed, or that it does not exist, or that it is

derived from heterosexuality. She argues when gay identities are implied within a framework of heterosexuality, it is not the same as claiming that these identities are defined or constituted out of heterosexuality. Therefore she also claims that it is not the same as claiming that heterosexuality is the only cultural framework in which gay identities are implied. These imitations of the sexualities convert the order of imitation and imitated, and in this process unveil its second effect, namely the fundamental dependence of the original to what it claims to produce (Butler 2008). However, maybe, she argues, the claim of specificity on the one hand, and the claim of non-existence on the other, are not as opposite to each other as it seems. In her opinion lesbian sexuality can be seen as a process that reinscribes certain power structures, which are at the same time resisted by lesbian sexuality. Lesbian sexuality attempts to replace the heterosexual matrix by which it is constituted, and it is the specificity of lesbian sexuality that should be reached, not outside of this reinscription of the heterosexual matrix, but in the modality and effects of that reinscription (Butler 2008). As she says "[...] the negative constructions of lesbianism as a fake or bad copy can be occupied and reworked to call into question the claims of heterosexual priority" (Butler 2008: 169). Thus, those who do not seem to fit within the constitutive heterosexual matrix have the possibility through their claim of their sexuality to challenge and resist heteronormative notions of sexuality, which is another example of parody or ridiculing the sexual regimes that lead to our constitution as subjects by taking in a comic position as argued before.

Nevertheless, what is problematic in Butler's theorising on resistance and subversion is as Browne (2004: 334) states: "As Butler (1992) suggests resistance may reinforce hegemonic power relations through establishing the very thing we seek to resist." It seems we are unable to move beyond the dualism of gender and sexuality as these have led to our constitution. Furthermore in order to be intelligible we need to make use of these in our attempts to challenge and resist these notions resulting in the recitation, and therefore the re-establishment of these. As Vasterling (2003: 208) states:

"In speaking and writing we comply with already-existing meaning conventions or discursive practices which effect a certain semantical construction of, among other things, the speaking subject itself. In short, the subject does not produce, invent or create the meaning of the words s/he cites; s/he is an effect of, or constructed by the meaning conventions and the discursive practices s/he complies with while speaking and writing."

I will come back to this notion of reinforcement of dualisms through resistance in the section dealing with the sexualisation of space.

What becomes clear in the section above is that Butler does not completely deny an active agent, and in her later work she revised her first theoretical insights after criticism introducing more clearly a conscious and active agent into her work. However it is beyond the scope of this thesis to fully introduce these revised insights in this theoretical framework. Therefore to acknowledge the changes in her perceptions of agency I will shortly touch

upon these. In her work 'Undoing Gender' (2004) Butler revised her theory of performativity as introduced in her book 'Gender Trouble'. In this work Butler acknowledges human agency as a capacity to act and resist more, especially she focuses on the agency of humans to create and communicate oppositional norms and discourses that call for action. Action or doing, in her words, is closely linked to being, as she states in the starting pages of 'Undoing Gender' "if I have any agency, it is opened up by the fact that I am constituted by a social world I never chose" (2004: 3). In this sense our agency is constituted from a paradoxical position, our agency is the result of our constitution as subjects something over which we have no control. However, this paradoxical position, according to Butler (2004), does not mean that our agency is an impossibility, rather our agency comes from this paradoxical position. Our understanding of how we are constituted as humans is for Butler a prerequisite to undo, resist and transform the norms that lead to our constitution.

What is important in the question of human agency is the notion of intelligibility, the question of who counts as human. The norms and categories of who count as human are temporal creations, and work through the inclusion and exclusion of particular groups within society. For Butler (2004: 13) this means that "its [the category of human] rearticulation will begin precisely at the point where the excluded speak to and from such a category." More particularly she argues for the need of "inclusive transformation" (2004: 223) by which she means a radical criticism aimed at a continuous disruption of what has become "settled

knowledge and knowable reality and to use, as it were, one's reality to make an otherwise impossible or intelligible claim [so that] something other than a simple assimilation into prevailing norms can and does take place" to eventually reform reality at the level of the body (Butler 2004: 27). It is in this section that it becomes clear how Butler introduces another conception of agency, resistance and subversion that no longer depends on slippages in the recitation and repetition of discursive norms and regimes over which we as humans have no control, rather she argues that it is our duty as human beings, as agents with a critical mind to challenge, disrupt and transform these. This almost hints at a kind of radicalism, which shows the difference in Butler's perceptions of agency throughout her work.

In short, the revised possibilities for resistance Butler introduces take place at the borders of the bodily norm, especially those who do not seem to fit within the heterosexual regime are able to resist and distance themselves from the dominant symbolic norms meanwhile creating new identities, and possibly even able to destabilise dominant heteronormative norms (Butler 2004). To illustrate her revised theory of human agency Butler expands in 'Undoing Gender' on the case of David Reimer³. David is an example of

³ The David Reimer case is an example often used within gender studies. This case is known in medical literature as the John/Joan case, it is the story of a boy who was raised as a girl after his penis was accidentally injured during a circumcision. At the age of fifteen she asks to be changed into a boy again. This case is used by medical experts to argue that gender has a biological foundation, others use the case as an argument for the social constructed nature of gender. Besides the case shows that gender plays an essential role in one's life, especially in terms of intelligibility, a role even of life and death, as David Reimer committed suicide in June 2004 at the age of 38 (Bell 2008).

someone who lives at the borders of the bodily norms of heteronormativity, he did not fit any category, was not recognisable or intelligible in terms of the binary gender norms. Nevertheless Reimer was able to articulate and speak of himself, to make a claim for agency and to resist the heterosexual norms enforced upon him by society (Butler 2004). Besides, Butler (2004) uses the case to show how intersex is seen as something that needs to be medically treated, and how gender in these treatments is oversimplified. However David was only able to articulate and speak of himself at a very high price as society with its categorical-dualistic thinking drove him crazy, leading him to commit suicide (Bell 2008).

Both Butlers conception of the body, and her notion of agency stands in contrast to Foucault's theorising on the body. For one reason, in Butler's perspective the materiality of the body gives a false sense of identity. There is in her theorising no a-priori individual confined by a body, rather the individual is constituted through a materialisation of the body by discursive practices. In contrast Foucault does not deny the existence of this a-priori individual, in Foucault's theorising the individual is not constituted through the materialisation of the body, but rather the individual is confined to the materiality of his/her body. In his work 'Discipline and Punish' (1989) he argues that the body has a real existence, while the soul is only a recent invention created within the earlier mentioned system of biopolitics, he states in this work: "The soul is the effect and instrument of political anatomy; the soul is the prison of the body." (1989: 30). Although Butler introduces in her later work a more conscious and active agent, I will

mostly adhere to Foucault's theory of resistance, because this thesis has at its focus spatial acts of resistance against heteronormativity, in which the power that constitutes us as subjects can be used to make other ways of living possible either through critical self constitution or through the body as a micro-site of resistance, other ways of being. In this way an active agent is introduced in this thesis, a subject able to resist so-called common sense heteronormative notions.

Another opposition between Foucault and Butler can be found in their theorising on resistance and agency (through the body). As Butler's theory of performativity lacks an embodied active agent, I will now introduce how Foucault perceives the body as a means to create possibilities for resistance. The later work of Foucault has been important for the turning point to the body as the primary site of cultural and social theorising (Turner 1994). Foucault's new position was not so much post-structuralistic as a continuation of structuralism with other means (Turner 1994). Foucault held on to the essential linguistic idealism of structuralism with a focus-shift from *langue* to *parole*⁴ holding on to the notion of De Saussure that the two categories are complementary to each other as the structured and unstructured aspects of language. However, orthodox structuralism regarded *langue* as a manifestation of an efficient transcendental structure

⁴ De Saussure used the terms *langue* and *parole*. With *langue* De Saussure meant the language system, the underlying rule-governed structure of language. *Parole* De Saussure used to describe the actual acts of speaking, writing, drawing, etc. based on the rules and structures of *langue* (Hall 1997)

of the mind, while Foucault transformed *parole* into discourse, as the manifestation of a similarly transcendental extra-historical mind. The locus of abstract cognitive structures of *langue* was the mind, the locus of concrete discourses of the new post-structuralism of *parole*, therefore, is the body (Turner 1994). And so, the post-structural body was born, the site of all controls, the context of the discourses of power. In Foucault's work power became the generator of certain discourses of discipline and control, with as their predecessors bodies and pleasures, the objects of control and discipline (Turner 1994).

In relation to his argument that sexuality became a regulative discourse in the modern age, Foucault (1989) argues that it was only in the eighteenth century within a policy of coercion; that the body was policed, its characteristics, gestures and behaviour were manipulated. Foucault (1989) identifies the body as the site of power, that is, power has its specific locus on the body, the body as produced by and in power relations within a system of domination through which docility is accomplished and subjectivity constituted. In the earlier described system of biopolitics the mechanisms of power became more dependent on bodies to ensure the efficient functioning of power's control over life processes. In this sense, power is not a constraining form of control, rather it is a means to extract time and labour from bodies. As argued before, the normalisation of individuals by means of regulative discourses was necessary for the government of life processes, thus "[t]he human body was entering a machinery of power that explores it, breaks it down and rearranges it"

(Foucault 1989: 138). In line with this Foucault (1989) argues that the body is involved directly in political processes. Power relations and structures directly influence the body as the body is compelled to comply to these relations and structures. Therefore, the political influence on the body is related to its economic use, the body is a force of production and therefore invested with relations of power and domination. On the other hand, the productive force of the body is enabled through a system of subjection, as he says “the body becomes a useful force only if it is both a productive body and subjected body” (1989: 25-26).

Moreover, the body also became the locus of control due to its intrinsic relation with sexuality. The body was regarded as the place where sexuality was located, and as could be seen in the previous sections sexuality could no longer be ignored since the Victorian age, science was impelled to know all the secret details of the body, putting the body in the centre of control and discipline (Foucault 1984a). For Foucault the embodied subject was localised since the Enlightenment in a centre of techniques involving productive dominance and rational control. In this sense the body serves as a mark of the embodied nature of the subject, which becomes the site of proliferating discourses, forms of knowledge and of normativity, found within a diversity of aspects of society, like biology, economy, family sociology, psychoanalysis, demography, and so on. As can be seen Butler and Foucault still share common grounds, arguing that the materiality of the body is influenced by regulative discourses and disciplinary power.

Nonetheless, Butler and Foucault start to diverge at the moment Foucault starts to argue that the body is the place where power is located. Foucault does not see the body as passive in the system of disciplinary power, as it is as much involved in resistance against disciplining and regulatory regimes as it is involved in the creation of these. The body in Foucault has a dual existence (Turner 1994), on the one hand he identifies the body as the product of discourse, a creation out of historical conventions, while on the other hand this body disciplined and produced through discourse has the capacity to resist these social and historical conventions. The body in Foucault is not only a discursive product, but also a site of resistance. In line with this McWorther (1989) argues that we need to let go of the dream of an apolitical, ahistorical body, if we wish to understand Foucault. This dream in which we want to believe that somewhere under the surface of the body, below the aesthetic practices of our appearances a natural organism can be found. An organism oppressed by social norms and discursive practices, an organism that remains the bearer of our healthy functioning, the bearer of a physiological truth. We tend to perceive the body as the natural, the true and the unique, in opposite to the discursively constituted body, to our bodily appearances modified by culture. “And we dream of re-inhabiting that body, of reha-bilitating it, of polishing its tarnished exterior away and letting it shine forth again. We dream of a liberation of pure and everlasting flesh” (McWorther 1989: 612). In the work of Foucault the body is, according to McWorther (1989), the source of resistance against the attempts of identification. The body is the means

through which we can resist and disrupt the discourses constitutive of our identity. The body can be used in Foucault's terms as that which is able to be different, to disrupt these dominant modes of productive power. In Foucault's work "[b]ody is precisely that which changes, grows, degenerates, dies, decays, that which is never stable, never fully predictable, that which is opaque, elusive, and unknown" (McWorther 1989: 613).

Foucault (1980) argues that mastery over one's own body can only be acquired through the effect of an investment of power in the body. This leads to the desire of one's own body by way of the work of power on healthy bodies. However, once power produces this effect, Foucault continues, there inevitably emerge the responding claims of the body against power, of pleasure against the moral norms of sexuality, marriage, decency. What had made power strong eventually becomes used to attack it. Power after being invested in the body, finds itself exposed to a counter-attack in that same body. As Foucault (1980: 56) says: "[T]he impression that power weakens and vacillates here is in fact mistaken; power can retreat here, re-organise its forces, invest itself elsewhere [...] and so the battle continuous." In this sense, it is sexuality becoming an object of analysis and concern, which at the same time leads to an intensification of each individual's desire, for, in and over its body. He (1984a) further argues that the strategies of analysis by which power and knowledge are combined in mechanisms constructed around sexuality, to know; the hysterisation of women's bodies, the pedagogisation of children's sex, the socialisation of pro-creative behaviour, and the psychiatrisation of perverse pleasures,

resulted in a curious linking of power to pleasure. As the body became seen as the locus of sexuality, with sexuality as something that could no longer be ignored, science needed to know all the physical and biological secrets of the body. The examination by doctors of hidden medical problems through a confession of the patient, led to the person under examination becoming invested with a specific kind of pleasure through the confession of the most intimate details and these pressing explorations. As Foucault states (1984a: 45): "The medical examination, the psychiatric investigation, the pedagogical report, and family controls may have the overall and apparent objective of saying no to all wayward or unproductive sexualities, but the fact that they function as mechanisms with a double impetus: pleasures and power."

Following his line of critique against the repressive hypothesis, Foucault (1984a) argues at the end of his first volume of 'The History of Sexuality' that it is bodies and pleasures, which serves as the rallying point for the counterattack against the deployment of sexuality, and not sex and desires. The introduction of bodies and pleasures as a new relation, in contrast to sex and desires, by Foucault, creates the possibilities of resistance. As he argues: "It is the agency of sex that we must break away from, if we aim – through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality – to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance." (Foucault 1989: 157). Bodies and pleasures create the opportunity to react against the repressive power of sexuality, in which desire through the body

becomes the locus of control. This focus of Foucault on bodies and pleasures is a reaction to the regulative discourses of sexuality created within biopolitical rationality, which had as an effect that the realm of private desire was entered by state law. The target of control became the representations of desire, the prohibited thoughts, which one had to speak about either in the doctor's office, or during the confessional. McWorther (1989) argues that we can see here that Foucault argues for the liberalisation of the body per se, in contrast to the liberalisation of the sexualised body, as he wants to break free from discursively created sexuality.

Foucault argues in the first volume of the 'History of Sexuality': "It is necessary to invert with the body, with its elements, its surfaces, its volumes, its depths, a nondisciplinary eroticism: that of the body plunged into a volatile and diffused state through chance encounters and incalculable pleasures." (1984a: 278). A focus on bodies and pleasures, in contrast to sex and desire, provides a fundamental challenge to the deployment of sexuality, and in so doing it creates opportunities to reveal and uncover the historical conventional nature of sexuality. A focus on bodies and pleasures opens up a rallying point against the definition of the body in terms of sex, and pleasures in terms of desire. It is at this point one can break with the deployment of sexuality, and with the related regulative regimes controlling our bodies, pleasures and lives. In line with this, he introduces in his book 'The Uses of Pleasure' (1984b), in which he describes how pleasure is part of a power play within the social system of

ancient Greece, the term 'ars erotica' as the counterpart of 'scientia sexualis'. The ars erotica are characterised by erotic techniques, which are aimed at increasing pleasure. Within these ars erotica truth does not arise from discursive regulatory regimes and categories, but truth arises from pleasure. Pleasure is not connected to what one shall or can do or not do, to certain kinds of uses of pleasure, rather pleasure needs to be understood as a practice, an experience one obtains in life.

In addition in an interview in 1984 Foucault speaks about this form of resistance through bodies and pleasures as the formulation of a counter-discourse, the introduction of a new way of thinking about ourselves. It is within this activity of the subject that truth becomes translated into practices involving the body into new pleasures and new relationships, leading to a reconfiguration of how power is organised, and how we are subjectified. Through new ways of experiencing bodily pleasures we can desubjectify ourselves, as an act of resistance against the subjectification of ourselves through the deployment of sexuality, resulting in a restoring of flexibility in our process of self-configuration. The possibility to formulate counter-discourses and counter-identifications can be practised by taking on the stigmatised identities assigned by society, like the perverse sexuality, revelling in these rather than seeing these in negative terms. Foucault uses as examples sadomasochism and gay bathhouses, where we can experience new kinds of bodily pleasures to break free from the deployment of sexuality. He talks about gay bathhouses in San Francisco and New York as "laboratories of sexual experimentation" (Foucault 1991a: 151) in which

communities of pleasure can be enacted. And indeed, as Hubbard (2008) argues research about men selling sex to men shows that men who identify themselves as heterosexual can sell these sexual services, while in the 'swinging' scene many men can be found who enjoy having sex with both genders. We can identify these individuals as bisexual or heteroflexible, however, it may be better to think about sexuality in terms of immanence, defined in the moment of pleasure, and never easy to be classified (Conlon 2004). Our sexual identities are created in different encounters and relations, which together constitute our sex lives. For most of us this is seldom a consistent story, and our sex lives are seldom predictable, "hence, even if some of us feel able to identify as straight or gay, which of us can really claim to be 'normal?'" (Hubbard 2008: 15). Foucault (1984b) argues that the process of incorporating this new truth coming from bodily pleasures necessarily involves other people in new kinds of affinity and relationship. These new kinds of relationships do not necessarily have to be sexual, as long as they always involve people giving each other pleasure.

In the later volumes of his 'History of Sexuality' (1984b; 1985) Foucault gives an analysis of the Greek and Roman practices of sexuality, which he calls the "arts of existence", by which he means: "these intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being and to make their life into an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria" (1984b: 4). In ancient Greece there was no tendency to discuss and interpret sexuality as we have

come to do in and after the Victorian age, or to codify sexual behaviour defining some sexual acts as perverse. The key principle in ancient times was moderation and self-control with less concern on the sexual activities one engaged in. This key principle is what Foucault (1985) calls self-discipline. With this term he means the relationship with the self, which keeps a person from being carried away by pleasure, in order to gain and maintain a mastery over this, a freedom from the interior passions, leading to a mode of being that is defined by the full enjoyment of oneself, a supremacy and mastery of oneself over oneself. It is this relation of oneself to oneself and the care for the self, which Foucault (1985) later identifies as a site for resistance.

The 'practices of self' belonging to the 'arts of existence' can be used as a means of resistance against domination. This argument of Foucault comes from the link between self-mastery and freedom in Greek times, in which freedom is understood as "a certain form of relationship of the individual with himself [sic]" (1984b: 92). Freedom in this sense does not take on the form of liberation or the delimitation of constraints (as is done within the repressive hypothesis), rather this freedom coming from and through self-mastery is "a power that one brought to bear on oneself in the power that one exercised over others" (1984b: 93). Resistance is no longer aimed to counteract governmental intervention and regulation, rather resistance is concerned with the creation of new kinds of subjectivity, new forms of agency, which leads to the development of viable alternatives against the discursive regulatory regimes of society, rather than questioning the need

for classification and individualisation. These new kinds of subjectivity lead to the creation of new kinds and forms of being and doing, ones that stand in accordance with the process of constitution itself, which Foucault calls the 'aesthetics of existence' (1994). It is the individual creating a work of art out of his/her life that contrasts to the subordinate mode of living a moral life (1984b).

Foucault calls for a critical resistance, one in which we resist to submission to heteronomy, in which we resist the processes that lead to our self-constitution and our tendency to comply to certain regulations and practices of the various social agencies, which have the capacity to define and shape our identities lying at the basis of our self-constitution. He encourages us to have the strength to start using our own understanding of the world, the courage to think and act freely. Thereby counteracting upon the conditions by which we are under the control and authority of others (1994). He encourages us to develop a critical attitude towards ourselves, an attitude in which we take it upon ourselves to critically analyse the constraints imposed upon us by the regimes of power within which is consolidated what we are allowed to think, say and do (Foucault 1984b). Foucault (1991b) refers here to a historical ontology of ourselves, a self-critique on what we are saying, doing and thinking, while analysing and reflecting upon the limits imposed upon us by the discursive regime on what can be said, done and thought. Ethics in this sense refers to the recognition and facing up to that which allows us to be self-critical within the configurations of discursive regularities. His emphasis on what we are

saying, thinking and doing comes from his notion that our selves are constituted precisely through what can be said, thought and done within a particular discursive regime.

This ethical life, as Foucault calls it, can also involve testing the limits and constraints to eventually transform these, or as Foucault argues in his essay 'What is Enlightenment' (1991b: 315) "the critique conducted in the form of necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible crossing-over." Moving beyond the constraints imposed upon us is a possible means of resistance in Foucault's terms. This possible 'crossing over' is an active critique of what is seen as discursively necessary, and used to examine where within these discursive regimes possibilities for resistance can be found to transform these. Foucault identifies a permanent possibility of contestation of the effective limits of the discursive regimes through the process of self-actualisation, that is those "events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing, thinking, saying" (1991b: 315). Discursive regimes should be seen as particular possibilities that have been actualised within a specific, historical constellation. These will remain necessary as long as these are effectively actualised in what we think, say and do. Our adherence to these discursive regimes is self incurred and to become mature adults, Foucault (1991b) argues, we need to test and criticise our regimes by analysing and uncovering the real possibilities they contain, and not to submit to what we are made to do, say and think. We can see here how Foucault introduces in his later works an active agent, a subject able to resist the discursive regimes

leading to his/her constitution, by developing a critical (self)awareness and the ability to be free in one's thinking, saying and doing.

In Foucault's essay 'The Subject and Power' (1982) he introduces this notion of an active agent able to resist the structures of its constitution more clearly building upon his notions of power as being networked and part of our everyday social fabric. In this essay it becomes clear that Foucault's concern with freedom and the free subject is closely linked to his notion of power. In his essay 'The Subject and Power' (1982: 342) he argues that "[p]ower is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are "free"." Freedom is the pre-condition for power, one can not exercise power over individuals who are not free, people who do not have the earlier mentioned possibilities within discursive regimes in which a diversity of conducts, reactions and behaviour is available. Power functions through the structuring of these possible actions and capacities of free agents, this structuring results from governmental processes through which the possible field of actions for others is constituted. Power can only function through guiding the actions of free subjects, who always have the possibility to traverse the field of actions in creative and new ways. The idea that power is always rooted within the network of the social, and is identified as an action upon an action, implies that within this network of power there is always a possibility of intervention. As soon as we find ourselves confronted with a power relation the possibilities are created to react, to respond, and to intervene (Foucault 1982).

Besides, when we perceive of power as being networked, as a relation between different subjects, it can be argued that there is always a possibility inherent in these relations to escape these. Within a relationship of power we can always find a strategy for resistance (Foucault 1982). This argument of Foucault is based on the notion that power as a relation can only exist by means of another who reacts upon this, a subject who has the possibility to choose between different actions. Power relations necessarily involve, as argued before, that all agents involved have the possibility to choose, even in the most extreme cases, amongst a range of possible actions. At the moment this reciprocity between the parties involved in a power relation disappears, so too does the relation of power. A relation of power can only exist by means of a freedom of the other to react upon it. In this sense power and resistance are the forces that constitute all relations between subjects (Foucault 1982). Thus, Foucault contrary to Butler does not ignore the agency of the subject to act and react upon the regulatory regimes of power. He identifies the subject as a free individual that is able to resist the structures which lead to its self-constitution by thinking and acting freely. Opposite to Butler he does not perceive of us as condemned to repeat the discursive regimes and practices constitutive of our identities and bodies. Instead he introduces an active agent who is able to criticise and subvert these regimes and practices.

In the next section of this theoretical framework I will introduce the spatial component as this is relevant for a thesis about a contested spatial phenomenon. I will start with the introduction of Henri Lefebvre's work

on spatiality, in which the body plays a key role in the production and reproduction of space. By doing this I create a bridge between the concepts of resistance and agency through the body as introduced before, and the production and reproduction of space. As I will use his theorising on the production of space as a foundation for the remainder of this part of the theoretical framework, I will in the following section discuss his work 'The Production of Space' (1991). More specifically I will use this trialectic of space to continue this section to show how space is heteronormatively sexualised and the implications this has on the use of everyday public space by non-heterosexuals. I will first introduce Lefebvre's critique against the decorporealisation of space as a bridge between the introduction of the body as the carrier of human agency and Lefebvre's notion of social space. Afterwards I will introduce his critique against (post-) modernist conceptualisations and representations of space, which he challenges by the introduction of a trialectic of space. His philosophy should be regarded a meta-philosophy, which differs from philosophy mostly in their analysis and critique of representations. The analysis of representations by meta-philosophers is as such, as something internal to their world, and this analysis forms the basis on which the critique against these representations is founded. This critique of representations is the central point for departure in his conceptualisation of the social production of social space. I will end the discussion of Lefebvre with him introducing 'differential spaces' and complement this with Foucault's introduction of 'heterotopia's'. Hereafter, I will move from these abstract notions of space to a more

concrete conceptualisation focused on the sexualisation of space and its effects on people who do not seem to fit within the heterosexual matrix.

The production and reproduction of space

When we talk about the production and reproduction of space it is the Marxist French sociologist / philosopher Henri Lefebvre who has been one of the most cited thinkers on the subject. Lefebvre's work on the production and reproduction of space is part of his critique against the non-existence of spatiality in contemporary critical theory and philosophy. The spatial is neglected and denied in this critique and analysis of the constitution and reconstitution of social practices due to the emphasis on historicity and sociality. For the most part spatiality of the social and historical served as a background, as nothing more than an external container, a stage for social action. For Lefebvre (1991) space is an essential part of social life. All social relations get their real and concrete dimension at the moment these are inscribed into space. Social reality has an ontological spatial existence, social reality and social processes do not exist outside of the realm of the spatial. Although often covert even within the abstract, ideological realm of representation and imagination there is a spatial dimension. Lefebvre (1991) attempts to open up this realm of historical and sociological theorising with a critical approach to spatiality. He strongly asserts space and spatiality as something significant in all critical theorising. He states that "[t]o underestimate, ignore and diminish space amounts to the overestimation of texts, written matter, and writing

systems, along with the readable and the visible, to the point of assigning to these a monopoly on intelligibility” (Lefebvre 1991: 62). Lefebvre does not wish to reject the sociological and historical, instead he aims at introducing the spatial, a spatial problematic, regardless of which theoretical emphasis one chooses.

Following this critique against (post)modernist analysis and critique, an important theme in Lefebvre’s major work ‘The Production of Space’ (1991) is what he calls the decorporealisation of space. He criticises how within structuralist and post-structuralist thinking space is reduced to nothing more than a discursively and linguistically produced mental space, in which the body is emptied out and abstracted as it gets caught up in systems of symbolism and signifying and discursive practices. He argues that “Western philosophy has betrayed the body; it has actively participated in the great process of metaphorization that has abandoned the body; and it has denied the body” (1991: 407, original emphasis). The decorporealisation of space is according to Lefebvre (1991) the result of the abstraction of space, which is characterised by a shift from “the space of the body to the body-in-space, from opacity (warm) to translucency (cold), [which] some how facilitates the spiriting-away or scotomization of the body” (1991: 201). The body in Lefebvre’s critique is subordinated to abstract space, this abstract space that socialises us through mechanisms of ideological and political hegemony as class subjects and spatial bodies. We are, according to Lefebvre (1991), imprisoned between the four walls of abstract space in which our bodies are no longer ours. Rather, our bodies

are broken down into pieces and mediated by representations of non-knowledge, by how we ought to see ourselves within society. This abstract space denies the existence of concrete, qualitative space. Through these abstract spaces we are policed, controlled, subjugated and dominated resulting in the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others. As Lefebvre (1991: 26) argues “space is a product [...] the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action [...] in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power” (1991: 26). Lefebvre attempts to transcend the Cartesian dualism of mind and body, the artificial distinction between thinking and practice, between theory and practice within modern capitalism, a dissociation, a separation leading to alienation and indifference (Lefebvre 1991). This dualistic division between body and mind and his critique against this, can be regarded as part of a wider critique against binary dualisms excluding new and innovative possibilities. For Lefebvre two terms can never be enough, there is always a third, Other term (‘Il y a toujours l’Autre’). This third term is the one that disorders, disrupts, and leads to the reconstitution of the conventional binary oppositions into another composition, which together is more than the sum of the binaries. This will come back in his trialectic of space.

Nevertheless, Lefebvre (1991) argues that the body can not be completely reduced to abstract space, as he states: “[S]pace is not only the space of ‘no’, it is also the space of the body, and hence the space of ‘yes’, of the affirmation of life.” (1991: 201). The body in his perception is a critical

agent through which we are able to resist the abstraction of the body through space. The body seeks for recognition as a generative means, and as he argues the body plays an essential role in social practice, and thus: "The whole of social space proceeds from the body, even though it so metamorphoses the body that it may forget it altogether - even though it may separate itself so radically from the body as to kill it." (Lefebvre 1991: 405). To understand social space as the product of forces that move beyond the emphasis on written and readable space in contemporary Western thinking, resulting in a monopoly of intelligibility leaving out the physical, material and social aspects of life, according to Lefebvre (1991) asks for the introduction and recognition of the body as the starting point. In thinking about the production of space the body is essential. The body is the productive force in the creation of space through its gestural systems, while at the same time the body is produced in space. An intrinsic part of lived experience is the body, we perceive space through our senses, through bodily processes (Lefebvre 1991). At this point Lefebvre and Foucault are complementary to each other, both perceive the body as a productive force, the generative means of power and space. However, as Conlon (2004) suggests although Lefebvre argues for the significance of the body in the (re)production of space, he under theorises issues of gender and sexuality in his analysis. Therefore I will combine his theoretical insights with the issues of sexuality and gender as described earlier after this section. The body plays an essential role in all three layers of space Lefebvre (1991) distinguishes, to know; perceived, conceived and lived space. The body is

aimed at social-spatial practice for which bodily activity is necessary, like gestures, movements and the use of our senses, which makes up in Lefebvre's thinking perceived space. The conceived space of the body is based on the representations of the body within the sciences, like medical sciences such as physiology and anatomy. Moreover, as argued before these scientific representations of the body are constructed out of ideological understandings of the body that change over time. Between the perceived and the conceived spaces there is a constant mediation going on through lived or bodily space. Lived space is influenced by social and cultural conventions coming from abstract space (Lefebvre 1991). Lefebvre (1991) sees space as made up out of this three way dialectic between the perceived, conceived and lived.

Here we see the introduction of Lefebvre's renowned trialectic of space, which he introduced as a reaction against the abstraction of space, and as a critique against the idea that there is only rootless, non-place. A conceptualisation of space and place in which place becomes overwhelmed by space. He says: "Everything weighs down on the lower 'micro' level, on the local and localizable - in short, on the sphere of everyday life." (1991: 366). To counteract this perception of space Lefebvre distinguishes in his work 'The Production of Space' (1991) three components of space. This triad should not be seen as an end, or a given, rather the triad is meant as something to be extended further, as a means to move constantly beyond that which is already known and consolidated. Lefebvre distinguishes

between the following components of space: spatial practices, representations of space, and spaces of representation.

- Spatial practices produce and reproduce the spatial physical formations characteristic of a certain social structure. Through everyday practices human and social spaces are produced in a dialectic manner in the form of mediation between the other components of social space, which become translated into our everyday lived spaces through spatial practices. It is the aspect of space that helps to guarantee a certain degree of cohesion and continuity in social configurations. Spatial practices are dependent on our common sense understanding of spatial configurations, which include on the one hand the dimension of everyday life we take for granted, and on the other hand the rationalised urban fabric and institutions we pass and make use of during our daily activities. It is the dimension of space that refers to the dominant way in which society is produced. Spatial practices are due to their everyday lived manifestation of the components of space most easily studied within empirical social sciences. Spatial practices are perceived space as these embody the interrelations between institutionalised practices on the one side and everyday lived spatial reality in the form of our daily experiences and routines on the other.
- The representations of space are linked to the dominant hierarchy of a society, and therefore to its knowledge, signs and codes in, of and about space. The representations of space are the conceptual imaginations of space linked to the mode of production of society. These are the spaces

of bureaucrats and planners, those who map, plan and engineer space. Representations of space are constructed through discourse, which refers to the ideological contents and dominant forms of knowledge about space within society. These are the discursive conceptualisations and expressions of space, and therefore conceived space. Representations of space are the dominant discourses of space in a society, and although abstract, these form the foundations on which space is produced by political and social actors.

- The spaces of representation are lived space. It is the space of people, a space that is constantly in a state of becoming through the appropriation of space. It is the imagined space by which we live our lives involving space and its social symbolism in coherent systems of meaning and symbols created out of physical objects or non verbal signs used to symbolise lived experience and social meaning. These are the places of contestation, where the possibility for resistance can be found, the possibility to think and imagine spaces as different, and where counter-discourses can be formulated. It is the space of struggle in the process of realising ourselves as full persons.

The relations between, respectively, the perceived, conceived and lived space are not ever stable, nor are they artificial or linear. The representations of space or conceived spaces, are the dominant representations of space within society. The conceived is an abstract space, which is usually the dominant representation of space within society. This abstraction of space becomes objectified and is the product of a

materialisation of what is conceived as space (Lefebvre 1991), in this sense the dominant conceptualisations of space or abstract space are/is transformed into our lived spaces, or spaces of representation. This is relevant as the implication of this process results in omnipresent power structures inscribed by the most dominant within a society, constraining, structuring, disciplining us all at different spatial levels. As I will show later we are most often not aware of these structures, it is only when we do not (either consciously or unconsciously) adhere to these structures, that we are aware of these. Here we can find places of resistance, opportunities to be critical about the ideological structuring of space, and when possible and wanted to challenge or subvert these.

Differential space and heterotopia

With the spatial triad as described before Lefebvre shows the importance of lived space as a place of resistance through imagination, through the formulation of counter-discourses, against the power relations and structures constituted and influencing us through abstract space. Again Lefebvre and Foucault complement each other at this point. As Foucault argues that the body is a site of resistance, the place where power against disciplinary power is located, while Lefebvre argues that lived space, the space of the body is the site of resistance, which offers the opportunities to formulate counter-discourses, to resist disciplinary power enforced upon us through abstract space. Lefebvre (1991) conceptualises this lived space as an-Other world, a meta-space in which the possibilities for new social

relations and political strategies are unlimited, but in this space one needs to always search for Otherness and differences, a strategic and a departure from accepted beliefs and standards. Regarding this Lefebvre (1991) makes the plea for differential places; places that do not look superficially different, rather differential places are different to its very core. Places where experiential and bodily particularities are celebrated, as well as the non-negotiable right to difference. The location for this struggle for the right to difference is played out at different levels ranging from the micro-level of the body to the macro-level of global reactions to uneven development and underdevelopment. Lefebvre (1991) opens up with his introduction of differential spaces a new domain, a meeting places for all marginalised subjects, where they can create in space the opportunity for collective resistance. It is within this space of resistance that a new and different kind of citizenship can be constituted. According to Lefebvre we need to unite with the multiple vital powers constitutive of space to construct a spatial form worthy of the recognition and celebration of difference, a “true space” is what Lefebvre calls this, rather than the “truth about space” (1991: 397). In addition Merrifield (2006: 120, emphasis in original) basing himself on Lefebvre argues that the reclaiming of space for others, could possibly start with giving space for real difference, rather than conformity, “yet before imagination can seize power, some imagination is needed: imagination to free our minds and our bodies, to liberate our ideas, and to reclaim our society as a lived project. That, it seems to me, is what

the production of differential space is really all about. It's a project that can begin *this afternoon*."

It is at this point that it is relevant to introduce Foucault's notion on space, which he introduced in a lecture in March 1967. In this lecture Foucault introduces the term "heterotopia", a conceptualisation of space that resembles Lefebvre's differential spaces. That we see some similarities between the two philosophers in their plea for 'other spaces' is not a coincidence as both make use of Nietzsche's notion of the 'right to difference.' Foucault argues for the need of "heterotopia's [...] as those singular spaces to be found in some given social spaces whose functions are different or even opposite to others" (Foucault 1991a: 252). Foucault heterotopia's are, in contrast to utopia's, real places of difference that can serve as counter-sites to those we use in our everyday activities. Foucault derives the term heterotopia from the word utopia, he argues that utopia is nothing more than imaginary, something without a real existence, characterised by nonreal place. In contrast heterotopia is a real place, it exists, it is a counter-site, as he states in relation to utopia

"a kind of effectively enacted utopia in which the real sites, all the other real sites that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested, and inverted. Places of this kind are outside of all places, even though it may be possible to indicate their location in reality" (Foucault 1986: 24).

However, they are not only real, they have a more imaginary component, which contradicts Lefebvre's differential spaces as the real placed above the

imagined, as they offer, as Foucault says "a realization that makes me come back towards myself, to reconstitute myself where I am" (1986: 24). These heterotopia's offer a personal space of resistance, a space where we can move beyond what we should be. It enables us to move beyond and resist the social structures that constitute our selves or the I. In heterotopia's there is room for subjectivities different from the ones usually prescribed to us by society (Wearing 1996). Heterotopia's are not so much sites of resistance, but can be seen as places for alternative modes of sexual and social ordering.

According to Foucault these heterotopia's are constituted following six principles. I will shortly introduce these principles as these provide an outline of how heterotopia's are sites of resistance against the dominant production and reproduction of space. As not all these principles are equally relevant I will elaborate on some more than on others.

- The first principle, Foucault (1986) argues, is the notion that every culture or society constitutes its own heterotopia's. He makes a distinction between crisis heterotopia's and heterotopia's of deviation. The crisis heterotopia's are closely linked to the earlier discussion on Enlightenment thinking and the biopolitical rational of society. The crisis heterotopia's serve as a place for those who are in the eyes of society in a state of crisis, like menstruating women, elderly, adolescents, etc. An example can be found in the nineteenth century boarding schools for boys in which they could explore their sexuality elsewhere than at home. According to Foucault these crisis heterotopia's are slowly disappearing

from our society. Instead we see the proliferation of heterotopia's of deviation. These heterotopia's are in Foucault's words "those in which individuals whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm are placed" (1986: 25). Examples of these are prisons and psychiatric hospitals. And Foucault argues that in this age in which leisure is key principle, and idleness a kind of deviation, we should possible add the homes for the elderly.

- The second principle is that a society is able to create another function for already existing heterotopia's. As cultures and societies change over history, the functions of heterotopia change accordingly.
- The third principle is, according to Foucault, (1986: 26) that "[t]he heterotopia is capable of juxtaposing in a single real place several spaces, several sites that are in themselves incompatible."
- The fourth principle is characterised by the close relatedness of heterotopia to temporality, they open up onto "heterochronies" (Foucault 1986: 26). Heterotopia's come into being at the moment one breaks with traditional time. He distinguishes between heterotopia's, which are characterised in terms of temporality by the indefinite accumulation of time, like museums and archives. On the opposite we find heterotopia's related to flowing and transitory time, time in terms of festival. These heterotopia's are not directed at the eternal, rather these are momentary, and absolutely temporal. An example is the fairgrounds, where for a moment another more imaginary space is created.

- The fifth principle is that heterotopia's are characterised by a system of closing and opening, which at once makes them accessible and isolated. Heterotopia's are not as accessible as public space, access can be obligatory, like in the case of prisons, or the one entering has to go through a process of rites and purifications characterised by adhering to certain permissions and gestures. Besides there are other heterotopia's that seem to almost have disappeared within our society, these seem to be open, but that in general have covert exclusions. We enter an illusion, we think we enter where we are, but in fact we enter the excluded. An example Foucault (1986: 27) gives is of the famous American motel rooms "where a man goes with his car and his mistress and where illicit sex is both absolutely sheltered and absolutely hidden, kept isolated without however being allowed into the open."
- The sixth principle is that heterotopia's are functionally related to all space that remains. On the one hand heterotopia's create a space of illusion in which all real space is uncovered as being still more illusory. On the other hand heterotopia's can have the role of creating another real space, a well arranged, perfect space as "ours is messy, ill constructed, and jumbled." (Foucault 1986: 27). This latter type is not the space of illusion, but rather the space of compensation.

Thus, both Lefebvre and Foucault make a plea for spaces where we can imagine ourselves and be different, spaces where we can break free from the social conventions leading to our constitution. These spaces offer an opportunity for resistance against the dominant and ideological forms of

the (re)production of space. Both the notion of differential space and heterotopia are relevant in this sense, as these offer those who do not seem to fit within the discursive regimes ordering society a place of their own, a place where they can explore who they are, as well as have the freedom to be who they wish to be or are.

An example of an abstract place of difference and imagination can be found in the so-called space of the 'closet'. The closet as a place to explore and enjoy non-heterosexual feelings and desires, a place for non-heterosexuals to be who they are. However, the closet is not only an imaginary place of resistance, it is not only empowering, rather the closet is constituted out of heteronormativity. The closet is, following Kofosky Sedgewick (1990), the result of the oppressive discourse of sexuality, which made non-heterosexuals hide and deny their homosexuals desires and feelings. Kofosky Sedgewick (1990) refers partly to the ways in which the closet discursively functions in relation to power, and questions the emphasis placed on coming out of the closet, the refusal of being silent/silenced, being honest about your sexual orientation and preference within gay politics. This discourse has been empowering in some ways, but it has also been problematic as it reflects a world outside of power relations. In this sense the discursively constituted closet in a regime of denial and oppression creates a paradoxical space. As Butler (2008) argues being out of the closet always involves in some sense being in the closet. Following constitutive binary logic, she argues that the meaning of being out of the closet is constituted through and dependent on the polarity between the

two. So when one is out of the closet, the closet has to be reproduced over and over again to give meaning to its opposite, being out of the closet. The closet works to the benefit of the heteronormative and homophobic society, as it is rather a place of contradictions, whose impossibility rather helps than hinders (Kofosky Sedgewick 1990). In this sense "the discourse of the 'closet' paradoxically (or maybe not) serves to silence and make invisible" (Howell 2007: 309). Thus the closet is at the same time a place of oppression as well as a place of empowerment. Even when they function as stigmatising and disempowering, by denying people access to the sources and language needed to understand their own experiences, closets at the same time create places for the expression of non-heterosexual feelings and desires (Knopp and Brown 2003), a place for resistance against heteronormative oppression and the transformation of society, like Halperin argues "[c]oming out is an act of freedom [...] not in the sense of liberation but in the sense of resistance" (Halperin 1995: 30 in Howell 2007: 308, emphasis in original). The closet as an abstract, paradoxical space of both oppression and resistance shows the difficulties homosexuals experience within a heteronormatively ordered world, not only in the sense of societal and cultural processes, both also in terms of the spatial.

To explore these difficulties non-heterosexuals experience in space in a more concrete manner, I will in the following section elaborate on the sexualisation of space, as a particular kind of (re)production of space, and show how this sexualisation leads to the inclusion of some and the exclusion of others in spatial terms resulting in the need of those who are

marginalised to break free, to resist, and to challenge dominant representations of space. By doing so I translate the more abstract notions of power and discourse, gender/sexuality and performativity, resistance and human agency, and the production of space, as presented before, to a more concrete foundation from which to continue in this thesis without denying the abstract notions.

The sexualisation of space

In this section I will argue that our everyday spaces are heteronormatively constituted. This heteronormative inscription of space is the result of three processes. First of all, as shown in the discussion of the insights of both Foucault and Butler, although socially constituted, heterosexuality has a hegemonic position in society as the seemingly normal, natural and appropriate sexuality. Secondly, as Lefebvre argues it is the abstract, conceived representation of space that is objectified, materialised and transformed into our lived space. And thirdly, in negotiations over space some groups have more power than others, and thus, more rights to claim and dominate physical and social spaces (Pritchard et al. 2007; Zukin 1995). Thus, certain often marginalized groups in society find it difficult to inscribe their values in space in order to become part of a wider system of space. Everyday landscapes can therefore be read as the products of inscribed values, as representations of space, by the most dominant groups in society. As Holloway and Hubbard argue: “[...] in most Western societies [...] this means that places often reflect the cultural values and

interests of white, wealthy, male, bourgeois, heterosexual, able-bodied people.” (2001: 178). In addition, they argue that this is the result of unequal power relations in society. What follows when these three processes are taken together is the (re)production of space as heteronormative as the most powerful group in society regarding sexuality are heterosexuals due to the hegemonic position of heterosexuality. This group is in terms of the sexualisation of space the foundation on which the representations of space are formulated, and therefore our lived spaces are heterosexually structured and (re)produced.

This heteronormative sexualised (re)production of space within Western society serves to naturalise heterosexuality (Hubbard 2001). Thus, the sexualisation of space does not only serve to maintain space as inherently heterosexual, rather it also leads to the maintenance of heterosexual hegemony as natural, normal and appropriate. As Browne (2007: 996) states “[h]omophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity, and the fear of these discriminations, are cited as effects and reasons for the production of heterosexual spaces.” To reify heterosexual hegemony through space continuous processes of (re)production are at work. Spaces come into being through the spatial practices of their actors, as Browne argues “heterosexual space is performatively (re)constituted through discourse and practices” (2007: 996). There is no real cause and effect in this sense, the effect of the heteronormative (re)production of space is cause for the reification of hegemonic heterosexuality, which in its effect is the cause for the heteronormative (re)production of space. Thus, “just as place is (re)making

(and sexing) us, it is being (re)made (and sexed)” (Browne 2004: 335). In a similar line of thought as Butler deconstructs the performative and artificial nature of gender, Browne shows how consequently heterosexual space is performative. The idea of heterosexual space as performative means that, although socially constructed, where non-heterosexual regulations can be out of place, they simultaneously define what is in place. In a similar way as heterosexuality is dependent in its maintenance as a category of sexuality on its other homosexuality, the (re)formation of normative heterosexual space is dependent on the existence of non-heterosexual spaces, disturbances and regulations (Browne 2007). Thus, as Browne (2007) suggests we should start the analysis of the inscription of hegemonic heterosexuality in everyday environments with the premise that dominance and resistance are inherently intertwined, rather than simply hierarchical. We should focus in our analysis of the (re)production of space as heterosexual on the processes and common sense assumptions at the micro-level, which (re)produce hegemonic heterosexual spaces. Or as Kitchin and Lysaght (2003: 491) argue “[t]he sexing of space is in a constant process of ‘becoming’, [...] deconstructing such discourse and practice, and it’s resistance, allows us to start understand the ways in which the sexing of space is constantly being brought into being.”

The idea that space is produced and reproduced according to heteronormative values and norms is confirmed by research showing that homosexuals and bisexuals experience (public) space as predominantly heterosexual (Adler and Brenner 1992; Bell 1994; Valentine 1993). That

space is experienced as such by homosexuals and bisexuals, and not by heterosexuals, has to do with the notion that many of the spatial inscriptions are only clear for those who do not comply to these heterosexually informed norms, as Jackson (2005: 107) states “[h]eterosexuality is so firmly inscribed in space that it is virtually invisible, until its boundaries are transgressed.” Because everywhere we look heterosexuality is accepted as natural and normal, it is invisible for straight people. Homosexuals, however, see and experience heterosexuality everywhere and through this experience their own sexuality as ‘out-of-place’. As Cresswell (2004) argues it only takes a homosexual couple to kiss in public for hetero outrage to come to the fore. This apparent normality of heterosexuality is maintained by regulative regimes that manipulate and control the use of spaces by people. Due to the heteronormative character of space expressions of heterosexual affection, friendship and desire are seen as acceptable or normal in most spaces, resulting in many homosexuals finding themselves forced to hide or deny their sexual orientation when they are in public out of fear for homophobic violence and intolerance (Hubbard 2001).

An essential element in these forms of regulation is the earlier described disciplining gaze. People are through this disciplining gaze and the accompanying self-surveillance encouraged to behave in socially accepted ways, and to conform to what is expected from us in different places by different people. As Cresswell (1997: 340) states: “People act as they think they are supposed to; they do what they think is appropriate in places that

are also appropriate.” We adhere or compel in our daily spatial behaviour to taken-for-granted regulations as inscribed into space through the materialisation of the dominant representations of space. As a consequence of this there are prohibitions and bodies, which ask for no justification or explanation, and by passing through unnoticed, they (re)structure the heterosexual hegemony of space (Cresswell 1997). It is through these subtle processes that hegemonic heterosexuality is (re)constituted, processes that are more difficult to recognise, and therefore more difficult to resist, partly because they remain unnamed (Browne 2007). This collective gaze only allows certain groups within society to fully participate in public life. The disciplining gaze as introduced by Foucault makes, that homosexually identified people lead a dubious life. The gaze constrains them from showing their homosexual identity in heteronormative space. They can only express their identity in certain places, at certain times, and seldom in public (Hubbard 2001). The disciplinary gaze as a means of control and regulation is in relation to the spatial constituted through the representations of space, as a means to make the invisible visible, to define what is in or out of place, what is appropriate or not, normal and abnormal, etc. having its foundation in the dominant discourses of society as manifested in the representations of space. In this sense being visible, being under the gaze is an important means to maintain hegemonic representations of space and society. Being recognised always invokes systems of knowledge, classification, regimes of localisation, and disciplinary power. In this sense, these claims of recognition are based on,

what Braidotti (1994: 69) refers to as “the fantasy that visibility and truth work together.” Visibility is a means to claim empirical recognition, which is dependent on an investment in the future belief of knowing what someone’s place should be, and the possibility to claim a space for oneself. The ability to make a claim for recognition through visibility, and to claim a space for oneself can serve as acts of resistance against the heteronormative nature of both society and space. As Bell (1999) suggests visibility can be used to challenge taken-for-granted, normalised representations of space and society, Skeggs (1999) takes this one step further and argues that the spatialisation of visibility offers people a claim for recognition in a positive and inventive way. However, she reminds us that only some groups wish to be recognised, and only some groups are able to legitimately change their claims of visibility. More particularly Eves (2004) suggests that the visibility of homosexual identities in a heteronormative culture can be seen as an act of resistance to heterosexual hegemony and space. She continues that in heteronormative societies in which heterosexuality has the status of being the normal and natural sexuality, the visibility of non-heterosexual sexualities can be perceived of as “destabilizing, constituting queer space through transgressive practices and gender performances” (2004: 492). Similarly, Hubbard (2001) argues that it appears that sexual dissidents possibly need to make use of public space as a space for presence, forcing their existence to recognition and asking for a reconceptualisation of non-procreative or monogamous sex as a legitimate and healthy expression of sexual desire. When gay and lesbian

practices are made explicit, they have the potential to denaturalise the heteronormative character of public spaces. These spatial tactics are crisis points in the normal functioning of everyday experiences and spaces (Cresswell 1996). In this sense the appropriation and transgression of heterosexual space can be a fertile ground for bisexuals, gays and lesbians to destabilise and undermine processes of homophobic expression by challenging some tactics of the dominant production of space as heteronormative (Geltmaker 1992). By making visible these dissident sexualities, and by queering public space, people are reminded of the fact that sexual 'others' have a right to citizenship in the fullest sense of the word (Bell 1999). Eventually, when a group is not visible in public, it is effectively invisible in the eyes of the state and decent citizens, apparently having no rights or needs (Hubbard 2001).

An example of challenging and destabilising the taken-for-grantedness of heterosexuality as the appropriate and natural sexuality through visibility combined with a complex appropriation of space is given by Bell et al. (1994). They describe in this article how the hyperfemine lipstick lesbian and the hypermasculine gay skinhead⁵ through their parodic performances destabilise the hegemonic position of heterosexuality, as well as the heteronormative nature of public space. The gay skinhead and lipstick

⁵ The lipstick and skinhead looks are both parodic expressions of sexual orientation. The hypermasculinity of the gay skinhead look refers to a resexualisation of the gay body, a body hungry for sex. In a similar vein the lipstick look is an expression of hyperfemininity (Bell et al. 1994).

lesbian find themselves due to their style of dress and physical appearance somewhere in the gray area between being visible for some, while remaining invisible for others, as only some are able to recognise their appearance as belonging to a particular sexual identity. These possibilities to pass unnoticed give the gay skinheads and lipstick lesbians the possibility to create gay space in a (mostly) heterosexual world away from the constraining gaze of the state and society. The parodic performance of the gay skinhead shows the socially constituted nature of sexuality and space as their parodic performances of heterosexuality overemphasise typical socially accepted heterosexual masculine characteristics, while in fact they have a gay identity. In this way the hegemonic binary between heterosexuality and homosexuality becomes challenged, as the gay skinhead, who is perceived and interpreted by most people as heterosexual, has the possibilities to challenge heteronormative assumptions by showing in public their love for men, as Bell et al. (1994: 36) ask “[c]an you ever be sure again that you can read the identity of others or the identity of a space? And if not, then how can others read you?” This is where the subversive power of the lipstick lesbian and gay skinhead can be found. Another example of visibility as a means to make a claim for recognition, meanwhile challenging and subverting the heteronormative nature of our streets, are the gay pride marches. Parades can be seen as public deconstructive spatial tactics, a queering of everyday space. The participants in these parades use their bodies as places for (sexual) subversion, as a site of resistance. However, these parades are more problematic in terms of the effectiveness of

subversion than the example described before. While these bodily actions have as their goal the queering of public space, some gay parades have become a spectacle for heterosexual consumption, a reiteration and reconstitution of the otherness of homosexuals. This has as a counter-effect that heterosexuality as the normal and natural sexuality is reconstituted, while the parade participants are seen as the other, as deviant bodies. We can see here a process of othering by which the 'abnormal' reconstitutes and affirms the 'normal' (Johnston 1997). In both examples we can see how, as Lefebvre and Foucault already argued, the body plays a role as a productive force, as a place for the formulation of counter discourses, as a site of resistance. The physical appearance of the lipstick lesbian and the gay skinhead, and the bodily performances of gay pride parade participants serve to create a non-heterosexual space as an act of resistance against the heteronormative character of space and society. It is through their bodies that they make a claim for recognition, to appropriate a space of their own. Thus, subversion of the heterosexual nature of our everyday spaces by claiming recognition through the appropriation and transgression of space is not without its problems. As, Browne (2004) argues we need to remember that when the abnormal becomes marked and made visible, the normal is (re)produced and (re)instated. In this sense these bodily and spatial acts do not lead to the subversion or disruption of heteronormativity, rather these are affirmative of the hegemonic position of heterosexuality in both social and spatial terms. Besides becoming visible, being recognised as being someone, belonging to a certain group

“summons surveillance and the law, it provokes voyeurism, fetishism, the colonist/imperial appetite for possession [...] it reduces the body to the sign of identity” (Skeggs 1999: 228). People become vulnerable by their visibility, by being under the constant disciplining gaze, visibility can turn itself against them, as dominant norms and values do not change. The struggles for more visible sexual identities will lead to counter actions, lead to acts of violence, as the visibility of non-conventional sexual identities threatens the normalised and intelligible landscape (Skeggs 1999). A research by Keuzenkamp et al. (2006) on the level of acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands shows indeed that Dutch people do not regard homosexuality as problematic, but they have more problems with the visibility and (affective) expressions of homosexuality, especially those that deviate from gender norms, those that are not considered as 'normal' expressions and behaviour, like the fairy, are considered problematic and reason for expressions of rejection and aversion with violence and gay bashing at its extreme pole. This attitude towards homosexuality is what Keuzenkamp et al. (2006) come to call modern homonegativity. Therefore, the heteronormative character of society makes some non-heterosexuals forced to deny or hide their sexual orientation in public, unfortunately some homosexuals may even find themselves forced to hide and deny their sexual orientation in their personal lives as well out of a fear to be rejected by family, friends, and colleagues. They find themselves enclosed in the highly sexualised, marginalized, abstract, paradoxical space of the closet.

In conclusion, what became clear in this discussion of the sexualised production of space is that our everyday spaces are constructed following the hegemonic position of heterosexuality as the appropriate, normal and natural sexuality. Thus although this position is a discursive creation, the result of a process of recitation and reification it has in spatial (and social) terms real effects on people. This spatialisation of sexuality is both result and effect of heteronormative representations of space, as these representations serve to maintain and reify this position. Due to these spatial processes non-heterosexuals often find themselves caught up in a spatial web of heteronormativity. They are forced to hide or deny their non-heterosexual feelings and desires, and certainly not expected to act

upon these in public. It is only in particular places and at particular moments, like the gay pride parades, that they can express their homosexual orientation. In these moments of transgression and appropriation of space the usually invisible is made visible, a claim for recognition is being made, the right to be seen as full members of society. However, these claims of recognition through non-heterosexual spatial practices do not only have as an effect the disruption of heteronormative ideologies, at the other end we can see these practices as being affirmative, as confirming, and as reconstituting the hegemonic position of heterosexuality with homosexuality as its inferior other.

Chapter 3

Methodology

“You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way,
the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist.”
(Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900)

Framing the research

The methodology is the overall approach to the research, and the guiding principle by which data can be gathered and analysed (Hemingway 1999; Jennings 2001). In this section I will describe the chosen methodology, the methods, the co-researchers, discuss ethical issues, and the role of the research with a critical reflection on my position and on the conducted research.

I will first introduce the chosen paradigms for this research. The concept of the paradigm in science was first introduced by Kuhn (1970) who perceived paradigms as the foundation from which certain scientific traditions are developed as the paradigm represents accepted ways of doing scientific research. Scientific paradigms define the rules and boundaries of what is acceptable knowledge production and research (Tribe 2006). As Hemingway (1999: 487) states:

“[A paradigm] is at best imprecise, but can be understood as indicating a model of propositions and beliefs, explicit and implicit, held by a community of researchers about the conduct of

their work, the structure of what they study, the nature of their findings, how these findings are to be fitted together, and the social meaning(s) of the resulting statements.”

Thus, a paradigm is an ideological construction defining what kinds of knowledge and knowledge production are intelligible and acceptable, while framing the ways in which knowledge can be produced by proscribing three different components; the ontology; the epistemology; and the methodology. The ontology informs how we perceive of the nature of reality; the epistemology involves the relationship between the researcher and the research objects or subject, in this way the epistemology informs the position of the researcher; and, the methodology is the means through which the research is conducted (Jennings 2001). Hall (1997: 44) argues about the process of the production of knowledge that it “rules [...] certain ways of talking about a topic, defining an acceptable and intelligible way to talk, write or conduct oneself, so also by definition, it ‘rules out’, limits and restricts other ways of talking, of conducting ourselves in relation to the topic or constructing knowledge about it.” Following this critique and

acknowledging that a paradigm is an ideological productive construction I have chosen not to frame, or rather limit, my research within one paradigm, as this rigidity of paradigms makes it in my opinion impossible to frame a research fully within one. Not willing to comply to these rigid paradigmatic structures proscribing us as researchers what can and can not be done, said, written, and articulated, I will adhere in this research to three different, but complementary paradigms, each of them providing me with different ways of doing research, while remaining quite similar in terms of their ontological and epistemological perspectives. Besides the goal of this research is divided in two sub goals, which makes the use of different paradigms more appropriate than adhering to only one paradigm. This research finds its foundations in three paradigms, to know the interpretative, the postmodern / poststructuralist and the critical paradigm, which complement in my opinion each other on certain points, which is why a combination of these three paradigms is chosen for this research. I will elaborate on these three paradigms, as well as give the arguments in support of these in relation to my research.

As the first sub goal of this thesis is to understand the how's and why's of gay meeting places in the Netherlands I will now introduce the first paradigm (the term first however does not imply that this is the most important paradigm, the different paradigms should be seen as equally contributing and as complementary to each other). The first paradigm is what we know as the interpretive or constructivist paradigm, which is as Hemingway (1999) puts it, derived from postmodernism. Within the

interpretive paradigm emphasis is being placed on the particular, instead of on the universal. Interpretive researchers believe there are multiple realities, in contrast to positivist researchers who perceive of reality as a singular, objective truth (Hemingway 1999) There is no universal law, which can explain a phenomenon. Therefore the interpretive researcher gives room for multiple interpretations and realities which can explain a phenomenon or a causal relationship (Jennings 2001). Thus, knowledge produced within interpretive research is subjective, rather than objective. Interpretive researchers look for the complex and varied meanings given to phenomena and experiences by individuals. In this sense the research relies to a large degree on the views and perspectives on a given situation or phenomenon of those being studied (Creswell 2003). Therefore in acknowledging this, the interpretive approach was chosen "to give participants a voice and to place emphasis on participants experiences." (Harris and Ateljevic 2003: 23).

The relationship between the researcher and the researched is characterised by an aim for understanding. Jennings (2001) refers to Max Weber, who is one of the founders of the interpretive paradigm, who stated that the interpretive paradigm is about 'verstehen', or in other words an interpretive researcher strives for an empathetic understanding. To reach this empathetic understanding interpretive research is mostly qualitative with an emphasis on an emic, or insider perspective into the researched phenomenon or subject (Chick 1998; Hemingway 1999). This insider's view "allows for the identification of multiple realities since the views of all

social actors are taken into account and equally valued” (Jennings 2001: 39). However, the interpretive researcher positions herself within the research to acknowledge that her own interpretation is influenced by their cultural, historical and personal experiences (Creswell 2003).

Following the line of thought as articulated in the theoretical framework my research is also framed within the postmodern/poststructuralist paradigm. Postmodernism as argued before is the counterpoint to modernism, the era of industrialisation, enlightenment thinking, capitalism and knowledge growth (Jennings 2001). As a reaction against the belief in an absolute truth within modernism, postmodernists perceive of reality as constituted through a multiplicity of truths, or rather to avoid the word truth, which implies some sort of stable reality, through a multiplicity of social constructed interpretations of reality (Aitchison 2003; Jennings 2001). The world is continuously changing and transforming, therefore postmodernist reject the grand theories of enlightenment thinking “capable of explaining social, cultural and power relations throughout time and across space” (Aitchison 2003: 20). Reality in the postmodern world is being replaced by a world of signs and representations (Jennings 2001). Therefore, emphasis is being placed within the postmodernist / poststructuralist paradigm on linguistic and communicative practices and systems of signification (Aitchison 2003). Or as Urry (1990: 85) states: “Everything is a copy, a text upon a text, where what is fake seems more real than the real.”

The postmodernist perspective in terms of its epistemological basis is subjectivist to the extreme. Postmodernist researchers are aware of and acknowledge their own subjectivity during the conduct of research, as well as in writing down the results. The researcher is an integral part of the research and cannot be reduced from the research. Following the idea that there are multiple realities, the researcher perceives of, and describes their experiences and the outcomes as only one possible way to view the world, as only one interpretation of the social reality being studied. The postmodernist researcher aims at breaking down, at deconstructing, the social phenomenon being researched to its very core (Jennings 2001). This idea that there is no truth, only social interpretations and constructions leads to the core of postmodernist methodology being:

“[T]he doubt that any method or theory, discourse or genre, tradition or novelty, has a universal and general claim as the ‘right’ or the privileged form of authoritative knowledge. Postmodernism suspects all truth claims of masking and serving particular interests in local, cultural, and political struggles. But postmodernism does not automatically reject conventional methods of knowing and telling as false or archaic. Rather, it opens those standard methods to inquiry and introduces new methods, which are also, then, subject to critique.” (Richardson 1994: 517-518).

The postmodern/poststructuralist paradigm is used in this research as it provides a lens through which to view the possibilities for contesting, transforming, transgressing, disrupting, reworking dominant ways of

behaving and dominant codes omnipresent within society to eventually be able to bring about change across time and space (Aitchison 2003). As Aitchison (2000: 181) states: “Poststructural theory moves the critical eye from structures to cultures revealing the underpinning discourses and networks of power responsible for maintaining inequity.”

A particular paradigm informed by and associated with postmodernist/poststructuralist and critical thinking and theorising is queer theory, which focuses on individuals who are identified or identify themselves as lesbians, gays, bisexuals, or transgendered people (Creswell 2003). According to Knopp and Brown (2003) queer theory can be seen as a combination between poststructuralist, postmodernist theories and methodologies, and lesbian and gay studies. “It applies the analytical and political tools of poststructuralism (including deconstruction and decentering) to the categories commonly associated with lesbian and gay studies and experiences” (Knopp and Brown 2003: 409) with as an aim to uncover the malleability, constructed (and often oppressive) nature of categories of sexuality. Queer theory uses these deconstructive techniques to challenge the production of ‘stable’ and ‘fixed’ categories of sexuality, and critically analyses how modern knowledge claims about sexuality serve to maintain and reconstitute the power regimes that have led to their production. Queer theory aims to challenge and disrupt the status quo of sexual identities. Queer theory exposes the social constructed nature of sexual identities and knowledge claims, and the fluidity and instability of sexual identities (Fast 1999; Knopp and Brown 2003; Nash 2006). In this

sense “queer theory is another tool which enables an integrated analysis of sexuality, gender and race” (Pascoe 2005: 332). According to Brookey and Miller (2001) queer theory has in this sense been a blessing within academia, as it resulted in increased publishing by gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered scholars constituting a new field, and increased visibility and recognition of studies into the field of gender and sexuality combined with visibility and recognition of ‘other’ sexualities in academia itself. On the other hand they argue that the introduction of queer theory led to critiques as it seems to lead to little concrete change, “practitioners of queer theory are often taken to task for being out of touch with the political conditions of “real people”.” (Brookey and Miller 2001: 139-140). Most of the critique against queer theory is based on criticism against the queer theorist par excellence Judith Butler (see e.g. Nussbaum 2000) and following the line of critique on her work as outlined in the theoretical framework, queer theory leaves little grounds to work from. Taking into consideration the difficulties as discussed within queer theory I have decided to only make use of the deconstructive qualities of postmodernism/poststructuralism with the empowering and emancipating qualities of the critical paradigm. However, the use of these paradigms with in this thesis a focus on sexuality does touch upon some of the issues central within queer theory, like the deconstruction and challenging of seemingly stable categories of sexuality. By focusing and analysing the spatialisation of homosexuality I give a critical account of and expose the dominant perceptions and beliefs about homosexuality in the Netherlands. Furthermore I will challenge and where

possible subvert these through questioning the social constructed nature of this contested spatial phenomenon. Hereby I aim to empower those who are marginalised not only in spatial, but also in social terms. Therefore, my research is also framed within the critical paradigm as one of the goals of my research is to analyse the contested nature of gay meeting places in terms of both spatiality and sociality to effect some change or empowerment.

Thus, the last paradigm is the critical paradigm, Gibson (1986: 37 in Tribe 2007: 30) gives the following short description of critical theory, as the place where “knowledge and interest in emancipation coincide and thus make for those unities in which positivism severs – theory and practice, means and ends, thought and action, fact and value, reason and emotion.” The critical researcher perceives of the world as a complex reality constructed out of overt and covert power relations (Jennings 2001), as Jennings states: “The social world is perceived as being orchestrated by people and institutions in power positions who try to maintain the status quo and subsequently their positions of power.” (Jennings 2001: 42). Power is a key issue to be studied seeking to expose the constitutive power relations and structures together with the influence of ideological values, norms and positions serving the interests of some, while excluding others (Tribe 2007). A critical approach is characterised as having as one of its main goals the emancipation and empowerment of marginalised groups and individuals within society, as a “transformation in the way in which one perceives and acts in ‘the world’.” (Grundy 1987: 99). Thus, in

addition to the postmodern/poststructuralist paradigm the deconstruction of social phenomena serves in this case the emancipation and empowerment of minority groups in society.

To effect change in the position of the researched minority group involves interaction between the researcher and those being studied. The values and norms of the researcher are of paramount importance as the research is conducted to transform the social setting being studied. In this sense the relation between the researcher and those being studied is a subjective one based on the empathy of the researcher with the minority group and the commitment to empower and emancipate those being studied (Jennings 2001). Therefore, being critical involves being aware of your own positionality within the research context, which asks from me as a researcher to be aware and reflexive of my own history, biography, gender, social class, race, ethnicity and sexuality, and of being aware of all these personal characteristics within the research subject combined with giving attention to how these characteristics influence the research process and the research outcomes (Ateljevic et al. 2005). Besides by maintaining a subjectivist relation with those being researched they gain a voice and the agency to challenge the researcher, and with this the academic mindsets one brings with them into the research (Ateljevic et al. 2005).

I have introduced three paradigms, which have the same foundation in the sense that within all three paradigms a subjective stance is taken in which there is no absolute, objective truth, but only subjective interpretations of reality. Moreover the choice is made to introduce three paradigms as these

complement each other in its methodological uses. The interpretive paradigm is introduced as part of the research is aimed at gaining understanding of the phenomenon of gay meeting places in the Netherlands. However, following the goals of the research understanding alone is not enough, although very much needed to be able to provide an insight in the use of gay meeting places and the difficulties the users of gay meeting places face as a start to gain more social understanding for the phenomenon. Therefore, to be able to problematise and critically discuss gay meeting places, and homosexuality in the Netherlands in general, I introduced both the postmodern/poststructuralist and critical paradigm to be able to deconstruct the underlying social structures and power relations leading to the contested nature of gay meeting places. The postmodern/poststructuralist is in this sense especially helpful in terms of deconstruction and exposing, while the critical paradigm is helpful in its emancipatory and empowering focus. These different paradigms, however, all have in common that they perceive of reality as being socially constructed, and therefore as having multiple outcomes and interpretations. Besides, within all three paradigms the positionality and reflexivity of the researcher as an active actor in the process of doing research is emphasised as something to be aware of, and to be critical about. For this reason I will reflect on my role as a researcher in the final section of this chapter.

Research strategy

In the following section I will describe the research strategy, I will elaborate on the collection of data, the selection of co-researchers, and the ways in which the data is analysed.

Data collection

To reach more understanding of the phenomenon of gay meeting places I used as one data collection technique in-depth interviews. I had one interview over the Internet, and the others in person. An in-depth interview is characterised by its structure, length and depth. In terms of structure the interviewer leaves more space for explanations, unexpected turns, the introduction of new topics, therefore each interview will be (and was) different (Veal 1997). My interviews were semi-structured only making use of a topic list. This gives the opportunity to structure the interview to reach more consistent data over the different co-researchers, and it creates a more open and flexible conversation as there is room within the structure of the interview for unexpected topics and turns during the interview. An in-depth interview creates a more open ambiance for talking with more acknowledgement for your co-researchers as indeed people who co-research. The topics discussed were as follows:

- motivations to visit gay meeting places: tension, no other options, sexual need/desire, safety valve;

- identification sexual orientation: homo-bi-hetero, partner – kind of relation – openness – dealing with gay meeting places in relation to partner;
- role of the Internet: appointments, deciding on possible sex partners;
- other users – sex partners: sexual orientation, age, ethnicity, physical appearance;
- how does it work/what happens: rules, communication at gay meeting places, selection of sex partners, mutual consent – equal relation;
- conflicts/incidents: other visitors – incidents with whom?, safety, homophobic behaviour, violence, robbery;
- attitude towards homosexuality in the Netherlands (if relevant): themselves, social environment, society;
- attitude towards legalization of gay meeting places – designating outdoor sex places;
- the gay meeting place in a spatial sense: how does one find gay meeting places, favourite gay meeting place, and why?;
- spatial requirements: where (location), spatial design.

One can always ask more or something different. A topic list should not be seen, in line with the semi-structured outline of the interview, as a rigid means for data collection. The topic list is “merely used as a guide. The ‘real’ guide to the issues or themes is vested in the interviewees and they end up leading the interview by order of their thoughts and reflections on the topic.” (Jennings 2001: 164). The semi-structured nature of the interviews gives more depth to the interviews. The co-researchers are

encouraged to explain their answers, ask supplementary questions, and most of all to talk (Veal 1997). Typically in-depth interviews tend to take at least half an hour, but usually these take longer (Veal 1997). The interviews I had with the co-researchers lasted between one and two hour(s), and the interviews took place in November and December 2008.

After asking for consent, I recorded the interviews with a voice-recorder. I produced complete verbatim (word-for-word) transcripts of the interviews. Such transcripts can be used to analyse the results in a more complete way (Veal 1997), and the verbatim transcripts are a means to integrate in this thesis full length quotes. Besides recorded interviews can be listened back, and I did not have to rely on my memory or hand written interview notes. In addition recording an interview gives the opportunity to have a more relaxed and natural way of interviewing as you do not have to write constantly during the interview and are able to just have a casual conversation and look each other in the eyes, an essential element in communication. A question mark can be placed behind the in-depthness of the interview over the Internet. An interview over the Internet, although discussing the same topics, misses out on the essential elements of in-depth personal interviews as described before. However, I will use the data obtained from this interview as it remains a primary source. The major benefit of an interview like this is that you do not have to transcribe the interview.

Another means of data collection I used is the collection of data from the Internet. I gained statements and quotes from the Internet to critically

examine the phenomenon of gay meeting places in its larger social context. I looked for online (newspaper) articles or forum topics on gay meeting places on the Internet and collected the reactions people gave to these on websites and forums. I simply googled on the term gay meeting places and through this found several diverse online discussions on gay meeting places. I attempted to make sure that the topics of discussion are as diverse as possible to make sure that for example the responses are not only on topics articulating the positive or negative perspectives. The descriptions of the news items people respond to on the Internet are given in appendix 1 to create a fuller picture showing the differences in discussion topics. In the presentation of the data I will make clear which responses belong to which Internet item or discussion, because I consider it important that this background information is known to be able to place the reactions in their original context as a reader.

Selection of co-researchers

To fully acknowledge the contributions made to this research by the people who participated in this research I will refer to them as co-researchers. Without them this research would never have been possible and in that sense they are not merely participants, or interviewees, but co-researcher as in co-constitutive of this research. Due to the anonymity and secrecy involving gay meeting places it was a challenge to find people willing to participate. Moreover, the fact that people are not very willing to talk about one's sex life in general did not contribute to this. The visitors of gay

meeting places constitute the so-called hidden population, "a group of individuals for whom the size and boundaries are unknown, and for whom no sampling exists." (Tyldum and Brunovski 2005: 18). Members of these hidden populations often find themselves stigmatised and participating in illegal and/or deviant behaviour, which might lead to people refusing to cooperate to protect their privacy (Tyldum and Brunovski 2005). Thus, due to the sensitive nature of their spatial practices and the highly valued degree of privacy and anonymity, I expected visitors of gay meeting places to be rather reluctant to be interviewed on a sensitive topic like this. As one of the co-researchers said: "You did not make it yourself easy by choosing a topic like this, with a research like this, as many people do not dare to talk about it." Because of the expected difficulty to find co-researchers I only had one selection criterion, the co-researchers had to visit or should have visited gay meeting places. For reasons of anonymity and confidentiality I will not use any names, and not introduce or provide information on the co-researchers in this thesis, information about the co-researchers I regard as essential for this research will be articulated in the discussion of the data. Although problematic I did find people who were willing to participate. During the writing of my BSc thesis on the same topic I got into contact with one of the masters of one of the websites on gay meeting places providing me with information on the topic over the Internet. This time I had an interview with him over the MSN. After the completion of my BSc thesis there was one man from an interest group making themselves strong for the maintenance and toleration of gay meeting places who was

interested in my research. I contacted him again to ask for an interview. Fortunately he was willing to participate and he brought one other man of the interest group to the interview. It is also through him that I came into contact with another visitor of gay meeting places, who was willing to participate. This co-researcher also send me personal writings about experiences he had at a particular gay meeting places, I will also use this in the analysis.

I came into contact with the other three co-researchers over the Internet. There are several websites that serve as a virtual meeting place for those visiting gay meeting places. These websites can be used to make appointments with others to visit a gay meeting place, or to find locations and descriptions of gay meeting places. I subscribed to four of these websites, which had in total 7275 members, and started to post messages explaining my research and asking if people were willing to participate. As there were no responses to these messages, I decided to take a more proactive approach. I gathered the email addresses visible at these websites, and send an email with the question if people were willing to participate in my research to 150 members of diverse Internet communities. On these 150 emails I got twelve reactions. Not all of these reactions led to an interview. Out of the twelve reactions there were two people asking for more information, so I sent more information after which I did not get a reply back. One person was not willing to meet with me, so I proposed to have an interview over the chat, I did not hear anything back after this. Another person was willing to participate, I asked to have an interview

either in person, or over the chat, but I did not get a response back. Four people were willing to participate, but pulled out before we could set a date to meet. For two of them this happened after I made clear I was not willing to meet with them at their homes. I had one negative reaction to my email, one man responded by asking me if I could choose another topic for my research, as he thought that just another piece of paper would be published to be used against them, and he already felt as being routed and was afraid my research would not be very helpful, although I clearly articulated the goal of the research in my email. Eventually out of 150 emails I found three men willing to become the co-researchers. In the end I interviewed seven men who visit or used to visit gay meeting places. This is a rather small number, however this is compensated by the in-depth and rich data I obtained during the interviews.

Data analysis

Veal (1997: 135) argues that “the essence of any analysis procedure must be to return to the themes of reference, and the [theoretical] framework, and research questions [...] of the research, and begin to sort and evaluate the information gathered in relation to the questions posed and the [theories] identified.” Therefore I analysed the transcripts of the interviews by confronting these with the theoretical framework. I searched for statements and quotes that either confirm or reject the notions described in the theoretical framework. Besides, I looked for similarities and differences between what the different co-researchers said on the interview topics as

described before. Thus, I coded, classified, compared and confronted the data obtained in this research.

I used as a method to analyse the reactions given on the Internet discourse analysis “to read between the lines of social and cultural relations and make sense of the power relations inherent within social and cultural processes.” (Aitchison 2003: 19). This was chosen in order to expose the attitude towards gay meeting places in line with the postmodern/poststructuralist and critical paradigm. In other words, it was chosen as a way to reveal and critically analyse the attitude of people against gay meeting places in the Netherlands. Feindt and Oels (2003) identify seven strengths of discourse analysis, to know; a certain awareness that language plays a constitutive role in policy making, politics and political; a critical and sceptical attitude towards the idea of a single, objective truth and rationality; knowledge is regarded as contestable and contingent; an interest in how language and knowledge lead to bias effects; language and knowledge are perceived of as being an aspect of power and as resulting in and exerting power effects; an interest in how power relations and knowledge systems are constituted through everyday and/or political practices; and a strong empowering and emancipatory motive aimed at the democratisation of knowledge production and policy making. The discourse analysis is described in chapter five of this thesis.

All these different strengths are of value for my research, but more specifically I have decided to focus on a Foucauldian discourse analysis. A Foucauldian discourse analysis tries to reveal how the conventions of

talking and writing, or discourses as “a group of statements which provide a language for talking about [...] a particular topic at a particular historical moment” (Hall 1997: 44), within a particular context serve ideological and political foundations (Wooffitt 2005). The choice for a Foucauldian discourse analysis is obviously informed by the theoretical perspectives as introduced before. A Foucauldian discourse analysis perceives of power as being constitutive of the ‘truth’ and ‘reality’ through which certain ways of thinking, talking, writing and even being are legitimised, while others are excluded. It acknowledges that power relations are everywhere, in all social interactions and practices, in which power is both repressive, and constitutive and productive. Moreover, a Foucauldian analysis considers how subjects are constituted through discourse, thereby shaping their field of possible actions and limiting their freedom. Through discourse particular subject positions are constituted in their turn producing particular identities. Following this, Wetherell (1998) argues that it is necessary to explore the ideological underpinnings of these productive and constitutive discourses to understand how these and the subject positions made available, resonate with and reconstitute group interests and wider relations of dominance and power.

To be able to say something on how gay meeting places are dealt with in terms of spatial planning practices I searched for newspaper articles by using the search term ‘gay meeting places’ in a Dutch online newspaper databank, this resulted in two hundred articles published until September

2005. However, often the same article was published in different newspapers, and in the end I analysed forty-five articles.

I confronted the data obtained through the interviews and the discourse analysis with the theoretical framework to come to answers on the research questions and fulfil the goals of the research. This confrontation is described in chapter six. Besides, I used secondary data like reports and surveys on the attitude towards and the level of acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands as a means to support the arguments made in chapter five.

Ethical considerations

“Ethical behaviour is important in research, as in any other field of human activity.” (Veal 1997: 198). I will now shortly raise the ethical issues that came about in this research. My moral or ethical stance in this research is best described by Jennings (2001: 101) who says that “every researcher has a responsibility to ensure that they protect the rights of individuals [...] participating in their research.”

I needed to ensure that those men I interviewed would remain unrecognisable for the outside world at the moment this thesis is read. The reason for this is that due to the negative association people in general have with gay meeting places being known and recognised as a visitor of gay meeting can have an influence on one’s social image. Besides, the practices at gay meeting places and those visiting these are covered by secrecy. There are unwritten rules that ensure this secrecy and anonymity, it is, for

example, commonly known that when you meet each other at a gay meeting place and at a later moment on the streets one does not greet. Thus, it would ethically be unjust to reveal or partially reveal the identities of the co-researchers. Therefore, I ensured confidentiality and anonymity in my research. For this reason I have decided, as mentioned before, not to provide any irrelevant information on the co-researchers. Moreover I decided not to use their names to ensure that no one who is to read this thesis could recognise them. I do not want to make those visible, who wish to remain invisible.

I have sent the transcripts of the interviews to those who participated for them to correct me where I was wrong, or to add or delete information provided to make sure that I would not disclose any harmful or wrongly transcribed or interpreted information. This was also done to make sure that the data provided in this research is as objective as possible. Therefore I will give direct quotes and statements in the following chapter, rather than own interpretations.

In terms of reciprocity I did not have any incentives, besides a cup of coffee. The only thing I could offer the co-researchers was a confidential platform to talk about something they may find difficulties with talking to others about, my gratitude, and this thesis as a means to gain more understanding for gay meeting places, and to emancipate and empower those making use of these. I promised them to send my thesis when finished.

There are two other (ethical) considerations more related to myself as a researcher than to the co-researchers. To find people who were willing to participate through the Internet I had to access and subscribe to sites with often pornographic content. Because of this pornographic nature I was not willing to give my real email address on these websites, therefore I created a new email address for this research, which I also used to send emails from to find people to participate. I can not explain why I was reluctant to use my usual email address, but somehow it seemed in terms of my own ethical stance more responsible not to reveal this on the Internet in order to keep a distance between my public and my private life. In addition, for reasons of my own safety I decided to meet with the co-researchers in public spaces. In this case all the interviews took place in station refreshment rooms. Reason for doing so is that I came into contact with the co-researchers over the Internet and did not have any contact with them outside of the Internet before the interviews. Therefore I could never be sure who I was going to meet, what kind of person someone will be, and with what reasons one is participating. Although one could accuse me of having little trust and faith in others, for me this was a clear boundary, I would not have interviews in the homes of the co-researchers. Besides the co-researchers understood this, mostly related to their own thoughts and experiences of meeting strangers, as one of them said:

“Just now a student approached me to ask something about travelling, yes, with a topic like yours that is not possible. I had my thoughts about it, quite exciting for her as well, if I was you I

would also meet in a public place. Because at someone’s home is also risky. I can imagine this, although I think that when you meet ten times, it goes fine ten times, just as well you can just meet the wrong person. There are always these weirdo’s, yes.”

Moreover, as mentioned before this resulted in two interviews not taking place. In terms of ethics, meeting someone in a public space to talk about their (sometimes secret) sex life is difficult. There are always others eavesdropping on the conversation with the co-researcher, as one of them said “I have more the idea of the environment, that people are eaves dropping, well here it is okay, but still”, and in terms of confidentiality I left it up to the co-researchers what to reveal and what to keep private. They are the one’s making this decision, what to tell me in general, and especially while taking into account the risk that others might overhear you. I ensured the co-researchers that they had every right not to answer particular questions, and that they could end the interview whenever they wanted.

Considering the analysis of reactions to gay meeting places on the Internet, I have little ethical considerations, as the reactions are made public by people themselves. I will only use the quotes and statements of the Internet without using any names or what so ever, thus I expect to cause little harm to those reacting on the Internet with this research. Besides, I will try to give an objective overview as possible. Please note the addition “as possible”, following the sections above, complete objectivity is not possible

in a research like this. The analysis of data is my own interpretation and contextualisation, thus subjectivity always reigns.

Limitations of the study

As in any other research I also ran into some difficulties limiting the research. Firstly, as described before I could not find many people who were willing to participate, and due to time constraints I had to give up the search for more co-researchers at a certain moment. In addition, the co-researchers I have interviewed are possibly not representative of the group of visitors of gay meeting places considering that estimates are made that about eighty percent of the men is involved in a relationship with a woman, while I only interviewed one married man and two men who used to be married at the time they started visiting gay meeting places. At this moment I do not consider this a severe limitation as the in-depth character of the research led to valuable insights and additional knowledge on gay meeting places and their users. However, for further research it would be recommended to have more co-researchers participating in order to gain an even fuller understanding of the phenomenon of gay meeting places. Besides, I have to acknowledge that it would have been of more scientific value to interview others, or people who do not visit gay meeting places and policy makers, instead of analysing the newspaper articles and reactions on the Internet to come to an analysis of the attitude towards gay meeting places, and homosexuality in general. This is certainly a recommendation for further research. However due to time constraints this was beyond the

scope of this thesis. Nevertheless I can imagine that people are more open on the Internet, especially when their attitude is more negative, than they would have been during an interview. In addition one can place some questions considering the quality of data obtained from the Internet, usually people who give comments on the Internet express their opinion several times, and due to the fact that they intensively react on each other, a large number of comments come from a small number of people articulating over and over again the same opinion. I can imagine that people with a more negative attitude are responding more often on news paper articles on gay meeting places than people who do not care about the phenomenon.

A second limitation of this research is that the data obtained is in Dutch. However, this thesis is, as can be read, written in English. This is done for two reasons. Firstly, I will reach a larger audience for my research (e.g. I presented this thesis at a workshop in the UK). Secondly this was done because one of my supervisors is not able to read Dutch. Therefore, I had to translate the relevant parts of the transcribed interviews, and the quotes and statements from the Internet that I use in the discussion of the results. Some information or emphasis will always be lost during this process as a translation can never express the same overtones as the original sentence. Nevertheless, I will provide the Dutch quotes next to the translations at the end of the chapters in which the results are presented to cope with this limitation. Moreover, appendix 2 provides transcripts and translations of all relevant data to create a more coherent overview of the data obtained.

Another limitation is that I did the interviews in public spaces. First of all this limited the number of co-researchers, and secondly this could have led to a less open and confidential atmosphere to talk about a private (and secret) part of the life of the co-researchers, which possibly led to less in-depth data as would have been possible when interviewed in a more closed and private setting. Besides, one can always wonder about the data obtained during interviews, especially regarding a topic like this, as there is always a chance that people do not tell you the whole story or tell a more positive, romanticised story.

The role of the researcher, or positioning myself

As already mentioned in the description of the different paradigms informing this research, an important issue within research is being reflexive on one's own role as a researcher, as "all of what I am affects the problems I see and the power dynamics I experience as a researcher." (Swain 2004: 103 in Pritchard and Morgan 2007: 16). Acknowledging the importance of this statement made by Swain and being told about this several times during the lectures, I know that I as a researcher am not value-free and my own subjectivity is of influence on my research. Therefore I will now reflect on my own position and role as a researcher in this research. The reflexive researcher in my perspective is indeed a bricoleur (although I do not like to use the same quote as probably many others have done before me), "who understands that research is an interactive process shaped by his or her personal history, biography, gender,

social class, race, and ethnicity [one might add sexual orientation], and those of the people in the setting. The bricoleur knows that science is power, for all research findings have political implications." (Denzin and Lincoln 2000: 3).

Let me start this reflexive exercise by giving a small example of a conversation I often had in the past two years:

"...I am working on my thesis."

"Oh, what is it about?"

"It is about gay meeting places."

(the facial expression changes into one of wonder and doubt) and after a long pause,

"Oh interesting."

Thus the first question I will answer in this section is why? Why a thesis about gay meeting places? Let me go back to the Christmas holidays of 2005 in which I had been thinking about a topic for my BSc thesis for Socio-Spatial Analysis, which was the writing of a research proposal. There were so many interesting things to choose, but not one really jumped out. Until this particular day on which I passed a well-known gay meeting place near the village my parents live. I immediately knew that this spatial phenomenon would be an interesting, challenging topic on which to write my BSc thesis. The question why? remains, I guess Holloway and Hubbard (2001: 128) make an interesting point when they argue about 'dark' and sexy spaces that these "hold a strange fascination for white middle-class people." This strange fascination is probably caused by the secrecy of the

practices at gay meeting places. We all seem to know these places, but no one knows what is happening over there, why, and by whom. Besides, there is a general idea that these places are visited by married, heterosexual men looking for sex with other men, which probably only makes the phenomenon more fascinating. To make the story complete, ever since I started thinking about gay meeting places as a spatial phenomenon I have never understood why these places are perceived as being problematic; what is it that makes these places contested, why is there a policy in which these places are restricted and if possible abolished, who is bothered by these and why? Can I explain this from my own position? Yes, I can. I have a strong believe that we should provide spaces for people to have a freedom to be who they are, to do what they wish, as long as they do not harm others. Besides, in the case of gay meeting places I do not see much harm caused by those visiting these places.

By the time I had to choose a topic for my MSc thesis for Socio-Spatial Analysis I foresaw too many problems in finding people to participate, resulting in me taking the easy way out leaving the topic of gay meeting places for what it had been in my BSc, and focused on something else. Then I started to study the MSc Leisure, Tourism and Environment. Again a topic for a thesis became an issue, and due to a new sparking off of my critical awareness in the first period, together with the emphasis placed during this period on the useful and challenging character of critical research, to raise questions, to analyse taken-for-granted structures and

perceptions, I decided to challenge myself and focused yet again on gay meeting places.

So, here I am a white, middle class woman working in a university, having the privilege to do a second master. How does this small characterisation of myself influence my work. The fact that I am white and middle class has been no issue during this research as the people I interviewed were also white, middle class men. Being a woman interviewing men has not been a disadvantage, I experienced that the co-researchers had no problems talking to me. This is probably also due to my open-mindedness and the atmosphere of confidentiality, as I made clear to them what the goals of the research were. Therefore they knew that I held an open attitude towards them and the phenomenon. One of the co-researchers for example replied this to me over the email "Thank you for your pleasant approach." I regard an open-minded position during a research like this an important precondition to be able to have interviews with people involved in contested activities and practices. An open-mind gives you as a researcher the possibility to build an atmosphere in which the men do not feel judged, but feel that they can open up to you.

Besides, the position of researcher proved to be helpful in my case as the co-researchers perceived of me as being in a position in which I would not make a judgement on their behaviour, as one of the co-researchers states:

"Because you are doing a research it is all legal, and thus when I would talk with you as a stranger or acquaintance, then were talking about it in a legal way. But when you would not put it in a

research and I start talking about it with you, then you could possibly think like 'Hé he is also like that'. But now you are the source to talk about it legally, and then it suddenly becomes interesting for people, because we can talk about it without being put into a box by an other."

Also the topic, both the sensitive character and the contested nature has proven to be helpful, as for most co-researchers a reason to participate was that they had a platform to talk about a secret part of their life, and the possibility that through this research more understanding for the phenomenon of gay meeting places could be reached. This comes together in the following quote of one of the researchers: "I had two reasons to participate, firstly I found it exciting to talk about this for ones, but my interest was also like who knows maybe it becomes less taboo."

In terms of taboo, talking about a taboo-issue with sexual practices as the main activity was not as difficult as I had expected, predominantly because I as the interviewer did not have to reveal anything. The co-researchers were quite aware of the sensitive nature of the interviews and the difficulties this could cause for me as researcher. One of the co-researchers said the following about this: "I find it quite a brave step. I find it more brave for you than for me." Nevertheless I often did feel nervous before the interviews, not knowing whom I would meet, and having some stereotypical images in my mind about men visiting gay meeting places did not make this easier. However, open-minded I have called myself before, I found myself at certain moments confronted with my own heteronormative

ideas, which were apparently slumbering in my sub consciousness. I was confronted at a particular moment with heteronormative preconceptions on what kind of men visit websites and gay meeting places for sexual purposes. An image characterised by a negative and heteronormatively informed stereotypical thinking on men visiting gay meeting places. This moment has been of value as it made me aware of my own position towards these men I was going to interview. A moment in which I was confronted with my own presumptions, something of which I was little aware before. Nevertheless, now in the end I can honestly say that these preconceived heteronormative images I held somewhere in my mind do not hold anymore, as the men I met were great company to be with. Moreover, this confrontation with my own heteronormative mindset is also confirmative of the need to be critical towards your own position in research and dare to be reflexive to your own preconceptions, stances, values and norms, although some only come to the fore at moments we find ourselves confronted with these, while others will remain slumbering forever.

Moreover, I would like to touch upon one critical issue, which I have struggled with during the writing of this thesis. An issue which is a central point of criticality within poststructuralist / postmodernist theorising and research. In the attempt to deconstruct and challenge essentialist notions of categories of sexuality, gender, race, etc. we as academics are dependent on these essentialist notions to be intelligible to both our academic and general audiences. Through the recitation of these categories within our writing we continuously reproduce these categories as binary opposites, and as

Aitchison (2001: 136) argues “the construction of dualisms or binary opposites is inherently related to the construction of the Other.” I found myself caught up within this paradox in which my own writing has, although unwanted, contributed to the process of Othering by a continual recitation of the categories of sexuality and gender through which the homosexual is constituted within the exclusionary binary relation between heterosexuality and homosexuality. I have wrestled with this question (drawing from Aitchison 2007: 87) of how I as a researcher can “make a difference rather than just mark difference and how we might represent Other voices without being complicit in the [reconstitution of the discourse of sexuality].?” However, no matter how aware I was of this process I have not been able to work around this, and I can only provide this consideration as a means to critically reflect on this web of Othering I find myself caught up in.

Chapter 4

Letting the data do the talking

In this chapter I will present the results in a descriptive manner, or in other words I will let the data do the talking to give an interpretive account of gay meeting places. I will first introduce visiting gay meeting places as a leisure phenomenon by providing an insight in the visitors of gay meeting places, an insight into the spatial component, in the systems of communication and the component of sociality, and an overview of the motivations of people to visit gay meeting places. Thereafter, I will focus on one particular group of users, which I have called family men. With this term I refer to the idea that gay meeting places are predominantly visited by men who live a heterosexual life for the outside world. However this term should be taken as only denoting this idea, reflecting a social construction, and not reality. In this section I will go into the sexual orientation of these men, how they come to terms with their sexual orientation, the notion of self-classification as belonging to a particular category of sexuality, and how the co-researchers experience the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands. I will end this chapter with providing an insight on the experiences of the co-researchers with measures taken at gay meeting places, the public nature or visibility of the activities, their

“There are no facts, only interpretations.”

(Friedrich Nietzsche 1844-1900)

attitudes towards toleration, designation and legalisation, and acts of violence at gay meeting places.

A Leisure Phenomenon

In this section I will give an insight in gay meeting places as a leisure phenomenon found within a given social space.

Visitors

The men visiting gay meeting places appropriate parts of public space to create a leisure place where they can meet each other to have some *sexcitement* and satisfy their sexual needs. They create places of non-heterosexual sexual pleasure. I will start with a description of the men visiting gay meeting places. Gay meeting places are mostly visited by white, somewhat older men, and approximations made by the co-researchers show that around eighty to ninety-five percent is involved in a relationship with a woman. The co-researchers gave possible reasons for the lack of young visitors; young visitors maybe do not dare to come to gay meeting places, or because they have their own scene do not need to visit gay meeting places. A final possible reason that was given was that the older age of the visitors

is related to the notion that most men are married and only after some years of marriage start to act upon their non-heterosexual feelings by making use of gay meeting places:

“[E]ighty percent of what you see over there, I say eighty percent eh, I do not know if it’s true, for the most part what you see there are all men who are married. [...] for the most part of middle age or older. [...] ninety percent, ninety-five percent Dutch, here. And then I am talking about the specific parking places mostly alongside the highway.”¹

“I think that ninety-five percent has a relationship, and about seventy-five percent is not open about their homosexuality or bisexuality. [...] Earlier it was younger, but nowadays the ages are between thirty and fifty, ninety-nine percent is Dutch, once in a while you see a Turkish, Indian, Moroccan man, but all seldom, older Turkish men you see a bit more often.”²

The spatial component

Most of the co-researchers had no idea how gay meeting places come into existence. However one co-researcher said the following about this:

“Men look for places to have sex. You are having a walk and meet a fellow through eye contact. The space is right, then something happens, people come back, people talk about it to friends or possible other visitors of gay meeting places, and the gay meeting place comes into existence.”³

The spatial component plays a role as differences can be found depending on the location of particular places. A gay meeting place at a parking place is experienced and used differently than a gay meeting place in a park or a recreational area. The most important difference is there is a rather steady group of visitors, who tend to stay longer at the place (combined with non-sexual recreational purposes), at gay meeting places in recreational areas and parks, while on gay meeting places at parking places men just drop by, find a partner, have sex, and leave. The contacts are more fleeting and men tend to come to parking places only for the quick satisfaction of sexual needs:

“The place [in a recreational area] where I now already come for eight years, that is really a place where you recreate, where a quite steady group of men come, of about twenty men, who come with the same purpose as I. They come there with towels, really to sunbathe when the weather is beautiful, and that is a somewhat different place than the gay meeting places where men come and go. The place where I go thus is really a place where you meet people, where you really meet each other.”⁴

“[W]hen you take parking places alongside the highway, the greater part is simply, to say it bluntly, stop, find someone, come, and leave. In the park you walk around more often, you often wait longer, I think, you really search more specifically. And I think that in the park the diversity is larger, there is a younger public.”⁵

Besides other quotes show that people who visit gay meeting places in recreational areas or at beaches have more a sense of belonging to a place. They argue that the place is theirs, it belongs to them.

Communication and sociality

The fleeting nature of the contacts is probably the reason why there is less communication and sociality on gay meeting places at parking places:

“No, you are not there for personal contact. And sometimes there is a kind of personal contact, but that stays often limited to there[.]”⁶

“[Talking?] Yes sometimes, but in most cases no. Most men come there for fast anonymous sex.”⁷

However, not all co-researchers prefer these non-social contacts. One co-researcher argues that he enjoys it more when he has a little talk afterwards, to give the encounter a little personal touch.

The lack of verbal communication can also be explained by the fact that, that the men who come to these these gay meeting places want to keep their activities secret, which makes it more difficult to reveal something of yourself, and therefore they have less conversations:

“[W]hen people start talking than quite quickly you have to mention your name, and that is something you don’t want. What are you going to talk about? Your kids, your wife? And boyfriend?”⁸

“You don’t mention your occupation or something there.”⁹

Besides, the high degree of married men visiting gay meeting places resulted in the non-outspoken rule that you do not greet or show any sign of recognition at the moment one meets each other outside of the gay meeting place in order to keep the activities of yourself and the others secret:

“Within the gay scene there is something like, when you meet each other at the streets, then you don’t make clear that you know each other. Then you simply walk right past someone, then you’re not expected to say ‘hello’ or something, you just walk on. But that’s simply an agreement, that’s very simple. You know damn well who you met, also when it’s dark, then you still know what those people look like. And when you meet them in the village or city, then you just ignore each other, no, that’s very easy to do. [...] you don’t talk about it with each other, you don’t give any sign of recognition.”¹⁰

This is a form of mutual respect to protect those men who would like to keep their sexual activities at gay meeting places secret.

◦ Communicating your preferences

Due to this lack of verbal communication the co-researchers describe the selection of a possible sex partner as having a click with someone at a gay meeting place. They intuitively know with whom they would prefer to have sex without talking to that person. The only selection criteria the men have are based on appearance, and personality seems irrelevant:

“[P]eople do react on your appearance, and people are very fast in making a judgment. You have to as you generally don’t have much time (laughing). You meet each other and with the one you feel a click, and with the other absolutely not. When there is no click with the other, then you simply continue walking. And when there is a click then you have particular codes to communicate it, and yes, that is quickly understood, you get it very fast.”¹¹

“[T]hey don’t have to be pretty, but at least I myself, I look whether they are, gosh, well-groomed, uhh is he clean, yes you have a sixth sense for that, I don’t know, but I have something like, yes I sense it and uhm, and sometimes then it is like hup gone, and sometimes you have contact. [Personality?] No that’s not important, at least not for me. It is absolutely not there, it is purely the sex and the sensation, excitement.”¹²

What can be seen from the quotes above is that although there is little verbal communication at gay meeting places, there is non-verbal communication.

Besides, the men making use of gay meeting places communicate non-verbally to the other that they would prefer to have sex with him:

“[O]ften you walk around, and sometimes you walk past each other and you look at each other and don’t say anything. Yes when you meet someone of whom you think ‘I would like to have sex with you’, then you keep standing, you open your pants, you start playing with yourself to show that you are in the mood, often something like that. Often it is only ‘Do you want a blow job, yes, no?’.”¹³

“[V]ery often there is little talking. Very often there is no talking, you walk there, you make eye contact, well and, and I don’t know, yes you say a few words to each other and mostly it comes down to the same, that you’re in a horny mood. Yes then it is just the way the contact is, and the click there is, what you do and, yes, that is very different.”¹⁴

Thus, it is through non-verbal communication, making use of eye contact and other gestural and behavioural signs that the men communicate to each other that they would like to have sex with someone.

An important element of having sexual encounters at gay meeting places, which is communicated to each other, both verbally or non-verbally, is what one prefers and does not prefer in the encounter. Besides, although the contacts are fleeting and there is little sociality, there is a high degree of mutual agreement on what one wants in terms of sexual preferences with respect towards each others preferences. People are never forced to have sexual encounters with someone if they do not want it. They respect each other in what one prefers and wants to do, and an unpleasant contact can be ended at any moment without problems:

“[I]t also happens that you have a contact that is not completely pleasant, well that is also possible. There is a particular code at those places, when you experience from each other that you experience the contact as unpleasant, then everyone goes one’s own way, and in general this goes quite well.”¹⁵

“Stopping a sexual practice is not meant to articulate that you’re rejected, but it just articulates that you would like to look a bit further.”¹⁶

“Nothing takes place what someone doesn’t want, seldom I think, I have not encountered it yet. When someone says ‘No’, then it is ‘No’, then it ends there, that’s obviously also very clear.”¹⁷

Motivations

One question remained unanswered thus far, why do these men visit gay meeting places, what are their motivations to go there? There are different reasons for men to visit gay meeting places. Below the most mentioned reasons or motivations are described.

◦ Sexual need

One of the most important reasons to visit gay meeting places is that the men have a sexual need, feel the desire to have sex:

“To say it bluntly, when you are horny and you have nothing else for that moment, then I am at home and my wife is at work, well then there is sexual tension. You are turning yourself on by the Internet and then you give in to that. It is not on a weekly basis. [...] However, when you go to such a meeting place, then you go because you are in the mood.”¹⁸

“There is simply a category, to which I also belonged, who fairly goes there at the moment they feel the need. And as soon as it has passed, then it’s gone, just finished and then you leave.”¹⁹

“Most come there for fast, anonymous sex.”²⁰

“You are not doing it on a daily basis, when you are in the mood then you look for something.”²¹

“It is actually very banal and easy, sex and excitement, the end.”²²

What becomes clear is that the men visit gay meeting places, because they are in the mood, are horny and want to flow off some sexual tension.

◦ Excitement

A factor that plays an important role in the motivation to visit a gay meeting place is excitement:

“[T]he large part simply comes there to search for the excitement towards each other[.]”²³

“Well you just go there for the sex and the excitement. I can be really short and sweet about it. I have nothing to add. [...] you go there purely for the excitement and the sex, and sometimes you only go there for the excitement and nothing happens, and sometimes you think ‘I want sex’ and then you go there, and then it is exciting without going there for excitement. Those are two, I think, separate things.”²⁴

“Excitement, scary, horny. [...] Yes the excitement is most important.”²⁵

An important component in the excitement lies in the unexpectedness of the encounter, not knowing what will happen, and with whom:

“One percent finds it exciting because it is forbidden and there is a risk to be caught. The rest finds the excitement in meeting the unexpected.”²⁶

“For some they come purely for the sex, [...], there are men who really only go there for sex. For myself excitement also plays a role, I always find it

very fun and exciting. Not knowing what's coming, who's coming, what's going to happen [.]”²⁷

“[Why exciting?] Well, you don't know what is happening, you don't know who you will meet, what is going on and how it will develop, yes that's the excitement you have. And yes, that's the only excitement I have.”²⁸

This element of not knowing what is going on, what is happening at gay meeting places is also reason for some co-researchers to go for the first time to a gay meeting place. This becomes more clear when one of the co-researchers explains how he started visiting gay meeting places:

“[Why started?] For the excitement and also for what's happening over there, what's going on [...] Simply the curiosity to know what's taking place, to know what's happening there, what are they doing there. And yes that curiosity that tickles you[.]”²⁹

This curiosity to know what is happening at gay meeting places shows some similarities to the strange fascination most of us hold with the phenomenon, as explained earlier. However, this curiosity of the co-researchers is also linked to the opportunities gay meeting places offer to explore non-heterosexual desires, to which I will come back later.

- Sex outdoors

Another factor which plays a role in visiting gay meeting places is the fact that the sexual encounter takes place outdoor. Although there are differences in preference for outdoor contacts:

“[P]ersonally I find sex outdoors very exciting. [However, earlier he said] Yes at a place it is always and it always remains making it do. I mean it is

always making it do. And then I am only talking about myself, but in summer it is of course easier than in winter, I mean, it is freezing cold, and. When you are outside, then it is always better on a summer night than when you now [the interview took place in November], so to speak, have to stand outside.”³⁰

“[Sex outside] gives a delicious, free feeling, gives really a delicious free feeling. It is simply fantastic, yes fantastic, ah I get a kick out of it. It simply gives a delicious feeling, it is very free, nice fresh air around it, yes, I don't know, yes.”³¹

However also an exhibitionistic component adds to the excitement the men experience, which makes sex outdoors attractive for some:

“For me it is not the excitement of being outside, but more the excitement of being watched at, that other people are watching what I'm doing with another man or woman, or what so ever.”³²

“Look, I don't always need priers. [But it is okay?] Yes sure, that also gives some extra excitement. You are welcome to know that I once [...] had sex at the grass field, and yes simply in public, alone, I mean everyone could see it, but more in an area of which you know that ninety-nine percent comes there for the same reason. Then we, indeed, very quickly discovered that, uhm, there was someone watching behind every tree, well yes fine, we had something like ‘Well yes nice, exciting, do watch’, and I don't care about it at that moment. It is rather more exciting and arousing, than it disturbs, but it is depended on the situation, with whom you're there[.]”³³

In reaction to the fact that some have sex that is visible for everyone else, some co-researchers say:

“[B]ut that is the same with that ninety-nine percent looks for a quite and covered place.”³⁴

“[Y]ou have exhibitionistic people, who like to show something to others, well that’s possible, but that’s only a small part of a very large group.”³⁵

Thus, although there are exhibitionistic people, their numbers are relatively small. I will come back to this issue of visibility of the sexual activities at gay meeting places in the discourse analysis.

Although some of the co-researchers have an exhibitionistic longing, when asked to describe what kind of gay meeting place one would prefer they tend to agree that their sexual encounters should remain invisible:

“Well, a place where you have the least chance to have people from other, people who are offended by it to come near the place. That it is a place where we can be undisturbed, without having the risk to meet other people. And these places do exist, and those can be created in new areas, so to say, if you want to.”³⁶

“Protected [...] quite dense bushes with many twisting paths to flaunt. A wide entrance where one can wait for each other, and security so that it is safe.”³⁷

◦ Easy satisfaction of sexual needs

There are two factors which make the satisfaction of sexual needs easy at gay meeting places. First of all, gay meeting places can be found everywhere in public space at quite accessible places. And secondly, men

come there for the same reasons, which makes it easier to find a sex partner:

“Well, and if it [sex] didn’t happen in the usual way, well you were driving home, on the way was a place, not a very large one, everyone knows when there are cars then something is happening, then something is walking there. Well, thus, I stopped there quite regularly, and uhm, sometimes contact, sometimes not.”³⁸

“It is very easy, you take the car, you go there, and something will happen, and it is up to you whether something happens or not. If you don’t care with whom, then there is always someone, and it is of course very easy and delicious, and you don’t have to plan it at all.”³⁹

A leisure activity?

What becomes clear from the quotes is that visiting gay meeting places is a leisure activity. The men enjoy in their leisure time sex with other men. It is pleasurable, exciting, it gives them an opportunity to relax and get out of the routines of everyday life:

“For myself I perceive of sex as a hobby of me, in all respects. It is a leisure activity, hobby.”⁴⁰

“For me it has to do with the excitement and the kick, and just because in your ordered life, everything this and that, it has become a kind of safety valve for me.”⁴¹

However, although for most co-researchers it is an impulse to go there, once the co-researchers take the first step of visiting gay meeting places, the second step becomes easier, and a sort of addictive element starts to act up:

“Only you develop in yourself a certain pattern. I do not want to call it an addiction, but it is something which continuously stimulates [...] So that piece of addiction is certainly there, at least it is like that for me. I think it works like that for a large number of the men.”⁴²

“[...] I also think that it, there creeps in a kind of habit for yourself, when you are doing these kinds of things.”⁴³

In a similar way as what happens with many leisure activities that what is seen as a break with everyday routines becomes a habit, a behavioural pattern, a routine.

Family men

One motivation is not yet discussed in the section above, this motivation is related to the idea that a relatively large number of the men visiting gay meeting places has, as argued before, a relationship with a woman. In this section I will deal with these ‘heterosexual’ men, which I have called family men, as they are often referred to as these men with a wife and children, who have child seats in the back of their cars.

One important reason given by the co-researchers when answering the question why men visit these places is, according to them, that they are afraid to be open about their homosexual desires or activities, which can

have different reasons. They visit gay meeting places to give room to these feelings, as already became clear in some of the quotes in the section before. Nevertheless, the idea that gay meeting places are mostly visited by married man is nuanced by one co-researcher:

“[T]he large part of the men who come there are not even married, but for example live alone, or don’t want the whole social environment to know of it, or have a social status in which it is not or difficultly accepted. Those are exactly the ones who come to these places, and a portion of those will be married.”⁴⁴

However we need to be careful with giving approximations of the numbers of married men visiting gay meeting places, as one of the co-researchers says about the percentages on married men given in the media:

“No, those are that kinds of assumptions which come into being through the media, and which are manipulated by people who are against these kinds of places, as the higher you make these numbers, the less acceptable it is, and the more child seats in the back of the car, the more difficult it is for the rest of the Netherlands to perceive of it as acceptable.”⁴⁵

Being open about one’s sexual orientation

Two of the co-researchers were married by the time they started to visit gay meeting places, and one of them is still married. One of the most obvious reasons to get into a relationship with a woman, while having non-heterosexual feelings, is the fear of being open about one’s sexual

orientation, which can have different reasons as argued by the co-researchers:

“Here you are in [a strict Dutch reformed area], and there are very many who are simply married and rather would like to be homosexual, but because the church, or who ever, thinks that you should be married, that those for that reason, yes. It is after all very remarkable that many parking places are located in these kinds of areas. Sure, that’s bitter, it’s very sad. It is only society and the church that can change that. If the church would say ‘Guys for us it makes no difference whether you are homosexual or not, you are simply a child of God or what ever other child’, then I think that it would be easier in that world to come out of the closet.”⁴⁶

What becomes clear from this quote and other quotes is that still for some men it is difficult to be open about their non-heterosexual desires and feelings, which has different reasons, but most obviously it is a fear to be rejected by friends, family, the social environment, and society at large. However, there are also other comments made by the co-researchers:

“It is, of course, even trendy to have some [homosexuals] in your circle of acquaintances.”⁴⁷

“Because people are more easily included by the social environment or friends, it is no longer necessary to stay in the closet. [...] You already notice that friends and family deal with it more easily, while on the other hand there is less and less tolerance and more violence.”⁴⁸

Coming to terms with one’s sexual orientation

Although some men prefer to remain silent about their non-heterosexual sexual orientation, some of the co-researchers who were not openly homosexual or bisexual felt the need to do something with their feelings, to come to terms with their non-heterosexual feelings and desires, and found possibilities for this at gay meeting places. The lives of family men were/are complicated; being married to a woman, but longing for sexual encounters with other men. To deal and come to terms with these desires and feelings the men started to visit gay meeting places. This led to them making the choice to be honest about their non-heterosexual feelings and desires at a certain moment. A decision to identify themselves as homosexuals, as belonging to this sexual category. In this way gay meeting places provide men who wish to explore or act upon their non-heterosexual feelings and desires, an opportunity to move beyond the social roles they get assigned by our heteronormative society:

“During my relationship, my marriage, I had many dates outside of my relationship, partly at meeting places. [Why?] Well, simply, because you are in the mood, and, considering this I did not really have a super, or actually no sexual relationship with my wife, so I was looking for contacts with a man. I was looking for a man for sexual contacts. [...] And it is very difficult and I can say from my own experience that you are really leading double lives, your married life, you have a life outside, and like I call it, your own life and that is made up by those who knew exactly of me what

and how. [...] As a consequence of being married I know quite some men who were in the same situation and some of them sooner or later took the decision like ‘Well, okay, I’m going to choose for myself.’ It is all about for how long you can put up with it, and how long you are willing to make concessions to yourself.”⁴⁹

More co-researchers argue that gay meeting places provide men with a place to explore their non-heterosexual feelings:

“[A]nd that they stay open I also find necessary. [Why?] Because I think that many men can only have contact at that kind of places, who do not go to clubs, who don’t come to these holiday resorts where it takes place and who are maybe homosexual, or have homosexual feelings, and are married or not, and they can come into touch with it, and in that way come out of the closet. [Means for that?] I think so, it will not immediately be a place to develop long term relationships, just because it is too fleeting. [And later he argues] because hetero’s can meet each other everywhere, this [the restroom at the station] can be a general hetero meeting place, and that is possible throughout the city. You can meet each other or not, and you can decide to go somewhere with each other. But a homo will, when he meets a nice boy or man, not immediately think ‘Oh he will be homo’, so making contact between two men or two people of the same sex is much more difficult. And that’s why you have these kinds of places, because those places are there to bring people of the same sex together.”⁵⁰

Nevertheless there are also men who choose to maintain the heterosexual relationship:

“There are also many people who choose to maintain the relationship [when the man has homosexual feelings and desires] and that sometimes goes very well. Because yes getting a relationship with a homo-bi man is never only the decision of the man, but the partner also chooses for that kind of person for certain reasons. So that is always between two people and it can work very well when the man get’s the opportunity to experience that homo-feeling, that the other part of the relationship goes fine, that is possible. I know many people who live like that.”⁵¹

Self-classification

Although gay meeting places may provide men who have homosexual feelings and desires a place to explore and act upon this, eventually identifying themselves as homosexual. This is not to argue that all men who visit gay meeting places should be classified or classify themselves as belonging to the category of homosexual. As one co-researcher married to a woman tells the following story about his sexual activities outside of his marriage:

“I am not really a homosexual, I’m more, if you would like to put it in boxes, then I am bi. [...] but I get a kick out of sperm, and that’s why I lustre after having sperm squirted in my mouth and face [continues with more details]. Thus this maybe in your eyes perverse kick, makes me get into contact with men. Thus I am as they call it simply ‘sperm lecherous.’

[...] See my preference is for women, when I can choose between a man and a woman, then I choose a woman. But I also enjoy being busy with men and women. You also hear men say 'Oh I do not even want to think about indulging a woman with another man', that thought is already one step too far. Nobody forces me into something, everything I do is my own choice. [...] I do not like to have anal intercourse, but a bit of jerking off and blow jobs and so on, that's what I find exciting. [...] Real homo sex, no, that's not of my preference. That's why I find it fun to do it with other couples and so on. With more men indulging another woman and see a man come, that's my kick, that kind of things. But that is probably different for everyone, when you have ten interviews, then everyone has his own kick."⁵²

What becomes clear from what this co-researcher is saying is that one should not be classified on the basis of one's sexual behaviour. It is not because he gets a kick out of the sperm of other men, that he classifies himself as being homosexual, as he is happy with his wife, but does not completely match on the sexual level with her.

Another co-researcher says the following on this issue of classification of people belonging to a certain category on the basis of their sexual behaviour:

"[Married or hetero man, are they hetero's or homo's?] There you ask me something, sometimes they ask you 'Are you married?', then I say 'Yes with a man', and then 'Oh', sometimes people react strangely when you as a homo are at such a place. Then I am so naive to think, 'Is that man

thinking that there are only hetero's walking around here, who want homo sex for a moment.', and whether they are bisexuals, or homosexuals who are married, I can not give an answer to that. I don't think you can put a label on it."⁵³

However, as will become clear in the discourse analysis people do mostly label the men visiting gay meeting places as belonging to the category of homosexual. This issue of classification is problematic as I will argue later. Moreover also the co-researchers have their ideas about this, they make comments like the following about men having a sexual relationship with another man outside of their (heterosexual) relationship:

"I think when a you as a hetero man have an affair with another woman, that that is accepted more than a hetero man who has a fling with another man, because then you fit in that other category. In that culture of narrow-mindedness, when you then have three, homosexual, bisexual and heterosexual but I mean, I think that as long as you stay within your own lane or have a fling in your own category, then that is not problematic, that people accept that, whether homo's are having an affair with homo's, that is their choice, or hetero's with hetero's, that is their decision, but as soon as there is cross-fertilisation. When someone is openly bisexual and that person has a bisexual fling, then there will not be that many problems, but when someone does cross-fertilisation, and actually says, 'I am in the hetero world, or I am in the homo world, but I also do it with women', then I think, yes. I think, when you stay in your own category, then people

will look at it similarly, but when you cross over from your own category to another category, I think that people then think ‘There is something strange about that person, that is not done.’ Then choose for one, or choose for openly bisexual. When people are openly bi, that is of course still a taboo, according to me a bigger taboo than homosexuality, but when people are bi, would be openly bi, that people perceive of that completely different, but that is what I think. You are not often open, because you should belong to either hetero or homo.”⁵⁴

What becomes clear from this quote and other quotes is that the co-researchers have the idea that it is more accepted, or at least less problematic when you as a man have an extramarital relationship with a woman, than when you have an extramarital relationship with a man.

Moreover, what the interviews show is that the co-researchers have the idea that there are differences between men and women in relation to fleeting sex, which possibly adds to the negative connotation that gay meeting places have:

“And how do men react towards each other, I think that men can more easily make the distinction between sexuality and intimacy. [...] Whether women have that naturally I don’t know, but anyways I think that society is very much focused on women being the care-giver, that there should be intimacy, that there should be warmth and, thus, to that the image of sexuality of women is linked. The image that women first need intimacy and that they can possibly from there have sexuality. I have a bit the

experience that that is not in all cases the case, but that also many women are only focused on sexuality.”⁵⁵

Acceptance of homosexuality

The quotes on the difficulties homosexuals might experience in dealing with, and being open about their homosexuality combined with the estimations of ‘heterosexual’ men visiting gay meeting places also signals that homosexuality in the Netherlands is not completely accepted:

“No, I have never experienced acceptance. Even among those who tolerate us there are very few who accept us. Tolerated is a better word. Accepted? Homosexuality has never been accepted.”⁵⁶

“I think that the image the average Netherlander has of the emancipation of homo’s that that image is terribly distorted. I do not at all have the feeling that people, and especially when you come out of the closet or experience homosexual feelings at a later age, that you can come out easily. It is a gold leaf that exists, you easily pierce through it. [...] While we are known as a tolerant country, and then I think ‘Yes, it really is a gold leaf.’”⁵⁷

“What I particularly see in class, what I experience, it is simply a term of abuse in class, homo, faggot, and then I do shout ‘Ho,ho’, and then they look around and say something like ‘Oh sorry sir we didn’t mean it like that’. But it is still being used as a term of abuse and as long as it is used as a term of abuse, it shows that it has a negative connotation. And then full acceptance, that is gone then! As long as no-one uses that word as a term

of abuse, then I think you could possibly speak of full acceptance. But as long as it is used on a royal scale by everyone like you can roar ‘Homo’ or ‘Dirty homo’, well then... [...] For a foreigner it [homosexuality] is here to a high degree accepted, but within the Netherlands you surely notice that it is not that accepted yet.”⁵⁸

This last quote is a good example of how the recitation and repetition of certain words leads to a process in which homosexuality continuously receives a negative connotation.

Although some co-researchers argue that homosexuality in the Netherlands, or in certain regions of the Netherlands, is still not accepted, other co-researchers state something like the following:

“We think we are very open, and compared to other countries we are I think, but at the same time in certain areas we aren’t. Homosexual, for example, that you say ‘I’m homo’, you can easily or rather easily be open about this in the Netherlands. I mean more like when you discover that you like men, then you can say this in the Netherlands, ‘I’m homosexual’, done. That is maybe more easily accepted, that you say ‘I’m homo’, than ‘I go to meeting places and have sex in the bushes with other men.’ For others that is weird.”⁵⁹

In relation to this last quote what became clear from the interviews is that the men are not open about their visits to gay meeting places:

“When you don’t talk about it with other people then for you it will not have a negative association. At the moment you are talking with someone

about it and they have a negative association with these kinds of places they will make a judgement about you. Maybe you change from a nice, friendly young man to a friendly, nice young man with some strange characteristics. And that is also the reason I think why many people, and including me of course, that you are seldom talking about it, because not everyone has to know what I am doing, and I also do not want to know of others what they are doing, and yes, they will judge you when you make known you are going there, and they will judge you hard. There will not be a lot of people who will say ‘When you think that it is fine then you should do it’, I think that most people will condemn you. [Why?] Well because those places are not known as the most hygienic and clean places, you can do that somewhere else than on a parking place, right. Well yes, you don’t have to show off your homosexuality, you can do that indoor right, come on. [Married men?] Yes that also has a negative connotation, because those married men have to pass there for a moment.”⁶⁰

When we look at the quotes above it can be concluded that the degree of acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands is perceived differently by the co-researchers. However they do agree that visiting gay meeting places is not acceptable. Some signal a trend in which there is less and less acceptance, while others argue that homosexuality in the Netherlands is more and more accepted. However, the co-researchers do refer to the problematic nature in terms of acceptance or toleration of the visibility of homosexuality in public space:

“Yes that, I don’t know, it is like, why are there people when I walk with my boyfriend and I walk hand in hand or whatever, or I kiss him at the streets, people find it strange. While when you simply walk with a female friend and you’re doing the same people do not say anything.”⁶¹

“Well that you do not sit that close against each other, that you do not touch each other very often, yes because people can be offended by it. Some Netherlanders have problems with [...] when men give each other a hand, or hug or kiss, yes who can react very aggressively to it. [Worse for men than for women?] Yes that is true. Why, women always walk arm in arm, already for years arm in arm and cosy in the city and when men do it they are homo’s. Done, because men also don’t do it, hetero men don’t do it, so homo men also should not do it, and when they do do it they are homo’s. And that’s why it is easier for lesbian women to do something like that than for men. Only you can, of course, easily see from the outside that they are lesbians, and that is also the case with men. And sometimes you can absolutely not see it, but women do have an advantage, that is what I see as a man. Sometimes I am jealous about that. Yes how many women give each other a kiss when they meet each other at the street. Will remain, will always remain.”⁶²

What the quotes show is that it is difficult for homosexual men to express their affection in public space, as they often get negative reactions to this kind of behaviour.

In terms of the words used in these quotes we can also see that often the co-researchers use the word ‘we’ when they refer to homosexuals, which

shows that they have a strong sense of identifying themselves as belonging to a certain category, the category of the homosexual.

The section above introduced the perspectives of the co-researchers in relation to gay meeting places and family men. I will in the following section go into what the co-researchers experienced in terms of state and police intervention.

State and police intervention

In this section I will go into police and state intervention in relation to gay meeting places. What becomes clear from the newspaper articles is that often measures are taken to prevent the men from having sexual encounters in public spaces by either the municipality, district recreation boards, or the Directorate-General for public works and water management.

Water-bed effect

Often the measures taken are aimed at the closure of gay meeting places. However the co-researchers indicate that these measures lead to the so-called waterbed-effect; when one gay meeting place is closed down another one will pop up somewhere else:

“Those men who do not want that [the deterrent measures] will go and look for another place.”⁶³

“And through that kind of waterbed-effect, no longer tolerating the places where people are not bothered by it, you create places where people are bothered, because the space is sought for anyways, because ordinary

parking places are visited and there is a kind of code which people signal to each other, lights, well yes I know that when I look for a place. But fine now they are looking for places where they do not expect any inspectors and those are the ordinary parking places, thus then you really have that waterbed-effect and there people come who are really bothered by it. So what happens, the already existing negative image is only getting bigger.”⁶⁴

What becomes clear from these quotes is that measures taken to close down gay meeting places do not sort the wanted effect, and possibly even the opposite effect as the men go and look for other places to appropriate for their sexual encounters and possibly appropriate less appropriate places.

Overt and covert measures

It becomes clear from the news paper articles that often gay meeting places are closed down by cutting the bushes, the placing of fences, or more intensive police control. The co-researchers talk about overt and covert measures. It needs to be noticed that the police is only allowed to intervene when the sexual practices or intimate body parts are visible from the public road, thus practices at gay meeting places out of the sight of the public are not liable for penalty. The co-researchers give the following examples of police measures:

“I did experience here in [mentions place] that two city guards came there. Then you see all the men dash out into all different directions, then everyone is pfjiet gone. But those city guards do know that of course, those are there because officially it is prohibited. I mean those city guards are

purely there to disturb the cruising order. They do not fine anyone, but they do make trouble. Yes then everyone is gone. You are always with one eye watching the environment, always on one’s guard. No, that’s why I say like, because many men are married they do not want to, when they get a fine it will arrive at home, and when police men catch you, it should be like that, well too bad, but that later arrives at home, that fine.”⁶⁵

“[B]ut it [the sexual practices] is not visible and already eight years, never any problems till last year. I think that the district recreation board was troubled by it in one way or another or they think that a toleration zone should not be possible anymore, and they held a kind of raid over there. In spring they came there four times a day with inspectors and police going through the area and they chased away men, gave fines for nudity. It is a very vulnerable group of men, it is a group of homo-bi men who for the large part are not open about it[.] [...] And that I experienced thus this spring how police men and inspectors react to this phenomenon. Denigratory, dominant, they come there like a bunch of macho’s they come and scare away those fairies, that is the feeling you get. [...], and you are treated like dirt, like you can not do this, you have to go away.”⁶⁶

What becomes clear is that the police takes, in some cases, rather extreme measures against the men visiting gay meeting places. Especially the family men visiting these places are vulnerable to these measures, as they fear that it becomes known at home that they visit these places due to the fines being send to their home address.

Another often mentioned measure is making the practices at gay meeting places less attractive through creating more visibility by cutting down the bushes at places where men have their sexual encounters, or putting in cattle:

“Like they are doing now, shortly said, more police at that area, more control, cutting down trees, closing down the entrance, put in sheep.”⁶⁷

“Look when you have a place, what they often do nowadays, that they start pruning and throw the wood there at the place so that you can not walk there anymore, yes that is simply very bothersome. Then I think just create a place, allow it and I know that they at [mentions a place], I lived close to that place and then it was already happening, but uh, yes they have a piece of nature there and at a certain moment they released some of that kind of oxen, and then I think, ridiculous like those animals are bothered by it. Then I think well yes, do that and you look for a place where those animals do not come or you chase them away.”⁶⁸

The putting in of cattle seems to be a rather inefficient measure. More efficient is cutting down the bushes as this threatens three important issues at gay meeting places non-visibility, secrecy and anonymity. I experienced an other example of this in the area I originally come from where a gay meeting place is located at an island in a recreation area. However this autumn the recreational board decided to place a steel beam connecting the island to the main land of the recreation area. I informed after this beam and the response of the governmental body responsible was as follows:

“The unwanted forms of recreation have almost disappeared, among whom especially the nude men. Only at the isle there are still some men coming. For the inspectors it turned out to be impossible to confront these people with their behaviour. The inspectors could not approach these people unnoticed, therefore we placed the beam.”

This is a good example of how governmental bodies sometimes deal with the phenomenon. Those men recreating at an isle not disturbing anyone are chased away. The word unnoticed seems especially important in this, as the word implies that the inspectors want to surprise the men to catch them in the act as indicated by some co-researchers as well.

Visibility

It is at this point that I will re-introduce the issue of visibility. What will become clear in the discourse analysis is that an important issue many commentators on the Internet refer to is related to the visibility of the practices at gay meeting places. Often police and state intervention is the result of people complaining about gay meeting places, in which it is thinkable that the possibility of being confronted with men having sexual encounters with other men plays an important role, and maybe it is not even this fear but only the idea that men are having sexual encounters with each other at a public place. I will now continue the presentation of the data as a continuation on the issues of visibility as introduced in the previous section. It already became clear that the co-researchers are careful

not to confront people, who are not looking for it, with their sexual practices:

“I am not like that, an exhibitionist, but I would not want a couple walking around, and I am busy and they pass by, then I am embarrassed. But people who are looking for that, when they are watching, yes that arouses me. [...] I find the most important, that you should not confront people with it who do not want that, who are not looking for it.”⁶⁹

“I just find, yes, you should make sure that when you are doing that, you should not disturb another, another should not be bothered with your behaviour. Just like I find that other people should not tell me you can not do that, or whatever, that is dirty, or whatever. I decide about it myself, but I also make sure that others are not bothered by me.”⁷⁰

“On the other side it is like that, when you do it all openly and everyone can see it, then I do think that could be a bit more covered-up or further away. You do not have to stand at the border of parking places, where also others come and families come. That I find wrong. No I would not agree with that. When it takes place somewhere in the back, and you really have to go look for it, then I think, yes.”⁷¹

However, it was earlier on argued that a relatively small number of men visiting gay meeting places do have an exhibitionistic longing and seek to confront other people with their sexual activities. Nevertheless the co-researchers agree that everyone should keep their sexual practices invisible. There is no need to confront those who do not wish to be confronted with their sexual practices.

Besides, they also indicate that they are seldom confronted with people who are not there for the same reasons:

“[Accidental visitors?] At the place where I am talking about not. Sometimes at other meeting places, then I think like ‘Yes you are walking here with the risk that you see things you rather would not want to see’, but I did not ask them of course, so I do not know if they were walking there with that reason.”⁷²

“[Other visitors?] No. No when you’re driving by a parking place in the evening and there are many cars with the lights turned off, I think that an average family thinks ‘Let’s drive on’, why I do not know, but it does not look very inviting and friendly then. I would say myself ‘Well drive on’. I never had the confrontation, and conflicts. Those parking places are not often near roadhouses, or these are located right before it, I mean mostly you drive on to a McDonald’s or something.”⁷³

Moreover, what also is articulated by some of the co-researchers is that people often are pretty much aware of the locations where one can find gay meeting places in their neighbourhood. I also experienced this myself, as often people react by mentioning where in their neighbourhood or near their neighbourhood gay meeting places are located when I tell them that I am doing research on gay meeting places. The co-researchers say the following about this:

“[P]eople surely know where those places are.”⁷⁴

“And indeed people often say like ‘Yes but I can not walk there with my kids’ or whatever. There are places homo paths and meeting areas, but then I think like, many people say like ‘Oh in my neighbourhood it is there and there’. Often people do know that, well then go walk somewhere else or do not complain.”⁷⁵

“No people do not know that, how should they.”⁷⁶

What can be seen is that some co-researchers argue that people can simply avoid gay meeting places as they do know where these are, while another argues that people can not know where these places are.

However, the argument that people can avoid these places as, or when, they know where these are located is also used by some of the commentators on the Internet:

“You are not telling me that people do not know where a cruising area is in their living environment. I would say, stay away then, then you are not bothered by it.”⁷⁷

“When you do not belong to the club then you can go and walk the dog at another place? Or the dog should also have deviant behaviour???”⁷⁸

“Everyone knows by now where it is. Maybe you should just not go there when you do not want to be confronted with it. When I do not want to have loud music around me then I also do not go to a discotheque :-).”⁷⁹

Designating, tolerating and legalising

Moreover, some commentators on the Internet even argue that marking gay meeting places, or designating these, is desirable as it provides the opportunity to avoid these places:

“When they would design special outside s*x places, then you obviously know what you are up to: that you are not surprised by a horde of people (homo’s and/or hetero’s) who are having a very fun time.”⁸⁰

“I am actually quite happy that there is a ‘special part’ now, then you at least know that you should not go there...”⁸¹

Also the co-researchers give a similar argument when asked about their opinion on the designation and/or legalisation or toleration of gay meeting places. The co-researchers are in general in favour of legalising or tolerating gay meeting places with as their most important reason that there is a safe place is created, where they have the right to have sexual encounters with other men, while other people know where these places are located and do not have to be confronted with the practices at gay meeting places. Legalisation or toleration would in this way solve many of the conflicts between the users of gay meeting places and other people coming to the same place.:

“[Legalising?] Yes sure, let me say it like this, let them take care that those places are facilitated. Then it does not happen that places are not there anymore. Then there are less excesses at even more daring places where you thus cause disturbance. But on the other side make sure that people do not

cause any disturbance. At the parking places alongside the highway, there are also people coming who just want to get out or eat something. When you are not looking for it, then you do not want to see it. I think that nine out of ten people will say ‘Well I do not want this.’ [...] The government should make sure that things go properly, make sure that another is not disturbed by someone, if that would be the point of departure then we would get very far. You have a chance that people who want to cause disturbances are attracted by it. [...] I think that when you would do that you win on both ends. You are not confronted with it because you are not walking around in that area, and on the other hand I know ‘I am here legally, only I have to adhere to those and those rules’, so cleaning up condoms, not leaving rubbish lying around. I would be in favour.”⁸²

“For all I care you put up a sign which says ‘Gee, listen be aware’, then no-one can say I did not know it. [...] But indeed just make some places accessible, at least what I already said, put up a sign that says ‘You have a chance to see copulating men here’, I do not know, whatever.”⁸³

“There are always negative effects. Any gay basher who did not know it yet, knows it now. But yes you have to weigh up the pros and cons, and then it is possible that it is good. What you then get for example is that people can not complain anymore like ‘I saw two men having sex’.”⁸⁴

Nevertheless, the co-researchers agree that certain conditions should be implemented when legalising or tolerating gay meeting places, like respecting others by not having sex that is visible, and cleaning up after

oneself. As the discourse analysis will show this issue of litter and rubbish is a negative aspect of gay meeting places. One co-researcher even argues that it is a possible reason to determine the use of gay meeting places:

“There is a intensive deterrent policy here. [Where does that come from?] I think that the province does not want those parking places anymore, that they are in one way or another sick and tired of it and why I do not know. But they are not the most clean parking places. When homo’s would be a bit more neat in not leaving any rubbish, it would be a bit more pleasant I think, yes. Simply clean up your mess for a moment, that could be a bit more neat, yes. It is often like sex, done, throw the stuff on the ground, when you reach your orgasm, and leave it. Those are not the most pleasant parking places to be, I mean it is simply dirty, it is completely dirty. Then I think like, ‘Yes god, is it that difficult when you use a condom to take the condom with you and throw it in the garbage bin.’ Everybody is walking there with tissues, throw those tissues just in the garbage bin, all that aluminium foil where that stuff comes out is lying everywhere left and right, then I think ‘Yes’ you know ‘be a bit environmentally aware’.”⁸⁵

Gay bashing

However, the co-researchers also mention possible problems resulting from the legalisation or toleration of gay meeting places, as already mentioned, like gay bashing:

“And it also leads to some people, that you stimulate gay bashing. At the moment people hear there homo’s gather, those parking places are of

course in first instance, people know about it, but people do not talk about it. And at the moment there is not spoken about it, possible gay bashers hear, or I just mention something, youngsters who want some troubles, they do not go there. But at the moment you openly say like 'Well there and there you find concentrations, they can do that there', then I think that you can simply sense, that youngster turn against it and possibly go there."⁸⁶

"[Risk of more violence?] Well no I do not think so, also the police should show their face sometimes to show that they are protecting the group. Now I have the idea that they are there to scare us away, and I know from the group at that place where I come, that of those twenty, twenty-five people who come there not one is willing to report it to the police when something happens, because they do not see the police as their buddies anymore, as protectors, but as the enemy, we are chased away. I do know that the police is busy with this, that leaflet 'Blue at the pink meeting place' is not there for nothing."⁸⁷

Thus, although some co-researchers argue that designated gay meeting places could possibly attract more violence, another co-researcher argues that violence can more easily be prevented as the police has the opportunities to protect and act up against gay bashers at the moment gay meeting places become legal or tolerated.

Gay bashing at gay meeting places is a serious threat, in 2006 it even resulted in the death of a visitor of a gay meeting place. Even more so also some comments on the Internets articulate the following:

"And people find it strange that homo's are sometimes beaten up..."⁸⁸
"...in this way they go gay bashing once in a while..."⁸⁹

The co-researchers are very aware of this threat and some experienced it themselves:

"[Mentions a place] yes that one is closed now because of the disturbance, yes also violence, seems that someone was murdered there once, yes at that kind of places you have to be guarded against young people who like to come and bash. [...] [Did you experience gay bashing?] No, no, but I did not look for it in that sense, like when it was very dark or something, well fine, then not. But I really do not go to a very dark parking place where you can not see a thing. It is simply like as soon as you thought 'Hé this is not working', you get into the car, lock the door, and leave. This is an intuitive feeling."⁹⁰

"I have been hit with a iron bar on my head by a dude. When I got the light back into my eyes and saw the blood running over my head I saw the attacker running away. A dark type of about sixteen. Did not even see him...was standing behind some bushes. [...] And one time a car came speeding through the forest in the dark and about five men came running into the forest with flash lights screaming loudly. We could run faster thus nothing happened. I wanted to report it, but I have been at the police

station for two hours. And there was no-one who could take in my report, then I just left. [...] I did not go for a long time. Got really scared but after a year I went once in a while during the day, and I think about two years later in the dark.”⁹¹

What becomes clear from these quotes is that besides gay bashing being a serious threat. Moreover, many men are not willing to report violence against them due to the anonymous and secret character of the practices at gay meeting places. Another reason for the reluctance to report violence or other anti-homosexual behaviour is that the users have due to their experiences with the police little trust that they will act upon these complaints.

The picture as presented now is a rather negative picture, however it is the picture as described by the co-researchers. Nevertheless, there are municipalities, district recreations board, and governmental institutions who take more progressive measures in relation to gay meeting places. A famous example is the municipality of Best, where the decision was taken to give the men who get a fine at a gay meeting places the opportunity to pay at the spot, in order to prevent a fine arriving at home revealing their secret sexual encounters. Or the municipality of Amsterdam where they indicated where the gay meeting place is located on a map of a recreation area. Besides, in some municipalities more intensive police control is implemented. However not to scare away the men, but to provide them with a sense of safety and protection. The awareness of the need for this is

reflected in the leaflet ‘Blue at the Pink Meeting Place’⁹² to which one of the co-researchers refers, giving suggestions to the police on how to deal with these kinds of places.

1 “[T]achtig procent van wat je daar ziet, ik zeg tachtig procent hoor, weet niet of dat zo is, merendeel wat je daar ziet zijn mannen die allemaal getrouwd zijn. [...] merendeel middelbare leeftijd of ouder. [...] Negentig procent, vijfennegentig procent Nederlanders, hier. En dan heb ik het dus echt over specifieke parkeerplaatsen meestal langs een autoweg.”

2 “Ik denk dat vijfennegentig procent een relatie heeft, en ongeveer vijfenzeventig procent er niet voor uit komt dat hij homo of bi is. [...] Vroeger was het jonger. Maar tegenwoordig ligt de leeftijd tussen de dertig en vijfenvijftig, negenennegentig procent is Nederlands. Af en toe zie je een Turkse, Indische, Marokkaanse man, maar allemaal zelden, oudere Turkse mannen zie je wel iets vaker.”

3 “Mannen zoeken plaatsen om seks te hebben. Je loopt te wandelen en treft een gelijke door oogcontact, de ruimte is goed, dan gebeurd er wat. Men komt nog eens terug, men verteld er over aan vrienden of eventuele andere baan bezoekers op andere banen, en is het een baan.”

4 “De plek waar ik dus nu al acht jaar kom, dat is echt een plek waar je dus ook echt recreëert, waar een redelijk vaste groep mannen komt, van een man of twintig, die daar met hetzelfde doel komen als ik, ze komen daar met handdoeken, echt om daar met mooi weer te gaan zonnen, en dat is een wat andere plek dan die homo-ontmoetingsplaatsen waar het een komen en gaan is. De plek waar ik kom is dus een plek waar je mensen ontmoet, waar je elkaar ook echt ontmoet.”

5 “[A]ls je parkeerplaatsen langs de snelweg neemt, het merendeel is gewoon, om het platweg te zeggen, stoppen, iemand zoeken, klaarkomen en wegwezen. In het park loop je vaker rond, wacht je vaak langer, denk ik, ga je echt specifiek op zoek. En ik denk dat in het park de verscheidenheid ook veel groter is, daar komt ook jonger publiek.”

6 “Nee, je zoekt absoluut geen persoonlijk contact. En soms ontstaat er wel iets van persoonlijk contact, maar dat blijft alleen maar beperkt tot daar[.]”

7 “[Gepraat?] Ja soms wel, maar in de meest gevallen niet. De meesten komen er voor snelle anonieme seks.”

8 “[A]ls men gaat praten dan moet je al snel een naam zeggen en dat wil men niet. Waar moet je het over hebben? Je kinderen, je vrouw? En vriend?”

9 “Je zegt daar niet wat je beroep is ofzo.”

10 “Het is binnen de homowereld wel zoiets van als je mekaar tegenkomt op straat, dan laat je niet weten dat je elkaar kent. Dus dan loop je gewoon straal langs elkaar heen, dan wordt er ook niet geacht dat je ‘hallo’ zegt ofzo, op dat moment, dan loop je gewoon door. Maar dat is toch gewoon een afspraak, dat is heel simpel. Je weet drommels goed wie je bent tegengekomen, ook al is het donker, dan weet je nog hoe die mensen er uitzien, en als je dan die persoon in het dorp of in het stadje tegenkomt, dan negeer je mekaar, nee dat is heel goed te doen hoor. [...] je praat er niet over met elkaar, je geeft ook geen vorm van herkenning.”

11 “[M]en reageert wel op hoe je cruiet ziet en mensen schatten dat ook heel snel in, moet ook want je hebt niet zo heel veel tijd over het algemeen (lachend), je komt mekaar tegen en bij de één voel je dat het klikt, bij de ander absoluut niet. Als het bij de ander niet klikt, dan loop je gewoon door. En als het wel klikt dan heb je bepaalde codes om dat effe duidelijk te maken, en ja, dat is snel begrepen hoor, dat heb je snel door.”

12 “[I]k bedoel ze hoeven niet knap te zijn, maar althans ik zelf, kijk wel zo van gossie ziet iemand er een beetje verzorgd uit, uhh is ie schoon, ja daar heb je een zesde zintuig voor, ik weet het niet, maar ik heb zoiets van, ja, ik voel dat en uhm, en soms dan is het gewoon hup weg en soms heb je wel contact. [Persoonlijkheid?] Nee dat is niet belangrijk, althans voor mij niet. Is er absoluut niet, het is puur de seks en de sensatie, spanning.”

13 “[V]aak is het toch rondjes lopen, en soms loop je bij elkaar langs en je kijkt naar mekaar en zegt niks. Ja als je dan iemand treft waarvan je denkt ‘Daar heb ik wel zin mee’, dan blijf je staan, je doet je broek open, je gaat wat met jezelf spelen dan laat je zien dat je zin hebt, zoiets vaak. Het is vaak alleen ‘Wil je pijpen, ja, nee?’”

14 “[H]eel vaak wordt er maar heel weinig gezegd. Heel vaak wordt er niks gezegd, je loopt daar, je zoekt oogcontact, nou en, en weet ik veel, ja je zegt een paar woorden tegen elkaar en meestal komt het gewoon op hetzelfde neer, dat je gewoon in een geile bui bent, ja dan is het maar net hoe het contact is, en hoe het klikt en wat je doet en, ja, dat is heel verschillend.”

15 “[H]et gebeurt ook wel eens dat het contact wat er bestaat helemaal niet prettig is, nou dat kan ook. Er is wel een bepaalde code op die plekken, als je van elkaar eraart dat je het contact niet prettig vindt, gaat iedereen weer zijns weegs, en over het algemeen gaat dat ook erg goed.”

16 “Het stoppen van een seksuele handeling wil niet zeggen dat je afgewezen wordt, maar dat wil gewoon zeggen dat iemand die wil nog wel even verder kijken.”

17 “Er vindt niks plaats wat iemand niet zou willen, zelden denk ik, ik ben het nog niet tegengekomen. Als iemand ‘Nee’ zegt dan is het ‘Nee’, dan houdt het op, dat is gewoon ook heel duidelijk.”

18 “Om het grof te zeggen, als je geil bent en je hebt even geen andere dingen, dan zit ik thuis en mijn vrouw is op het werk, nou dan is er spanning, je zit je op Internet al op te geilen en dan geef je daaraan toe. Het is niet bij mij wekelijks. [...] Maar als je naar zo’n ontmoetingsplek gaat, dan ga je omdat je zin hebt.”

19 “Er is gewoon een categorie, waar ik zelf ook toe behoorde, die gewoon gaat op het moment dat ie behoefte heeft. En zodra het geweest is, dan is het ook weg, gewoon klaar en dan ga je weer.”

20 “De meeste komen daar voor snelle, anonieme seks.”

21 “Je doet het ook niet dagelijks, als je een keer zin hebt dan zoek je wat.”

22 “Het is eigenlijk heel platvloers en makkelijk, seks en spanning, punt.”

23 “[H]et grootste gedeelte komt daar gewoon om de spanning naar elkaar op te zoeken[.]”

24 “Nou je gaat gewoon puur voor de seks en de spanning, daar kan ik heel kort en bondig in zijn. Ik heb er niks aan toe te voegen. [...] je gaat puur voor de spanning en de seks, en soms ga je alleen maar voor de spanning en gebeurt er helemaal niks, en soms denk je nou ik wil seks en dan ga je er heen en dan is het toch wel weer heel spannend zonder dat je echt voor de spanning gaat. Dat zijn twee, vind ik, gescheiden dingen.”

25 “Spanning, eng, geil. [...] Ja de spanning is wel het belangrijkste.”

26 “Één procent vindt het spannend omdat het verboden is en betrap kan worden, de rest vindt de spanning in het onbekende tegengaan.”

27 “Voor een aantal is het echt puur voor de seks komen, [...], er zijn er een aantal die echt alleen voor de seks komen. Voor mijzelf speelt ook wel de spanning mee, ik vind het wel altijd heel erg leuk en spannend. Niet weten wat er komt, wie er komt, wat er gaat gebeuren [...]”

28 “[Waarom spannend?] Nou je weet niet wat er gebeurt, je weet niet wie je tegenkomt, wat er te doen is en hoe het zich zal ontwikkelen, ja dat is de spanning die je hebt. En ja, dat is de enige spanning die ik heb.”

29 “Voor de spanning en de sensatie en toch wel voor wat gebeurt daar, wat is daar aan de hand [...] Gewoon de nieuwsgierigheid om te weten wat vindt daar plaats, om te weten wat is daar gaande, wat doet men daar. En ja die nieuwsgierigheid die prikkelt je[.]”

30 “[P]ersoonlijk vind ik seks in de buitenlucht heel spannend. [...] Ja op een plek is het altijd en blijft het altijd behelpen. Ik bedoel het is altijd behelpen. En dan heb ik het alleen maar over mezelf, maar ’s zomers gaat het natuurlijk wat makkelijker dan ’s winters, ik bedoel, het is gewoon stervenskoud, enne. Als je dan toch al buiten bent, dan is het op een zomeravond beter, dan als je nu bij wijze van spreken buiten zou moeten staan.”

31 “Geef een heerlijk vrij gevoel, geeft echt een heerlijk vrij gevoel, het is gewoon geweldig, ja, geweldig, ach daar kick ik een beetje op. Het geeft gewoon een heerlijk gevoel, het is heel vrij, lekker frisse lucht er omheen, ja, ik weet niet, ja.

32 Voor mij is het niet de spanning van buiten, maar meer de spanning van bekeken worden, dat andere mensen toekijken wat ik met een man of vrouw of wat dan ook doe.”

33 “Kijk ik hoef niet altijd pottenkijkers erbij. [Maar het mag wel?] Ja hoor, dat brengt ook wel weer de extra spanning. Je mag rustig weten ik heb ooit eens een keer [...] seks gehad op het grasveld en ja gewoon in het openbaar, alleen, ik bedoel iedereen kon het zien, maar wel weer een gebied waarvan je weet dat 99 procent van de mensen die daar komen daar om dezelfde reden zijn. We hadden toen inderdaad heel snel in de gaten dat, uhm, er overal achter iedere boom iemand stond te kijken, nou ja goed, wij hadden zo iets van ‘Nou ja leuk, spannend kijk vooral’, en dat boeit mij dan op dat moment niet. Het is eerder wat meer opwindend en spannend, dan dat het stoort, maar dat ligt dan ook aan hoe is de situatie, met wie ben je[.]”

34 “[M]aar dat is hetzelfde met dat 99% een stil en rustig afgeschermd plekje op zoekt.”

35 “[J]e hebt exhibitionistische mensen, die graag iets aan een ander willen laten zien, nou dat kan, maar dat is zo’n klein deeltje van de hele grote groep.”

36 “Nou, een plek waar je de minste kans loopt om mensen uit andere, mensen die zich daar aansturen dat die daar in de buurt komen. Dat het dus ook een plek is waar we ongestoord kunnen zijn, zonder het risico te lopen andere mensen tegen te komen. En die plekken zijn er, en die kunnen ook gecreëerd worden in nieuwe gebieden zeg maar als je dat wil.”

37 “Afgeschermd [...] behoorlijk dicht begroeid met veel kronkel paden voor het paraderen. Een ruime ingang waar men elkaar op kan wachten en beveiliging dat het veilig is.”

38 “Nou, en als dat [seks] dan niet op de gebruikelijke manier ging, nou je reed naar huis, onderweg naar huis was een plaats, niet een hele grote, iedereen weet dat als er auto's staan dan is er wat te beleven, dan loopt daar wat. Nou dus ook daar ben ik regelmatig gestopt, en uhm soms een contact en soms geen contact.”

39 “Het is hartstikke makkelijk, je neemt de auto, je gaat er heen, en er gebeurt wel wat, en het ligt aan jezelf of er wel of niet wat gebeurt. Als het jou niet uitmaakt met wie, dan is er altijd wel iemand, en het is natuurlijk ook hartstikke makkelijk en heerlijk, en je hoeft het helemaal niet te plannen.”

40 “Voor mijzelf zie ik gewoon seks is een hobby van mij, op alle inhoudelijke vormen. Het is een vrijetijdsbesteding, hobby.”

41 “Voor mij voor de spanning en de kick, en gewoon in je geordende leven, alles is dit en dat, het is voor mij een soort uitlaatklep geworden.”

42 “Alleen je ontwikkelt bij jezelf een bepaald patroon, ik wil het geen verslaving noemen, maar het is wel iets dat continue prikkelt [...] Dus dat stukje verslaving zit er wel degelijk hoor, zo is het bij mij tenminste, ik denk dat het bij een groot gedeelte van de mannen zo werkt hoor.”

43 “[...] ik denk ook dat het, er sluipt voor jezelf ook een bepaalde gewoonte in, als je dit soort zaken doet.”

44 “[H]et grootste gedeelte van de mannen die daar komen is niet eens getrouwd, maar woont bijvoorbeeld of alleen, of willen niet dat de hele omgeving het weet, of hebben een sociale status waarin het niet of moeilijk geaccepteerd is, die komen juist op die plekken, en daar zal een gedeelte van getrouwd zijn.”

45 “Nee, dat zijn van die aannames die ergens door de media ontstaan zijn, en die ook gemanipuleerd worden door mensen die tegen dit soort plekken zijn, want des te hoger je het dan maakt, des te minder acceptabel het is, en des te meer kinderzietjes achter in de auto, des te moeilijker het dan ook wordt voor de rest van Nederland om dat dan ook als acceptabel te gaan zien.”

46 “Hier zit je in [een streng gereformeerd gebied], en dat daar heel veel zijn die gewoon getrouwd zijn en eigenlijk liever homoseksueel zijn, maar omdat de kerk en wie dan ook, vindt dat je getrouwd moet zijn, dat die daarom, ja. Het is toch wel heel wonderlijk dat heel veel parkeerplaatsen toch zijn bij dat soort oorden. Tuurlijk is dat heel zuur, het is heel sneu. Dat is alleen maar de maatschappij en de kerk die dat kan veranderen. Als de kerk zegt van ‘Jongens het maakt ons niet uit of je wel of niet homo bent, je bent gewoon een kind van God of wat voor een kind dan ook’, dan denk ik dat het in die wereld veel makkelijker is om uit de kast te komen.”

47 “Het is zelfs wel trendy om er een paar [homoseksuelen] in je kennissenkring te hebben natuurlijk.”

48 “Doordat men in de omgeving of vrienden makkelijker opgenomen wordt is het niet meer nodig je af te schermen. [...] Je nu al duidelijk merkt is dat vrienden en familie makkelijker er mee om gaan, terwijl er aan de andere kant steeds minder tolerantie is en steeds meer geweld.”

49 “Gedurende mijn relatie, mijn huwelijk, heb ik heel veel dates buiten de deur gehad, waarvan deels op ontmoetingsplaatsen. [Waarom?] Nou, gewoon, omdat je in de mood bent, enne, wat dat betreft had ik niet echt een super, of eigenlijk helemaal geen seksuele relatie met mijn echtgenote, dus ik zocht gewoon contact met een man. Seksuele contact zocht ik gewoon bij een man. [...] En het is heel moeilijk en ik kan uit eigen ervaring zeggen dat je echt dubbellevens leidt, je getrouwde leven, je hebt een leven buiten, en zoals ik dat dan zeg, je eigen leven en dat was dan bij een paar mensen die van mij precies wisten hoe of wat. [...] Mede ook doordat ik zelf getrouwd ben geweest ken ik redelijk veel mannen die toch in dezelfde situatie zaten en een deel daarvan die vroeg of laat toch de beslissing neemt van nou oké, ik ga toch voor mezelf kiezen. Het is maar hoe lang houdt je het vol en hoe lang wil je concessies doen met jezelf.”

50 “[E]n dat ze open moeten blijven dat vind ik ook dat dat noodzakelijk is. [Waarom?] Omdat ik denk dat er heel veel mannen zijn die alleen maar op dat soort plekken dat contact kunnen krijgen, die niet naar clubs gaan, die niet op vakantieoord komen waar het is en die misschien wel homoseksueel zijn, homogevoelens hebben, en wel getrouwd zijn of niet getrouwd zijn, en die dan op deze manier misschien toch in aanraking kunnen

komen en op die manier dan toch een keer uit de kast kunnen gaan komen. [Middel daarvoor?] Ik denk het wel, het zal niet meteen een plek zijn voor relaties op te bouwen, omdat het gewoon te kortstondig is.”

51 Er zijn ook een heleboel mensen die kiezen voor de relatie in stand houden en wat soms ook heel goed gaat. Want ja een relatie aangaan met een homo-bi man is nooit alleen vanuit de homo-bi man, maar de partner kiest ook om bepaalde redenen dat soort figuur. Dus dat is altijd een samenspel en dat kan heel goed werken door de man de ruimte te geven dat homo-gevoel te beleven, dat dan de rest van de relatie goed gaat, dat kan. Ik ken een heleboel mensen die op die manier leven.

52 “Ik zie mij zelf niet als homoseksueel maar als bi seksueel. Ik heb een voorkeur voor vrouwen, maar ik heb een kick voor sperma en daarom geil ik er op om sperma in mijn mond en gezicht gespoten te krijgen. Dus deze misschien in jou ogen perverse kick zorgt er voor dat ik dus ook met mannen contact leg. Dus ik ben zo als we dat zeggen gewoon sperma geil. [...] Kijk mijn voorkeur gaat ook uit naar een vrouw, als ik kan kiezen tussen een man en een vrouw, dan kies ik een vrouw. Maar ik vind het ook lekker om met mannen en vrouwen bezig te zijn. Je hoort ook wel mannen die zeggen van ‘oh ik moet er niet aan denken dat ik met een andere man een vrouw moet verwennen’, die gedachte gaat hen al te ver. Niemand dwingt mij ergens toe, alles wat ik doe is mijn eigen keuze. [...] Ik vind anaal niks, maar een beetje trekken en pijpen enzo dat vind ik wel spannend. Je gaat mekaar laten spuiten enzo en dat anderen dan toekijken dat vind ik spannend. Echte homoseks, nee dat trekt me ook niet. Ik vind anaal niks, maar een beetje trekken en pijpen enzo dat vind ik wel spannend. [...] Echte homoseks, nee dat trekt me ook niet. Daarom vind ik het dan ook leuk met stellen enzo. Met meerdere mannen een andere vrouw verwennen en een andere man zien klaarkomen, daar kick ik op, op dat soort dingen. Maar dat zal ook wel voor iedereen verschillend zijn, als je tien interviews afneemt, een ieder heeft weer zijn eigen kick.”

53 “[Getrouwde of ‘hetero’ man, zijn dat hetero's of homo's?] Daar vraag je me wat, er wordt wel eens gevraagd ben je getrouwd, dan zeg ik ja met een man, en dan ‘oh’, er wordt wel eens raar gereageerd als je als homo op zo'n plek bent. Dan ben ik zo naïef om te denken, zal die man denken dat hier alleen maar hetero's rondlopen, die even homoseks willen hebben, en of dat nou biseksuelen zijn, of homoseksuelen die getrouwd zijn, daar kan ik geen antwoord op geven. Ik denk niet dat je er een label op kunt plakken.”

54 “Ik denk dat als een heteroman met een andere vrouw rommelt, dat dat meer geaccepteerd is dan een heteroman die met een andere man rommelt, want dan pas je in die andere categorie. In die hokjescultuur, als je er dan drie hebt, homoseksueel, biseksueel en heteroseksueel, maar ik bedoel, ik denk zolang het maar binnen je eigen straat blijft of in je eigen categorie vreemdgaat, dat dat niet erg is, dat men dat wel accepteert, of nu homo's met homo's vreemdgaan, dat moeten zij weten, of hetero's met hetero's, dat moeten zij weten, maar zodra er kruisbestuiving plaatsvindt. Als iemand open bi is en die gaat open bi vreemd, dan zullen er ook niet zo veel problemen mee zijn, maar als iemand die kruisbestuiving gaat doen en eigenlijk zegt, ik zit in de heterowereld, of ik zit in de homowereld, maar ik doe het ook met vrouwen, dan denk ik, ja. Ik denk, blijf je in je eigen categorie, dan zal het aankijken hetzelfde blijven, maar ga je over je eigen categorie heen naar een andere categorie, ik denk dat ze dan denken, er is toch wel iets vreemd met die persoon, dat kan eigenlijk niet. Kies dan voor één of kies dan voor open bi. Als mensen dan gewoon open bi zijn, dat is natuurlijk ook een taboe nog steeds, volgens mij nog wel een groter taboe dan homoseksualiteit, maar als al die mensen die bi zijn, daar openlijk bi zouden zijn, dat daar dan heel anders tegen aan gekeken wordt, maar dat denk ik. Je bent ook niet open vaak, omdat je in hetero of homo hoort te zitten.”

55 “En hoe reageren mannen op elkaar, ik denk dat mannen ook wat makkelijker seksualiteit kunnen scheiden van intimiteit. [...] Of vrouwen dat van nature hebben weet ik niet, maar sowieso is denk ik de maatschappij er erg op gespits dat vrouwen de zorgende moet zijn, dat er intimiteit moet zijn, dat er warmte moet zijn en, dus, daaraan is ook het beeld van seksualiteit van een vrouw gekoppeld. Het beeld is dat vrouwen eerst intimiteit moeten hebben en dat ze van daaruit misschien seksualiteit zullen hebben. Ik heb een beetje ervaring dat niet in alle gevallen zo is, maar dat ook een heleboel vrouwen alleen maar seksueel gericht zijn.”

56 “Nee, geaccepteerd heb ik nog niet meegemaakt. Zelfs onder mensen die ons tolereren zijn er maar heel weinig die ons accepteren. Getolereerd is een beter woord. Geaccepteerd? Homoseksualiteit is nog nooit geaccepteerd.”

57 “Ik denk dat het beeld wat de gemiddelde Nederlander heeft van de emancipatie van homo's dat dat een ontzettend vertekend beeld is. Ik heb helemaal niet het gevoel dat men, en met name als je op wat latere leeftijd er voor uitkomt of ervaart bij jezelf dat er ook homoseksuele gevoelens

zitten, dat je dan makkelijk naar buiten kan komen. Het is een stukje bladgoud wat er is, je prikt er binnen de kortste keren doorheen. [...] Terwijl we dan zogenaamd bekend staan als een tolerant land en dan denk ik ja, het is echt een stukje bladgoud.”

58 “Wat ik met name zie in de klas [de co-researcher is docent], wat ik meemaak, het is gewoon nog wel een scheldwoord in de klas, homo, flikker, en dan roep ik wel van ‘Ho ho’ en dan kijken ze om en roepen ze van ‘Oh sorry meneer dat was niet de bedoeling’. Maar het wordt dus nog wel als scheldwoord gebruikt en zo lang dat nog steeds als scheldwoord gebruikt wordt, wijst het dus aan dat het een negatieve connotatie heeft. En dan ben je de hele acceptatie, die is dan weg hoor. Zo lang niemand meer dat woord noemt als een scheldwoord, dan denk ik dat je dan wel eens zou kunnen spreken van volledige acceptatie. Maar zo lang dat nog op royale schaal bezigd wordt door iedereen van brul maar ‘Homo’ of ‘Vieze homo’, nou dan... [...] Voor een buitenlander is het [homoseksualiteit] hier heel erg geaccepteerd, maar binnen Nederland merk je best wel dat het nog niet zo heel geaccepteerd is.”

59 “We menen dat we heel open zijn, en vergeleken met andere landen zijn we dat ook wel denk ik, maar ondertussen op bepaalde gebieden ook weer niet. Homoseksueel, bijvoorbeeld, dat je zegt ‘Ik ben homo’, kan je hier in Nederland heel makkelijk voor uitkomen of vrij makkelijk. Ik bedoel meer van dat als je ontdekt ik val op mannen dan kan je dat in Nederland wel zeggen ‘Ik ben homoseksueel’, klaar. Dat wordt misschien nog wel eerder geaccepteerd dat je zegt ‘Ik ben homo’, dan ‘Ik kom op ontmoetingsplaatsen en ik doe het in bosjes met andere mannen.’ Voor anderen is dat raar.”

60 “Als je het er met niemand overhebt dan heeft het voor jou geen negatieve associatie. Op het moment dat je het er met iemand over hebt en die hebben een negatieve associatie over dat soort plekken zullen ze ook een oordeel over jou vellen. Dan zul je misschien van een vriendelijke, leuke jongeman tot een vriendelijke, leuke jongeman met toch wel een beetje rare trekjes. En dat is ook een reden denk ik waarom veel mensen, en ik zelf ook natuurlijk niet, er bijna met niemand over heb, omdat niet iedereen hoeft te weten wat ik doe, en ik hoef ook niet van anderen te weten wat die allemaal doen, en ja, ze zullen je oordelen als je bekend maakt dat je daar naar toe gaat, en daar zullen ze hard over oordelen. Er zullen weinig mensen zijn die zullen zeggen als jij dat goed vindt dan moet je dat doen, ik denk dat de meeste mensen jou zullen veroordelen. [Waar komt dat door?] Nou omdat die plekken niet bekend staan als de meest hygiënische en schone plek, dat kun je toch wel ergens anders doen dan op een parkeerplaats. Nou ja, met je homoseksualiteit hoef je toch niet te koop te lopen, kun je toch ook binnen huis doen, kom zeg. [Getrouwde mannen?] Dat heeft natuurlijk ook wel een negatieve connotatie met zich mee, omdat die getrouwde mannen er nog even langs moeten.”

61 “Ja, dat weet ik niet, dat is toch, waarom zijn er mensen als ik met mijn vriendje in de stad loop en ik loop hand in hand of wat dan ook of ik zoen hem op straat, vindt men dat vreemd. Terwijl als jij met gewoon een vriendin loopt en doet precies hetzelfde zegt men niks.”

62 Nou, dat je niet zo heel snel dicht tegen mekaar aan gaat zitten, dat je niet zo heel veel aan mekaar gaat zitten, ja omdat mensen daar toch wel aanstoot aan kunnen nemen. Sommige Nederlanders die daar heel erg tegenop zien, die er tegen aan kijken als mannen elkaar een hand geven, of omhelzen of zoenen, ja daar toch wel heel erg agressief op kunnen reageren. [Erger voor mannen dan voor vrouwen?] Ja dat is zo. Waarom, vrouwen lopen altijd al gearmd, al jaren gearmd door de stad en er zal nooit iemand roepen, lesbo's, lesbo's, omdat er zo veel vrouwen zijn die gearmd en gezellig door de stad heen lopen en als mannen dat doen dan zijn het homo's. Klaar, want mannen doen dat niet, heteromannen doen dat niet, homomannen horen dat dus ook niet te doen, en als ze dat wel doen dan zijn het homo's. En daarom is het voor lesbische vrouwen, lesbiennes, makkelijker om te doen dan voor mannen. Alleen bij sommige vrouwen kun je natuurlijk aan de buitenkant goed zien dat het lesbo's zijn, en dat is bij mannen ook, en soms kun je het ook absoluut niet zien, maar vrouwen hebben wel een voordeel daarin, zie ik als man. Soms ben ik wel jaloers daar in. Ja, hoeveel vrouwen geven elkaar niet een zoen als ze mekaar tegenkomen op straat. Zal blijven, altijd blijven.

63 “Die mannen die dat [ontmoedigende maatregelen] willen zoeken wel een andere plek.”

64 “En door dat soort waterbed-effect, het niet meer gedogen op plekken waar mensen er geen last van hebben, creëer je plekken waar mensen er wel last van hebben, want de ruimte wordt toch gezocht, want er worden gewone parkeerplaatsen opgezocht en er is onderling toch een bepaalde code dat men naar elkaar seint, stoplichten, nou ja ik weet dat als ik een plaats zoek. Maar goed nu zoeken ze dan de plaatsen op waar ze geen boswachters verwachten en dat zijn dan de gewone parkeerplaatsen, dus dan heb je echt dat waterbed-effect en daar komen mensen die zich daar echt aan storen. Dus wat gebeurt er, het negatieve beeld wat er is wordt alleen maar groter.”

65 “Ik heb hier in [noemt een plek] wel een keer meegemaakt dat twee van die stadswachten er aan kwamen. Dan zie je de mannen alle kanten opvliegen, dan is iedereen pfiert weg. Maar die stadswachten weten dat natuurlijk ook, die zijn er omdat het officieel niet mag. Ik bedoel die stadswachten zijn er puur om de orde van het cruisen te verstoren, ze slingeren niemand op de bon, maar ze zaaien wel onrust, ja dan is iedereen zo weg, je bent altijd met een half oog met de omgeving bezig, op je hoede van. Nee daarom zeg ik van omdat toch heel veel mannen getrouwd zijn willen ze, als ze een bekeuring krijgen komt die bekeuring thuis, en als agenten betrappen, zo hoort het, jammer dan, maar dat komt later wel thuis, dat proces-verbaal.”

66 “[M]aar het is niet zichtbaar en al acht jaar is die plek daar, nooit problemen gehad tot vorig jaar. Ik denk het recreatieschap heeft zich daar aan gestoord op de één of andere manier of ze vinden dat een gedoogplek binnen het hele gebeuren gewoon niet meer mag, en ze hebben daar een soort razzia gehouden. Van het voorjaar zijn ze daar tot vier keer per dag samen met BOA's en politie door het gebied gegaan en hebben mannen opgejaagd, hebben ze bekeuringen uitgedeeld voor bloot lopen, het is een hele kwetsbare groep mannen, het is een groep homo-bi mannen die er eigenlijk voor het grootste deel niet voor uit willen komen [...] En dat heb ik dus ervaren van het voorjaar hoe politie mensen en BOA's reageren op dit fenomeen. Denigrerend, dominant, ze komen daar, als een stelletje macho's komen ze daar even die nichten wegjagen, zo'n gevoel krijg je [...], en wordt je behandeld als vuil, zo van dit mag niet, jullie moeten weg.”

67 “Zoals ze nu doen, kortweg gezegd, meer politie op dat terrein zetten, vaker controleren, bomen kappen, de toegang afsluiten, schapen inzetten.”

68 “Kijk als je een plek hebt, wat ze tegenwoordig heel veel doen, dat ze gaan snoeien en het snoeihout er gewoon tussen gooien zodat je er niet meer kunt lopen, ja dat is gewoon heel vervelend. Dan denk ik creëer gewoon een plaats, sta het toe en ik weet dat ze bij [...], ik heb daar zelf vlakbij gewoon en ook toen gebeurde het daar al, maar uh, ja daar hebben ze een stuk natuur en daar hebben ze op een gegeven moment van die ossen uitgezet, en dan denk ik van, belachelijk net of die beesten zich eraan storen. Dan denk ik van nou ja, doe dat vooral enne je zoekt dan wel een plek op waar die beesten niet komen of je jaagt ze weg.”

69 “Ik ben ook niet zo, een exhibitionist, maar ik zou niet graag willen dat een wandelend echtpaarje, en ik ben daar bezig en die komt daar langs, dan geneer ik me. Maar mensen die dat zoeken, als die staan te kijken, ja dat windt me wel op. [...] Ik vind het belangrijkste, je moet niet mensen er mee confronteren die er niet van gediend zijn, die niet daar naar op zoek zijn.”

70 “Ik vind gewoon, ja, je moet zorgen dat als je doet, moet je geen overlast zijn voor een ander, een ander moet zich niet aan jouw gedrag kunnen storen. Net zoals ik vind dat mensen niet tegen mij moeten zeggen dat mag jij niet doen, of wat dan ook, dat is vies, of wat dan ook, dat bepaal ik zelf wel, maar ik zorg ook dat de ander geen last van mij heeft.”

71 “Aan de andere kant is het natuurlijk wel zo, als je het helemaal open en bloot doet en iedereen heeft er zicht op, dan denk ik wel dat kan wel even iets bedekter of verder weg. Je hoeft niet zo meteen aan de rand van de parkeerplaatsen te gaan staan, waar ook andere komen en gezinnen komen. Dat vind ik fout, nee dat zou ik niet goed vinden. Als het achterin ergens plaatsvindt en je moet er echt naar op zoek om het te vinden, dan denk ik, ja.”

72 “[Toevallige bezoekers?] Op de plek waar ik dus over praat het Noorderbos niet, wel eens andere ontmoetingsplaatsen, dat ik denk van ja u loopt hier met het risico dat u dingen ziet die u liever niet wil zien, maar ik heb die mensen er niet op aangesproken uiteraard, dus ik weet ook niet of ze er met die reden liepen.”

73 “[Toevallige bezoekers?] Nee. Nee als je op een avond langs een parkeerplaats rijdt en er staan heel veel auto's met de lichten uit, ik denk dat een gemiddeld gezin denkt, laat ik maar doorrijden, waarom weet ik niet, maar het ziet er niet heel uitnodigend en vriendelijk uit dan. Ik zou zelf zeggen, nou rijdt maar door, ik heb zelf nooit die confrontatie gehad, en conflicten niet gehad. Die parkeerplaatsen liggen niet vaak bij wegrestaurants, of ze liggen er vlak voor, ik bedoel meestal rijd je dan toch wel door naar een McDonald's ofzo.

74 “[M]ensen weten best wel waar die plekken zitten.”

75 “En inderdaad mensen die zeggen van, ja maar ik kan daar niet lopen met mijn kinderen of wat dan ook. Er zijn plaatsen daar zijn homopaden en ontmoetingsgebieden, maar dan denk ik van, net zoals je het zelf al zijn, heel veel mensen zeggen ‘Oh bij in de buurt is dat daar en daar’, vaak weten mensen dat wel, nou ga dan ergens anders wandelen of zeur niet.”

76 "Nee mensen weten dat niet, hoe moeten ze ook."

77 "Je maakt mij niet wijs dat mensen niet weten waar in hun leefomgeving een cruising area is, ik zou zeggen, blijf daar dan gewoon weg, dan heb je er ook geen last van." (Hollandsche Rading)

78 "Als je niet tot deze club behoort dan laat je de hond toch op een andere plek uit ? Of de hond moet ook een afwijkend gedrag hebben ???"
(Enschede)

79 "Iedereen weet zo onderhand waar het is. Misschien moet je er gewoon niet heen gaan als je er niet mee wilt worden geconfronteerd. Als ik geen harde muziek aan mijn kop wil hebben ga ik ook niet naar een discotheek :-)" (Groene Ster)

80 "Als ze nou speciale buitens'ks plaatsen in gaan richten, dan weet je ook duidelijk waar je aan toe bent: dat je niet wordt verrast door een horde mensen (homo's en/of hetero's) die het wel hééél gezellig hebben." (Hollandsche Rading)

81 "Ben eigenlijk wel blij dat er nu n `speciaal stuk` is, weet je in ieder geval dat je daar niet heen moet..." (Best)

82 "[Legaliseren?] Ja hoor, laat ik het zo zeggen, laten ze er voor zorgen dat die plekken er zijn, dan gebeurt het niet zomaar dat die plekken er helemaal niet meer zijn, dan gebeuren er misschien andere excessen op nog gewaagdere plekken waar je dus overlast veroorzaakt. Maar aan de andere kant wel duidelijk maken aan mensen dat ze geen overlast moeten veroorzaken. Op de parkeerplaats ook langs de snelweg, daar komen ook mensen die er alleen maar even uit willen of een broodje willen eten. Als je er niet naar op zoek bent, dan hoeft je het ook niet te zien. Ik denk dat negen van de tien mensen zegt 'Nou daar ben ik niet van gediend'. Mensen die dat zoeken, de meeste plekken zijn wel bekend hoor, er staan op Internet wel dingen van buitenseksplaatsen, daar staan allemaal adressen op van waar dit, bij afslag die en die, en als je wil kun je ook wel gaan zoeken. [...] Ik denk als je dat zou doen dat je aan beide kanten wint, jij wordt er niet mee geconfronteerd omdat je niet dat terrein oploopt, en aan de andere kant weet ik, ik ben hier legaal, alleen ik moet me aan die en die regels houden, dus condooms opruimen, geen rommel laten liggen. Zou ik wel voor zijn.

83 Voor mijn part zet je er een bord neer waarop staat, goh, luister denk erom, dan kan niemand zeggen van ik wist het niet. [...] Maar inderdaad, maak gewoon bepaalde plekken toegankelijk, tenminste wat ik al zei, zet je er een bord neer waarop staat 'U maakt kans dat u hier parende mannen ziet', weet ik veel, wat dan ook.

84 "Er zijn altijd nadelen. Welke potenrammer het nog niet wist weet het nu, maar ja je moet de voor en tegens tegen elkaar afwegen en dan kan het best zo zijn dat het wel goed is. Wat je dan wel krijgt bijvoorbeeld is dat mensen niet meer kunnen klagen van 'Ik zag 2 heren seks hebben', want ze waren er voor gewaarschuld."

85 "Er is wel een ontzettend ontmoedigingsbeleid hier gaande. [Waar komt dat vandaan?] Ik denk dat de provincie dat niet meer willen hebben die parkeerplaatsen, dat ze op één of andere manier daar zat van zijn en waarom weet ik niet. Maar het zijn ook niet de meest schone parkeerplaatsen, laat ik dat zeggen, als homo's wat netter zouden zijn in het niet achter laten van vuil, zou het ook een stukje prettiger zijn denk ik, ja. Gewoon eens even je rotzooi opruimen, dat mag wel eens wat netter, hoor. Het is wel heel vaak van seks, klaar, gooi de boel maar neer, als je je hoogtepunt bereikt hebt, en laat maar liggen. Het zijn niet de meest aangename parkeerplaatsen als je daar wil vertoeven, ik bedoel dat is gewoon vies, het is ronduit vies. Dan denk ik van, ja god, is het zo moeilijk als je een condoom gebruikt om je condoom mee te nemen en je gooit hem in de prullenbak. Iedereen loopt met tissues, gooi die tissue even in de prullenbak, al dat aluminiumfolie waar dat spul uitkomt, ligt overal links en rechts, dan denk ik, 'Ja' weet je, 'doe even milieubewust zeg.'"

86 "En het leidt er ook toe dat je potenrammen stimuleert. Op het moment dat men hoort daar komen homo's samen, die parkeerplaatsen zijn natuurlijk in eerste instantie, men weet er wel van, maar men praat er niet over. En op het moment dat er niet over gesproken wordt, horen mogelijk potenrammers, of ik noem maar wat, jongelui die uit zijn op een beetje trammelant, gaan daar niet naar toe. Maar op het moment dat je dan openlijk zegt van 'Nou daar en daar vindt je concentraties, die mogen dat daar doen', dan denk ik dat je een keer op je klompen kunt aanvoelen, dat jongeren zich er tegen keren en mogelijk daar naar toe gaan.

87 "Nou dat denk ik niet, ook politie moet zich dan daar af en toe laten zien om te laten zien dat ze de groep beschermen, nu heb ik het idee dat ze er zijn om ons weg te jagen, en ik weet zeker over de groep waar ik dan kom, dat van die twintig, vijftiengentien mensen die daar komen niet één aangifte

bereid is als er iets gebeurd, omdat ze de politie niet meer zien als maatjes, als beschermers, maar als vijand, wij worden weggejaagd. Nou weet ik wel dat de politie daar toch wel mee aan de slag is gegaan, die folder van 'Blauw op de roze ontmoetingsplaats' is er niet voor niets."

88 "En mensen vinden het gek dat homo's af en toe in elkaar geslagen worden..." (Overlanden)

89 "...op deze manier gaan ze af en toe weer potenrammen..." (Overlanden)

90 "[Noemt een plek], ja die is nu gesloten vanwege overlast, ja ook geweld, schijnt dat er ooit iemand vermoord is, ja op soort plaatsen moet toch heel goed op passen voor jonge lui die graag effe komen rammen. [Heeft u het wel eens meegemaakt?] Nee, nee, maar ik heb het ook nooit opgezocht in die zin, zo van als het erg donker was of zoiets, nou prima, dan maar niet. Maar ik ga echt niet op een hele donkere parkeerplaats waar niets te zien valt. Het is gewoon ook zodra je dacht van hé dit werkt niet, stap je in je auto, je deur op slot en je gaat weg. Dit is een intuïtief gevoel."

91 "Ik ben een keer door een gozer met een ijzeren staaf op mijn hoofd geslagen. Toen ik weer licht in mijn ogen kreeg en het bloed als een gek over mijn hoofd liep zag ik de aanvaller weg rennen... een donker type van een jaartje of 16. Ik had hem niet eens gezien... stond ergens achter een struik.

[...] En een keer kwam er een auto door het bos scheuren in het donker en kwamen een man of vijf hard schreeuwend de bossen in rennen met zaklantaarns. Wij konden sneller rennen dus er gebeurde verder niets. Ik wilde aangifte doen, maar ik heb 2 uur op het politiebureau gezeten. En er was niemand die mijn aangifte kon opnemen, toen ben ik maar weggegaan. [...] Ik ging een hele lange tijd niet meer. Was erg bang geworden, maar na een jaar ben ik overdags weer eens af en toe gegaan en ik denk zo'n twee jaar later wel weer eens in het donker."

92 See for a description of this document appendix 3.

Chapter 5

Discourse Analysis

In this chapter I will go into the discourses articulated on the Internet. I will give some representative quotes from the Internet to show how certain discourses around gay meeting places are formulated. More particularly I take a look at particular words people use when they articulate their opinion on gay meeting places. I will firstly focus again on the earlier introduced idea that 'family' men visit gay meeting places. Thereafter, I will focus on the negative discourse articulated about gay meeting places. I will introduce the discourse in which the public nature of the sexual encounters plays a role. After this I will return to the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands as articulated on the internet, which I support in the final section with research conducted in the Netherlands on the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands.

Family men

The analysis of the newspaper articles shows that in nineteen out of forty-five newspaper articles there is indeed emphasis placed on married/heterosexual men visiting gay meeting places, some examples are:

“But what is truth? Is truth a changing law?
We both have truths. Are mine the same as yours?”
(Pilate to Jesus Christ in Jesus Christ Superstar 1973)

“A painful case because often the home front is not aware of the sexual escapades of father.”¹

“Most men who visit the meeting places, do this without the home front being aware of this.”²

“Don't forget that many visitors lead a double life. They are married. Sometimes they come to the Weerseloseweg with the child seat in the back of the car. Men sometimes break down and cry when they get charged. They get a ticket at home in which is mentioned that they are charged for obnoxious behaviour.”³

When we look at the reactions people give on the Internet it becomes clear that people have a general idea that gay meeting places are often visited by family men. Often a reference is made to cars with child seats in the back denoting that the owners of those cars, visiting a gay meeting place, have a family at home. However, who can ever be sure that men who have a child seat in the back of their cars are married men, maybe they are divorced, have a homosexual relation, or whatever other reason is possible. Nevertheless people seem to make a direct association between child seats

and family men, which is possibly sparked off by the discourse articulated in the media as argued before. Whatever the reason why people articulate this association with family men, there is a discourse constituted around gay meeting places in which family men have a central position, and through a rearticulation and repetition of this discourse either in the media, or within society, the discourse remains intact:

“This is only done by men who don’t dare to come out of the closet (because of their religion and social environment) and often have a wife and children at home. Myself as a homo I also find this disgusting.”⁴

“Or is the wife secretly at home sitting on the couch with the children...and they do not know you’re a secret fairy??? Dirty man!”⁵

“Most people who come there are married fake hetero’s. There are many cars standing there with child seats in it. And use abusive language to homo’s while they are frustrated that they have to do it at their fat sour wife every evening, nicely hypercritical.”⁶

“I have no pity at all with men who cheat on their wife. If they want to be homo secretly then they have to know it for themselves, but others should not become victims.”⁷

“These places are known as men meeting places as it turns out that most visitors are married men? Who often in this area, which is known by everyone, go ‘crossing’ or walking their ‘dog’, yes, yes! And I can know it!”⁸

“This I find sick! All those cars with child seats in the back...and all those tissues everywhere....really sick!”⁹

“Hmmm, I understood that mostly ‘hetero’ men go to these kinds of meeting places. Often they are neatly married for the outside world, but at the same time they have two relationships.”¹⁰

“Bluh, when I then think about those ‘decent family men’ who supposedly never cheat on their wives, but go into the bushes with an unknown dude, and then go and contaminated their wife at home.”¹¹

“Yech, yech, yech, let them just meet at home, oh no there is the wife kindly waiting till her husband returns from work...”¹²

In these reactions and others people articulate feelings of rejection in relation to the idea that ‘decent’ family men visit gay meeting places while cheating on their wives and children. Sometimes these reactions are accompanied by feelings of sympathy with the family of these men. This rejection, moreover, is often related to the idea that the men are ‘fake’ hetero’s having sex outside of their marriage with men. Besides, there is a concern articulated with sexually transmitted diseases and possible contamination of the wives of these ‘fake’ hetero’s, or ‘decent’ family men. Thus, the discourse on gay meeting places in relation to family men is a discourse of rejection.

Disgust, disease, filth, and bestiality

We can already see in the quotes above that people articulate words like sick, yech, dirty, and associations with sexually transmitted diseases. When we look at the attitude towards gay meeting places articulated by people, often reactions can be found like:

“These kinds of things is not making love, but simply perversity...”¹³

“Pigs, can just dump their cum.”¹⁴

“Dirty cancer dogs, kill them all.”¹⁵

“(Yech :(go to a hotel dirty faggots.”¹⁶

“Perversity, biologically and psychologically incorrect, this behaviour should be banned instead of stimulated. Man belongs to woman, woman belongs to man, that is nature. Does your mind say something different? To the psychiatrist.”¹⁷

“[B]y this bestial sex obsessed behaviour in the bushes and at parking places.”¹⁸

“More importantly these places are incubators for child abuse and the spread of AIDS, something which is forgotten often.”¹⁹

“When I think about it I still get nocuous... is this the message we want to give to our kids? I find this more a disease than something else...what would be the solution for this?? Therapy? Is it unhappiness? Not enough sex at home, so it seems to me...but there are already so much divorces....this society is really not completely healthy!”²⁰

When we look at the discourse people use, we can see that often they articulate an utterance like ‘Yech’, connoting a feeling of disgust. Besides, the discourse reveals that people have an association with sickness in relation to the men visiting gay meeting places, that they get sick from it, or that they find the behaviour of the men sick, a disease, unnatural, or have an association with Sexual Transmitted Diseases (STD’s) and visiting gay meeting places and so on. Furthermore, the discourse used shows that

people link the behaviour of the men with bestiality, and use animal names when referring to the users of gay meeting places. Also some reactions show an association between those men making use of gay meeting places with dirt, filth. In addition there are associations articulated between gay meeting places and child porn and prostitution. Moreover, often words are used to denote the perverse nature of the sexual practices at gay meeting places. Besides, people are not reluctant to use terms of abuse to refer to the men visiting gay meeting places. What becomes clear from this analysis is that these people reacting on the Internet have a very negative attitude towards gay meeting places, or better said towards those who make use of gay meeting places. This is confirmative of the fear the co-researchers experience that visiting gay meeting places has a negative influence on their social image. There is intensively a discourse articulated in which the men making use of gay meeting places are constituted as perverse, sick, disgusting, filthy.

Sex in public

What also becomes clear from the reactions on the Internet is that people, in opposite to the co-researchers, do not see a need why gay meeting places should be tolerated or stay open:

“Seriously, can’t these dudes not rent a room? What a poorness to do these kinds of things in the bushes...”²¹

“That you’re gay fine, but don’t have sex in public over there! Do it nicely at home.”²²

“For me this not only goes one bridge too far, but some bridges. Is this true? I am not a homophobe, but let these guys meet at home.”²³

“[Understandable. But why can’t they play their ‘game’ at home, or a rented room,...?] I completely agree with this ;)”²⁴

“I have nothing against homo’s. A good friend of mine is homo, but I don’t think he has sex at the streets. He is simply married to a man. I think that sex in the bushes is a very weird phenomenon, that is not necessary, right? We are not living anymore in the days that you had to be homo secretly and had to marry with a woman, right? You can easily go to a bar or sauna or I don’t know what and make an appointment there and then have sex at home? I simply don’t understand the phenomenon.”²⁵

The people articulating these quotes do not seem to understand why the sexual activities of the men visiting gay meeting places take place outdoors. Often it is argued that these men should have sex at home or in a hotel. Little understanding is articulated for the need or desire to have sex outdoors, either because the men have no other options, or because of the additional excitement of having sex outdoors. Moreover there is a general idea that it is no longer necessary to remain secret about your sexual orientation in a liberal country as the Netherlands, which contrasts some of the opinions of the co-researchers arguing that homosexuality in the Netherlands is still problematic. This shows that people have a rosier picture of the level of acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands. In general, it is interesting is that many people who make a negative comment start their argument with a comment like ‘I have nothing against

homosexuals...’. So, the discourse articulated in relation to the public nature of the sexual encounters is one of little understanding for men having sexual encounters with other men in public spaces. However, the reason for this lack of understanding is not deducible from the comments made.

Comparing homosexuals with heterosexuals

Besides, often the commentators on the Internet use the comparison between homosexuals and heterosexuals as an argument against sex in public by men arguing that heterosexuals do not have sex outdoors, so why should homosexuals have the right to have sex outdoor. Some even articulated feelings of being put behind in comparison to homosexuals and argue that homosexuals get an undeserved special treatment:

“Why can’t these dudes not do it at home, in the car or if necessary in a hotel like hetero couples?”²⁶

“Heterosexuals also can not do this, so I don’t see why homo’s can, yech.”²⁷

“I think they just have to wipe those parking places clean. When I would have sex with my wife at the parking place of the Aldi, I would also be send away with a big fat fine.”²⁸

“I think it is bullshit. Does everyone get a piece of forest where they can have a go at it? If that’s the case then I go with a piece of tape to the Amsterdamse Bos to mark my territory. But I just think it is strange that gays now get a special meeting place...I feel put behind as a hetero-woman.”²⁹

“Yes but when you as a hetero couple are screwing around in your car and they catch you, then you get a vigorous fine.”³⁰

“Hetero’s also can’t have sex in public, why can they have their own meeting place? Moreover, I find it a bit, well yes, sad is maybe not the right word, but yes... strange, when you look for your pleasures there. I mean, then at least get a room.”³¹

“Yes I am sorry, but if I can not do it outside, why can a homosexual person? So in my opinion, simply close them down and just go to a gay bar or meeting centre or create yourself a gay meeting places somewhere inside, should also be possible, right? Why are there no lesbian or hetero meeting places?”³²

“Really don’t understand why this is allowed. Hetero’s also can not do it, why gays? Because they are so sad otherwise, because they have no place to go? Well, sorry...”³³

“This goes waaaaaaaaaay too far, what a super-civilised society we have in the Netherlands! Everything should be possible and there is understanding for everything...I do NOT understand this...sex in public is forbidden, for every sex and sexual orientation...”³⁴

The quotes show that people make a comparison between them as heterosexuals and the users of gay meeting places as homosexuals. Often they argue something like sex in public is forbidden for hetero’s, being fined, etc., while for homosexuals sex in public is allowed or tolerated. Some commentator’s take this even further and argue that heterosexuals are left behind, that homosexuals have more rights than them. However

they seem to forget that within legislation no difference is being made between homosexuals and heterosexuals in terms of the liability to penalty of sexual activities visible for the public. Besides these comments reflect that these people are unaware of the fact that also heterosexuals have sex in public, and that also for heterosexuals places exist where sexual encounters take place. The comments made articulate a discourse in which the dichotomy between homosexuals and heterosexuals is reconstituted by making a comparison. It is a discourse in which only homosexuals have sex in public with a connotation of rejection. A discourse in which there are some question marks placed around the equal treatment of heterosexuals and homosexuals, in which homosexuals seem to have more rights than heterosexuals.

However the picture as presented above, around this issue of comparisons made between heterosexuals and homosexuals in relation to public sex, is rather crooked. There are also people on the Internet giving comments in relation to homosexuals and heterosexuals having sex outdoors, like:

“Well yes, I agree and think that it is not allowed and that also counts for a man and woman together, no sex in public nature, houses aren’t there for nothing.”³⁵

“We, heterosexuals also do it everywhere. No respect for each other in this country, so let those gays go ahead, as long as I am not bothered by it.”³⁶

“I only wonder (as everyone keeps saying ‘when they are hetero’s they get a fine’). Is heterosex in public less annoying.”³⁷

“Are you stupid or something, don’t you know that hetero’s also screw around in the wild sometimes?”³⁸

“I also don’t want to be confronted with hetero’s, who are having sex.”³⁹

“Men meeting places have an important function for men who wish to keep this part of their sexuality secret. The Groene Ster [the gay meeting place discussed] is also used by hetero’s. Only they often go there together. And it is not that they meet each other there. I am a big proponent of homo’s getting married like hetero’s when they want to. I know more than enough people who are homo. Some have a steady relationship, other loose contacts, and others are alone. They are in that sense just like hetero’s :).”⁴⁰

“Well, sex in public is as old as the hills. Didn’t you do it secretly in the bicycle shed when you were younger?”⁴¹

“There are simply hetero meeting places, only you don’t hear anything about those.”⁴²

“For me it makes no difference whether they are homo’s or hetero’s, I just think that they have to find a room...”⁴³

“I just read that hetero’s don’t do that? Because only homo’s are moral less...”⁴⁴

What becomes clear from these quotes is that these people are aware of the fact that also heterosexuals have sex in public space. They challenge the discourse that public sex is only involving homosexuals, and argue that also heterosexuals have sex in public spaces. Considering this they make no difference between homosexuals and heterosexuals in relation to public sex, whether they are in favour or not. Nevertheless, in most quotes people

refer to heterosexuals and homosexuals as distinctive categories, thereby reconstituting the discourse on the dichotomy between homosexuality and heterosexuality.

Children

Other reactions relating to the public nature of the practices at gay meeting places is often linked to the idea that children are confronted by the sexual practices:

“What if children walk by. How sick can you be.”⁴⁵

“I kick such a faggot the cancer when my little ones see it.”⁴⁶

“Imagine your children cycling passed it, they are not safe for those sick perverts.”⁴⁷

“I don’t want to see it, let alone little children who can even be traumatised by it.”⁴⁸

“Nice when you’re walking with your kids and meet these kinds of figures. Explain that to them...”⁴⁹

“Think about those small children who accidentally see strange things during a car ride. Whether it is about homo’s or hetero’s, to me it does not seem healthy for minors.”⁵⁰

“I sometimes see a car stop there with a normal average family (so with children)... Really outrageous that nothing is done about these kinds of things.”⁵¹

“What will those children think when they see that happening.”⁵²

“Anyways there is a lot of unsafe sex because of which the STD’s are increasing, anyways I think it is undone that there are condoms and so on lying at places where also children come and can even be infected with this.”⁵³

“BUT I do not have respect for people who snap up public nature area, have massively sex there while there are children and families walking around and in addition simply do not clean up their mess.”⁵⁴

However, there were also two reactions which represent another picture:

“Probably it is only me, but I think that children have nothing to do at parking places next to highways.”⁵⁵

“I find parking places alongside the highway less problematic, because you do not quickly go into the bushes there with your children. There you often are for a fast pit stop and not to relax in nature.”⁵⁶

The quotes show that people resent the idea that children can be confronted with the sexual practices of the men at gay meeting places. These quotes are completely directed at the sexual practices of men. Few comments are made about heterosexual sex in public, and it seems that people find it particularly worrisome that children could be confronted with men having sex. People worry about the sexual practices having a negative influence on the children, that they have to explain to children what is happening when they do see it, a fear that the children are contaminated with STD’s due to the condoms lingering around, etc. However, what became clear from the interviews is that the co-researchers

agree that particularly children should not be confronted with the sexual practices at gay meeting places, and that they should make sure to clean up after themselves. Thus, the fear that children will be confronted with the sexual practices at gay meeting places is not a very realistic one. Even when people stop at a parking place with their children, the chances that there is a confrontation are small, as the sexual practices usually take place at places where these stay invisible for the general public. Besides, what again becomes clear from the quotes, although these are now involving (little) children having the chance to be confronted with the sexual practices of the men at gay meeting places, is that often people articulate feelings of disgust, an association with STD’s, and associations of abnormality and immorality.

Although these quotes involve a confrontation between children and the sexual encounters at gay meeting places, there is in general a concern with being confronted with the practices at gay meeting places. What did not completely become clear from quotes in this chapter, but what in general is articulated by the commentators on the Internet is a fear of being confronted with men having sex, of having to see the sexual practices between men. This fear of being confronted by this, I would argue, is not so much a real fear, but more a mental fear. It is a fear that is created in the minds of people, as like the co-researchers argue, seldom people are accidentally confronted with the sexual practices of men at gay meeting places. Besides as the co-researchers argue only a relatively small amount of the men visiting gay meeting places want to be visible for others. Thus, the

fear of being confronted with, a fear associated with the visibility of, the sexual encounters gay meeting places, is possibly a moral fear.

Moreover, this can be taken one step further when we look at the discourses being articulated on the Internet. Also these discourses are most probably based on the idea that men are having sex in public, and not so much on real confrontations or experiences with gay meeting places. In this sense there are discourses created around gay meeting places, which are based on ideas, on moral notions. However these discourses although based on ideas have real effects as they constitute both gay meeting places, as well as the men visiting these, as being perverts, immoral, etc.

What else becomes clear from the quotes in general is that there is a tendency to classify the men visiting gay meeting places as homosexuals. The discourses articulated predominantly refer to the users of gay meeting places as homosexuals, and although often a reference is made to men living a heterosexual life, the fact that they are having sex with other men leads to a classification as homosexuals. And it is not only the discourse around gay meeting places which reconstitutes this classification, it is already in the word GAY meeting place itself, which shows that the sexual practices and the men practising these are constituted as homosexuals. However, the co-researchers argued that these categories of sexuality should be perceived of as more flexible, one can not place a label in terms of sexuality on the men visiting gay meeting places solely on the basis of their sexual behaviour.

Acceptance of homosexuality

Differences can be found when we look at the quotes which reflect the attitude of people against homosexuality in general. There are people who are aware of the problems men might experience in coming out of the closet, or at least in finding non-heterosexual contacts. As well as an awareness of the difficult position of homosexuals in society in terms of the acceptance of homosexuality and coming out. This is in line with the arguments made by the co-researchers, showing that homosexuality in the Netherlands is still not accepted:

“All creatures are bisexual, only with a preference for. People are also bi, but society makes us choose for one group and stay there.”⁵⁷

“Biologically and psychologically correct. Romans, Greeks and ancient cultures already knew homo love. You can deny it basing yourself on religion forever.”⁵⁸

“Hmmm, I was thinking the Netherlands was so pro-homo. And tolerates everything. Or is it now like ‘do what you want to do, but not in my neighbourhood’...again this hypercriticism, right, the Netherlands accepts homo’s really not as easy as people do pretend to.”⁵⁹

“Look that homosexuals are meeting each other secretly is a direct result of oppression, exclusion and the fact that homosexuality became punishable.”⁶⁰

“However I also think that in general there should be done more by the ‘Netherlands’ in the acceptance of homo’s, because we are all shouting that

we are not against homo's. But I notice that when I walk in the city with my gay friend people doing a gay hand or something.”⁶¹

“Pro/against whatever, I mean to say that many people pretend to accept it, but don't and keep homo hatred, because of which homo's don't dare to be honest and because of which you will keep those places. In my opinion accepted means you are neutral.”⁶²

“That they don't clean their rubbish is bad, but with gay meeting places I don't have problems. I understand that it is difficult for homosexuals, especially those who are not openly out of the closet, to have sexual contacts. Those gay meeting places are a relatively safe and anonymous opportunity to get sex, bluntly said.”⁶³

However, also statements are made in which homosexuality is rejected, perceived of as a disease, as something immoral and incorrect. This, moreover, became clear from the terms of abuse people use when they talk about the men at gay meeting places. Two extreme examples are the following:

“Well personally I think that homosexuality is a deviation (what it really simply is).”⁶⁴

“Dirty cancer smelly homo shut the fuck up, you homo's are even less than dogs, they should put you in prison and forget about you. Your homo's are sick! Let them help you or something.”⁶⁵

However, to give a more objective picture of the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands I will in the following section give an overview of researches conducted within the Netherlands on this issue.

Research on the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands

In this section I will give an overview of research conducted in the Netherlands on the level of acceptance of homosexuality within Dutch society as a means to give a broader social picture on this related issue.

According to Keuzenkamp et al. (2006) research in both The Netherlands and international studies shows that certain groups within society have a more negative attitude to homosexuality than other groups. A more negative attitude seems more common within men, people with a lower education, people who are politically conservative, people who have no homosexual friends or acquaintances, people who do not read newspapers, people who think their friends also have a negative attitude towards homosexuals, and within groups of society where more traditional norms are important. Furthermore, the Socon study of 2000 shows that men are more negative towards homosexuality than women. Research in general affirms this. In addition, men have a more negative attitude towards homosexual men than to lesbian women (Herek 1988; 2000). Besides, people over fifty years old are more negative than people aged between twenty-five and thirty-four. Besides, people with an educational level below HBO are more negative towards homosexuality than higher educated people. The most important determinant of the attitude towards homosexuality is religion. In this sense, the researchers mean the importance religion has for someone. People who think religion is (slightly) important in their life have a more negative attitude towards

homosexuality than people who do not regard religion important in their life. The level of negativity increases accordingly with the level of importance of religion, the more religious someone is, the more negative towards homosexuality one is (SCP 2000). The SCP research of 2004-2005 (LAS 04-05) shows that in general Moroccan and Turkish urban citizens are more negative towards homosexuality than autochthon city inhabitants. This counts for both the second and first generations, however, the first generation is more negative than the second. In addition, Antilleans of the first generation have a more negative attitude than autochthons. This does not count for second generation Antilleans. For Surinamers there is no difference with autochthons. The research also shows that for ethnic minorities sex does not make a difference, men and women are equally positive or negative towards homosexuals, which differs with autochthons for whom sex is an influential factor in homo-negativity. More relevant in terms of this thesis is the research conducted on expressions of homosexual love and affection in public. In the SOCON (sociaal-culturele ontwikkelingen in Nederland / social cultural developments in the Netherlands) research of 2000 people were asked to give their opinion on these expressions in public. The research showed that people find it more offensive when people of the same sex kiss in public, than when this happens between people of different sexes. Besides the research showed that both men and women find it more offending when two same-sex partners with the same sex as them kiss in public, than when this happens between people of a different sex than them. According to

Keuzenkamp et al. (2006) this is closely related to the distinction between traditional and modern homo-negativity. Traditional homo-negativity is based on moralistic ideas on homosexuality, which are often inspired by religion. In these terms homo-negativity is often explicit, and often coarse rejections of homosexuality are being made, like 'Homosexuals should be expelled from society' and 'Homosexuality is a sin' (Keuzenkamp et al. 2006: 25). According to Keuzenkamp et al. (2006) traditional homo-negativity decreased within Dutch society. Modern homo-negativity is concerned with visibilities and expressions of homosexuality in public. People have problems with the visibility of homosexuality in public, in the media, etc., often related to homosexuals behaving in ways that do not comply to traditional gender norms, and/or expressions of homosexuality that are to obviously indicating their sexual orientation. An analysis made by Van Wijk et al. (2005) shows that people in general score lower on traditional homo-negativity, than on modern homo-negativity, which becomes clear from the little support for statements in which homosexuality is explicitly rejected.

In a research conducted by van San and de Boom (2006) these acts of violence and feelings of unsafety have been evaluated. The research showed that out of the 776 homosexuals included in the research almost seventy-five percent thinks that violence has either strongly (11%) or mildly (60%) increased in recent years. The respondents base their responses on messages in the media or on their own experiences (17%). About forty percent of the respondents indicates to experience more feelings of

unsafety due to their sexual orientation. Out of these respondents seventeen percent indicates to experience sometimes and two percent indicates to experience often feelings of unsafety due to their sexual orientation. Women and young people experience more feelings of unsafety than men and older people. Almost one-third of the respondents indicate that they behave differently to prevent incidents, for example they avoid certain places. Of the respondents more than half has been laughed at or has been sworn at due to their sexual orientation, and seventeen percent has been bullied. More than one out of ten respondents has been threatened with physical violence, and little more than three percent has been physically abused because of their sexual orientation. Following these numbers, the concerns as articulated in the introduction by the ministry seem to be appropriate. Moreover, this is reflected in news items on violence against homosexuals and the monitoring of and research on the level of acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands.

Furthermore, in 2008 Buijs et al. conducted a research on anti-homosexual violence in Amsterdam giving an insight in the acts of violence against homosexuals, and the underlying reasons for this. The research shows that the level of acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands should be seen as an illusion, a deception. The research showed that especially gender roles and deviations from these are reasons for violence against homosexuals. In forty percent of the cases being researched the trigger turned out to be that young men think they have become the lust-object of a homosexual man. The reason for the act of violence can be found in that

they feel themselves placed in a feminine gender role, an enormous violation of dominant gender roles and codes, which they perceive of as humiliating and impossible to come to terms with. Also group processes turned out to play an important role, as most acts of violence are committed by groups of people; an especially important element within these groups is group pressure. Besides, within group processes also the possibilities to identify oneself as belonging to a certain group plays a role, in which the rejection of homosexuality by a member of a group is an important means to achieve a relatively high, masculine status and reputation in a group through the rejection of the 'weak' and 'feminine' homosexual. This achievement of respect and status also turned out to be important in our society, which can be characterised as mediocratic, a society based on the idea of rewarding those who have demonstrated competence, capabilities and talents in past competitions or actions. For young men failure within a meritocratic society can increase the need to adapt to a dominant identity, in this case "the collective heterosexual masculine identity" (Buijs et al. 2008: 22). Another explanation is that homosexuals are seen as easy victims. A perpetrator who assumes this and because of this perception acts violently against homosexuals does not necessarily have a homo-negative attitude (Buijs et al. 2008).

1 "Een pijnlijke zaak omdat het thuisfront vaak niet op de hoogte is van vaders seksuele escapades."

2 "De meeste mannen die de ontmoetingsplek bezoeken, doen dat zonder dat hun thuisfront dat weet."

3 ""Vergeet niet dat veel bezoekers een dubbelvelen leiden. Ze zijn getrouwd. Soms komen ze naar de Weerseloseweg met het kinderzitje achter in de auto. Mannen barstten soms in huilen uit als we proces verbaal uitschreven. Ze krijgen een bon op de deurmat waarin staat dat ze zijn aangehouden voor aanstootgevend gedrag.""

4 "Dit doen alleen mannen die niet uit de kast durven te komen (ivm hun geloof en milieu omgeving) en vaak gewoon vrouw en kindjes thuis heeft. Ik zelf als homo vindt dit ook vies." (Overlanden)

5 "Of zit moeders de vrouw stiekem thuis met je kinderen op de bank...en weten ze niet dat je een stiekeme nicht bent??VIESMAN!" (Overlanden)

6 "De meeste mannen daar zijn getrouwde nep hetero's. Er staan veel auto's met kinderzitjes erin. En maar schelden op homo's terwijl ze gefrustreerd zijn dat ze iedere avond op hun vette zure vrouw moeten. lekker hypocriet!" (Overlanden)

7 "Ik heb geen enkele medelijden met mannen die hun vrouw bedriegen. Als ze graag stiekem homo zijn moeten ze dat zelf weten, maar daar moeten ze geen anderen de dupe van laten worden." (Zwolle)

8 "Deze plekken staan bekend als MANNEN ontmoetingsplaatsen want het blijkt dat de meeste bezoekers getrouwde mannen zijn? Die vaak in dit bijna bij iedereen bekende gebied gaan 'crossen' of hun 'hond 'uitlaten,ja,ja! En ik kan het weten!" (Hollandsche Rading)

9 "Maar dat vind ik echt ziek! Al die auto's met kinderzitjes achterin...en een en al zakdoekjes overal...echt ziek!" (Hollandsche Rading)

10 "Hmmm, heb wel eens begrepen dat er vooral 'hetero' mannen naar dit soort ontmoetingsplekken toe gaan. Ze zijn voor de buitenwereld netjes getrouwd, maar eten ondertussen van twee walletjes." (Hollandsche Rading)

11 "Bluh als ik dan denk aan die 'brave huisvaders' die zogenaamd nooit vreemd gaan, maar wel in de bosjes met een onbekende vent gaan en dan thuis hun vrouw weer besmetten." (Hollandsche Rading)

12 "Bahbahbah laten ze gewoon thuis afspreken voor vieze afspraken, o nee daar zit vrouwlief braaf te wachten tot haar man terugkomt van werk..." (Hollandsche Rading)

13 "Dit soort dingen is geen liefde met elkaar hebben maar gewoon smerelapperij." (Groenekan)

14 "Varkens, mogen gewoon hun kwakkie dumpen." (Overlanden)

15 "Vieze kankerhonden allemaal afmaken." (Overlanden)

16 "(: Bah :(ga naar een hotel of zo smerige nichten." (Overlanden)

17 "Vunzigheid, biologisch en psychisch gezien incorrect, dit gedrag moet afgeleerd worden ipv gestimuleerd. Mannetje hoort bij vrouwtje, vrouwtje hoort bij mannetje, dat is de natuur. Zeggen jouw hersens van niet? Naar de psychiater." (Overlanden)

18 "Door dit dierlijke, op seks geobsedeerde gedrag in bosjes en op parkeerplaatsen?" (Homo razzia)

19 "Belangrijker is dat dit soort plekken broedplaatsen voor kindermisbruik en aidsverspreiding zijn en dat dat nog veel te veel wordt vergeten..." (Best)

20 "Als ik er nog aan terugdenk word ik misselijk... is dit de boodschap die wij aan onze kinderen willen doorgeven? Ik vind dit meer een ziekte dan iets anders...wat zou hier de oplossing voor zijn?? Therapie? Is het onvrede? Tekort aan seks thuis lijkt me ook...maar er worden al zoveel scheidingen uitgesproken...deze maatschappij is echt niet helemaal gezond!"(Hollandsche Rading)

21 "Serieus... Kunnen die gasten niet gewoon ergens een zaaltje afhuren? Wat een armoede om dat soort dingen in de bosjes te doen..." (Overlanden)

22 "Dat je homofiel bent oké, maar dan niet in het openbaar gaan lopen sexe daar! Doe dat lekker thuis!" (Overlanden)

23 "Dit gaat me echt niet een brug te ver maar wel een stuk of wat. Is dat waar? Ik ben geen homofoob ofzo, maar laat die jongens lekker thuis afspreken." (Overlanden)

24 "[Begrijpelijk. Maar waarom kunnen ze hun 'spelletje' gewoon niet thuis,gehuurde kamer,..... spelen?] hier sluit ik me helemaal bij aan :)" (Groenekan)

25 "Ik heb niks tegen homo's. Een goede vriend van mij is homo maar ik geloof niet dat hij seks op straat heeft. Hij is gewoon getrouwd met een man. Ik vind dat seks in de bosjes een heel raar verschijnsel dat is toch nergens voor nodig?? We leven toch niet meer in de tijd dat je stiekem homo moet zijn en moet trouwen met een vrouw? Je kunt nu toch gewoon naar een bar of sauna of weet ik veel en daar een afspraak maken met iemand en dan thuis seks hebben? Ik begrijp gewoon het verschijnsel niet." (Homo razzia)

26 "Waarom kunnen die gasten het niet gewoon thuis, in de auto of desnoods in een Hotelletje doen zoals Hetero stelletjes ?" (Zwolle)

27 "Hetero's mogen dat ook niet dus ik zie niet in waarom homo's dit wel mogen bah." (Zwolle)

28 "Ik vind dat ze die parkeerplaatsen gewoon schoon moeten vegen. Als ik met mijn vrouw op de parkeerplaats van de Aldi tekkeer zou gaan, zou ik ook weggestuurd worden met een vette boete." (Code of conduct)

29 "Ik vind het nogal onzin. Krijgt iedereen nu maar een eigen stukje bos aangewezen om te kunnen fiezelevozen? In dat geval ga ik vast met een stukje lint mijn territorium afbakenen in het Amsterdamse bos. Maar ik vind het gewoon raar dat homo's nu een speciale ontmoetingsplek krijgen..Ik voel me als hetero-vrouwetje ernstig achtergesteld." (Best)

30 "Ja maar als je als hetero-stel ergens in de auto ligt te vunzen en ze betrappen je, dan krijg je een fikse boete." (Best)

31 "Hetero's mogen in het openbaar ook geen seks hebben, waarom mogen hun dan wel een ontmoetingsplek hebben?Bovendien vind ik je een beetje... nou ja, zielig is misschien niet het goede woord, maar wel.. apart, als je daar je pleziertjes zoekt.. Ik bedoel, regel dan in ieder geval een kamer." (Hollandsche Rading)

32 "Ja, sorry hoor, maar als ik het niet buiten mag doen, waarom dan een homoseksueel persoon eigenlijk wel?Dus wat mij betreft, gewoon sluiten daarvoor en ga maar gewoon naar een homobar of ontmoetingscentrum of sticht zelf een homo-ontmoetingsplek ergens binnenshuis, moet toch ook mogelijk zijn? Waarom zijn er geen lesbische of hetero ontmoetingsplaatsen?" (Hollandsche Rading)

33 "Ik snap echt niet dat dit nog wordt toegelaten. Hetero's mogen het ook niet, waarom homo's dan wel? Omdat ze anders zo zielig zijn, omdat ze nergens terecht kunnen? Nou, sorry hoor..." (Hollandsche Rading)

34 "Dit gaat veel te ver, wat een supergeciviliseerde samenleving is er toch in Nederland! Alles moet maar kunnen en alles moet maar mogen en er is overal begrip voor...ik kan hier met mijn hoofd NIET bij...seks in het openbaar is verboden, voor welk geslacht en geartheid dan ook..." (Hollandsche Rading)

35 "Nja ik ben het er mee eens ik vindt je mag en dat geld ook voor man en vrouw samen, geen seks in het openbaar natuur. er zijn niet voor niets huizen." (Chasing away)

36 "Wij hetero's doen het ook overal en nergens. Geen respect meer in dit land voor elkaar, dus laat die homo's lekker hun gang gaan, zolang ik er zelf geen last van heb." (Overlanden)

37 "Vraag ik me dan alleen af (omdat iedereen maar blijft piepen: 'als het hetero's zijn krijgen ze een boete'. Is heterosex in het openbaar dan minder vervelend?" (Overlanden)

38 "Ben je dom of weet je niet dat ook hetero's wel eens in het wild rondneuken?" (Overlanden)

39 "Ik wil ook niet geconfronteerd worden met neukende hetero's." (Overlanden)

40 "Mannen Ontmoetings Plaatsen vervullen overigens een belangrijke functie voor mannen met behoefte aan geheimhouding van dat onderdeel van hun seksualiteit. De Groene Ster [de homo ontmoetingsplek waar over gesproken wordt] wordt ook wel gebruikt door hetero's. Alleen gaan die er vaak samen heen. En het is dus niet zo dat ze elkaar daar ontmoeten. Ik ben een groot voorstander dat homo's net als hetero's moeten kunnen trouwen als ze dit willen. Ik ken genoeg mensen die homo zijn. Sommige hebben een vaste relatie, andere losse contacten en weer anderen zijn alleen. Het zijn wat dat betreft net hetero's :)" (Groene Ster)

41 "Ach seks in de openbaarheid is al zo oud als de weg naar Rome. Heb jij vroeger ook niet es stiekem in het fietsenhok dingen gedaan?" (Groene Ster)

42 "Er zijn genoeg hetero ontmoetingsplaatsen, daar hoor je alleen niets van." (Best)

43 "Maakt mij niet uit of het homo's of hetero's zijn, ik vind dat ze maar gewoon een kamer moeten opzoeken.." (Hollandsche Rading)

44 "Ik las net dat hetero's dat niet doen? Want alleen homo's zijn moraallos." (Hollandsche Rading)

45 "Stel dat er kinderen voorbij komen man. Hoe ziek moet je zijn." (Overlanden)

46 "Schop zo'n flikker de jankanker in als me kleintjes het zien." (Overlanden)

47 "Je kinderen zullen er langsfietsen, die zijn niet veilig voor die zieke smeerlappen." (Overlanden)

48 "Ik hoef het niet te zien, laat staan kleine kinderen waarvoor het zelf een traumatiserende werking heeft." (Overlanden)

49 "Fijn als je met je kids aan het wandelen bent en dit soort figuren tegen komt. Leg dat maar eens uit..." (Overlanden)

50 "Denk eens aan de kleine kinderen die per ongeluk tijdens een ritje in de auto vreemde dingen spotten. Of het nu om homo's of hetero's gaat, het lijkt mij voor de minderjarigen niet gezond." (Zwolle)

51 "Ik zie daar ook wel eens een auto stoppen met een gewoon gemiddeld gezin (dus met kinderen)... Echt te schandig dat aan zulke dingen niets wordt gedaan." (Code of Conduct)

52 "Wat moeten al die kinderen wel niet denken als ze dat zien gebeuren." (Groenekan)

53 "Sowieso wordt er ook veel onveilig seks bedreven waardoor de soa's zich opstapelen sowieso vind ik het niet kunnen dat er dus condooms etc. liggen op plaatsen waar ook kinderen komen en hiermee zelfs besmet zouden kunnen worden." (Hollandsche Rading)

54 "MAAR ik heb geen respect voor mensen die een openbaar natuurgebied in pikken, er massaal seks hebben terwijl er kinderen en gezinnen rondlopen en daarbij hun zoai gewoonweg niet opruimen." (Hollandsche Rading)

55 "Het zal wel aan mij liggen maar volgens mij hebben kinderen helemaal niets te zoeken op een parkeerplaats langs de snelweg." (Groenekan)

56 "Met parkeerplaatsen aan de snelweg heb ik minder moeite, omdat je daar niet snel gaat spelen met je kinderen in die bosjes daar. Daar ben je vaak voor een snelle pitstop en niet voor ontspannen in de natuur." (Hollandsche Rading)

57 "Alle wezens zijn bisexueel, alleen met voorkeur naar. Mensen zijn ook bi maar de samenleving zorgt ervoor dat we kiezen voor 1 groep en daar te blijven." (Overlanden)

58 "Biologisch en psychisch correct. Romeinen, Grieken en oudere volken kenden de homo liefde al. Je kunt ontkennen op grond van je religie tot je een ons weegt." (Overlanden)

59 "Hmm ik dacht dat NL zo pro-homo was. En alles tolereert. Of is het nu zo van "doe wat je moet doen, maar niet in mijn buurt".....weer die hypocrisie he, NL accepteert homo's echt niet zo makkelijk, zoals men doet blijken." (Groenekan)

60 "Kijk, dat homo's elkaar in het geheim ontmoeten is een regelrecht gevolg van onderdrukking, buitensluiting en strafbaar stellen van homoliefde." (Groenekan)

61 "Maar ook vind ik dat er gewoon over het algemeen wat meer door 'Nederland' gedaan moet worden aan het accepteren van homo's want we roepen allemaal wel dat we niet tegen homo's zijn. Maar ik merk als ik met mijn homo vriend rond loop dondersgoed als mensen een gayhandje of iets na doen" (Hollandsche Rading)

62 "Voor/ tegen whatever, ik bedoel te zeggen dat veel mensen wel doen alsof ze het accepteren maar dat niet doen en mooi homo 'haat' blijven houden waardoor homo's niet eerlijk durven te zijn en waardoor dus zulke plekken zult houden. In mijn visie blijft geaccepteerd toch dat je neutraal bent." (Hollandsche Rading)

63 "Dat ze hun troep niet opruimen vind ik een slechte zaak, maar met HOP an sich heb ik geen problemen. Ik snap wel dat het lastig is voor homoseksuelen, zeker degenen die nog niet openlijk uit de kast gekomen zijn, om aan seksuele contacten te komen. Die HOP zijn dan een relatief veilige en anonieme mogelijkheid om tóch aan seks te komen, grof gezegd." (Hollandsche Rading)

64 "Nou vind ik homoseksualiteit persoonlijk ook een afwijking (wat het echt gewoon is)." (Overlanden)

65 "Gore kanker stink homo houdt jij even je smoeel dicht, jullie homo's zijn nog minder dan honden, zouden jullie in een cel moeten stopen en vergeten. Jullie homo's zijn ziek ! Laat je helpen of zo." (Overlanden)

Chapter 6

Problematizing the results

In chapter four the data was presented in a descriptive way to provide an insight into the phenomenon of gay meeting places, and an insight into the contested nature of these places within the Netherlands. In line with the interpretive paradigm as introduced in the methodology, I let the data do the talking to eventually answer part of the research goals and questions. In the previous chapter I presented the discourse analysis of comments people give on the Internet in reaction to gay meeting places as a means to explore the phenomenon of gay meeting places within a broader social context. In this chapter I will critically engage with the results as a means to analyse

“The work of an intellectual is not to mould the political will of others; it is, through the analyses that he does in his own field, to re-examine evidence and assumptions, to shake up habitual ways of working and thinking, to dissipate conventional familiarities, to re-evaluate rules and institutions and to participate in the formation of a political will (where he has his role as citizen to play).”

(Michel Foucault 1926-1984)

“Problems worthy of attack prove their worth by hitting back.”

(Piet Hein 1905-1996)

these by confronting the results with the theoretical framework thereby problematizing the phenomenon to eventually come to conclusions.

Spatial resistance to heteronormativity in public spaces

What becomes clear from the results is that the men making use of gay meeting places appropriate part of public space for their sexual practices. Their bodies and non-verbal communication play an essential role in this as a productive force. It is through their bodily performances that they appropriate a space of their own, a non-heterosexual space. This appropriation of space for non-heterosexual leisure purposes challenges the heteronormative production of space. Although the spatial sexual practices

of the men are not meant to subvert and challenge the heteronormative nature of our public spaces, these can be seen as acts of resistance. At the moment non-heterosexual practices are made explicit they have the potential to denaturalise the heteronormative character of our public spaces (Hubbard 2001). The spatial practices of the men at gay meeting place then serve as crisis points within the normal functioning of everyday spaces (Cresswell 1996). The users of gay meeting places destabilise and undermine the dominant heteronormative production of space through the appropriation and transgression of heterosexual spaces for the satisfaction of their sexual desires and pleasures (Geltmaker 1992).

These men act through their non-heterosexual behaviour in public spaces against the taken-for-granted regulations inscribed into space through the materialisation of the dominant, heteronormative representations of space. In this sense the men are, what Cresswell (2003) calls, out of place. This is, moreover, reflected in the reactions on the Internet which show that people have problems with these spatial practices because these transgress particular codes of conduct within public space, and although the co-researchers argue that they seldom are confronted with non-sex seeking people, the problems arise often from the idea that the practices are visible for the general public. This can be related to the notion of modern homonegativity as introduced by Keuzenkamp et al. (2006) referring to the problems people have with the visibility and (affective) expressions of non-conventional sexualities, like homosexuality. As Cresswell (2004) argues it only takes a homosexual couple to kiss in public for hetero outrage to come

to the fore. This also became clear from the quotes of the co-researchers about them not showing signs of homosexual affection in public, and in a more extreme way from the examples of gay bashing given by the co-researchers. A fear is present within society to be confronted with these non-conventional sexualities threatening the moralised and intelligible landscape, and this threat is counter-acted upon by a reinscription of the heteronormative character of public space as I will argue now.

As Skeggs (1999) states being recognised as belonging to a particular group summons surveillance and the law. The men fall prey to the collective gaze which only allows certain groups to fully participate in public life. This gaze constrains the men from showing their non-heterosexual feelings and desires. They can only express their identity, as Hubbard (2001) argues in certain places, at certain times, and seldom in public. Considering gay meeting places the (family) men can only express these non-heterosexual feelings and desires at gay meeting places and in their free time. Indeed it became clear from the results that the state and police intervene at gay meeting places. Moreover, the most efficient measures taken by the state and police against gay meeting places involve making those visible who wish to remain invisible. This making visible of the invisible is problematic in two senses for the men visiting gay meeting places. First of all marking the places as gay meeting places makes the men vulnerable due to their visibility, not in terms of being visible, but in terms of the public knowing where gay meeting places can be found. This visibility could lead to counter-actions, lead to acts of violence, as Skeggs (1999) argues, with gay

bashing as an extreme example given by the co-researchers. These acts of violence serve to reconstitute the heteronormative production of space, through these acts of violence space is reproduced as heterosexual. Secondly, following Browne's (2004) argument, by marking those who are abnormal or immoral in the eyes of society through measures taken by the state and police, the normal and moral is (re)produced and (re)instated. In this sense the bodily and spatial acts of the men at gay meeting places do not lead to the disruption or subversion of heteronormativity, rather these are affirmative.

The issue of visibility also plays in another sense an important role, as the most efficient measures taken by the state and police against gay meeting places are involving the making visible of those who wish to remain invisible. Through these measures the men fall prey to the disciplining gaze of the state resulting in the reconstitution of heteronormativity as those who are perceived as abnormal, unwanted are marked and made visible, and placed against the ideal of the heteronormative society. The disciplinary gaze serves, indeed, as a means to maintain hegemonic representations of space and society by determining the non-heterosexual sexual practices of the men through measures creating undesirable situations for the men as the essential elements of secrecy, anonymity and invisibility become threatened. In this sense the men visiting gay meeting places are encouraged by (self-)surveillance to behave in socially accepted ways in a response to the collective gaze reproducing norms of bodily management and behaviour. The men visiting gay meeting places are

punished, fined, chased away due to them not adhering to these social norms or not complying to the norms of bodily functioning. Thus, although visibility can be used to make a claim for recognition, in the case of gay meeting places, as became clear from the results, visibility is unwanted and does not serve to make a claim for recognition, rather the men making use of gay meeting places wish to remain unrecognised. The measures taken by the state and police to ban the non-heterosexual sexual practices of the men from public space have as a result that not only the inherently heterosexual nature of our public space is maintained, as in its effect, following Browne (2007), it also leads to the maintenance of heterosexual hegemony as the natural, normal and appropriate sexuality. Moreover, there is no real cause or effect, as Browne suggest, hegemonic heterosexuality is reified by the heteronormative reproduction of space, and in its effect hegemonic heterosexuality is the cause for the heteronormative reproduction of space.

Thus, although the men making use of gay meeting places appropriate part of public space can be seen as challenging the heteronormative production of space through the inscription of non-heterosexuals norms and values into space, the measures taken to counter-act upon this appropriation of space result in the reproduction of space as heteronormative. It is through this reproduction that the hegemonic position of heterosexuality is reified, which in its turn leads to the reproduction of space as heteronormative. So, rather than acts of resistance the spatial and bodily practices of the men are constitutive acts that lead to a reaffirmation of the hegemonic position of

heterosexuality within society, as well as to the reproduction of space as heteronormative.

Personal acts of resistance

Although the spatial practices of the men making use of gay meeting places can not be described as acts of resistance in societal terms, the spatial practices are an act of resistance from a personal perspective as some co-researchers use these places as a means to explore and enjoy their non-heterosexual feelings meanwhile living a heterosexual life for the outside world. It offers them a place to come to terms with these feelings, and in this sense gay meeting places can serve as a means to come out of the closet. This closet that is the result of the repressive discourse of sexuality. Some co-researchers use gay meeting places as a personal means to refuse to be silent about their homosexuality, to reach beyond the closet. However by coming out of the closet they, following Butler (2008), reconstitute the closet as being out of the closet always implies in some sense being in the closet. The closet has to be reproduced to over and over again to give meaning to being out of the closet. These acts of coming out of the closet by some of the men making use of gay meeting places serve as personal acts of resistance, as a place for resistance against heteronormative oppression. However, as much as gay meeting places can serve as a means to come out of the closet for some, for others gay meeting places serve as a momentary closet in which they can express their non-heterosexual feelings and desires, as Knopp and Brown (3003) argue. By remaining anonymous and

secret the men have an opportunity to enjoy their non-heterosexual desires and feelings. Nevertheless for them this is not an act of coming out, rather as soon as they leave the gay meeting place they return to their everyday 'closets'.

When we perceive of gay meeting places as a place of personal resistance they can be described as differential spaces or heterotopia's. What became clear from the results is that gay meeting places are, what Lefebvre has come to call, differential spaces in the sense that these are spaces where bodily difference and experiential particularity are celebrated, as well as the non-negotiable right to difference. Gay meeting spaces are places where marginalised subjects can come together, where they unite and appropriate a part of public space meanwhile constructing a spatial form where difference is celebrated and recognised. Gay meeting places are spaces found within a given social space whose functions are different and even opposite to others. These are places of sexual freedom and pleasure, where the 'immoral' becomes 'moral', and the 'perverse' 'normal'. A place where possibilities for new social relations are unlimited from the micro-perspective of the users. A place which is different to its very core. Gay meeting places serve as a meeting place for those who are marginalised, a lived space, the space of bodies and pleasures where power against dominant power is located. Gay meeting places are true spaces, rather than the truth about space.

Furthermore, gay meeting places can be described as, what Foucault calls, heterotopia's. The function of gay meeting places is found within a social

space with a function different or even opposite to others, and in this sense they have a more imaginary component. Gay meeting places are real spaces of difference which serve as counter-sites to those places that the men make use of gay meeting places use in their everyday activities. When we look at the use of gay meeting places it becomes clear that some of the six principle constituting heterotopia as described by Foucault do apply to gay meeting places. Gay meeting places are places where those whose behaviour is regarded as deviant in relation to the norm come together; the places are characterised by temporality as the contacts at gay meeting are fleeting and momentary; gay meeting places have a system of opening and closing as there is a system of communication based on gestures opening up the space to those who understand this system, and when these men enter a gay meeting place they do enter an illusion, they enter the excluded; and gay meeting places are real spaces, they are functionally related to all space that remains, they are for some men a space of compensation where men can have sexual relations which are not possible in their everyday spaces.

Gay meeting places are places where there is a different mode of sexual and social ordering as the results indicate. Gay meeting places offer the men, especially family men, a place of personal resistance, a space where they can move beyond what they should be. Gay meeting places are a personal leisure space where family men can move beyond and resist the social structures that constitute ourselves, where subjectivities can be explored and enjoyed different from the ones prescribed to these family men by society and the social environment in their daily lives. In this sense the men

are free subjects able to resist the structures which lead to their self-constitution by thinking and acting freely. They are able to act and react upon the regulatory regimes of power. Moreover, as Foucault (1982) argues a relation of power can only be exercised over free subjects, it can only exist by means of the other being able to react upon it. The men at gay meeting places have these means to react to the relations of power either between them and the state and police, or between them and their social environment. The men are able to appropriate another part of public space for their sexual encounters when measures are taken to determine gay meeting places, and by making use of gay meeting places they are able to react upon their possible heteronormative social environments, they can escape the relation of power between them and their social environment. They find, as Foucault (1982) argues, a strategy of resistance within the relationships of power they find themselves in.

Challenging the discourse of sexuality

By these personal acts of resistance the users of gay meeting places develop a critical awareness by means of visiting these places. They create the opportunities for themselves to be free in their doing and thinking. They move beyond the constraints imposed upon them, cross over to find within the discursive regimes possibilities to act against these. This moving beyond the constraints imposed upon them is what Foucault (1991) calls an act of resistance. This crossing over, as Foucault (1991) would call it, can indeed be seen as an active critique against what is seen as discursively

necessary. They resist the processes leading to their self-constitution imposed upon them by heteronormative society and refuse to comply with regulations and practices as put into practice by social institutions like in this case the state and police, but also their social environment. The men make use of gay meeting places to be free from these discursive regimes. They test the regimes by uncovering the real possibilities these offer for them, and do not submit to what they are made to do and think. Some men come to terms with their non-heterosexual feelings and desires at gay meeting places which results in a constitution and recognition of themselves as subjects of what they are doing and thinking through a process of self-actualisation. Through this the men find means to create a new subjectivity for themselves, a new form of being and doing, a coming out of the discursively created closet constraining them in their being.

At gay meeting places they find the opportunity to take in a new relationship towards themselves, the opportunity to define their subjectivity different, to define themselves as belonging to another sexual category than the one imposed upon them, or to no sexual category at all. Through their sexual practices the men find possibilities to transform themselves, to explore and come to terms with their non-heterosexual feelings and desires, to give themselves the space to explore other sexual roles than the one's imposed upon them by heteronormative society. This is a resistance no longer aimed at counteracting governmental intervention, but rather it is a resistance concerned with the creation of new kinds of subjectivity. This creation of new kinds of subjectivities leads to the creation of new forms of

being and doing standing in accordance with the process of constitution itself. In this sense the men at gay meeting places practice what Foucault (1994) calls the 'aesthetics of existence'. They create an individual work of art out of their life, a mode of life which contrasts with the subordinate mode of living a moral life.

A central element at gay meeting places is the use of bodies and pleasure. The men experience and explore non-heterosexual sexual pleasure through their bodies. It is through the use of their bodies and pleasures the men at gay meeting places formulate a counter-discourse and new ways of thinking about themselves. They take on the stigmatised roles present within society, the perverse, as an act of resistance against the subjectification through the discourse of sexuality. In this sense, gay meeting places serve as what Foucault (1991) calls 'laboratories of sexual experimentation', in which communities of pleasure can be enacted. Moreover, the incorporation of this new truth coming from bodily pleasures does indeed involve other people in new kinds of affinity and relationships for the users of gay meeting places; men giving each other sexual pleasure.

Gay meeting places are places where new forms of bodily pleasures can be experienced to break free from the deployment of sexuality, thereby restoring the flexibility of their process of self-constitution. This focus on bodies and pleasures at gay meeting places serves as the rallying point against the deployment of sexuality. They have a possibility at gay meeting places to react against the repressive power of sexuality confining them to live a life within the boundaries of heteronormative society through their

bodies and with the pleasures the men experience at gay meeting places. Through their bodies and pleasures the men making use of gay meeting places make a claim against the moral norms of sexuality, marriage and decency, constituted on the basis of the hegemonic position of heterosexuality in society. A reaction against the mechanisms constructed around sexuality resulting from a combination of power and knowledge through which certain sexualities became perceived as diseases, as immoral, unnatural, and abnormal. The use of their bodies and pleasures by the men visiting gay meeting places creates a possibility of resistance, as Foucault (1985: 157) argues “It is the agency of sex that we must break away from, if we aim – through a tactical reversal of the various mechanisms of sexuality – to counter the grips of power with the claims of bodies, pleasures, and knowledges, in their multiplicity and their possibility of resistance.” (Foucault 1989: 157). The men break free from the deployment of sexuality in which sex and desires was the central focus point. They use their bodies and pleasures to counter the grips of power of heteronormative society. In this sense the body is an active agent implied within a process of resistance. The men make use of their bodies to communicate, to enjoy pleasure, to explore other sexual possibilities at gay meeting places. The men use their bodies as a micro site of resistance through which the power that constitutes them as subjects within heteronormative regimes of sexuality is used to make other ways of living and being possible. Thus, the men making use of gay meeting places challenge the discourse of sexuality as explained by Foucault (1984), a mechanism of regulation and

control within a regime of biopolitics through which sex, desires and sexual practices gained in importance as political issues. They use their bodies against the rationality that became employed in which the body became linked to body politics so that the government could control the sexual behaviour of its people. Furthermore, while medicine became the common denominator theories were developed with as their effect control and normalisation resulting in regimes of truth determining what kind of sexual behaviour is meaningful and possible, and what kind of behaviour is immoral, unthinkable and unintelligible, or perverse. It is within this historical context that sexuality became a regulative discourse, leading to seemingly stable categories of sexual preference resulting in the introduction of heterosexuality and homosexuality as categories, in which heterosexuality is perceived as the natural and moral mode of sexual being, while homosexuality is seen as immoral and unnatural. The homosexual could only make its appearance within the repressive discourse on sexuality, which resulted in the definition of seemingly perverse forms of sexuality. These forms are maybe more importantly desirable forms of sexuality due to their prohibited nature. Within this development homosexuality became described as a disease, and the discourse of homosexuality was used to describe a group of men who needed to be controlled and disciplined. The introduction of categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality had as an effect that since the nineteenth century people became in some sense their sexual preference; the sex of the person we have sex with determines to which category we belong.

The family men making use of gay meeting places challenge this categorisation of people on the basis of their sexual behaviour, thereby challenging the dichotomy between homosexuality and heterosexuality which is reflected in the high numbers of family men who lead a heterosexual life but enjoy having homosexual sexual encounters confusing the dichotomy as they challenge the seemingly stable nature of the categories of sexual preference. This became most clear when one of the co-researchers explained that he enjoys having sex with both women and men, and thus can not be classified on the basis of the sex of the person he has sex with, thereby challenging the dichotomy between homosexuality and heterosexuality. Besides as argued by Hubbard (2008) research shows that men who identify themselves as heterosexual can sell sexual services to other men, and in the swinging scene men can be found who enjoy having sex with both genders. Thus, the practices of family men at gay meeting places indeed show that sexuality should be thought of, as Conlon (2004) argues, in terms of immanence, defined in the moment of pleasure, and never easy to be classified. The use of gay meeting places by heterosexual men for non-heterosexual sexual encounters shows that our sexual identities are created in different encounters and relations, which together constitute our sex lives. As Hubbard (2008: 15) suggests for most of us this is seldom a consistent story, and our sex lives are seldom predictable, “hence, even if some of us feel able to identify as straight or gay, which of us can really claim to be ‘normal?’”

In addition the sexual behaviour does not only challenge the discourse of sexuality in terms of challenging the categorisation of people on the basis of their sexual practices. Moreover the men challenge the discourse of sexuality prescribing what kinds of sexual behaviour are normal, natural and moral. Firstly, the sexual practices take place outdoors, while in moral terms sex is something that belongs to the privacy of the house. Secondly, some of the men have sex with a person of the same sex outside of their relationship. This non-procreative sexual behaviour does not fit within a regime of biopolitics in which it was essential that the state knew what was happening with the sex of its citizens and the use they make of it combined with control over the use of sex as Foucault (1984) argues. The sexual practices are in this sense immoral as these do not serve the maintenance and preservation of the nuclear family, but rather challenge this social institution. Besides, the prescription that sex belongs to the privacy of the nuclear family is violated and the men seek for sexual relations outside of their family life. In this sense the sexual dissidents, or the users of gay meeting places, ask for a reconceptualisation of non-procreative or monogamous sex as a legitimate and healthy expression of sexual desire (Hubbard 2001).

Moreover, the men visiting gay meeting places, while living a heterosexual life for the outside world, challenge what Butler (1990) calls the heterosexual matrix. The heterosexual matrix makes sure that the gender hierarchy and therefore compulsory heterosexuality is maintained by naturalising bodies, genders and desires through a grid of cultural

intelligibility. It is through this heterosexual matrix that the clear coherence between heterosex is constituted, where the binary structure of gender finds its addition in the opposite-sex attraction. Thus, the heterosexual matrix excludes certain identifications, while others are made possible. Due to this Butler argues that the one sexuality is seemingly the precondition for the other. In this sense heterosexuality asks for an understandable idea of homosexuality to remain intact reconstituting the dichotomy between homosexuality and heterosexuality with homosexuality as the unnatural, inferior other of heterosexuality as the natural and normal sexuality. Butler introduces her theory of performativity, in which she conceptualises gender and sex as regulated fictions maintained through repeated and stylised performance, to denaturalise the heterosexual matrix. This heterosexual matrix is challenged by those men visiting gay meeting while living a heterosexual life. They confuse the dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality, showing that this dichotomy is as much performative as gender.

Besides, as Butler (1990) argues heterosexuality asks for an understandable idea of homosexuality to remain intact. In this sense heterosexuality is dependent on homosexuality, and as she argues “I think one of the reasons that heterosexuality has to re-elaborate itself, to ritualistically reproduce itself all over the place, is that it has to overcome some constitutive sense of its own tenuousness” (1994: 34). The married men visiting gay meeting places exactly do this, they challenge the understandable idea of homosexuality as they do not seem to fit within one category or another,

but seem to be free-floating between categories, and in this way more importantly they challenge the foundation on which heterosexuals build their identity. Their sexual practices show the performative nature of homosexuality and consequently they also show the performative nature of heterosexuality, thereby challenging the hierarchy between the categories of sexuality. Besides, as Butler argues (1990) people who do not seem to fit within this heterosexual matrix possibly become marginalised through the fiction of the heterosexual ideal placed against the abnormal homosexuality. The heterosexual matrix, therefore, makes certain identifications impossible. However, although some non-heterosexual regulations can be out of place, they are never completely removed, and for some men making use of gay meeting places they find within these non-heterosexual regulations another social identity, the homosexual identity which is fully possible within culture, but excluded from dominant culture. The sexual practices at gay meeting places can also be conceptualised as, what Butler (1990) calls parodic performances. For Butler the means for resistance can be found within parody. By doing certain conventional and accepted forms of behaviour differently, by parodying these, the preconceived notions of reality can be remade or deconstructed. The men living a heterosexual life parody through their sexual acts the preconceived notion that when one identifies oneself as belonging to the category of heterosexual that non-heterosexual sex becomes an impossibility. These men take on a comic sexual position, that sexual position you thought was impossible from the perspective of the sexual position you find yourself in

at that moment. The family men take on a homosexual position, while they have in their daily lives a heterosexual position, and it is at these moments in which you are fleeting between the categories of sexuality “where resistance to recuperation happens. It is like a breaking through to a new set of paradigms” (Butler 1994: 38). In this sense they challenge through a form of parody the taken-for-granted stability of categories of homosexuality and heterosexuality, a slippage in the discourse of sexuality is created by taking on a marginalised, comic sexual identity giving space to a transgressive identity, an identity which is fleeting and difficult to be classified, and as Bell et al (1994: 36) ask “[c]an you ever be sure again that you can read the identity of others or the identity of a space? And if not, then how can others read you?”

Reconstituting the discourse of sexuality

Although the men are challenging the hegemonic position of heterosexuality through their bodies and pleasures, through parodic performances, this is not a straightforward process. What becomes clear from the discourse analysis is that the discourse of sexuality still reigns within society, in which homosexuality and homosexual sexual activity is perceived of as being immoral, perverse, unnatural, and so on. This more particularly becomes clear when we look at the words people use when they react on the phenomenon of gay meeting places in which associations are made with rancidity, perversity, sickness, disease, disgust, repulsion, rejection, immorality, and bestiality. The sexual behaviour of the men is

probably perceived of as being immoral, disgusting and so on due to the public nature of the activities, but also because of the idea that most men have sex with other men while at home their wives are waiting for them. This shows that the idea that sex should take place within the privacy of the nuclear family, and not in bushes with other men resulting from the hegemonic position of heterosexuality within society, is present within society. Moreover, through the articulation of this discourse of immorality at the Internet the discourse of sexuality is reconstituted, and therefore the hegemonic position of heterosexuality is reconstituted, over and over again by the general public when they articulate their feelings of disgust and repulsion in relation to the men making use of gay meeting places and their sexual practices.

That the discourse of sexuality still reigns within society is not only articulated by this discourse of the general public as described above. Also the classification of the men visiting gay meeting places as being homosexuals by the commentators on the Internet is the result of sexuality becoming a regulative discourse in which the sex of the person we have sex with determines our sexual orientation. This not only becomes clear from the discourse analysis, however, also the co-researchers mostly classify and identify themselves as either homosexual or heterosexual even though some were married at the moment they started to visit gay meeting places they eventually made the choice to identify themselves as homosexuals. In this sense the dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality instead of

being challenged is reconstituted by the references made to homosexuality and heterosexuality as exclusionary categories.

Besides, as Butler (1990) argues the homosexual is defined by the negotiation and contradiction of everything the heterosexual is not. Homosexual sexual practices are practices in which one can only participate by the exclusion of other practices, following from the general consensus that sexual attraction can only exist between opposites, as Butler (1994: 34) states: "I think that crafting a sexual position, or reciting a sexual position, always involves becoming haunted by what's excluded. And the more rigid the position, the greater the ghost, and the more threatening it is in some way." In this sense the men making use of gay meeting places represent for heterosexuals a threat, a ghost. This process is known as othering, a process which serves to mark and name those who are perceived of as being different from oneself, and following Aitchison (2001) the other is mostly inferior. In the case of gay meeting places the heterosexual commentators, classifying the men as being homosexuals, make use of a process of exclusionary othering, in which power within relationships is used for subordination and domination resulting in a process of marginalisation, alienation, exclusion and decreased opportunities reflected in the interventions taken by the state and police. It is through this process of othering that the hegemonic position of heterosexuality instead of being challenged and disrupted is reconstituted.

Moreover, the 'heterosexual' men also threaten in this sense the foundations on which heterosexuals build their identity. These men who

do not seem to fit within one sexual category, but are free floating between categories in terms of their sexual behaviour, challenge the understandable idea of both homosexuality and heterosexuality as exclusionary categories in which heterosexuality is perceived of as the normal, natural and moral sexuality, and homosexuality as everything heterosexuality is not. This threat could be a possible cause why people classify the family men as homosexuals in order to reinforce the categories and reconstitute heterosexuality as a clear-cut category to which they belong, and on the basis of which they identify themselves, in which maybe the hegemonic position of heterosexuality plays a role. This need to adhere to a category of sexuality can be explained with Butler's argument that adherence to the heterosexual matrix is a prerequisite to be intelligible as human beings in the eyes of the general public, which could be a reason why some men who seem to be free-floating between categories eventually choose for a homosexual self-classification out of a fear to be unintelligible.

This system of classifying these family men as homosexuals is problematic when we take into account the discourse in which gay meeting places are associated with disgust, repulsion and so on as described before. Considering that the men making use of gay meeting places are defined as being homosexual and taking into account the discourse around these places it is not only the men making use of these places who become associated by disgust, immorality and so on, but moreover this discourse is due to the classification of the practices and the men as homosexual spread out to homosexuality in general. An association is made between the men

visiting gay meeting places as homosexuals, and therefore homosexuality in general receives a negative connotation. The articulation of this discourse then again leads to the reconstitution of the hegemonic position of heterosexuality as the normal, natural and moral sexuality. Moreover, following the theory of performativity as outlined by Butler the repetition and recitation of this discourse regulating sexuality under certain regulatory regimes produces the phenomena that it attempts to regulate and constrain. In this sense the men making use of gay meeting places and gay meeting places themselves are produced through the recitation and repetition of the discourse of disgust and repulsion as deviant, immoral and unnatural.

Besides, it is this hegemonic position of heterosexuality having its foundation in the discourse of sexuality which confines family men to live for the outside world an everyday heterosexual life, while preferring sexual encounters with other men. The need to fit within one category or another, the need to be intelligible for others, and through a process of moral self-constitution these men identify themselves as heterosexual, they internalise the discourse of sexuality. They are in this sense submitted to relationships of force within a network of micro-processes of power ranging from the individual level to the level of their social environment to the level of society at large. This process of self-surveillance is the result of the internalisation of the disciplinary power of the state and the social gaze through their self-control and adherence to shared moral codes proscribing heterosexuality as normal and appropriate. They live their 'heterosexual'

lives out of a fear to be transgressive or out of place, to fail to be recognised as subjects, to be excluded from and rejected by society and their social environment, so we are back at the beginning of this discussion in which these men appropriate a part of public space for non-heterosexual sexual encounters.

Chapter 7

Discussion and conclusion

“A conclusion is the place where you got tired of thinking.”

(Arthur Bloch 1948-)

In this chapter I will discuss the results and come to a conclusion by coming back to the goals of this research, to know:

- providing an insight in the phenomenon of gay meeting places, in order to reach a better understanding of and for these places as leisure places. In order to achieve this I will focus on the users of gay meeting places in terms of their perspectives concerning their motivations, perceptions, experiences and behaviour related to gay meeting places;
- and I will employ a critical analysis that aims to demonstrate the contested nature of this inherently spatial phenomenon. In order to achieve this I will focus on the perceptions and attitudes towards gay meeting places of the general public. In so doing I will explore deeper issues of the way how homosexuality is perceived in the Netherlands.

The phenomenon of gay meeting places

From the results it became clear that gay meeting places are visited by men with predominantly a Dutch ethnic background, of middle age or older and estimations made indicate that the majority of men making use of gay meeting places are married or living a heterosexual life. The relatively high

number of married men visiting gay meeting places can be explained by a fear to come out of the closet. As many co-researchers argued for some men being open about their sexual orientation can be a threshold which can not be taken either because of their social position or their social environment. These men visit these places as a means to do something with their non-heterosexual feelings, while they remain silent about this in their daily life. The reason for not opening up can have, as argued before, different reasons, but is in general caused by a fear of being rejected by the social environment or society at large. Often the co-researchers and commentators on the internet link this fear to men who have a (strict) religion, in which homosexuality is perceived as unacceptable. It is thus thinkable that for men living within a social environment in which religion plays an important role their possibilities to be open about their non-heterosexual inclinations are limited or non-existent if they do not want to be rejected by their social environment. I would argue that it is in relation to the fear of coming out of the closet not important whether there is less or more acceptance of homosexuality, it is more important how people with non-heterosexual feelings experience the level of acceptance in the

Netherlands. When you experience within your social environment and society at large a negative attitude towards homosexuality than obviously coming out of the closet becomes more difficult. Nevertheless, although some married men prefer to remain silent about their non-heterosexual inclinations others make use of gay meeting places to eventually come to terms with their non-heterosexual feelings and desires, which in its turn leads to these men being open about their sexual orientation towards others. However we should be careful with this categorisation of the men at gay meeting places as belonging to the category of homosexuals, although this is true for some, for other it is possible that they are happily married to a woman while enjoying sex with men without classifying themselves as being either homosexual or heterosexual.

When we look at the spatial component of gay meeting places it becomes clear that differences can be found in the ways in which gay meeting places are used. The results show that gay meeting place in recreational areas are used differently than gay meeting places in parks or at parking places. In recreational areas the places are used for a recreational purpose, like for example sunbathing, combined with sexual encounters leading to longer stays at the place. While at parks and parking places the places are only used for sexual encounters and the time spend there is shorter as the men leave as soon as they are sexually satisfied or when they can not find a suitable partner. Besides it can be concluded that men making use of recreational areas for sexual encounters with other men have more a sense of belonging to a place, they regard the place as theirs. The difference in

the time men spend at a place and the purpose of visiting a particular place is also reflected in the fleetingness of the social contacts as at parking places and in parks the contacts are more fleeting than at gay meeting places in recreational areas. Moreover this fleetingness of the social contacts is also reflected in the amount of communication. It becomes clear from the results that in general there is little verbal communication at gay meeting place. However in recreational areas people do talk more with each other, and there is more a sense of sociality.

This lack of communication can be explained by the secrecy and anonymity of the encounters at gay meeting places, which in its turn is the result of the men wanting to keep their sexual encounters at gay meeting places secret for the outside world, either because they can not be open about their sexual orientation, or because of the negative influence visiting gay meeting places can possibly have on the social image of the men. As a means to make sure that it does not become known for the outside world that men visit gay meeting places, there is a non-outspoken rule that one does not show any sign of recognition when one meets each other in public. The lack of verbal communication is however compensated by a system of non-verbal communication through which the men visiting gay meeting places communicate to the other that they would like to have sex with that person which is based more on the physical appearance of the other than on his personality, what they prefer in the sexual encounter, and that they wish to stop the sexual encounter. A sexual practice can at any time be stopped and nothing takes place at gay meeting places without

mutual consent which is possibly opposite to the idea people have of these places, as rancid, disgusting places associated sometimes with prostitution. However it becomes clear from the results that the activities are completely different from prostitution, the men come there voluntarily and no-one is forced into activities they do not want. Besides there are no payments involved, the relations at gay meeting places are characterised by equality. When we look at the motivations men have to visit gay meeting places it in essence comes down to feeling some sexual tension which they want to flow off. Gay meeting places offer them an opportunity to have sex at the moment the men feel the desire for sex, when they are horny. Another factor which plays a role in the motivations to visit gay meeting places is the element of excitement. In general the men describe the activities at gay meeting places as exciting. This excitement is mostly related to not knowing what will happen and with whom as every visit is different with different people and different kinds of encounters. Also the fact that the practices at gay meeting places take place outdoor plays a role. For most men sex in the open air adds an extra pleasure to the sexual practices. Besides for a relatively little amount of men sex outdoors is preferred because of their exhibitionistic longing, because they enjoy being watched by others. However these others should be at the place for the same purposes, as the men do not want to confront non sex-seeking people with their sexual practices. This is also communicated when they describe that at their ideal places one requirement is bushes with a high density to keep the sexual practices out of sight of the general public. Besides gay meeting

places are also visited because they are easy and cheap places to get sexually satisfied. First of all gay meeting places can be found everywhere in the Netherlands and are easy accessible, and secondly men come there for the same reasons which makes it easier to have a sexual encounter.

Moreover the results show that the men do perceive their visits to gay meeting places as a leisure activity. They undertake these in their free time, they use these as a safety-valve, a break with the routines of everyday life, and the visits are perceived as being enjoyable and pleasurable. As often happens with leisure activities in some cases visiting gay meeting places becomes a routine, something the men can not do without anymore. However, it can be concluded that the general public is not aware that gay meeting places are also visited to experience pleasant and enjoyable sexual contacts and not only to give space to within everyday life oppressed homosexual feelings and desires.

It can be concluded that often measures are taken to prevent men from using public space for sexual encounters. Nevertheless this needs to be nuanced as there are also examples of municipalities which facilitate and tolerate gay meeting places. However it can be concluded that deterrent measures taken are often not very efficient due to the water-bed effect by which is meant that as soon as one meeting place is not determined another place will be appropriated which possibly is located at an even more undesirable place. The results show that overt and covert measures are taken.

In terms of visibility it can be concluded that there is a concern among the general public with the visibility of the sexual practices of the men at gay meeting places. However this fear seems not very realistic as the men are, as argued before, careful not to confront others with their sexual practices. Besides they argue that most people do know where gay meeting places are located within their living environment and therefore there is no need to be confronted with these as they can avoid these places. A same kind of argument is also made by people giving comments on the internet. However from the analysis of the comments on the internet it can be concluded that people in general do not want to be, or have a fear of being, confronted with the sexual practices of the men at gay meeting places. Considering that the men argue that they are seldom confronted with non sex-seeking people this concern with the visibility of the sexual practices is probably not based on actual confrontations people experienced, but more a moral concern, a concern related to the idea that men are having sex in the bushes. A similar argument counts when we look at the comments made on the internet concerning children being confronted with sexual practices. There seems to be a general idea that children are particularly vulnerable to seeing the sexual practices between men at gay meeting places. One might wonder whether for children a confrontation with these sexual practices is more problematic than for youngsters or adults?

When we look at the possibilities to solve the problematic nature of gay meeting places it can be argued that the most efficient way to deal with these from the perspective of the men making use of gay meeting places is

to legalise the places. Not legalising in the sense of appointing new places, but legalising in the sense of making the practices possible at already existing places. By legalising it is possible to create certain regulations around gay meeting places proscribing what can and can not be done at gay meeting places. Also through legalisation it becomes more clear where gay meeting places can be found and people can avoid these and do not accidentally have to be confronted with the sexual practices of the men. However there is a possibility that this attracts more gay bashers. Besides legalisation creates the possibility to have the police deal with these places in a more consistent and tolerant manner making the men aware of what they can and can not do, but also giving them protection against acts of violence which are a serious threat at gay meeting places. Gay bashing is taking place at gay meeting places. It is commonly known that gay meeting places are often visited by family men who, for this reason, are not likely to report a case of gay bashing. However, when we look at the reactions given on the internet on news items about legalising or tolerating gay meeting places it becomes clear that many people do not find this fair as they as heterosexuals also do not get a special place for outdoor sex. Nevertheless legalising gay meeting places seems a viable means to deal with gay meeting places.

The discourse around gay meeting places

When we look at the discourse around gay meeting places it can be concluded that there are different discourses. We can distinguish between a

discourse in which gay meeting places are constituted as places which are created out of the oppression of homosexuals based on the notion that family men visit these. This is accompanied by the argument that gay meeting places should remain open and that the men making use of these should have the possibility to keep going there if they wish to. This discourse is a discourse in which homo-emancipation plays a role. It becomes clear from this discourse that these people are aware of the difficult position some men find themselves in when they experience within themselves non-heterosexual feelings. However also within this discourse a concern is articulated with the visibility of the sexual practices at gay meeting places. In general it can be concluded that people do not wish to be confronted with the practices at gay meeting places. A special concern is articulated around children. However there is no explanation for this concern.

In contrast to this discourse stands the discourse in which gay meeting places and the practices and men at these places are constituted as dirty, rancid, perverse, sick and immoral, combined with associations with diseases, prostitution, bestiality and child porn. However the results from the interviews showed the opposite, as argued before the places are characterised by mutual agreement and respect which probably contrast for those who do not come to gay meeting places with the fleetingness of the contacts. Nevertheless because people have little insights in the practices at gay meeting places they base their opinion on general notions that gay meeting places are places where married men come to have quick sex with

other men. This is from a moral perspective, following from the discourse of sexuality, simply unacceptable and inappropriate. Referring back to the first research sub-goal it turns out that little understanding for these places exist and that is why I undertook this research in the first place, to take gay meeting places out of the dark, make it less taboo and show what is really happening at these places to create more understanding for these places.

Moreover it can be concluded that people tend to classify the men visiting gay meeting places as homosexual at the basis of their sexual behaviour. However the results show that men visiting gay meeting places can be classified as belonging to any category of sexual orientation, or maybe to no category of sexual orientation. Nevertheless it can be concluded that people have a strong need to adhere to these dichotomies to build their identities on, both the general public as the men who visit gay meeting places. This classification of the men visiting gay meeting places as homosexuals combined with the negative discourse on gay meeting places is problematic, as this leads to a further stigmatisation of homosexuality as the inappropriate, immoral, unnatural and abnormal sexuality. This is, moreover, also caused by the banning of gay meeting places from public space reproducing public space as heteronormative and through this the hegemonic position of heterosexuality as the appropriate and normal sexuality is reconstituted. It is this hegemonic position of heterosexuality which makes that for some men they have no other options when they wish to give space to their homosexual feelings and desires than to go to gay meeting places. Besides the hegemonic position of heterosexuality lies

at the foundations of the negative discourse around gay meeting places, which in its turn is the reason for the heteronormative production of space reflected in the measures around gay meeting places reconstituting public spaces as heteronormative, and from here the same reasoning can be started again.

Thus, it can be concluded that the acts of resistance of the men, the means to give space to non-heterosexual desires and feelings, places to transcend beyond the social roles assigned by society, do not result in subversion or disruption of heteronormativity, rather the practices at gay meeting places lead to the reinforcement of these social roles through a reinforcement of the discourse of sexuality leading to heterosexuality keeping its hegemonic position with homosexuality as its inferior other.

The acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands

It can be concluded from the results of this research that homosexuality in the Netherlands is still not (completely) accepted. First of all this is indicated by the approximations of men visiting gay meeting places while

living for the outside world a heterosexual life. Moreover it became clear from the results of the discourse analysis that people either do have the idea that homosexuality in the Netherlands is still problematic, a notion which is reaffirmed by the negative discourse on gay meeting places. These results are confirmative of the researches conducted in the Netherlands which show that homosexuality in the Netherlands remains a difficult issue. Besides the results show that the homosexual men are careful not to show signs of homosexual affection in public out of a fear for either physical or psychological abuse which is in line with the notion of modern homonegativity as introduced by Keuzenkamp et al. (2006). Nevertheless it also became clear that within society there is a general idea that homosexuality is accepted and that there is no need for men to visit these places. Taking all this into consideration it can be concluded that, in line with Buijs et al. (2008) the acceptance of homosexuality in the Netherlands is an illusion, a deception, or as one of the co-researchers called it a 'gold leaf through which one easily pierces.'

Bibliography

- Adler, S., and J. Brenner. 1992. "Gender and Space: Lesbians and Gay Men in the City." *Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 16: 24-34.
- Aitchison, C. 1999. "New Cultural Geographies: the Spatiality of Leisure, Gender and Sexuality." *Leisure Studies* 18: 19-39.
- . 2000. "Women in Leisure Services: Managing the Social-Cultural Nexus of Gender Equity." *Managing Leisure* 5: 181-191.
- . 2003. *Gender and Leisure: Social and Cultural Perspectives*. London: Routledge.
- . 2007. "Marking Difference or Making a Difference: Constructing Places, Policies and Knowledge of Inclusion, Exclusion and Social Justice in Leisure, Sport and Tourism." Pp. 77-90 in *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies. Innovative Research Methodologies.*, edited by I. Ateljević, A. Pritchard and N. Morgan. Amsterdam & Oxford: Elsevier Ltd.
- Alexander, J.C. , and S. Seidman. 2008. *The New Social Theory Reader*. London: Routledge.
- Alvesson, M., and Y.D. Billig. 1997. *Understanding Gender and Organizations*. London: Sage.
- Ateljević, I., C. Harris, E. Wilson, and F.L. Collins. 2005. "Getting 'Entangled': Reflexivity and the Critical Turn' in Tourism Studies." *Tourism Recreation Research* 30: 9-21.
- Barad, K. 2003. "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 28: 802-831.
- Bell, D. 1995. "Pleasure and Danger: the Paradoxical Spaces of Sexual Citizenship." *Political Geography* 14: 139-153.
- Bell, D., J. Binnie, J. Cream, and G. Valentine. 1994. "All Hyped Up and No Place to Go." *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 1: 31-47.
- Bell, E. 2008. *Theories of Performance*. Los Angeles, London, New Dehli & Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Bell, E., and S. Holman Jones. 2008. "Performing Resistance." Pp. 199-232 in *Theories of Performance*, edited by E. Bell. Los Angeles, London, New Dehli & Singapore: Sage Publications.
- Braidotti, R. . 1994. *Nomadic Subjects : Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Brickell, C. 2005. "Masculinities, Performativity, and Subversion." *Men and Masculinities* 8: 24-43.
- Brookey, R.A., and D.H. Miller. 2001. "Changing Signs: The Political Pragmatism of Poststructuralism." *International Journal of Sexuality and Gender Studies*. 6: 139-153.
- Brown, W. 2002. "At the Edge." *Political Theory* 30: 556-576.
- Browne, K. 2004. "Genderism and the Bathroom Problem: (Re)materialising Sexed Sites, (Re)creating Sexed Bodies." *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 11: 331-346.

- . 2006. "Challenging Queer Geographies." *Antipode* 38: 885-893.
- . 2007. "(Re)making the Other, Heterosexualising Everyday Space." *Environment and Planning A: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 39: 996-1014.
- Browne, K., and J. Caudwell. 2008. "Call for papers special issue Leisure Studies: Sexy Spaces: Leisure and Geography Intersectionalities."
- Buijs, L., G. Hekma, and J.W. Duyvendak. 2008. "Als Ze Maar Van Me Afblijven. Een Onderzoek naar Antihomoseksueel Geweld in Amsterdam." Amsterdam: Universiteit van Amsterdam.
- Bulkens, M. 2005. "'De Banen op, de Bosjes in.' Onderzoek naar Homo-ontmoetingsplekken." BSc thesis in Socio Spatial Analysis. Wageningen: Wageningen University.
- Butler, J. 1990. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*. New York (US) and London (UK): Routledge.
- . 1993. *Bodies That Matter. On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"*. New York (US) and London (UK): Routledge.
- . 1994. "'Gender and Performance': An Interview with Judith Butler." *Radical Philosophy. A Journal of Socialist and Feminist Philosophy* (interviewers Osbourne, P. and L. Segal) 67: 32-39.
- . 2004. *Undoing Gender*. New York: Routledge.
- . 2008. "Imitation and Gender Insubordination." Pp. 3166-178 in *The New Social Theory Reader.*, edited by J.C. Alexander and S. Seidman. London: Routledge.
- Canales, M. K. 2000. "Othering: Toward an Understanding of Difference." *Advances in Nursing Science*. 22: 16-31.
- Chick, G. 1998. "Leisure and Culture: Issues for an Anthropology of Leisure." *Leisure Studies* 20: 111-133.
- Conlon, D. 2004. "Productive Bodies, Performative Spaces: Everyday Life in Christopher." *Sexualities* 7: 462-473.
- Connell, R.W. 2008. "Gender as a Social Practice." in *The New Social Theory Reader.*, edited by J.C. Alexander and S. Seidman. London: Routledge.
- Cresswell, T. 1996. *In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression*. Minnesota: University Of Minnesota Press.
- . 1997. "Weeds, Plagues and Bodily Secretions: a Geographical Interpretation of Metaphors of Displacement." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 87: 330-345.
- . 2004. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Malden [etc]: Blackwell.
- Creswell, J.W. 2003. *Research Design: Qualitative, Quantitative, and Mixed Method Approaches*. Thousand Oaks [etc]: Sage Publications.
- Denzin, N.K., and Y.S. Lincoln. 2000. *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications.
- Ernste, H. 2004. "The Pragmatism of Life in Poststructuralist Times." *Environment and Planning A: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 36: 437-450.
- Essers, R.C. 1994. "HOMOSEKSUALITEIT ALS RECREATIEVORM. 't Is Maar Wat Je Onder Recreatie Verstaat..." Nijmegen: -.

- Eves, A. 2004. "Queer Theory, Butch/Femme Identities and Lesbian Space. ." *Sexualities* 7: 480-496.
- Fast, A.S. 1999. "Called to be Queer: Towards a Theological (re)Vision for the People of God." in *Theological Studies*. Vancouver: Vancouver School of Theology.
- Feindt, P.H., and A. Oels. 2005. "Does Discourse Matter? Discourse Analysis in Environmental Policy Making." *Journal of Environmental Policy & Planning* 7: 161-173.
- Felluga, D. 2003. "Introductory Guide to Critical Theory."
<http://www.cla.purdue.edu/academic/engl/theory/index.html>
 (consulted 15-11-2008)
- Foucault, M. 1970. *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*. New York: Panteon Books.
- . 1974. *The Archeology of Knowledge*. London: Tavistock.
- . 1977. "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History." in *Language, Counter Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews.*, edited by D.F. Bouchard. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- . 1980. "Body/Power." Pp. 55-62 in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings, 1972-1977*, edited by C. Gordon. Brighton: Harvester.
- . 1982b. "The Subject and Power." Pp. 208-226 in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics.*, edited by H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow. Chicago: University of Chicagi Press.
- . 1984a. *De Wil Tot Weten*. Geschiedenis van de Seksualiteit. Volume 1. Nijmegen: SUN.
- . 1984b. *Het Gebruik van de Lust*. Geschiedenis van de Seksualiteit. Volume 2. Nijmegen: SUN.
- . 1985. *De Zorg voor Zichzelf*. Geschiedenis van de Seksualiteit. Volume 3. Nijmegen: SUN.
- . 1989. *Discipline, Toezicht en Straf: de Geboorte van de Gevangenis*. Groningen: Historische Uitgeverij.
- . 1991a. "Space, Knowledge and Power." Pp. 239-256 in *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction to Foucault's Thoughts.*, edited by P. Rabinow. London: Penguin.
- . 1991b. "What Is Enlightenment?" Pp. 47-52 in *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction to Foucault's Thoughts.* , edited by P. Rabinow. London: Penguin.
- . 1994. *Dits et Écrits: 1954 - 1988*. Paris: Gallimard.
- Foucault, M., and J. Miskowiec. 1986. "Of Other Spaces." *Diacritics* 16: 22-27.
- Fraser, M. 1999. "Classing Queer. Politics in Competition." *Theory, Culture & Society* 16: 107-131.
- Geltmaker, T. 1992. "The Queer Nation Acts Up: Health Care, Politics, and Sexual Diversity in the County of Angels." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 10: 609-650.
- GLBTQ. 2004. "Kertbeny, Károly Mária (1824 - 1882)."
http://www.glbtc.com/socialsciences/kertbeny_km.html (consulted 15 01-2009)

- Grundy, S. 1987. *Curriculum: Product or Praxis*. Sussex: Falmer Press.
- Hacking, I. 2004. "Between Michel Foucault and Erving Goffman: Between Discourse in the Abstract and Face-to-face Interaction." *Economy and Society* 33: 277-302.
- Hall, S. 1997. *Representation : cultural representations and signifying practices*. London [etc.]: Sage.
- Halperin, D. 2008. "Queer Politics." Pp. 197-205 in *The New Social Theory Reader*, edited by J.C. Alexander and S. Seidman. London: Routledge.
- Hanson, J. 2007. "Drag Kinging: Embodied Acts and Acts of Embodiment." *Body & Society* 13: 61-106.
- Harrer, S. 2005. "The Theme of Subjectivity in Foucault's Lecture Series L'Herméneutique du Sujet." *Foucault Studies* May: 75-96.
- Harris, C., and I. Ateljević. 2003. "Perpetuating the Male Gaze as the Norm: Challenges for 'Her' Participation in Business Travel." *Tourism Recreation Research* 28: 21-30.
- Hekma, G. 1996. "Snoeien in een Wildernis van Vormen. Een Historiografisch Overzicht van de Geschiedenis van Homoseksualiteit." *Tijdschrift voor Sociale Geschiedenis* 22: 205-224.
- Hekma, G. 2007. "De Benen Wijd, de Stem naar Beneden. Houdingen Tegenover 'Nichterigheid' bij Homoseksuele Mannen." *Sociologie* 3: 81-94.
- Hemingway, J.L. 1999. "Critique and Emancipation: Toward a Critical Theory of Leisure." in *Leisure Studies. Prospects for the Twenty-First Century*, edited by E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton: Venture Publishing Inc.
- Herek, G.M. 1988. "Heterosexuals' Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay men. Correlates and Gender Differences." *Journal of Sex Research* 25: 451-477.
- . 2000. "Sexual Prejudice and Gender. Do Heterosexuals' Attitudes toward Lesbians and Gay Men Differ?" *Journal of Social Issues* 56: 251-266.
- Herek, G.M. 2008. "Facts About Homosexuality and Mental Health ". http://psychology.ucdavis.edu/rainbow/html/facts_mental_health.html (consulted 22-06-2009)
- Holloway, L., and P. Hubbard. 2001. *People and Place: the Extraordinary Geographies of Everyday Life*. Harlow [etc.]: Prentice Hall.
- Howell, P. 2007. "Foucault, Sexuality, Geography." in *Space, Knowledge and Power. Foucault and Geography*, edited by J.W. Crampton and S. Elden. Aldershot & Burlington: Ashgate.
- Hubbard, P. 2000. "Desire/Disgust: Mapping the Moral Contours of Heterosexuality." *Progress in Human Geography* 24: 191-217.
- . 2001. "Sex Zones: Intimacy, Citizenship and Public Space." *Sexualities* 4: 51-71.
- . 2008. "Here, There, Everywhere: The Ubiquitous Geographies of Heteronormativity." *Geography Compass* 2: 1-19.
- Jackson, P. 2005. "Gender." Pp. 103-108 in *Cultural Geography. A critical*

- dictionary of key concepts., edited by D. Atkinson, P. Jackson, D. Sibley and N. Washbourne. London & New York: I.B. Taurus.
- Jennings, G. 2001. *Tourism Research*. Milton: John Wiley & Sons Australia, Ltd.
- Johnston, L. 1997. "'Queen(s)' Street or Ponsonby Poofers? Embodied HERO Parade Sites." *New Zealand Geographer* 53: 29-33.
- . 2001. "(Other) Bodies and Tourism Studies." *Annals of Tourism Research* 28: 180-201.
- Keuzenkamp, S., D. Bos, J.W. Duyvendak, and G. Hekma. 2006. "Gewoon Doen. Acceptatie van Homoseksualiteit in Nederland." Den Haag: Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau.
- Kitchin, R., and K. Lysaght. 2003. "Heterosexism and the Geographies of Everyday Life in Belfast, Northern Ireland." *Environment and Planning A: International Journal of Urban and Regional Research*. 35: 489-510.
- Kivel, B.D., and D.A. Kleiber. 2000. "Leisure in the Identity Formation of Lesbian/Gay Youth: Personal, but Not Social." *Leisure Sciences* 22: 215-232.
- Klages, M. 1997. "English 2010: Modern Critical Thought." <http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/> (consulted 25-01-2009)
- Knopp, L., and M. Brown. 2003. "Queer Diffusions." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*. 21: 409-424.
- Knox, P., and S. Pinch. 2000. *Urban Social Geography. An Introduction*. Harlow (UK): Pearson Education Limited.
- Kofosky Sedgwick, E. 1990. *Epistemology of the Closet*. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Kuhn, T.S. 1970. "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions." in *International Encyclopedia of Unified Science*., edited by O. Neurath and R. Carnap. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lefebvre, H. 1991. *The Production of Space*. Oxford [etc.]: Blackwell.
- Lloyd, M. 1999. "Performativity, Parody, Politics." *Theory, Culture & Society* 16: 195-213.
- Lochs, M., and S. van Ommen. 2008. "HOP's. Homo-Ontmoetingsplaatsen. 'De Baan in Goede Banen Leiden.'" Leiden: Universiteit van Leiden.
- Liotard, J-F. 1984. *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Maatman, M., and A.H. Meijer. 1993. "Cruising als Ruimteclaim. De Rol van de Overheid in het Gebruik van de Openbare Ruimte voor Homosexueel Contact." Amsterdam: Planologisch and Demografisch Instituut.
- Martin, J. 2005. "Identity." Pp. 97-102 in *Cultural Geography. A critical dictionary of key concepts*. , edited by D. Atkinson, P. W. Jackson, D. Sibley and N. Washbourne. London & New York: I.B. Taurus.
- McHoul, A., and W. Grace. 1993. *A Foucault Primer. Discourse, power and the subject*. New York: New York University Press.
- McWhorter, L. 1989. "Culture or Nature? The Function of the Term

- 'Body' in the Work of Michel Foucault." *The Journal of Philosophy* 86: 608-614.
- Merrifield, A. 2006. *Henri Lefebvre : a Critical Introduction*. New York [etc.]: Routledge.
- Mills, S. 2003. *Michel Foucault*. Abingdon (US) and New York (US): Routledge.
- Nash, C. 2000. "Performativity in Practice: Some Recent Work in Cultural Geography." *Progress in Human Geography* 24: 653-664.
- . 2006. "Toronto's Gay Village (1969-1982): Plotting the Politics of Gay Identity." *The Canadian Geographer / Le Géographe Canadien* 50: 1-16.
- Nelson, L. 1999. "Bodies (and Spaces) Do Matter: the Limits of Performativity." *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography* 6: 331-353.
- Nussbaum, M. 2000. "The Professor of Parody." in *The New Republic Online*. 220, 37-45.
- Ministerie van O,C&W. 2007. "Gewoon Homo Zijn." Den Haag: Ministerie van Onderwijs, Cultuur en Wetenschap.
- Pascoe, C.J. 2005. "'Dude, You're a Fag': Adolescent Masculinity and the Fag Discourse." *Sexualities* 8: 329-346.
- Pritchard, A., and N. Morgan. 2007. "De-centring Tourism's Intellectual Universe, or Travelling the Dialogue Between Change and Tradition." Pp. 11-28 in *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies. Innovative Research Methods.*, edited by I. Ateljević, A. Pritchard and N. Morgan. Amsterdam [etc.]: Elsevier.
- Pritchard, A., N. Morgan, and D. Sedgley. 2007. "In Search of Lesbian Space? The Experience of Manchester's Gay Village." in *Gender and Tourism. Embodiment, Sensuality and Experience.*, edited by A. Pritchard, N. Morgan, I. Ateljević and C. Harris. Wallingford (US): CAB International.
- Rabinow, P. 1991. *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London: Penguin Books.
- Raeven, H. 2008. "Lezing Homo Ontmoetingsplaatsen." in *Delftse Werkgroep Homoseksualiteit*. Delft.
- Richardson, L. 2000. "Writing: A Method of Inquiry." Pp. 516-529 in *Handbook of Qualitative Research.*, edited by N.K. Denzin and Y.S. Lincoln. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- San, M. van, and J. de Boom. 2006. "Geweld tegen Homoseksuelen." Rotterdam: RISBO contractresearch.
- Skeggs, B. 1999. "Matter Out of Place: Visibility and Sexualities in Leisure Spaces." *Leisure Studies* 18: 213-232.
- Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau. 2000. "Sociaal-culturele ontwikkelingen in Nederland." Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.
- Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau and Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek. 2005. "Leefsituatie allochtone stedelingen (LAS2004/2005)." Den Haag: Sociaal en Cultureel Planbureau.

- Sothorn, M. 2007. "You Could Truly Be Yourself if You Just Weren't You: Sexuality, Disabled Body Space, and the (Neo)liberal Politics of Self-help." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 25: 144-159.
- Stake, R.E. 1995. *The Art of Case Study Research*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Strafrecht, Wetboek van. 2009. "Art. 239 Wetboek van Strafrecht (Schennis van de eerbaarheid)."
- Strohmayr, U. 2005. "Post-Structuralism." Pp. 6-10 in *Cultural Geography. A Critical Dictionary Of Key Concepts.*, edited by D. Atkinson, P. Jackson, D. Sibley and N. Washbourne. London & New York: I.B. Tauris.
- Thrift, N., and J-D. Dewsbury. 2000. "Dead Geographies - And How to Make Them Live." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 18: 411-432.
- Tribe, J. 2006. "The Truth about Tourism." *Annals of Tourism Research* 33: 360-381.
- . 2007. "Critical Tourism: Rules and Resistance." Pp. 29-39 in *The Critical Turn in Tourism Studies. Innovative Research Methodologies.*, edited by I. Ateljević, A. Pritchard and N. Morgan. Amsterdam: Elsevier Ltd.
- Tyldum, G., and A. Brunovski. 2005. "Describing the Unobserved: Methodological Challenges in Empirical Studies on Human Trafficking." *International Migration* 43: 17-34.
- Turner, T. 1994. "Bodies and Anti-Bodies: Flesh and Fetish in Contemporary Social Theory." in *Embodiment and Experience. The Existential Ground of Culture and Self.*, edited by T.J. Csordas. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Urry, J. 1990. *The Tourist Gaze. Leisure and Travel in Contemporary Societies*. London: Sage.
- Valentine, G. 1993. "Hetero-Sexing Space: Lesbian Perceptions and Experiences of Everyday Spaces." *Environment and Planning D - Society and Space* 9: 395-413.
- Valentine, G. , and T. Skelton. 2003. "Finding Oneself, Losing Oneself: the Lesbian and Gay 'Scene' as a Paradoxical Space." *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 27: 849-866.
- Vasterling, V. 2003. "Body and Language: Butler, Merleau-Ponty and Lyotard on the Speaking Embodied Subject." *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* 11: 205-223.
- Veal, A.J. 1997. *Research Methods for Leisure and Tourism. A Practical Guide*. London [etc.]: Pearson Education Limited.
- Visser, G. 2003. "Gay men, leisure space and South African cities: the case of Cape Town." *Geoforum* 34: 123-137.
- . 2008. "The Homonormalisation of White Heterosexual Leisure Spaces in Bloemfontein, South Africa." *Geoforum* 39: 1344-1358.
- Wearing, B. 1996. *Gender. The Pain and Pleasure of Difference*. Melbourne: Addison Wesley Longman Australia Pty Limited.
- Wetherell, M. 1998. "Positioning and Interpretative Repertoires: Conversation Analysis and Post-Structuralism in Dialogue." *Discourse*

- & Society 9: 387-412.
- Wijk, E. van, B van de Meerendonck, F. Bakker, and I. Vanwesenbeeck.
2005. "Moderne Homonegativiteit: De Constructie van een Meetinstrument voor het meten van Hedendaagse Reacties op Zichtbare Homoseksualiteit in Nederland." Tijdschrift voor Seksuologie 29: 19-27.
- Wooffitt, R. 2005. *Conversation Analysis and Discourse Analysis*. London [etc.]: Sage
- Wylie, J. 2007. *Landscape*. London & New York: Routledge.
- Yin, R. 1994. *Case Study Research, Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Zukin, S. 1995. *The Culture of Cities*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Appendix 1: Internet discussion topics

1) *Youtube movie*: A Look at Gay Meeting Place at the Hoornseplas by Dagblad van het Noorden (a regional newspaper).

Guiding text: In the past week an article appeared in the Dagblad van het Noorden on increased disturbance people at the Hoornseplas (recreational area) experience caused by the gay meeting place. Curious as we are, we seized up the situation to see how bad this disturbance is.

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Hoornse Plas.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fG8IjuFuxL8>, 23-07-2009)

2) *Youtube movie*: Homo's Fleeting Away.

Guiding text: It was a warm summer day, way to warm to put oneself out. But not when you are gay. Then you seek as a dirtbag a parking place with a homo bush. So what is it then, time to chase those dirtbags away...What a coincidence, there happens to be a Spanish cracker in the night stand, to throw at those back chuggers!

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Chasing away.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NPQUJwRpXOk&feature=related>, 23/07/2009)

3) *Youtube movie*: Fences should make an end to 'outdoor sex' by RTV Noord (regional tv station).

Guiding text: Men in bushes, used condoms at the parking place and cars driving around. These are familiar problems as the Hoornseplas. To make

an end to this, Meerschapp Paterswolde (lake district board) placed fences. The lake district board is of the opinion that there is disturbance caused in the area. Not only visitors leave rubbish lying around, the lake district board also thinks that other recreations should not be confronted with men having sex outdoors. The Platform Keelbos, which stand up for the interests of homosexual men and women, recently took legal action to prevent this. Nevertheless the fences are already put in place. Keelbos thinks this should not have happened and that the municipality of Haren should have gained more in-depth knowledge in the importance of gay meeting places.

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Fences.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9exTAHjPUn&feature=related>, 23-07-2009)

4) *Youtube movie*: Measures Against Homo's at Hoornse Plas Do Not Work by RTV Noord.

Guiding text: The measures to make an end to the disturbance of homo's at the Hoornse Plas do not work. That is what visitors of the lake say. They are already complaining for years about the homo's who have sex there. Fences and patrolling city guards should have made an end to the disturbance, but until now little seemed to have happened, according to the complaining recreationists. Mark Boumans, chairman of Meerschapp

Paterswolde, is amazed by this and calls the situation 'worrisome'. For now the Meerschap continues with the contemporary measures. Visitors of the Hoornse Plas is asked to report complaints, but Boumans emphasizes that 'you can not forbid someone to sit in a car'.

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Measures.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vmSjVZVGzBU&feature=related>, 23-07-2009).

5) *Youtube movie*: Amsterdam Kort: Cruising Area Put at the Map by Het Parool (a national newspaper).

Guiding text: City District Slotervaart has placed new information panels in recreation area The Oeverlanden.

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Oeverlanden.

(<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JpARuXK4XE>, 23-07-2009)

6) *Article in Gay Krant* (published: 13-07-2009): Not Marking Groene Ster (recreational area) as Gay Meeting Place.

Guiding text: Layman Marco Florijn does not find it necessary to mark a part of recreational area the Groene Ster near Leeuwarden as a men meeting place. That is what the COC proposed, after a homo had been heavily abused there in May. A part of the Groene Ster is already for years popular as MMP (Men Meeting Place). According to Florijn this does not cause any problems. He calls the abuse 'an incident'. Placing special signs would make a caricature out of the situation and he use thereby in the

Leeuwarder Courant the comparison with 'a kind of dog walking place'. Florijn sees more perspectives in consultation with those having an interest. Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Groene Ster.

(<http://www.gk.nl/index.php?id=9&a=bericht&bericht=6505>, 23-07-2009)

7) *Article in Leeuwarder Courant* (published 13-07-2009): Layman: 'Signs make gay meeting places a caricature.'

Guiding text: Layman Marco Florijn does not find it necessary to mark a part of recreational area the Groene Ster near Leeuwarden as a men meeting place. That is what the COC proposed, after a homo had been heavily abused there in May. A part of the Groene Ster is already for years popular as MMP (Men Meeting Place). According to Florijn this does not cause any problems. He calls the abuse 'an incident'. Placing special signs would make a caricature out of the situation and he use thereby in the Leeuwarder Courant the comparison with 'a kind of dog walking place'. Florijn sees more perspectives in consultation with those having an interest. Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Groene Ster.

(http://www.leeuwardercourant.nl/nieuws/regio/article4924264.ece/Wethouder_Borden_maken_homo-ontmoetingsplaats_karikatuur_?showComments=1, 23-07-2009).

8) *Article at Internet forum www.weerwoord.nl* (published 19-2-2002): Zwolle Wants a Fence at Gay Meeting Place.

Guiding text: The municipality of Zwolle wants to put up a fence at a gay meeting place near the highway A28. The fence should make sure that the

visitors are not visible for passers-by. A path next to it where nude recreation takes place, is not mowed anymore to prevent sunbathing. With the measures should put an end to the complaints by neighbours. They say to experience disturbance of the sexual practices in the bushes. Earlier plans to put in sheep in the area, to place camera's or to make an inaccessible isle of the gay meeting place, were rejected by the major and the laymen. By closing the place, there would at another, maybe less suitable location, another one pop up. With the proposed measures, which will cost more than 19.000 euro's, the bushes remain accessible, but the walkers in the environment can not see it. A part of a inspection path where men sunbath naked is closed down. The meeting place is accessible through a parallel road of the A28. The verge of the road is damaged by the often parked cars. The municipality wants to prop up the verge. From research it was concluded that the bushes are by men from the wider area. According to the police there is no 'objective disturbance' and there are no offence taking place. But the neighbours complain and protested by squirting out a tank of liquid manor and cutting down trees. (The article was published at www.nu.nl)

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Zwolle.

(<http://www.weerwoord.nl/weerwoord/viewtopic.php?t=1855&sid=351f03f403417b0f0f9330802400b811>, 23-07-2009).

9) *Article at Internet forum www.flitsservice.nl: Code of Conduct for Police Officer at Gay Meeting Place.*

Guiding text: When the men are given a fine for sex in public, for example, should be given the possibility to pay the fine immediately. 'Mail with details about the offense is send to the home address and could disrupt the family situation.' The advisory organisation makes suggestions to come to solutions for possible disturbance, without loosing the 'vulnerable position' of the visitors of the 'sight' out of sight. Robbing, blackmailing, homo hostile violence are possibilities, the explanation mentions. The police man should make sure for mutual respect between visitors and opposites. The need to seek for anonymous sex contact in the open air is large, the LECD explains in the leaflet. Closure of cruising areas is therefore not an option, can furthermore be read. In the code of conduct amongst others is mentioned what the police can not do. Registration of license plates of visitors and without any reason asking for identity papers, is what Snijder mentioned Thursday as example. The leaflet is necessary according to him because within the police there are many misunderstandings about gay meeting places and because there is no national uniform approach. The National Expertise Center Diversity (LECD) of the police is spreading among regional corps with advices on the work of police men at gay meeting places. Inspector Jan Snijder of the LECD mentioned this in radio show De Ochtenden. (The article was published at www.Telegraaf.nl).

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Code of Conduct.

(<http://www.flitsservice.nl/phpBB/media/gedragscode-voor-agent-op-homo-ontmoetingsplaats-t32509.html>, 23-07-2009).

10) *Article at Internet forum www.marokko.nl: Inhabitants of Koningin Wilhelminaweg in Groenekan Want the Gay Meeting Place Behind Their Houses to Disappear.*

Guiding text: Since the closure of the popular fuck place Bosberg near Hilversum it is getting more busy next to parking place Nijpoort alongside the A27. The ground is littered with empty packages of condoms and used French letters. Inhabitants do not know how they should explain to their children what is happening behind their houses. For the police it is difficult to make the men go away structurally. The Directorate-General for public works and water management only wants to try something when very many complaints are filed. (The article was published at www.goedzo.com).

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Groenekan.

((http://www.goedzo.com/index.php/goedzo/2005/01/31/homo_ontmoetingsplek_bij_a27_moet_verdwi, 23-07-2009)

11) *Article at www.extra.volkskrant.nl (published 12-06-2008): Homo Razzia*

Guiding text: On the 29th of May plain-clothes policemen inspected parking place Leikant next to the A58. It seemed to be quite quiet, the policemen got in their cars again and drove to Lage Aard near Molenschot to score better there. That inspection was not mentioned in the assignment because there never were any complaints about the Lage Aard, but the policemen felt like a homo razzia, so they asked the visitors of Lage Aard shouting and swinging with flashlights for identity papers, an action for

which any legitimate reason was missing. Now there has been, after insistence of the corps chef and major of Tilburg Ruud Vreeman, an evaluation of the exaggerate intervention of the police by the police of Midden- and West-Brabant themselves. Conclusion: 'For this action in this way every foundation was missing. The asking for identity papers of visitors should not have happened.' This evaluation is a cause for satisfaction (mostly scandals involving the police are wiped out, not now thanks to Vreeman), but it is more cause for dissatisfaction. What was exactly the case? Homophobia. The Dutch boys and girls in uniform were chasing ordinarily after those homo's at those parking places, like Moroccan boys do in Amsterdam. Boys and girls in uniform chased ordinarily after those homo's. 'This should not have happened', should not be the last sentence of the report. Something should be put behind it, for example this: 'That is why the Chief Constable of the police Midden- and West-Brabant has decide to put the responsible corps chef X of the razzia on non-active on suspicion of discrimination and unnecessarily discrediting the parking places. X will be screened on earlier behaviour, as well as the policemen who let themselves go at Lage Aard and of whom emphatically can be suspected that they did not discover that lust in themselves for the first time, but keep under this smouldering homo hatred for years already. Which is reprehensible and unacceptable. If during the hearings still anti-homo noises come to the fore, then Midden- and West-Brabant will dismiss the persons concerned.' And not only write this in your report, but

meaning it, making it public and, finally and for a constitutional state necessary deed, applying it.

Referred to in the footnotes in Presentation of Data as Homo Razzia.

(<http://extra.volkskrant.nl/opinie/artikel/show/id/786/Homorazzia>, 23-07-2009).

12) *Article at www.tctubantie.nl*: Intimidation of visitors gay meeting place.

Guiding text: Visitors of the gay meeting place next to the Weerseloseweg between Enschede and Hengelo are sometimes being intimidated. At the police of Twente two times a complaint of threatening was filed. This did this far not result in an arrest. 'We have a suspect. Unfortunately we could not get the case juridically fixed', tell L. Reiring and G. Westrik of the police. Strangely enough the suspect also regularly complains himself at the police about disturbing behaviour of visitors of the gay meeting place. 'It turns out that the complainer himself forces other men to stop. He also offends homo's.' Reiring and Westrik surveilled from April till August several times a week at the Oude Vliegveldweg, Hartjesbosweg, Veldscholteweg, Smeenkweg, Hofmeijerweg en Sniedersveldweg. These side-roads of the Weerseloseweg are well-known meeting places for sex between homo's. As this leads to offensive behaviour, rubbish in the verges and disturbance by traffic, the police paid much attention to it, the police paid much attention to it. There is extensively spoken about it with the core of regular visitors of about forty to fifty men. 'We wanted to get a picture of the group and know if there is criminality taking place. The

latter takes barely place, besides of the threatening. Proof of prostitution we did not find as well. What does happen is that seldom a car with young men enters the meeting field.' In the period of increased police inspection one ticket was booked for offensive behaviour. Two men were making love at the street. At night no tickets have been booked. The police assumes that those who visit the Weerseloseweg at night, is seeking the homo's purposely and is not offended by it. The problem during the day is that homo's drive in to roads, where they are not allowed to come. For this offence more than thirty times a ticket has been booked. The impact was sometimes large. 'Do not forget that many visitors are living a double life. They are married. Sometimes they come to the Weerseloseweg with the child seat in the back of the car. Men sometimes break down in tears when they get a ticket. They get a ticket at the doormat in which is mentioned that they are arrested for offensive behaviour', says neighbourhood officer L. Goossen in Enschede-Noord. The inspections of the police next to the Weerseloseweg did in the beginning lead to large unrest. The sexual practices moved in the direction of Hengelo. Because the homo's mostly know each other, it quickly became clear that the police was not there to chase them away. 'After some time we gained trust and the cars did not speed off as soon as they saw us. Many homo's were happy to see us. They knew that we were coming to make the area more safe. They gave us the license plate numbers of drivers who were harassing them.' The police stopped this increased police inspection in August. The inspections are now part of the regular route. They did leave a special email address at the

homo's, who can respond in this way anonymously. Within the police circles the Enschedese project is, according to Reiring, Westrik and Goossen, unique. The knowledge gained is transferred to German colleagues in Munster. At the end of this month there is in Hengelo a national meeting of police men, in which Enschedese police men tell about their experiences. 'Our message is that the police learns how to deal with gay meeting places. You can chase the homo's away, but with that you only transfer the problem.'

Referred to in footnotes Presentation of Data as Enschede.

(<http://www.tctubantia.nl/regio/enschede/3730196/Intimidatie-van-bezoekers-homoontmoetingsplek.ece?start=1&sort=desc,23-07-2009>).

13) *Discussion topic at Internet forum www.partyflock.nl: Special gay meeting places assigned in Best.*

No guiding text.

Referred to in footnotes Presentation of Data as Best.

(http://partyflock.nl/topic/702978:Speciale_homo_ontmoetingsplaats_toegezwen_in_Best.html,23-07-2009).

14) *Article at Internet forum www.bokt.nl: Gay Meeting Place Given Back to Nature - refers to an article with the following contents: A 'topper' among the meeting places for homo's, with 'also young public'. 'One of the most busy lanes of the Netherlands. Activities almost 24 hours a day, except during the day in the weekends.' Already for three years car drivers are not able to park and take a rest at the Bosberg, alongside the A27 near*

Hollandsche Rading. The parking place was used that often as gay meeting place that the Directorate-General of public works and water management closed the site in 2004. This week it was made known that the asphalt is being cleared out and the site is given back to nature. But attractive texts at the Internet about the 'lane' alongside the highway A27 near Hollandsche Rading as a place to 'cruise' clearly maintains its reputation at the Bosberg among the unwanted part of the visitors.

Cruisers, homo and bisexual men seeking for fleeting and anonymous sex contact in the open air. As long as there has been a parking places alongside the A27, there were meetings, the former users think. It was something well known, among those who love anonymous outdoor sex. The Bosberg. With the parking place for the social meeting and the bushes in the behind for the sexual acts. Till the nineties there were no complaints. About rubbish. Condoms, paper, junk and packages. And about other things not everyone wants to enjoy. The Directorate-General of public works and water management threatened to close the parking place. Officially not because of the gay meeting place. They were working on a new resting place near Eemnes, by which enough resting place alongside highways would be established.

An email bombardement aimed at Directorate-General of public works and water management was started by the users, followed by juridical procedures by Stichting Platform Keelbos – mentioned after Limburgian homo bushes. In vain. Bosberg was closed down. Whether the closure yielded something? No, the experts and users argue. When Bosberg closed

down, it became more busy next to the parking place Nijpoort alongside the A27. Inhabitants at the Groenekanse Koningin Wilhelminaweg complained that they could 'enjoy' unwanted the sexual escapades of the visitors. The bushes were cut down. Just like what they did at the carpool place alongside the A1 near Brunschoten, where the crowdedness increased.

'When men can not meet at that one place, they do it somewhere else. Gay meeting places are part of our society. Closing them all down is not possible, whether people like it or not', says the knowledge centre homo- and lesbian emancipation policy. According to the organisation research shows that about forty percent of all men would like at a certain moment in their life homosexual contacts. After the closure by the Directorate-General of public works and water management sometimes a cruiser was spotted, but since the exit to the Bosberg is closed, they are predominantly walkers spotted in the forest. Anthony Mathijssen, chairman of Stichting Platform Keelbos, understand that people think back with melancholy

about the Bosberg. The organisation which stand up for users of gay meeting places do not resign to the decision made by the Directorate-General of public works and water management. 'It is a witch hunt against homo's. For gay meeting places there are no juridical means.' (article published at <http://www.ad.nl/utrecht/stad/article1847253.ece>)

Guiding text: Every evening when I drive home, I pass it ... the Texaco near Utrecht Noord. And it is always extremely busy ... with cars full of men waiting for an anonymous fuck in the bushes. Gay meeting places are not forbidden in the Netherlands, but I find it ridiculous that these people get a permit to practice this kind of practices at parks, nature areas and gas stations, and to pollute these with used condoms, empty tubes of lubricant etc. What do you think? Should this be possible or not?

Referred to in footnotes Presentation of Data as Hollandsche Rading. (<http://www.bokt.nl/forums/viewtopic.php?f=135&t=1103164>, 23-07-2009).

Appendix 2: Quotes not used

Belonging to chapter 4: Letting the data do the talking

A Leisure Phenomenon

Visitors:

“I do not often encounter many young boys or young men, mostly they are men in their late thirties up to sometimes seventy. There are also old, dirty men, and they cruise there everywhere, alone, yes, they have less success, to say it like that, because no-one wants them. But yes sometimes they succeed, or they are spectators, who stand there around you jerking themselves off. [Allochtons?] No, in any case no Turkish or Moroccan people or what so ever. I have once seen a black man, a surinam man maybe or what so ever, at least with a dark skin colour. No in general they are white men, so I assume Dutch men. When they [muslims] are caught then they totally lose face within their family. Allochtons, no. They are usually Dutch men in their late thirties and older. I am fifty-two.”¹

“[People of other ethnicity?] At the place where I come [mentions the place], there always comes one man, a young man, I think he is in his late twenties, always walking there very shyly. Especially since the police [there was a police invasion at the place], I never see him anymore, but he comes there specifically for the sexuality, but he always reacts very timid, a very nice man, but you notice that no-one can know or see it, but he really comes there for the sexuality. [...] In general somewhat older people,

where I come somewhat older people, let's say between forty and sixty, seventy. The place where I come [mentions the place], I know, I know there are men who are somewhat younger, that they are married or have a relationship and who also come there every now and then, and I know them by sight, but in general it is a bit older what comes there.”²

“In this region, I would say, it is in general white, there are quite some, I think, married men walking around, I also think there are many bachelors walking around who have not come out of the closet yet, and then the rest of the homo is left, those are the openly homo's, but it is difficult to draw a picture. Yes, I can not see whether, because homo's can also get married now, when someone has a ring, is it a hetero or a homo marriage. Because sometimes, yes with the safety seats and the stickers in the back of the car then you have an increased chance. But seldom you see a foreigner, but that is here, the places I visit, rarely. I mean when it becomes known that you are there in the foreign culture then yes, at most they are real foreigners who come there, who are on a holiday or live there temporarily, but no the allochton, he will not be it.”³

“My idea is that ninety percent, maybe even more, is not really homosexual, those are all married men, or bi men. Real homo's have their own scene, real places, they don't need those outdoor places I think. They

are mostly married men. [What do you think about that?] Yes amazing and confirmative that I'm not the only one. [...] See, a real homo, who is single, can receive people at home. When I would like to have extramarital sex, whether this is with a man or a woman, yes at home it is very difficult, then they have to be gone all at the same time. Maybe that's also a reason why you would create these places, for people who can not receive others at home, those also go often to outdoor meeting places or clubs or what so ever. That could also be a reason. [...] I have the idea that many men at these places are married. They are often married men, but in any case not real homo men, those are not the real homo's, they don't come there, I am convinced about this. Sure there can be one. No they have their own scene, they have their own life."⁴

"Well when I look at myself, at that age you dare a bit more, you are more confident about yourself. I was earlier as a teenager, let's say it like this, I was very shy. But I had more sexual contacts and adventures in the last years than I had when I was young, while that's the time you go and explore. Then I was very shy. [...], I didn't dare to go into sex clubs or what so ever, while I was single then and no-one cared. But now I'm older I dare more in that area."⁵

"I think it also has to do with when you are as a bi or homo man in a hetero relation, you can do that for a period, but after some time that homo-bi feeling get's to the surface. I explain this to myself now. Then I think that after about ten years, in my case this was so, then that feeling

get's to the fore more and you have to do something with it. And then people start doing something with it, I made it public to my relation, but many people don't do that and choose to visit more frequently GMP's to get satisfied. And yes, when you add the years then you mostly end up around forty."⁶

"I think that the younger guard, to call it like that, those are probably those young men who do not easily make contact, or have a high sexual need. But the real nice young man, yes, you do not find them in the park."⁷

Spatial component:

"I know many people there and when I arrive there in the morning at eleven [...] then we talk to each other for a while, and during the day we also walk by each other and also for a talk, also sometimes for sexuality, but also sometimes for a talk. Thus that is actually more a kind of, it is a bit comparable to beaches, what we call gay beach."¹¹ About the same place, "the place [names the place] is our area, it's our place, where we in our minds, and then I'm talking for the whole group who comes there, because in our sense we have the right to the place, because it is a place where we don't disturb others, [...] it's our place where normatively more is possible. [...] [I]t is from a recreation perspective my place. [...] The other places [places alongside highways], yes I come there for my horny feeling. For the quick, and you can also sometimes meet nice people there, [...] but I actually go there because it tickles."⁸

“[I] think that at that kind of places (alongside highways) social contact is not the most important. It is even more anonymous. When you come there to flow of [sexual] tension, and separate it from intimacy, then the social is less important.”⁹

“[O]n holiday we [he and his partner] also do it, in dune areas where it takes places, also in other countries we visit those places. The difference is of that kind, that at holiday places it takes place during the day, and at parking places it is often at night and in the dark. Because, mostly, at the parking places many men do not want to be recognized, and in contrast to the dunes or the beach, where, so to say, more open cruising areas are, there people are not ashamed to walk openly. There are some who rather remain invisible and then the sex is, so to say, also short, I mean it can be done in five minutes, but you also have contacts where it can take longer. [...] The people who visit the parking places, often come from the area, in that way they don't want to be recognized that fast, and also no conversation. But when I am in the dunes, and that is usually at [names an Mediterranean island] and when you have there a cruising area, people come from everywhere, thus they will never be recognized in their country [...]. Eventually they also come there for the sex. It is less sneaky, the parking place quickly has a bit of the back room feeling, like we are actually not allowed to do this, and we should not do this, therefore let's do it very quickly. [At open places] it is more relaxed. [...] No, yes, there is a big difference between a parking place or there. Yes in the atmosphere it is completely different. I rather go to the dunes than to a parking places,

because it is simply more relaxed, yes it is just open, it is not the sneaky back room effect.”¹⁰

Communication and sociality:

“[Talking?] It is so diverse, that you can not say there is talking or there is no talking. But I think that the average hetero man comes purely to have very quick sex and leave again, because he possibly has to report at home, or because he has to walk the dog.”¹¹

“What I always find enjoyable at such a place, when you had sex with someone, that there is a nice contact, a relaxed contact afterwards, that it is not like, finished business, boom, in the car and tear off. Well, that you talk for a moment with each other, sometimes people say ‘Gee how awesome, how nice, how nice it was, how awesome this’, and well just a talk, a social talk, gives it a little more of a personal touch, for me it does not necessarily have to be that fleeting, or...I enjoy, I mean, pants back on and immediately gone, not even a goodbye, that is so scanty, and then I think ‘woh’.”¹²

“I have to say that, when I go there [places near home] then you have a higher chance to meet someone you know, yes negative tension, non pleasurable tension. [...] When you meet someone you know from those places, then no, you don't say anything, yes. Yes it depends of course whether you're alone, then you can of course greet, but if you walk with your wife in the city. Then you have to explain who it was [...] ‘Well, a

colleague or this or that’.”¹³ The co-researcher takes this one step further and after the interview he tells me that his wife works at emergency centre, where she has on the screens the images of the security camera’s in the city, thus he makes sure that when he leaves e.g. a sex cinema that he is not caught by the camera.

Communication of preferences:

“[What kind of partner?] A bit fresh, sometimes you simply then you see a person and then, well, without thinking too much about it, that’s just him, you know, you see it from the posture or the appearance, and then you walk up there.”¹⁴

“How I decide with whom I will have sex, gee, in first instance he has to look nice. And that doesn’t have to be pretty, sometimes rather ugly, or ugly, is also fine, but it is first eye contact and sometimes not. Sometimes it is purely that you say like, then this other person hasn’t seen you yet, but you have seen him, and then you walk up to him and then just wait and see what happens. Sometimes I am not in the mood for someone, because he is hanging around you so long already, that eventually it becomes exciting that people are so eager to have you, and then it happens anyways. Yes I also had this moment that I thought ‘Well let’s do it then it is done and over with’ [...]. I don’t know what it is, gee, why do you have something with someone. When I’m in the dunes then I am very penis focused, yes then that’s something you look at quickly, that is possible over there, as everyone walks there open and naked. [Something causes a click?] Yes but

I can not always say what. It can be very disappointing, but it can be very awesome [...], with someone of whom you think ‘What should I do with that person?’. I find well-groomed rather important, that doesn’t have to be totally shaved, but the clothing should be a bit neat, my hairs should not stand on end when I see that person, that I think ‘Yuck what do I have to do with this creep?’.”¹⁵

“When one person asks me ‘Do you want to be fucked?’, then I answer with ‘No’. And when he is explicitly looking for that, then the encounter ends there, and he walks further.”¹⁶

“[How do you agree on what happens?] That all happens intuitively, and sometimes someone says ‘No, not that, do not do that’, well then you know that that is not appropriate, well fine, then you stop doing that, and if you don’t like it and you would like exactly that, then you say ‘Well too bad, then it ends here’. It is quite possible that a contact completely ends after two minutes, if someone doesn’t want it, there are more than enough people who only touch each other shortly, and then say after ten minutes ‘This was enough, it was fun, but I don’t want to come yet, or ‘I want to do something with someone else, or ‘I want this or I want that’.”¹⁷

“[I]t also happens that you have a contact that is not completely pleasant, well that is also possible. There is a particular code at those places, when you experience from each other that you experience the contact as unpleasant, then everyone goes one’s own way, and in general this goes quite well.”¹⁸

“My boundary at the sexual level always is like, everything is possible when man and woman are doing it, as long as it is voluntarily and nothing against your will. No matter how extreme what you do as man and woman or as two men, when you both want it then it is okay from my perspective, but when the other says ‘Hé I do not want this’, that is where it ends for me. Besides children and animals is also not done. But all the other cases, when two adult people want something with each other, no matter how extreme, when you both want it, then it is always fine. But you should want it both.”¹⁹

Motivations:

“I think that there is a category of men who, indeed, go to the place because they anyhow have no relation, have difficulties finding a relationship.” “Ik denk dat er een aantal mannen zijn die inderdaad naar de plaats toegaan omdat ze gewoon sowieso geen relatie hebben, moeilijk een relatie kunnen vinden.”²⁰

“Why? I mean, I just say what I think, why do you go there? You go there because you are in a horny mood and looking for something at that moment.”²¹

“Also earlier [...], in my youth around my twentieth I also visited these places. Just purely excitement, sensation, uhm, yes gee, you come out of the bar at night and you didn’t have a date, well then you just went there to see what’s there and is there something, and is there something nice. Does

there happen to be a nice man walking there, and yes, then you just wait and see what happens.”²²

“[...] A kind of excitement. Excitement, like, gee yes, who will I meet [...]”²³
“[E]specially the people you possibly meet that’s the sensation.”²⁴ “[V]ooral de mensen die je eventueel gaat ontmoeten dat is de sensatie.”

“[W]hen you sometimes see one of those men again, and if you had sexual contact once with a man, then you don’t want it a second time that fast. Then it passed, then the sexual tension is gone. Sometimes when you had good sex, then you think ‘Well with you I would like to do it again’.”²⁵

“[I]t is also partly excitement, you do not know who you are going to meet.”²⁶

“I was fourteen and experimenting with boyfriends and girlfriends, but in our village there was no gay meeting place, otherwise I would have gone there probably earlier out of curiosity. It was only when I got my drivers license, and four boyfriends and six girlfriends later, I visited a gay meeting place for the first time.”²⁷

“[But now? (rainy, cold day)] Now it is cold, and I don’t like rain, no I don’t go then, with this weather I can also very easily get it out of my head. The weather has a big influence, yes, and when spring arrives again with beautiful weather then you notice that it get’s busier.”²⁸

“Well, let me say it like this, if I can meet with someone inside or outdoor, then I would choose for inside. Yes, you are dependent on the weather, and

it is a bit more unsafe. Outside also has something, but not per se. You have more luxury, otherwise it is often standing, sometimes in the car, but when you meet at someone's home then there is a couch, a bed. You can have a drink or something, or afterwards. Let me say it like this, it is for me not that outside is extra exciting, that I want it because it is outside.”²⁹

“My ideal meeting place, God girl, well a place that is easily accessible, that is decorated with bushes and trees and what so ever. It would be nice if there was water to swim with a beach and just where you can move openly, and you do not have to be afraid. With all sorts and conditions of people. Because that would make it more fun, that would make it more realistic, otherwise you remain in a dream paradise which does not exist anyways. [...] I think it is delicious when it is on the beach, I mean I find that delicious, nice swimming water, it gives me a feeling of freedom, it would give me a sense of freedom, that it just is so openly open and free[.]”³⁰

“[Y]ou of course come across these places everywhere in the Netherlands, when you are driving on the high way you pass these places, thus then it is very easy to take the exit, and to go and see for a moment. [...] Yes, you can when you feel some tension, sexual tension, you can easily go to such a place to let it flow of, yes it's possible, and it happens.”³¹

“[A]nd it [the gay meeting place] was very close to our home, thus it was very easy by bike, three kilometers of biking and you were there, and then

through a fence, and then you arrived at the parking place, well there it was, done, very easy.”³²

“Those are of course fantastically beautiful and cheap places to become sexually satisfied. You only have to drive by with your car.”³³

“[A]nd yes, when you have done it once, yes I would not call it addictive, but once you take the threshold, it is not difficult to go a second time.”³⁴

“Yes and it helps me with my sex drive, I could not do without it.”³⁵

Family men

“They [family men] are afraid that it becomes known that they looked for contact at meeting places.”³⁶ “[But] for example have a wife at home, or want to keep their sexual orientation secret for the outside world.”³⁷

“Interest groups for homo's indicate that the men who visit these locations, are often married, their visit is secret[.]”³⁸

“The visitors of the gay meeting place (some married with children) panicked, with the murder [a man was killed at the particular meeting place] their secret life was possibly unmasked.”³⁹

Being open about one's sexual orientation:

“Not coming out of the closet can have many different reasons. The most recurrent one is still the fear of rejection, losing family and friends. But it is of course more difficult when you're married and having children. The Netherlands is not as tolerant as one thinks and says to be. When it is on a distance then it is still okay for the large part of the Netherlands, but as

soon as it gets closer then it is something different. Look around you and listen carefully when you are at a party, or with a group of people, there are always comments made about homo's. Often as a joke with some laughter, when you are at that moment the one who is still in the closet, then the threshold is again a few centimeters higher, and it goes on like this for years. Friends, well, you do everything with them, but as soon as they know you're homo, then they don't want to go swimming with you anymore, because then you take a shower together and so further, that is suddenly not responsible anymore."⁴⁰

"They [family men] can not go anywhere else. [Why get married to a woman?] There is a certain category of men, I think, of whom the outside world can not know that they are homosexual or have homosexual inclinations. [...] [O]ften Dutch reformed or what so ever, often children, and then 'Oh yes as long as it isn't disclosed'. See, you obviously can not go to a gay bar, because imagine someone sees you leaving the bar, you can not go to a sex cinema, so you do it when you're on the road, and then hope you don't meet someone you know."⁴¹

"[About the reactions of people on his coming out] Very positive, always thought it. I have never seen it as a threshold, but I have never been so occupied with it, only later, after some years I thought 'If I really want something, then it has to happen one moment soon', but it has never been an issue, that I was in a spot or something. I only thought 'Now it has to

happen', done. It has to come out and then you wait and see were it ends, and it doesn't end at all, no."⁴²

Coming to terms with one's sexual orientation:

"I have been married, but that's about eight, nine years ago. [Visited gay meeting places?] Yes, also. Yes, I have been married for twenty-six years, before I got married I already knew that I was also interested in men, I told this to my ex, let's say, there was also a piece, I think I was more bi-oriented, then really homo-oriented. I was of the opinion that I had to continue with her, she thought the same, and that went fine for years. Only after having been married for about ten, twelve years that homo-feeling came more to the front. Then we talked about it and then she indicated 'If you have to do something with it, when you feel suffocated by me, or you cannot get from me what you need for that other part, then look for ways to find that.' And then she hinted at, I think, to have a relationship on the side. I did try it, but it didn't work out that well, then you have to live for two hundred percent, when you want to have two relationships, at least that is my feeling. So, to give space to that homo-feeling I started visiting those places, to be among my own sort, so to say, to have sex, but also to have social contacts, but also to have the feeling you belong to a group."⁴³

"[Do you think that a gay meeting place is helpful in coming out of the closet?] No, maybe for some, when visiting a gay meeting place ends with a nice drink in a gay bar. People can explore at gay meeting places to what extend one is bi, but coming out of the closet is something completely

different. [Do you think that men can explore and develop their feelings?] Yes, more and more people are curious. Earlier that was quickly suppressed, but nowadays people hold on to it in their fantasy, and then the moment comes they want to act upon this fantasy. I think a gay meeting place is not fit for this, but it does work.”⁴⁴

Self-classification:

“I’m married, yes, two children. [...] [Wife doesn’t know?] No, she knows I’m free in terms of sex and so on, having sexual adventures with a married couple and so on, she knows that, but not that I go to those meeting places. [...] Yes it never came into my mind to tell her this. [Difficult a double life?] Yes maybe, yes I do not have much problems with it. Maybe my wife also has secrets for me. When you talk to people you hear from everyone, then everyone has secrets for each other. That they first say their honest and blablabla, ideal images, and according to me that is not true and I’m just one of them. The one is not honest about money things, maybe he gambles, or something else. [...] [Happy with wife?] Yes only the sex is not so so, and it is also not something we do not do often, only summarily. [Related to each other?] Well I think so, but that is because of her, I would like to have more sex, but I do not find it problematic, we can talk with each other, we get along in all fields, only in that field we don’t match completely. And maybe that’s a reason that I ... See, if my wife also would like exciting things, go to a club or something, then I did not have to go look for it alone, then we could maybe go together. Or you look for one or

two married couples with whom you have a click and you maintain that and then you go there, with whom you entertain yourself or do something. But for her sex is simply something, well within the walls of marriage and not outside of it.”⁴⁵

“You should not put labels on people. That piece [visiting gay meeting places] is what people base their judgement on. It is absurd but true. But yes, people of course want some hold when placing their norms and this is of course is a way to. And I think the more Christian you are, the more boxes you have.”⁴⁶

“It is after all different when men have sex with another man, it is dirty, it should not be like that. And when you have an affair with a delicious or beautiful woman then they say like ‘Look at that’, or ‘Look at him’, then you’re such a man [raises his dumb]. That is so hypercritical as possible. You are doing it yourself and you have to justify it to yourself.”⁴⁷

“[About being open to his wife] I think that she could not understand it, I think she would rather understand that I have something with another woman, than something like this.”⁴⁸

“I read once that men are hunters, actually it is biological. It all does not fit to the moral and how we should live. Doing everything with one partner, and being married, does not match with our biological make-up. [...] And then I think sometimes ‘We men are nothing worse than women, women are just as bad’, only women are a bit more discrete, I often think.”⁴⁹

“I don’t think there are this kind of hetero parking places. [Why not?] I think that women do not go to that kind of places that quickly, and by the way, certainly not alone as a woman anyways, I also would not go there alone as a woman.”⁵⁰

Acceptance of homosexuality:

“[I]t is difficult to come out of the closet, I think, here in the east possibly it is. When I look at my school [the co-researcher is a teacher], they all know I’m a homosexual, fairly I would have expected more boys to come to me, who would like to talk. I had in my whole career, let’s say ten years, one, two girls who came to me. But that’s the whole trend in the whole of society of course, acceptance has decreased during the last years.” “Nou dat heeft denk ik nog steeds te maken dat het heel moeilijk is om uit de kast te komen, denk ik, hier in het oosten misschien wel. Als ik dan op school kijk bij mij, ze weten allemaal dat ik homoseksueel ben, gewoon dan had ik toch wel wat meer verwacht dat jongens bij me zouden komen, die zouden willen praten. Ik heb tot nu toe in mijn hele carrière, zeg maar tien jaar, één, twee meisjes gehad die bij me zijn geweest. Maar dat is de hele trend in de hele maatschappij natuurlijk, dat acceptatie is minder geworden de laatste jaren.”⁵¹

“Many homo’s thought that we were done after the introduction of gay marriage. But recently you notice that people who are homophobic can get away with it. I do not dare to walk hand in hand in Amsterdam anymore. Our freedoms are eroding.”⁵²

“I think that it [the way people deal with homosexuality] becomes more free, that is more and more accepted, but okay there is always a certain category who doesn’t want it, or is not able to, for whatever reasons, their upbringing, their religion or what so ever, who have difficulties with it. Without doubt it has improved. Fairy’s should themselves not always provoke. [...] [About the gay parade] However, I think something like, I don’t think it is necessary to go and stand there [on the boats] without clothes, it doesn’t add anything, at least not for me. We should be careful that we don’t take it too far, that we don’t, and through this incite more aggression. That’s what I’m afraid of, that that is just happening, that some cases of aggression are purely and solely the result of, yes yes, presenting or doing something just a bit too expressly, then I think like ‘Yes, that totally does not have any function.’”⁵³

“[Sex playing a role in the opinion on gay meeting places?] Yes I think so. [Why?] Especially when they are talking about it they want to make known that they find it disgusting, while maybe secretly in their heart also find it exciting or maybe do it. I am not like that by the way, when they talk about it, I keep wisely silent or, I do not condemn it, I am not like that. But I am also not going to say that I come there to my colleagues or at a birthday party, name it.”⁵⁴

“It has a very negative image of course. [The cause?] Yes it is of course, I have never shouted around ‘Well I have contacts there and there’, no that is not something you shout that quick. [Reason?] Yes, because you, you are

ashamed for it I don't know, but but, yes it influences your image negatively.”⁵⁵

“In addition, of course, that for a part the people who from the Islam, completely reject this kind of things and have the idea that they can have measures against it, because I think that for many young people from that group, that they think like ‘Those are perverts anyways, they are pigs and you can throw them from the highest tower’. So I think that that also plays a role in it. I have, I have to say, little experience with it myself, I did experience that I was walking in the city with a friend and that remarks were made, but I never experienced physical violence in relation to that. But well when I hear the stories of people around me.”⁵⁶

State and police intervention

Waterbed effect:

“But designated places I find wrong. I would find that it should simply be possible in a safe way. I think that when you decide to tolerate, because those parking places were, when only at those parking places and a few kilometres further, when you start closing those then people look for other yet other places and in that way you keep on chasing after each other, it will never end. Then rather a place where it is tolerated, then you have those place, which already exist, why would you close those down and open other somewhere else.”⁵⁷

Overt and covert measures:

“[T]here was a man there who had a camper and he was standing near the meeting place and then he met a man at that meeting place and said like ‘Shall we go to the camper, then we have more privacy’, then the police came and started knocking on the door of the camper, like open up. And then he opened the door, ‘Yes what are you doing here’ said the police man, then he said ‘None of your business, I am standing here at a parking place, I can stand here with the camper.’ ‘Yes but I know what you are doing here, and what is that man doing there with you?’ ‘Yes that is also non of your business.’ That is simply intimidation, because it is not forbidden to stand with a camper at a parking place [...]. And what that other man was doing there, is for sure not something the police man should ask about, he was right, but it was purely intimidation. So he did not get a fine or something, but he did feel intimidated and troubled by that police man. But I never experienced it, luckily not.”⁵⁸

“For example I got a fine right, when I would have fine for parking my car somewhere where it is not allowed, then it arrives at home within one-and-a-half week, well then I know I had a fine, fine. There is a policy at the district recreation board [of the place], the director also mentioned it, that he fines are not send until the maximum of sixteen weeks, because before the sixteenth week it should arrive at your home, so get the fine in the fifteenth week, I experienced it myself, I mean I live alone so I do not continuously have to go to the mail box to see if the fine is there, but I was thinking imagine that I do not make known that I have bi- or homo feelings and am in a married situation, then I have to go every morning for

sixteen weeks to the mail box to see if I have to secretly take out the letter. That is ridiculous right, but that is terror, that is simply terror and it happens.”⁵⁹

“[Police?] They have here in [mentions a city] also near the [mentions a place] that is a recreation area and in a part of it there is nude recreation during the day, but at night it is also a meeting place. The police and government found it so problematic that they cut down all the trees there, simply deterrent policy. At the [mentions a highway] just outside [mentions a city], there is a parking place which is also a meeting place, there they also cut down all the trees, they made it in such a way that you can not stand out of the sight of others anymore. Let me say it differently, imagine that we would prohibit prostitution in the Netherlands, then about ten to twenty percent more women would be raped than happens now on a yearly basis. They witnessed that in the United States during the prohibition on alcohol, then everything at once got worse. I think that something which is simply present in society is something you have to learn to live with, and not prohibiting these lanes.”⁶⁰

Visibility:

“I do agree that, that kind of people who come there, like me, you can not cause any disturbances to people who do not want it. When it is at more public places, that you do not shock children or people who do not want to know anything about it. No I can understand that very well, and I find that quite logic. You can look at that very well negatively, that you do not cause

any disturbances, and you do see that in the newspaper. That people leave things lying around, paper and so on.”⁶¹

“And you know there are also homo-bi men who are not careful, who have sex at the side of the road, then I think ‘Yes, you should also be a bit self regulating, you should also know where the boundaries in relation to other people are’, and I find that those people should be dealt with, I have no problems with that, then I think ‘Yes that is public indecency’, that is what I perceive of as public indecency.”⁶²

“I sometimes get pictures of men visiting gay meeting places who for example are butt-naked having sex at a picnic table at the border of a highway. That should be visible from the highway and that is why they do it, some think like that, but the large part has more something like it belongs to all of us and we want a part of it where no-one disturbs us and we do not disturb anyone. [...] Who goes and has sex in the sight of other? Also children can come by.”⁶³

“[Experienced others at a place?] No actually not.”⁶⁴

“[Other people?] Yes that happened. Look you also have, surely alongside highways parking places and that those are simply public parking places, that people stop there and are not aware of it and then suddenly, I do not know, see a few dude in the bushes, and maybe are startled by it. I have never talked to someone or something.”⁶⁵

Designating, tolerating and legalising:

“It doesn’t seem necessary to me [marking a gay meeting place]. Even I know by now as a non Friesian inhabitant that in recreation area the Groene Ster sausages are walked regularly.”⁶⁶

“[Legalising?] The place where I had a conflict, would for sure be a place to legalise it, because there really is no-one disturbed by it. It is really a place which is detached from other kinds of recreation, thus that would be an ideal place [...] I think that when you make clear to people that that is a meeting place, then I think that people would be less disturbed by it, because they know we should not be there. Now they sometimes bump onto something that they think, that they suddenly, accidentally are confronted by it. And you know there are also homo-bi men who are. [...] So I think that when you would legalise, marking that this is a gay meeting place, yes then you prevent very many problems, and you make it way easier for the large group themselves. [...] In addition you create more willingness to report to the police, because people start to perceive of the police as protectors of the group, plus you get less criminality at that kind of place, and I have to say that I experienced a few times very bad criminality. [...] And I think that when you would legalise other places, sure you create a lot of rest and you can confront people when they do not comply to the restrictions. You should allow it under certain conditions, there can not be visible public sex, also not on public roads, it should stay invisible, in that sense invisible that it is in bushes and when people do not do that you have a right to say something. Then you can ‘Come on, the

agreement is not like that, you get a fine for that’, and then people would accept that too. Now they resist in advance.”⁶⁷

“Yes legalising, I know, when you go and legalise something, I do not think that the people in the government should designate places ‘Here it is allowed’, because I find that so stigmatising, there you can mess about, and there you can mess about, but when you do it somewhere else then it is not allowed anymore. I could not care less if people are messing about at a parking place or not. I could not care less whether they are homo’s or hetero’s. [...] No, a designated place I would find bad. And it also leads to some people, that you stimulate gay bashing. But who wants control, you could not come there with your family for example, or hetero couples are not welcome. I can go as a homo to a parking place, but if I mess around is something different.”⁶⁸

Gay bashing:

“I have to say that I experienced a few times very bad criminality, or criminality, yes people who, uhm I have to think for a moment, people who know those parking places, and I do not know if that happens from a kind of right-wing-radical behaviour or purely macho behaviour, but who come up to you very intimidating and let steam off on your car. In my case two tires were pierced, for example, at that place [mentions place] where I park my car at that parking place, when I came back from recreation two of my tires were pierced, but also at other places people who simply come up to you very intimidating with a stick, for example, and try to trash your

window, or, I did become more careful in that, as soon as I notice that I do not trust it, then I am gone, then I turn around the car and leave, because I know that I am nothing against that kind of people, and I do not trust the police that much that I think 'Let me call them'. I find that in a certain way a terrible pity, because at that kind of moments I should take my phone and say like, 'Look guys, 112, I am assaulted, come on'. But I am not convinced that the police comes that quickly, or at least not with full speed, I do not think so."⁶⁹

"[Experienced gay bashing?] No fortunately not. No fortunately not. It think not that that is a fiction what is described. I think that many men came into contact with violence without reporting it. When I do not want to be recognised at such a parking place and I am beaten up, then I will not go and report it, because then I have to go inside to report that I have been at that parking place. 'And what were you doing there, sir?', 'But why do they beat you up you are not gay right?'. Look, sure it happens and people know it, but if people close their eyes for it, I do not dare to say. I find it very difficult. I think that people rather here that it is not happening, than that it is happening."⁷⁰

1 “Ik kom er niet veel jonge jongetjes of jongemannen tegen, het zijn toch vaak mannen van achter in de dertig tot soms wel zeventig jaar toe. Er lopen ook oude vieze mannetjes, en die cruisen daar overal, alleen, ja, die hebben minder succes om het zo te zeggen, omdat niemand daar op uit is. Maar ja soms lukt het dan wel weer, of het zijn van die kijkers, die er om heen staan te trekken ofzo. [Buitenlanders?] Nee, in elk geval geen Turken of Marokkanen of wat dan ook. Ik heb wel eens een donkere man zien lopen, een Surinamer misschien of wat dan ook, in ieder geval een donkere huidskleur. Nee het zijn over het algemeen wel blanke mannen, dus ik neem aan Nederlandse mannen. Als die moslims betrappt worden dan gaan ze helemaal af in hun familie. Buitenlanders, nec. Het zijn meestal Nederlandse mannen van achter in de dertig en ouder. Ik ben tweeënvijftig.”

2 “[Mensen van andere etniciteit?] Op die plek waar ik kom [...], komt altijd één meneer, een jongeman nog, ik denk dat hij achter in de twintig is, loopt daar altijd heel schuw en heel schichtig. Vooral nu daar de politie, zie ik hem helemaal niet meer, maar die komt daar ook echt voor de seksualiteit, maar hij reageert altijd heel schuchter, een hele aardige vent, maar je merkt dat niemand mag dat weten en niemand mag dat zien, maar komt daar echt voor de seksualiteit. [...] Over het algemeen wel wat oudere mensen, waar ik dan kom wel wat oudere mensen, zeg maar tussen de veertig en de zestig, zeventig. De plek waar ik dus kom [...], daar weet ik, ken ook mannen die ook wat jonger zijn, dat ze ook getrouwd zijn of een relatie hebben en die daar dan ook af en toe komen, en die ken ik dan ook wel gewoon van gezicht enzo, maar over het algemeen is het ietsje ouder wat er komt.”

3 “In deze contreien, zou ik zeggen, is het hoofdzakelijk blank, er lopen denk ik nog wel behoorlijk wat getrouwde mannen bij, ik denk dat er ook heel veel vrijgezellen rondlopen die er nog niet voor uit zijn gekomen, en nou dan blijft de rest over van de homo, dat zijn dan openlijke homo's, maar het is wel moeilijk om een schets te maken. Ja ik kan niet zien of, omdat je nu als homo's ook gewoon getrouwd kunt zijn, dat als iemand een ring om heeft, is het een hetero of is het een homo-huwelijk. Want soms, ja met de zitjes en de plakplaatjes achter in de auto dan heb je wel iets meer kans. Maar heel af en toe zie je eens een buitenlander, maar dat is hier, de plekken die ik hier bezoek, sporadisch. Ik bedoel als dat openlijk wordt dat jij daar bent in de buitenlandse cultuur dan ja, het zijn hooguit echte buitenlanders die daar komen, die op vakantie zijn of hier tijdelijk wonen, maar niet de allochtoon, die zal het niet zijn.”

4 “Mijn gevoel zegt dat negentig procent, misschien nog wel meer, is niet echt homoseksueel, dat zijn allemaal getrouwde mannen, of bi-mannen. Echte homo's die hebben die eigen scene, echte plekken, die hebben die buitenplaatsen niet nodig volgens mij. Het zijn toch meest getrouwde mannen. [Wat vindt u daar van?] Ja verbazingwekkend en bevestigend dat ik niet de enige ben. [...] Kijk, een echte homo, die vrijgezel is, die kan gewoon thuis ontvangen. Als ik buitenechtelijke seks wil, of dat nou met een man of vrouw is, ja thuis wordt wel heel moeilijk, dan moeten ze allemaal een keer weg zijn. Dat is misschien ook een reden dat je een ontmoetingsplek zou maken, voor mensen die niet thuis ontvangstmogelijkheden hebben, die gaan ook heel veel naar buitenseksplaatsen of naar clubs of wat dan ook. Dat zou ook nog een reden kunnen zijn. [...] Ik heb toch het idee dat heel veel mannen wel getrouwd zijn op die plekken. Het zijn vaak getrouwde mannen, maar in elk geval geen echte homo-mannen, dat zijn niet de echte homo's, die komen daar niet, daar ben ik van overtuigd. Tuurlijk kan er één tussendoor lopen. Nee die hebben hun eigen scene, die hebben hun eigen leven.”

5 “Nou als ik een beetje naar mezelf kijk, op die leeftijd durf je wat meer, ben je wat zekerder van jezelf. Ik was vroeger als tiener, zeg maar, was ik heel verlegen. Maar ik heb de laatste jaren veel meer seksuele contacten en avonturen gehad dan toen ik jong was, terwijl je dan eigenlijk juist op zoek gaat. Toen was ik heel verlegen. [...], toen durfde ik echt niet seksclubs in te gaan of wat dan ook, terwijl ik toen vrijgezel was en niemand er iets om gaf. Maar nu ik wat ouder ben durf ik van alles op dat gebied.”

6 “Het heeft denk ik ook wel iets te maken met als je lang als bi- of homoman in een heterorelatie zit, dan kan je dat een periode volhouden, maar na verloop van tijd komt dat homo-bi gevoel toch boven. Dan verklaar ik het even naar mezelf toe hoor. Dan denk ik dat na een jaar of tien, bij mij was dat zo, dan komt dat gevoel duidelijk naar voren en moet je er iets mee. En dan gaan mensen er ook vaak iets mee doen, ik heb het dan openbaar gemaakt naar mijn relatie toe, maar heel veel mensen die dat niet doen en dan kiezen voor een frequenter bezoek van HOP's om aan hun trekken te komen. En ja als je die jaren bij elkaar optelt dan kom je meestal zo uit rond de veertig.”

7 “Ik denk dat de jongere garde, om het zo maar even te noemen, dat zijn dan waarschijnlijk toch de jonge mannen die of niet zo snel contact leggen, of heel veel behoefte hebben. Maar de echte leuke jongeman, ja, die vind je niet in het park.”

8 “De plek [noemt de plek] is ons gebied, is ons terrein, waar we ook voor ons gevoel, en dan praat ik ook echt voor de hele groep die daar komt, omdat we er voor ons gevoel ook recht op hebben, omdat het een plek is waar niemand zich er aan stoort, [...] het is onze plek waar normatief meer kan. [...] [H]et is recreatief mijn plek. [...] De andere plekken, ja daar kom ik voor mijn geile gevoel. Voor het snelle, en daar kun je ook soms wel eens leuke mensen ontmoeten, [...] maar ik ga er eigenlijk heen omdat het een beetje kriebelt.”

9 “[I]k denk op dat soort plekken [langs de grotere wegen] is het sociale contact niet echt het belangrijkste. Het is nog anoniemer. Als je er komt om spanning af te vloeien en het loskoppelt van intimiteit dan is het sociale minder belangrijk.”

10 “Nec op vakantie doen we het ook wel, in duincentra waar het zich plaatsvindt, ook in het buitenland wel zoeken we die plekken op. Het verschil is in die aard dat het op vakantieplekken overdag is en dat het op parkeerplekken toch vaak 's nachts is en in het donker plaatsvindt. Omdat met name op de parkeerplaatsen veel mannen eigenlijk liever niet herkend willen worden en in tegenstelling tot duinen of op het strand waar, zeg maar, meer openlijke cruising areas zijn, daar schaamt men zich er niet voor om openlijk te lopen. Er is wel een aantal die liever niet gezien willen worden en dan is de seks, zeg maar, ook heel kort, ik bedoel dan kan het in vijf minuten ook wel afgelopen zijn, maar je hebt soms ook wel contacten waar het langer loopt. [...] De mensen die op de parkeerplaatsen komen, komen vaak uit de buurt, ze willen op die manier niet zo snel herkend worden en dus ook geen praatje. Maar als ik in de duinen ben, en dat is meestal op [noemt een Mediterraans eiland], en als je daar zo'n cruising area hebt, men komt dan overal vandaan, dus men zal nooit meer ergens herkend worden in den landen [...]. Uiteindelijk komt men ook daar voor de seks. Het is minder geniepig allemaal, de parkeerplaats heeft heel snel een beetje het achterkamertjesgevoel, van eigenlijk mag dit niet en eigenlijk horen we dit niet te doen, dus doe maar even heel snel. [Op openlijkere plekken] is het allemaal meer ontspannender. [...] Nee, ja er is wel een groot verschil met een parkeerplaats of daar. Ja in sfeer is het echt heel anders. Ik ga liever naar de duinen dan naar een parkeerplek, omdat het gewoon ontspanner is, ja het is gewoon open, het is niet het geniepige achterkamertjeseffect.”

11 “[Gepraat?] Het is zo heel divers, dat je niet kunt zeggen er wordt gepraat of er wordt niet gepraat. Maar ik denk dat de gemiddelde heteroman puur komt om heel snel seks te hebben en weer weg te zijn, omdat hij zich mogelijk thuis nog moet melden of dat ie de hond nog moet uitlaten.”

12 “Wat ik zelf toch wel altijd heel leuk vind op zo'n plek, als je dan seks met iemand hebt gehad, dat er even een leuk contact is, een ontspannen contact na die tijd, dat het niet dus is, gedane zaken, boem, in de auto en wegcrossen. Nou, dat je even met elkaar praat, soms zeggen mensen 'Goh wat geweldig, wat leuk, wat was het fijn, wat geweldig zeg dit', en nou gewoon even een gesprek, een sociaal gesprek, geeft een iets persoonlijker jasje aan, het hoeft niet perse allemaal voor mij zo vluchtig of... Ik vind het wel leuk, ik bedoel, de broek aan en meteen weg, nog niet eens een hoi of dag, dat vind ik zo iets kaals, en dan denk ik, woh.”

13 “Dat moet ik wel weer zeggen als ik daar heen ga plekken in de buurt dan heb je toch wel weer wat meer kans dat je een bekende tegenkomt, ja negatieve spanning, niet prettige spanning. [...] Als je iemand van die plekken tegenkomt dan nee dan zeg je niets, ja. Ja dat ligt er natuurlijk aan of je alleen bent, dan kun je natuurlijk wel groeten, maar als je met je vrouw door de stad loopt. Dan moet je weer uitleggen wie was dat, 'Nou een collega of dit of dat.'”

14 “[Wat voor een partner?] Beetje fris, soms heb je gewoon dan zie je een persoon en dan, nou, zonder er heel diep over na te denken, dat is hem gewoon, weet je wel, je ziet het aan de houding of het uiterlijk, en dan loop je er heen.”

15 “Hoe ik bepaal met wat voor mensen ik seks heb, jeutje, in eerste instantie moet ie er voor mij ogelijk uitzien. En dat hoeft echt niet knap te zijn, mag soms ook best wel lelijk zijn, of lelijk zijn, maar het is eerst oogcontact en soms ook niet. Soms is het ook puur dat je zegt van, dan heeft die persoon je nog helemaal niet gezien, maar jij die ander wel, en dan loop je er op af en dan zie je wel of het wel of niet of wat wordt. Soms is het ook wel eens dat ik helemaal geen zin heb in iemand, omdat ie al een tijd zo om je heen zit te dralen, dat je het uiteindelijk toch ook wel heel spannend vind dat mensen het dan zo graag met jou willen, en dat het dan toch maar gebeurt. Ja ik heb het ook wel eens gehad dat ik dacht van 'Nou laat ik het maar doen dan ben ik er van af, van die persoon. [...] Ik weet niet wat het is, goh, waarom heb je iets met iemand. Als ik in de duinen ben dan ben ik

toch wel heel erg penisgericht, ja dan kijk je wel heel snel daar naar, dat kan dan ook, want het loopt er toch allemaal open en bloot. [Iets is er?] Ja maar ik kan dat niet altijd zeggen. Het kan ontzettend tegen vallen, maar het kan, zoals ik net zei, met iemand van wie je denkt 'Wat moet ik daarmee?', kan het toch heel erg geweldig zijn. Verzorgd vind ik toch wel belangrijk, dat hoeft niet helemaal netjes geschoren te zijn, maar de kledij moet toch wel een beetje net zijn, er moet me niet de haren overeind gaan staan als ik die persoon zie, dat ik denk van 'Jekkes wat moet ik met die creep?'."

16 "Als er één tegen mij zegt 'Wil je geneukt worden?', dan zeg ik 'Nee'. En als ie daar expliciet naar op zoek is dan is de ontmoeting over, dan loopt ie verder."

17 "[Hoe spreek je af wat er gebeurt?] Dat gebeurt allemaal op gevoel en soms zegt iemand 'Nee dat niet, niet doen', nou dan weet je dat dat niet hoort, nou klaar, dan doe je dat niet weer, en als je dat niet zint en jij wil dat dus net wel, dan zeg je 'Nou jammer dan houdt het op'. Het kan best zijn dat na twee minuten het contact helemaal is afgelopen, als iemand niet wil, er zijn genoeg mensen die heel even alleen maar aan elkaar zitten en dan na tien minuten zeggen, het is goed geweest, het was leuk maar ik wil nog niet klaarkomen, of ik wil met anderen wat hebben of ik wil dit of ik wil dat. Het stoppen van een seksuele handeling wil niet zeggen dat je afgewezen wordt, maar dat wil gewoon zeggen dat iemand die wil nog wel even verder kijken."

18 "[H]et gebeurt ook wel eens dat het contact wat er bestaat helemaal niet prettig is, nou dat kan ook. Er is wel een bepaalde code op die plekken, als je van elkaar ervaart dat je het contact niet prettig vindt, gaat iedereen weer zijns weegs, en over het algemeen gaat dat ook erg goed."

19 "Mijn grens ligt op seksgebied altijd bij, alles kan je als man en vrouw met elkaar doen, zo lang het maar vrijwillig gebeurt en niks tegen je zin. Al is het nog zo extreem wat je als man en vrouw of als twee mannen doet, als je het allebei wil dan is het in mijn ogen oké. Maar als de ander zegt van 'Hé dat wil ik niet', dan is het voor mij over. Daar buiten kinderen en dieren is voor mij ook uit den boze hoor. Maar voor de rest als twee volwassen mensen iets met elkaar willen al is het nog zo extreem, als je het allebei wil is het altijd goed. Maar je moet allebei willen."

20 "Ik denk dat er een aantal mannen zijn die inderdaad naar de plaats toegaan omdat ze gewoon sowieso geen relatie hebben, moeilijk een relatie kunnen vinden, en er is gewoon een categorie, waar ik zelf ook toe behoorde, die gewoon gaat op het moment dat ie behoefte heeft. En zodra het geweest is, dan is het ook weg, gewoon klaar en dan ga je weer."

21 "Waarom? Ik bedoel, ik zeg gewoon maar wat ik denk en wat ik vind, waarom ga je er naar toe? Je gaat er naar toe omdat je in een geile bui bent en op dat moment iets zoekt."

22 "Ook vroeger [...], in mijn jeugd rond mijn twintigste ook wel eens plaatsen opgezocht. Gewoon puur spanning, sensatie, uhm, ja goh, je komt 's avonds uit de kroeg en je had geen date, nou dan ging je gewoon effe kijken, wat is daar en is er iets, en is er iets leuks. Loopt er toevallig een leuke vent, enne, je, dan zie je wel wat er gebeurt."

23 "[...] En een bepaalde spanning. Spanning zo van, goh ja, wie kom ik tegen[...]"

24 "[V]oor de mensen die je eventueel gaat ontmoeten dat is de sensatie."

25 "[A]ls je soms van die mannen weer ziet en als je één keer seksueel contact met een man hebt gehad dan hoeft dat niet zo heel snel weer een tweede keer. Dan is dat gepasseerd, dan is de spanning er wel af. Soms als je dan goede seks hebt gehad dan denk je 'Nou met die zou ik nog wel een keer willen'."

26 "[E]r zit ook een stukje spanning bij, je weet niet wie je ontmoet."

27 "Ik was 14 en experimenteerde met vriendjes en vriendinnetjes maar in ons dorp was geen baan anders was ik daar waarschijnlijk uit nieuwsgierigheid al eerder heen gegaan. Pas toen ik mijn rijbewijs had en 4 vriendjes en 6 vriendinnetjes verder was kwam ik voor het eerst op een baan."

28 "[Maar nu? (koude, regenachtige dag)] Nu is het koud, en regen vind ik niks, dan ga ik ook niet, met dit weer dan kan ik het ook heel makkelijk uit mijn hoofd zetten. Het weer heeft heel sterk invloed, ja, en als het straks voorjaar wordt met mooi weer dan merk je ook dat het drukker wordt."

29 "Nou, laat ik het zo zeggen, als ik met iemand onderdak of buiten kan afspreken, dan zou ik toch voor onderdak kiezen. Ja je bent afhankelijk van het weer en het is toch wat onveiliger. Buiten heeft ook wel wat, maar voor mij niet perse. Je hebt meer luxe, anders is het toch vaak staande, soms in de auto, maar als je bij iemand thuis afspreekt dan is er een bank, een bed. Je kan eventueel wat drinken ofzo, of na die tijd wat. Laat ik het zo zeggen het is voor mij niet dat het buiten extra spannend is, dat ik het graag wil omdat het buiten is."

30 "Mijn ideale ontmoetingsplek, god meid, nou een plek die in ieder geval makkelijk toegankelijk is, die bekleed is met bosschage en bomen en struiken en nog al niet wat. Er mag ook wel een stuk zwemwater bij zijn met strand erbij en gewoon waar het openlijk verkeren is, en je niet bang hoeft te zijn. Waar een divers pluimage is, niet alleen maar prachtige mooie mannen, die naar jouw wensen er rondlopen, maar dat er gewoon toch wel een diversiteit aan mannen rondloopt. Want dat maakt het toch wel leuker, dat maakt het realistischer, anders zit je alleen maar in zo'n droomparadijs en die bestaat toch niet. [...] Ik vind het heerlijk als het aan het strand is, ik bedoel dat vind ik heerlijk, lekker zwemwater erbij, dat geeft me toch wel een vrij gevoel, dat zou me een vrij gevoel geven, dat het gewoon zo heerlijk open vrij is[...]"

31 "[J]e komt dit soort plekken natuurlijk overal tegen als je vaak door Nederland rijdt, kom je langs de grote weg dit soort plekken tegen, dus dan is het heel makkelijk even een afslag te nemen en daar even te gaan kijken. [...] Ja, je kan even als je wat spanning voelt, seksuele spanning, kan je makkelijk even naar zo'n plek gaan om dat te laten afvloeien, ja dat kan, en dat gebeurt ook."

32 "[E]n het [de homo-ontmoetingsplek] was heel dicht bij ons huis de plek, dus het was heel makkelijk te doen op de fiets, drie kilometer fietsen en je was er, en dan een hekje door, en dan kwam je op de parkeerplaats, nou daar was het, klaar, heel makkelijk."

33 "Het zijn natuurlijk fantastische mooie en goedkope plekken om aan je gerief te komen. Je hoeft er alleen maar met je auto langs te rijden."

34 "En ja, wanneer je het eenmaal één keer hebt gedaan, ja ik zou het niet verslavend willen noemen, maar als je eenmaal over de drempel bent, dat is een tweede keer niet moeilijk."

35 "Ja en het helpt me van mijn seksdrive, ik zou niet zonder kunnen."

36 "Ze zijn bang dat bekend wordt dat ze contact hebben gezocht op de ontmoetingsplaats."

37 "[M]aar bijvoorbeeld thuis een vrouw hebben of hun geaardheid voor de buitenwereld verborgen willen houden."

38 "Belangenverenigingen van homo's wijzen erop dat de mannen die deze locaties bezoeken, vaak getrouwd zijn, hun bezoek stiekem is[...]"

39 "De bezoekers van de homobaan (sommigen getrouwd en met kinderen) raakten in paniek, met de dode dreigde ontmaskering van hun verborgen leven."

40 "Niet uitkomen voor je geaardheid kan vele redenen hebben. De meest voorkomende is toch wel de angst van afwijzing, het verliezen van familie en vrienden. Maar het ligt natuurlijk nog moeilijker als je getrouwd en kinderen hebt. Nederland is niet zo tolerant als men wel zegt en denkt te zijn. Als het op afstand is dan gaat het nog voor een groot deel van Nederland, maar als het dichterbij komt dan is het toch ff iets anders. Kijk maar eens om je heen en luister goed, als je op een feestje zit of gewoon met een groepje, er wordt altijd wel een keer iets gezegd over homo's. Vaak als grap en met wat gelach. Als jij dan die ene bent die nog in de kast zit, is de drempel alweer een paar centimeter hoger, en dat gaat zo jaren door. Vrienden, ach, daar doe je alles mee, maar als ze weten dat je homo bent, dan willen ze niet meer met je zwemmen, want dan ga je samen douchen enzo, dat ineens niet meer verantwoord."

41 "Ze kunnen nergens anders heen. [Waarom dan toch trouwen met een vrouw?] Er is een bepaalde categorie mannen denk ik die toch voor de buitenwereld, ja waarvan de buitenwereld toch niet mag weten dat ze homofiel zijn of homofiele neigingen hebben. [...] [V]aak gereformeerd of wat dan ook, vaak kindertjes en dan 'Oh ja als het maar niet uitkomt'. Kijk, je kunt dus niet naar een homo kroeg gaan, want stel je voor als je er uitkomt en iemand ziet je, je kan niet naar de seks bioscoop gaan, dus doe je dat maar onderweg en dan maar hopen dat er dan niemand bekends is."

42 "[Over de reacties van anderen over zijn coming out] Heel positief, altijd wel gedacht. Ik heb het nooit gezien als een drempel, maar ik ben er nooit zo heel erg mee bezig geweest, pas later, na een aantal jaar dacht ik 'Als het nu echt iets wil, dan moet het nu toch een keer gebeuren', maar het is nooit echt een issue geweest, dat ik daar mentaal helemaal klem zat ofzo, helemaal niet. Ik heb alleen een keer gedacht 'Nu moet het gebeuren', klaar. Het moet eruit en dan maar zien waar het schip strand, het schip strandt helemaal niet, nee."

43 "Ik ben ook getrouwd geweest, maar dat is al weer een jaar of acht negen geleden. [Naar ontmoetingsplekken?] Ja ook. Ja, ik ben zesentwintig jaar getrouwd geweest, voor dat ik ging trouwen wist ik al dat ik mannen ook interessant vond, heb ik ook gemeld aan mijn nu ex, zeg maar, er zat ook een stuk, ik denk dat ik toen meer bi-georiënteerd was, dan dat het echt homo-georiënteerd was. Ik vond dat ik met haar verder moest, dat vond zij zelf ook en dat is ook jaren lang wel goed gegaan. Alleen toen ik zo'n jaar of tien twaalf getrouwd was toen kwam dat homo-gevoel meer op de voorgrond. Toen hebben we daar ook samen over gesproken en toen gaf ze ook aan 'Als jij daar iets mee moet, als je je bij mij verstikt voelt, of je kan bij mij niet halen wat je ook voor dat andere deel nodig hebt, zoek dan wegen om dat wel te zoeken.' En toen doelde ze op, denk ik, ook op een relatie erbij. Heb ik ook wel geprobeerd, maar dat werkte niet zo goed, dan moet je echt voor tweehonderd procent kunnen leven, als je twee relaties wil hebben, dat is tenminste mijn gevoel. Dus om toch dat homo-gevoel ruimte te geven heb ik ook dit soort plekken opgezocht, om zeg maar, soortgenoten te ontmoeten, om daar ook seks te hebben, maar ook om sociale contacten te hebben, maar ook het gevoel te hebben dat je bij een groep hoort."

44 "[Denk je dat de homo-ontmoetingsplaats ook mannen kan helpen uit de kast te komen?] Nee, op een enkeling na misschien, wanneer een bezoek aan de homo-ontmoetingsplaats eindigt in een gezellig drankje in een homokroeg. Men kan op de baan wel ontdekken hoeveel 'bi' men nu eigenlijk is, maar uit de kast komen is heel wat anders. [Denk je dat mannen wel hun gevoel kunnen ontdekken en misschien ontwikkelen?] Ja, steeds meer mensen zijn nieuwsgierig. Vroeger werd dat al snel onderdrukt, maar tegenwoordig behoudt men dat nog in hun fantasie, en dan komt wel eens dat moment dat men verder wil dan fantasie. Ik vind een baan daar een slecht iets voor, maar het werkt wel."

45 "[Getrouwd?] Ik ben getrouwd, ja, twee kinderen. [...] [Vrouw weet er niets van?] Nee, ze weet wel dat ik vrij ben in seks enzo, avontuurtjes heb met een echtpaar enzo, daar weet ze ook wel vanaf, maar dat ik naar zulke ontmoetingsplekken ga niet. [...] Ja het is eigenlijk nooit in mijn gedachten opgekomen om dat te vertellen tegen haar. [Moeilijk zo'n dubbelleven?] Ja misschien, ja ik heb er niet zo'n moeite mee. Misschien heeft mijn vrouw ook wel geheimen voor mij. Als je met mensen praat je hoort van iedereen, dan heeft iedereen wel geheimen voor elkaar. Dat ze eerste zeggen dat ze eerlijk zijn en blablabla, ideaal plaatjes, en volgens mij is dat niet zo en daar ben ik er gewoon één van. De één is niet eerlijk tegenover zijn vrouw over geldzaken, die gokt misschien, of iets anders. [...] [Wel gelukkig met vrouw?] Ja, alleen de seks is niet helemaal, en het is ook niet iets wat we heel veel doen, maar summier nog. [Gerelateerd aan elkaar?] Nou dat denk ik wel, maar dat ligt aan haar, ik zou best wel wat meer seks willen hebben, maar ik heb daar niet zo'n moeite mee, gesprekken kunnen we met elkaar voeren, we liggen elkaar op alle gebieden, alleen op dat gebied matchen we niet helemaal. En misschien is dat een reden dat ik... Kijk als mijn vrouw ook wel spannende dingen, mee wou naar een club ofzo, dan dan hoefde ik ook niet meer alleen op zoek, dan gingen we misschien samen op zoek. Of je zoekt één of twee echtparen waar het mee klikt en dat houdt je dan in stand en dan ga je daar heen, waar je je mee vermaakt of iets meedoen. Maar voor haar is seks alleen maar, nou binnen de huwelijksmuren en niet er buiten."

46 "Je moet eigenlijk geen etikettes plakken. Dat stukje [HOP bezoek] daar wordt het oordeel opgeplakt. Het is absurd maar waar. Maar ja mensen willen natuurlijk houvast hebben om hun normen aan op te hangen en dit is natuurlijk een manier om. En ik denk des te Christelijker dat je bent, des te meer hokjes dat je hebt."

47 "Het is toch anders als mannen seks hebben met een andere man, het is vies, dat hoort niet zo. En als je met een lekkere of mooie vrouw vreemd gaat dan zeggen ze van moet je eens kijken of kijk hem eens, dan ben je zo'n kerel [steekt duim op]. Dat is zo hypocriet als wat. Je doet het zelf en dat moet je voor jezelf verantwoorden."

48 "[Waarom niet] Ik denk dat ze dat niet zou kunnen begrijpen, ik denk dat ze het eerder zou begrijpen als ik iets met een andere vrouw heb, dan zoiets."

49 "Ik heb wel eens gelezen van mannen zijn jagers, eigenlijk is het biologisch. Het is allemaal misschien niet passend bij de moraal en hoe men moet leven. Alles met één partner doen, en met elkaar getrouwd zijn, dat past helemaal niet bij onze biologische indruk. [...] En dan denk ik wel eens van 'Wij mannen zijn niks slechter dan vrouwen, vrouwen zijn net zo erg, alleen vrouwen zijn er wat subtieler in, wat discreter, denk ik vaak.'

50 "Ik denk niet dat er zulke hetero-parkeerplaatsen zijn. [Waarom niet?] Ik denk dat vrouwen niet zo snel naar dat soort plaatsen zullen gaan, en trouwens alleen als vrouw al sowieso niet, ik zou alleen als vrouw ook niet daar heen gaan als ik een vrouw zou zijn."

51 "Nou dat heeft denk ik nog steeds te maken dat het heel moeilijk is om uit de kast te komen, denk ik, hier in het oosten misschien wel. Als ik dan op school kijk bij mij, ze weten allemaal dat ik homoseksueel ben, gewoon dan had ik toch wel wat meer verwacht dat jongens bij me zouden komen, die zouden willen praten. Ik heb tot nu toe in mijn hele carrière, zeg maar tien jaar, één, twee meisjes gehad die bij me zijn geweest. Maar dat is de hele trend in de hele maatschappij natuurlijk, dat acceptatie is minder geworden de laatste jaren. [...] Wat ik met name zie in de klas [de co-researcher is docent], wat ik meemaak, het is gewoon nog wel een scheldwoord in de klas, homo, flicker, en dan roep ik wel van 'Ho ho' en dan kijken ze om en roepen ze van 'Oh sorry meneer dat was niet de bedoeling'. Maar het wordt dus nog wel als scheldwoord gebruikt en zo lang dat nog steeds als scheldwoord gebruikt wordt, wijst het dus aan dat het een negatieve connotatie heeft. En dan ben je de hele acceptatie, die is dan weg hoor. Zo lang niemand meer dat woord noemt als een scheldwoord, dan denk ik dat je dan wel eens zou kunnen spreken van volledige acceptatie. Maar zo lang dat nog op royale schaal gebezigd wordt door iedereen van brul maar 'Homo' of 'Vieze homo', nou dan... [...] Voor een buitenlander is het [homoseksualiteit] hier heel erg geaccepteerd, maar binnen Nederland merk je best wel dat het nog niet zo heel geaccepteerd is."

52 "Veel homo's dachten dat we klaar waren na invoering van het homohuwelijk. Maar de laatste tijd merk je dat mensen die homofoob zijn er mee weg kunnen komen. Ik durf in Amsterdam niet meer hand in hand te lopen. Onze vrijheden worden uitgehold."

53 "Ik denk dat dat [de manier waarop mensen met homoseksualiteit omgaan] steeds vrijer wordt, dat het steeds meer geaccepteerd is, maar goed er is altijd een bepaalde categorie die dat niet wil of niet kan en om wat voor reden dan ook hun opvoeding of hun geloof of wat dan ook, die daar moeite mee hebben. Het is zondermeer verbeterd. Nichten moeten ook zelf niet altijd zo provoceren. [...] [Over de gay parade] Maar, ik heb zoiets van ik vind het niet nodig om daar in je blote kont op zoiets te gaan staan, dat voegt niets toe, voor mij althans niet. Wij moeten oppassen dat we niet doorschieten, dat we niet, en daardoor juist weer agressie gaan oproepen. Daar ben ik ook bang voor, dat dat gewoon gebeurt, dat sommige gevallen van agressie puur en alleen komt door, ja ja, net even te nadrukkelijk je te presenteren of iets te doen, dan denk ik van ja, dat heeft totaal geen enkele functie."

54 "[Seks meespelen in oordeel over HOP?] Ja dat denk ik wel. [Waarom?] Vooral als ze het over hebben willen ze laten weten van nou dat vind ik maar smerig, terwijl ze het misschien wel heimelijk in hun hart ook wel spannend vinden of het zelf misschien wel doen. Zo iemand ben ik overigens niet, als ze het er over hebben, dan hou ik me gewoon wijselijk stil of, ik ga dat niet breeduit veroordelen, zo ben ik ook niet. Maar ik ga ook niet zeggen dat ik er zelf ook nog kom tegen collega's bijvoorbeeld of op een verjaardagsfeestje, noem maar op."

55 "Het heeft een heel negatief imago natuurlijk. [Oorzaak?] Ja het is natuurlijk, ik heb nooit geroepen zo hoog goh ik heb contacten daar en daar, nee dat roep je niet zo snel. [Reden?] Ja omdat het toch, je schaamt je er voor weet ik niet, maar maar, ja het beïnvloedt je imago negatief."

56 "Plus daar kom natuurlijk toch voor een gedeelte ook nog bij de mensen die vanuit de Islam, dit soort zaken helemaal verwerpen en het idee hebben dat ze daar ook maatregelen tegenover mogen stellen, want ik denk dat een heleboel jonge mensen dat hebben vanuit die groep, die denken van 'Dat zijn toch viezeriken, het zijn toch varkens en je mag ze van de hoogste toren gooien.' Dus dat speelt denk ik ook wel een rol. Ik heb daar zelf moet ik zeggen niet zo heel veel ervaring mee, ik heb wel een paar keer dat ik met een vriend door de stad liep en dat er wel opmerkingen kwamen, maar ik heb nooit lijfelijk geweld daaromtrent ervaren. Maar goed als ik de verhalen hoor van de mensen om me heen."

57 "Maar aangewezen plekken vind ik niet goed. Ik zou wel vinden dat het gewoon veilig zou moeten kunnen. Ik denk als je besluit om te gedogen, want die parkeerplaatsen waren, als alleen maar op die parkeerplaatsen en een paar kilometer verderop, als je die gaat sluiten dan zoekt men weer andere plekken en zo blijf je maar achter elkaar aanjagen, het houdt toch niet op. Dan maar een gedoogplek, dan heb je die plekken, die zijn er al, waarom zou je ze dan dichtgooien en ergens anders openen."

58 "[E]r was een man bij en die had een camper en die stond dan vlakbij in de buurt tegen die ontmoetingsplek aan met zijn camper en toen had ie een man ontmoet op die ontmoetingsplek en zei die van zullen we naar de camper gaan, hebben we wat meer privacy, en toen kwam dus de politie ook en die gingen dus bij hem op de camperdeur bonken, van wilt u open doen. En toen deed ie open, ja wat doet u hier zei die agent, toen zei die ja dat gaat je geen moer aan zei die tegen die agent, ik sta hier op een parkeerterrein, ik mag hier staan met een camper. Ja maar ik weet heus wel wat u hier doet, en wat moet die man bij u. Ja dat gaat u ook geen donder aan. Dat is gewoon intimidatie, want het is niet verboden met een camper op een

parkeerplaats te staan [...]. En wat die man daar bij hem in de camper doet, daar heeft die agent geen reet om daar naar te vragen, hij had ook wel gelijk, maar het was pure intimidatie. Dus hij kreeg ook geen bekeuring of wat dan ook, maar hij voelde zich geïntimideerd en lastig gevallen door die agent. Maar ik heb er zelf geen ervaring mee, gelukkig niet.”

59 “Bijvoorbeeld ik kreeg een bekeuring hè, als ik een andere bekeuring kreeg voor fout parkeren, dan ligt die na anderhalve week dan ligt die op mijn mat, nou dan weet ik ik heb een bekeuring gehad, nou prima. Er is een beleid bij [noemt een plek], dat is ook benoemd door de directeur, dat de bekeuringen worden achtergehouden tot het maximale van zestien weken, want voor de zestiende week moet die op je mat liggen, dus je krijgt hem de vijftiende week op je mat, ik heb het zelf in ondervinding, ik bedoel ik woon alleen dus ik hoef niet continue naar die brievenbus te lopen van ligt er wat in, maar ik dacht wel stel dat ik niet bekend maak dat ik bi- of homo-gevoelens heb en ik zit in een getrouwde situatie, dan moet ik zestien weken lang iedere ochtend naar die brievenbus om te kijken of ik die brief er uit moet lichten. Dat is toch belachelijk, maar dat is terreur, dat is gewoon pure terreur en het gebeurt.”

60 “[Politie?] Ze hebben hier in [noemt een plek] ook bij de [noemt een plek] dat is een recreatieplas en in een deel wordt ook naakt gerecreëerd overdag, maar 's nacht is het ook een ontmoetingsplek. De politie en de overheid hadden er zo'n moeite mee dat ze al die bomen daar hebben gekapt, gewoon ontmoedigingsbeleid toegepast. Op de A28 ook net buiten Groningen, daar is een parkeerplaats wat ook een ontmoetingsplaats is, daar hebben ze ook de bomen allemaal gekapt, zo gemaakt dat je niet meer uit zicht kan staan. Laat ik het anders zeggen, stel dat je prostitutie in Nederland zou gaan verbieden, dan werden tien tot twintig procent meer vrouwen verkracht dan er nu jaarlijks verkracht worden. Dat hebben ze vroeger in Amerika ook gezien tijdens de drooglegging, toen werd alles in één keer nog veel erger. Ik denk iets dat er gewoon in de maatschappij is daar moet je mee leren leven, en die banen niet verbieden.”

61 “Waar ik het wel mee eens ben, zulke mensen die daar komen zoals ik, je mag geen overlast veroorzaken aan mensen die daar niet van gediend zijn. Als het op wat openbaardere plekken is, dat je geen kinderen choqueert of mensen die daar niet van willen weten. Nee dat kan ik wel goed begrijpen en dat vind ook wel vrij logisch. Daar mag je best negatief tegen aankijken, dat je geen overlast veroorzaakt, en dat zie je ook wel in de krant. Dat men dingen laat rondslingeren, papier enzo.”

62 “En weet je er zijn ook homo-bi mannen die hier ook niet zorgvuldig mee omgaan, die aan de kant van de weg bezig gaan, en dan denk ik ja, je moet ook een beetje zelf-regulerend zijn, je moet ook weten waar de grenzen liggen naar andere mensen toe, en ik vind dat die mensen aangepakt worden, dat vind ik prima, dan denk ik van ja, dat is openbare schennis, dat zie ik onder openbare schennis.”

63 “Ik krijg soms foto's van hoppers die bijvoorbeeld spiermaakt op een picknick tafel bezig zijn aan de rand van de snelweg. Dat moet te zien zin vanaf de snelweg en daar gaat het ze dan ook om. Sommigen denken zo maar toch denkt de grote meerderheid meer van het is van ons allen en wij willen een stukje waar niemand ons stoort en wij ook niemand storen. [...] Wie gaat er nu in het zicht met elkaar rotzooien? Er kunnen ook kinderen voorbij komen.”

64 “[Meegemaakt anderen op de plek?] Nee eigenlijk niet.”

65 “[Andere mensen? Ja dat is gebeurd. Kijk je hebt natuurlijk ook, zeker langs snelwegen parkeerplaatsen en dat het gewoon een openbare parkeerplaats is, dat mensen daar stoppen en niets in de gaten hebben en dan in één keer, weet ik veel, een paar kerels in de bosjes zien, en daar misschien toch wel van schrikken. Ik heb zelf nooit iemand gesproken of zoiets.”

66 “[Legaliseren?] De plek waar ik dus het conflict ervaren heb, zou zeker een plek zijn om te legaliseren, omdat echt niemand zich daar aan stoort. Het is echt een plek wat los staat van andere vormen van recreatie, dus dat zou op zich een heel ideale plek zijn [...] Ik denk als je plekken duidelijk maakt voor andere mensen dat dat een ontmoetingsplek is, dan denk ik dat mensen zich daar ook minder aan gaan storen, omdat ze weten dat ze daar niet moeten zijn. Nu komen ze wel eens een keer iets tegen dat ze denken, dat ze plotseling, per ongeluk daarin verzeild raken.” (Groene Ster)

67 “[Legaliseren?] De plek waar ik dus het conflict ervaren heb, zou zeker een plek zijn om te legaliseren, omdat echt niemand zich daar aan stoort. Het is echt een plek wat los staat van andere vormen van recreatie, dus dat zou op zich een heel ideale plek zijn [...] Ik denk als je plekken duidelijk maakt voor andere mensen dat dat een ontmoetingsplek is, dan denk ik dat mensen zich daar ook minder aan gaan storen, omdat ze weten dat ze daar

niet moeten zijn. Nu komen ze wel eens een keer iets tegen dat ze denken, dat ze plotseling, per ongeluk daarin verzeild raken. [...] Dus ik denk dat als je het zou gaan legaliseren, aangeven dat dat een homo-ontmoetingsplaats is, ja dan voorkom je ontzettend veel problemen, en je maakt het voor de grote groep zelf een stuk makkelijker. [...] Plus je gaat daarbij toch de aangifte bereidheid vergroten, omdat mensen de politie gaan zien als beschermers van de groep, plus dat je daardoor ook minder criminaliteit op dat soort plekken krijgt, en ik moet zeggen ik ben een paar keer wel hele vervelende criminaliteit tegengekomen. [...] En ik denk als je die andere plekken zou legaliseren, tuurlijk je creëert een heleboel rust en je kan mensen er op aanspreken als ze zich niet aan de voorwaarden houden. Je moet het toestaan onder voorbehoud, er mag niet zichtbaar openbare seks bedreven worden naar anderen, ook niet naar openbare wegen toe, het moet onzichtbaar blijven, in die zin onzichtbaar dat het in de bosjes is en als mensen dat niet doen dan heb je ook recht van spreken vind ik. Dan kun je zeggen van kom op, die afspraak is niet zo, je krijgt een bekeuring daarvoor en dan accepteren mensen het ook. Nu gaan ze bij voorbaat al met de hakken in het zand hoor.”

68 “Ja, legaliseren, ik weet, als je iets gaat legaliseren, ik vind niet dat men in den lande plaatsen moet aan gaan wijzen ‘Hier mag het’, want dat vind ik zo'n gestigmatiseer, daar mogen jullie rommelen en daar mogen jullie rommelen, maar als je het ergens anders doet dan mag het niet meer. Het zal me helemaal worst wezen of mensen rommelen op een parkeerplaats of niet. En of het nu homo's zijn of hetero's zal me ook helemaal worst wezen. [...] Nee, zo'n aangewezen plekken zou ik slecht vinden. Het werkt ook denk ik in de hand dat een aantal personen, dat je het potentieel stimuleert. Maar wie wil er controle dan, jij zou daar met je gezinnetje niet meer mogen komen bijvoorbeeld, of heterostellen zijn niet welkom. Ik kan als homo wel op een parkeerplaats komen, maar of ik daar rommel of niet is een tweede.”

69 “Ik moet zeggen ik ben een paar keer wel hele vervelende criminaliteit tegengekomen, of criminaliteit, ja mensen die, uhm moet ik effe denken hoor, mensen die parkeerplaatsen kennen, en ik weet dan niet of dat gebeurt vanuit een soort rechts-extremistisch gedrag of puur macho gedrag, maar die heel intimiderend op je af komen en je auto onder handen nemen. Er zijn bij mij twee banden lek gestoken, bijvoorbeeld, daar op die plek, het Noorderbos, waar ik dan mijn auto parkeer op die parkeerplaats, toen ik terug kwam van het recreëren waren twee banden lek gestoken. Ik heb niet gezien wie dat was, maar ik weet wel dat dat homofobisch gedrag was, omdat het typisch op die plaats is, en wie steekt er anders gewoon met een scherp mes twee banden lek, maar ook op andere plaatsen mensen die gewoon heel intimiderend op je afkomen met een stok, bijvoorbeeld, proberen je ruit in te tikken, of, ik ben daar een beetje voorzichtiger in geworden, zodra ik merk dat ik het niet vertrouw, dan ben ik weg, dan draai ik mijn auto om en dan ga ik, omdat ik toch weet dat ik tegen dat soort mensen niet op kan, en ik ook niet zo veel vertrouwen heb in de politie dat ik denk ik ga ze bellen. Op zich vind ik dat verschrikkelijk jammer, want op dat soort momenten zou ik mijn telefoon moeten pakken en moeten zeggen van, kijk jongens 112, ik word hier overvallen, kom op. Maar ik ben er van overtuigd dat de politie niet zo snel komt, of in ieder geval geen plankgas zal geven, dat denk ik niet.”

70 “[Potenrammen meegemaakt?] Nee gelukkig niet. Nee gelukkig niet. Ik denk niet dat het fictie is wat er beschreven wordt. Ik denk dat heel veel mannen die met geweld in aanraking komen zich niet melden. Als ik dus niet herkend wil worden op zo'n parkeerplaats en ik word in elkaar geramd, dan zal ik dat dus toch niet gaan melden, want dan moet ik daar naar binnen lopen om te melden dat ik daar op die parkeerplaats ben geweest. ‘En wat deed u daar dan meneer? Maar waarom slaan ze u dan in elkaar u bent toch geen homo?’ Kijk, tuurlijk gebeurt het en men weet het ook wel, maar of men daar dan de ogen voor sluit, durf ik niet te zeggen. Vind ik heel moeilijk. Ik denk dat men liever hoort dat het niet gebeurt dan dat het wel gebeurt.”

Belonging to chapter 5: Discourse analysis

Family men:

“Completely true, but look do not look for the problem with homo’s having sex in public where the problem really can be found: the religious fake hetero’s with the child seats in the back. A himself respecting homo (who is out of the closet and so on) commits his disgraces simply at private places.”¹

“Being homo, no problem. But do it at home ... and when you have a wife and child over there, Tough luck, get out of the closet and do not bother others with it.”²

“Even more so: the average homo looks down on these cruisers. As in: Pascal and Jean-Paul drive passed a gay meeting places: “Yech, there are the fake-hetero’s giving each other HIV again, yech.”³

“Who says that the whole gay community is waiting for this kind of bullshit? I am a big proponent of fining these cruising homo’s. Not in the least place to make the possible wives of those homo’s attentive that condoms are not an unnecessary luxury during the next fuck...”⁴

“Put some webcams at this sex zone, the real ones keep coming and the family meng4 find their refuge somewhere else.”⁵

“It is not very nice for the women who are sitting at home waiting for their man. Haha, you suddenly walk strange darling! No not fun, no.”⁶

“Those are maaaaaaaany married men who want to experience something different. Because a real homo has NO child seat at the back of the car!”⁷

“I have nothing against homo’s just so you know. But the sort that has a wife and children at home and then at parking places go and get their so-called shortcoming I find terrible. From my perspective these places can be closed.”⁸

“Indeed often they are hetero men who want to have homo contact anonymous. I passed by the row of cars a couple of times and they were mostly business men who were sitting in the cars.”⁹

“So they found a new place. Well, apparently there is a heavy need, for those business men. The creeps. And telling their wives/girlfriends that they have to work overtime.”¹⁰

“But as already said, often (maybe mostly) hetero men who do not get satisfied at home (or have needs, whatever you want).”¹¹

“Can not stand it, that there are men among them who have a wife and children at home. When you have the guts to go and you-know-what in public, with people around you everywhere, then have the guts to tell your wife and children that you have figured out that *hum-hum*.”¹²

“What makes me sad are the many station wagons with child seats in the back which are parked there. That gives you something to think about.”¹³

“Men in suits, men with child seats in the back of the car, men with a company car (smart when you want to be anonymous), men who work at the municipality. And then you still have those so-called bird watchers. Or

those men who want to take a close look, but are not ready this year to have one to one contact (better chance next year).”¹⁴

“Those who get a kick out of it are often not homo’s, but sexually frustrated hetero’s...Of the large part of those who meet secretly, the church is not of minor influence. Imagine to be Dutch reformed and homo...you have no life anymore!!!”¹⁵

Disgust, disease, filth and bestiality:

“Dirty cancer wankers!!”¹⁶

“Even I as homo thinks this goes too far. Was just having dinner, yes, thank you, yech...”¹⁷

“Cancer gays”¹⁸

“Dirty people, yech.”¹⁹

“Yes these homo’s are filthy and should have sex at home if they really want to.”²⁰

“Fucking faggots.”²¹

“Homo’s you’re going too far. Get everything done nowadays....yech...if you were really normal you would not behave as animals...yech.”²²

“Dirty perverts.”²³

“Yech, those fairies are sick dudes.”²⁴

“Yech!”²⁵

“Get lost with this rancid shit.”²⁶

“Ass fuckers, yech.”²⁷

“It is disgusting and vulgar.”²⁸

“Dirty canal wipers with panty’s.”²⁹

“I was driving past there, is there a dude next to the parking place (very near to the road!) looking all dirty at me.”³⁰

“This makes you sick, and besides those rubbers cause pollution.”³¹

“Yech a homo park!!!??? KK Yech!!!”³²

“These meeting places should be forbidden you only get child porn and child trafficking out of it. And child whores. And that is not the worse, because the worse part is that they just do it outside where everyone can see it. I don’t want to see something like that, that is just too disgusting. I even, without joking, had to puke when I saw two kissing.”³³

“I just find it completely disgusting, especially when people are walking by.”³⁴

“This gives me goose bumps, yes...brrrr...how can people get SOME kind of satisfaction out of it. This is simply too incomprehensible and I am frustrated by it. Provoking behaviour! But the stupid thing is that it is attractive, that there are walking so many men :S.”³⁵

“It so happens that my parents are living opposite to this gay meeting place, and I can tell you that it is really terrible over there. I am used to quite something but my mother asked me once to come up to look and you don’t know what you’re seeing. Group sex and so on, simply too rancid for words and indeed they are just waiting there for their ‘clients’.”³⁶

“I think everyone should enjoy sex when they feel the need, but to do it like this, no that is bestial.”³⁷

“MY GOD, am I really the only ‘non-tolerant’ person who is heavily shocked by this??? What is wrong with these men??? Yech...”³⁸

“In my opinion they can all get a big fat fine. Yech, yech. Sick people!”³⁹

Sex in public:

“Do it simply nicely at home with your gay friends, you know.”⁴⁰

“I don’t give a damn, they can just rent a room or meet at the homes of one of them.”⁴¹

“Do I understand this correctly are these faggots facilitated in their exhibitionistic behaviour? Let those perverts do this at home, like normal gays.”⁴²

“Ridiculous, this perversity in public. And that there are signs placed by the government for these extravagances, your mind stops.”⁴³

“Sex you have to have at home or in a brothel.”⁴⁴

“What a bullshit. Again this leftish bogus. This kind of commotions are really getting too crazy.”⁴⁵

“Understandable. But why can’t they play their ‘game’ at home, or a rented room,...?”⁴⁶

“Why can’t these men not have sex at home. I simply find it rancid that something like this has to happen outside.”⁴⁷

“Let them go to a hotel.”⁴⁸

Comparing homosexuals with heterosexuals:

“Get the fuck away with those faggots, I also don’t go into the bushes, why do these dirty assfuckers have to have something special?”⁴⁹

“Nature belongs to everyone, except in Slotervaart. There homo’s have more rights than the rest of the population. Where you as a normal citizen get a fine, they give you in Slotervaart a ribbon for the same. Is this what the gay movement achieved? Claiming an area where you are only allowed to come when you’re homo. Imagine the opposite: a sign with ‘Forbidden for homo’s’. Then these fairies would scream blue murder.”⁵⁰

“I also don’t go screw around with my girlfriend in the bushes? And I would get a fine for it too!!!”⁵¹

“Why do homo’s have to get exclusive rights. Nothing against homo’s. But why do we have to accept this.”⁵²

“Why do homo’s necessarily have to have sex in public? Let them do it at home...”⁵³

“When people want to have se** then that is possible at other places, hotels, etc, rather than in the open air or gay meeting places. When someone in public takes his *** out of his pants he is arrested for indecency. When at gay meeting places se** takes place, that should be possible.”⁵⁴

“[Understandable. But why can’t they play their ‘game’ at home, or a rented room,...?] Yes exactly, I also don’t understand it. Hetero people also have sex at home, at least normally? Or if necessary in a hotel?”⁵⁵

“I also feel put behind as hetero.”⁵⁶

“I simply demand a place where it is legal to have sex as hetero’s.”⁵⁷

“What matters to me is that these people get their own place, and me and all other hetero’s not.”⁵⁸

“As soon as hetero’s decide to have spontaneously sex outside (with strangers), then we also get our own place...I don’t see it happening, but just go ahead.”⁵⁹

“I find it really bad those things, why their own places and so on, it is already worse enough that these exist, and then they get public places, then do it at an industrial area in the evening or something.”⁶⁰

“Tsjja, for hetero’s sex outside is also not allowed, as far as I know.”⁶¹

“I thought that sex in public was forbidden... Oh no, it is about homo’s now, touchy point for open-minded Netherlands, so homo’s can nicely euh...ride through the mud with a tractor. Ridiculous...just abolish this business and just build a brothel especially for homo’s in the red light district...By the way what is wrong with the disco’s and so on, I thought there were more than enough places for gays to meet each other? Nooo, I don’t find it acceptable...Homo’s want the same rights as hetero’s...then they also get the things that are forbidden for us.”⁶²

“Well, it is a bit double...Group sex between hetero’s in public is also forbidden. You have the whole of the Netherlands in the highest tree when it would become known that that would be allowed somewhere. For homo’s a blind eye is turned to them, also when they are standing in line in the bushes, and you can speak about a group happening. Positive discriminations, that is what it is called...”⁶³

“When a hooker is walking the streets then she is arrested, but in the case of homo’s it is accepted.”⁶⁴

“I have nothing against homo’s...but I don’t find this necessary. Hetero’s also are not doing this, right? Who should not discriminate, this group isolates themselves, and that does not contribute to the positive opinion on homosexuality!”⁶⁵

“Hetero’s are also not having sex outdoors? Why gays?”⁶⁶

“I really don’t understand this...that they want to stay anonymous, fine. But should this be allowed ‘legally’?! We also can not do it?! Would be nice...”⁶⁷

“Everywhere in the world people are screwing around in bushes, but this very concentrated in one place, unfortunately. The park belongs to everyone! Not one place especially for homo’s (and the lost hetero’s).”⁶⁸

“Would hetero meeting places be tolerated in a similar way?”⁶⁹

“Go ahead just have sex, when you both agree on what you’re doing. You only live once, so f*ck off with all those rules...create space for homo, hetero, bi meeting places next to each other at parking places.”⁷⁰

“What matters here is that over there, sexual practices are taking place almost in public. Most people in the Netherlands are not in favour of this, whether those people are homo’s or hetero’s is not important.”⁷¹

“But hetero’s also do it sometimes in the bushes, in the dunes or a the beach.”⁷²

“This, however, does not mean that people who are homosexual/lesbian do not have the same rights as so called hetero’s.”⁷³

“As long as they don’t bother me with it I have no problems.”⁷⁴

“Since when are hetero’s goody-goodies? Book a ticket to Ibiza, enough fucking at the beach, also hetero’s! Did you forget what it was like in Llorett with your hetero friends...? Never screwed a chickie at the beach? (That’s a pity for you) and I have seen them (hetero couples) having sex in the IT, yes the disco, when it still existed. Homo’s are an easy target, therefore this fucking stupid discussion which already takes years!”⁷⁵

“Many people have had sex in the open air, also hetero’s.”⁷⁶

“In short: sex outdoor takes place in all different layers of society, also the hetero’s.”⁷⁷

“I am bothered by it, whatever sexual orientation of the people who want sex. You should do those kind of things at home, or in a closed club. I am repulsed by these practices.”⁷⁸

“Why are you bothered? In my opinion they can do what they want as long as they don’t bother others. Always that frustrated nonsense when it is about se**.”⁷⁹

“Hetero couples also park often at the Nieuwe Meer [meeting place], and from my heterosexual days I know that two feet against the front screen of the car do not mean that those people are playing lingo [a tv game].”⁸⁰

“You don’t want to know where and anywhere they are having sex at parking places...whatever sexual orientations.”⁸¹

“I think there are more places for heterosexual men and women, and you probably don’t know those places...”⁸²

“Well, those are not only gay meeting places. Like those behind Riant and Bruggelen there also man/wife couples come. Thus, they are not only

homo’s. I mean, thus, that we should not only accuse the men, there are more than enough women and couples.”⁸³

“I have heard that you also don’t want to park in Kootwijk at night because of the couples who satisfy their needs there.”⁸⁴

“I think homo’s and hetero’s should be treated equally at all times. That means in this case no sex alongside the highway and in the forest.”⁸⁵

“And it is not only homo’s, also many hetero’s are joining in.”⁸⁶

“Let those people also have a place...”⁸⁷

“Let those who want to have sex outdoors have it!!!”⁸⁸

Children:

“I kick them the fucking cancer when I see them fucking when I walk somewhere with my children.”⁸⁹

“The fact is that homo cruise areas are tolerated by some municipalities, like here in Zoetermeer, no 100 meters from the beach where children are!”⁹⁰

“Yeck. And then your children are walking there...”⁹¹

“What about the children who are playing there in the forest? ‘Mommie, why is that man’s penis in that other man?’”⁹²

“But can you bump into them with your kids?”⁹³

“When people have a sexual orientation like that, fine by me, but do not bother another with it and do not confront children with that situation in a recreation area or at other public places. I experienced it years ago with my son who was only seven at that moment, and we were fishing there.

Suddenly he tells me that three men in their naked asses are playing train against a tree. You startle yourself lame and I got quite angry, that angry that I chased those ass fuckers away with a big stick. When people want to do it like that...that is it but leave others alone. So no sign and no toleration at the Groene Ster.”⁹⁴

“Why should other people, parents with children, be confronted with it unwanted??”⁹⁵

“I find it disgusting all this mesh near playing children and not only children!”⁹⁶

“When I would have children then I would not want them to be witnesses to the sexual practices of others, in a car or against a tree.”⁹⁷

“Stopping it is not possible I think, but sometimes it is annoying. I think in that case, imagine that there at the heath, that a little child is riding around these or I don’t know. Yech, don’t want to think about seeing men busy there.”⁹⁸

“It seems to me anyways not something to confront others with unwanted, everyone should be able to walk the streets unbothered, or through nature, and you’re not that happy when your young children bump into it accidentally.”⁹⁹

“When you accidentally drive by it with a child. Those kids see that, and they are startled.”¹⁰⁰

“No, I find this really not done in a park where people with children come everyday. Because they can not play freely in the park anymore and go and

explore in nature. Then they bump into completely other things unfortunately...(and yes they do indeed pick it up).”¹⁰¹

“I do not find it more than normal when you have sex in public space that you at least do it at a time when there are children cycling around, that is not normal.”¹⁰²

“A meeting place is fine, but they should be marked or fenced off so that no children and so on are the victims.”¹⁰³

Acceptance of homosexuality:

“Go follow some biology lessons, before you come and play the ‘professional’. Then you will see that homosexuality is present everywhere in nature.”¹⁰⁴

“This behaviour finds its basis in oppression and goes back hundred of years and is often still practised by MARRIED ‘HETEROSEXUAL’ MEN who don’t dare to be homo towards their social environment.”¹⁰⁵

“It is not strange that there still are cruising areas, that has everything to do with the fact that for some homosexuality is still taboo. You don’t have to look far for that, you even see here reactions in which is stated that homosexuality is a disease.”¹⁰⁶

“Well, we have made it like this ourselves...when whole Dutch society was not so homophobic, then you didn’t need those places at all.”¹⁰⁷

“Actually gay meeting places should not be necessary. But why are there gay meeting places, and why is the need for anonymity that large? Is that because of the narrow mindedness of people? Is that a ostrich attitude? The

church? It is too bad for words that a couple of adult men have sex/short love in bushes, because they can not just be openly homosexual. That they can love a man just as much as a hetero man loves his wife? A shortage of respect and understanding, that is what makes these men look for anonymous sex at a nice summer day with all accompanying risks...They cannot and are not allowed to be themselves in their own environment and yes then it is logic effect that they go look for that somewhere else.”¹⁰⁸

“I don’t have problems with it, but I am one of few. Here in the area you simply have no chance as a homo to meet other homo’s in a normal way, and yes, what should they do then? They are not doing it in public, but reasonably far in the bushes. Hetero’s also do it, then punish everyone”¹⁰⁹

“People say they are ‘pro’ homo’s, but many totally aren’t. There should be much more actions to create a ‘livable’ Netherlands for homo’s, because that is not there for many.”¹¹⁰

“[...] that often there is a lot of sadness behind it, people who go secretly to this kind of places, simply because they are terrified to loose everything in their lives and who have been living like this for years already. Sad, very sad.”¹¹¹

1 "Zoek het probleem van openbaarneukende homo's waar het probleem echt is: bij de religieuze nephetero's met de kinderzitjes achterin. Een zich zelfspecterende homo (die dus uit de kast is en zo) bedrijft zijn schandelijkheden gewoon op priveplekken." (Overlanden)

2 "Homo zijn ok... geen probleem. maar doe het dan thuis.... en als je daar een vrouw en kind heb zitten? tough luck... kom uit die kast en ga niet anderen lastigvallen." (Overlanden)

3 "Sterker nog: de gemiddelde heaumeau kijkt best wel neer op de cruisers. Als in: Pascal en Jean-Paul rijden langs een HOP: "Lew, daar staan de nephetero's elkaar weer met HIV te besmetten, jakkie"" (Overlanden)

4 "Wie zegt dat heel homoland op dit soort onzin zit te wachten? Ik ben een groot voorstander voor het flink beboeten van cruisende homo's. Niet in de laatste plaats om de eventuele vrouwen van die homo's er op attent te maken dan condooms geen overbodige luxe zijn bij de volgende wip..." (Overlanden)

5 "Zet een aantal webcams op deze afwerkstrook, de echten blijven komen en de huisvaders zoeken elders hun heil." (Groene Ster)

6 "Het is alleen niet leuk voor de vrouwen die thuis zitten te wachten op hun man. Haha, 'wat loop je ineens raar schat!' Nee, niet echt leuk nee." (Code of Conduct)

7 "Het zijn veeceel getrouwde mannen die hijgerig eens wat anders willen meemaken. Want echt een homo heeft GEEN kinderzitje op de achterbank van de auto!" (Enschede)

8 "Heb totaal niks tegen homo's hoor. Maar voor het soort wat thuis vrouw en kinderen heeft zitten en dan op parkeerplaatsen hun zogenaamde tekortkomingen gaan halen vind ik waardeloos. Van mij mogen deze plekken gesloten worden." (Hollandsche Rading)

9 "Het zijn inderdaad vaak heteromannen die anoniem eens homocontacten willen hebben. Ik ben een paar keer langs die rij auto's gereden en waren over het algemeen zakenmannetjes die er in de auto's zaten." (Hollandsche Rading)

10 "Dus ze hebben daar hun nieuwe plek gevonden. Tja, blijkbaar toch een zware behoefte aan, voor die zakenmannetjes. The creeps. En maar zeggen tegen hun vrouwen/vriendinnen dat ze weer over moet werken. Yeah, right." (Hollandsche Rading)

11 Maar zoals gezegd, het zijn vaak [misschien wel meestal] hetero mannen die thuis idd niet aan hun "trekken" komen [of behoeften, wat je zelf wilt]." (Hollandsche Rading)

12 "Kan er vooral niet tegen, dat er dan ook van die mannen tussen zitten die gewoon een vrouw en kinderen thuis hebben. Als je dan het lef hebt om op die plekken gewoon in het openbaar te...je-weet-wellen, met mensen overall om je heen, heb dan ook het lef om aan je vrouw en kinderen te vertellen dat je je toch maar bedacht "hum-hum" hebt." (Hollandsche Rading)

13 "Wat me overigens wel verdrietig maakt zijn de vele stationwagens met kinderzitje achterin die er geparkeerd staan. Dat geeft toch wel iets te denken." (Hollandsche Rading)

14 "Mannen in pakken, mannen met kinderstoeltjes achterin de auto, mannen met de bedrijfswagen (erg slim als je anoniem wilt blijven) mannen die bij de gemeente werken. En dan heb je nog de zogenaamde vogelspotters. Oftewel de mannen die een kijkje van erg dichtbij willen hebben maar er dit jaar nog niet aan toe zijn om 1 op 1 contact te maken(volgend jaar beter)." (Hollandsche Rading)

15 "Diegenen die er op kicken zijn vaak geen homo's, maar seksueel gefrustreerde hetero's.....Van het overgrote deel die stiekem afspreken, is de kerf niet van geringe invloed. Je zult maar christelijk gereformeerd zijn én homo.... dan heb je geen leven meer!!!!" (Hollandsche Rading)

16 "Vieze kankerwankers!!!" (Chasing away)

17 "Zelfs ik als homo vind dit echt te ver gaan. Zat net te eten, ja, dank je...Gadver..." (Overlanden)

18 "Kankergays" (Fences)

19 "Vieze mensen, bah." (Measures)

20 "Ja deze homo's zijn smerig en moeten thuis maar lekker seks gaan hebben als ze dat zo graag willen." (Overlanden)

21 "Kut poten." (Overlanden)

22 "Homo's...jullie schieten door. Krijgen alles voor elkaar tegenwoordig...getverdemme...als jullie echt NORMAAL waren dan zouden jullie je zelf niet als beesten gedragen...getverdemme." (Overlanden)

23 "Vieze smerlappen." "Gadverdamme, wat zijn die nichten toch zieke gasten." (Overlanden)

24 "Gadverdamme, wat zijn die nichten toch zieke gasten." (Overlanden)

25 ""Gat"verdamme!" (Overlanden)

26 "Oprotten met die ranzige shit." (Overlanden)

27 "Reetridertjes, bah." (Overlanden)

28 "Het is ranzig en ordinair." (Overlanden)

29 "Vieze kanalenvegers met panty's." (Overlanden)

30 "Kom ik daar langsrijden, staat er een kerel langs de homoparkeerplaats (vlak langs de weg!) op zo'n smerige manier te kijken." (Code of Conduct)

31 "Hier word je toch gewoon misselijk van, en besides die kapotjes veroorzaken milieu vervuiling." (Groenekan)

32 "Gatverdamme een homo park!!!!? KK gatverdamme!!!" (Best)

33 "Deze ontmoetingsplaatsen moeten verboden worden je krijgt er alleen maar meer kinderporno in en kinderhandel. En kinderen hoeren. En dat is nog niet het ergste want het ergste is nog dat ze het buiten doen waar iedereen het kan zien. Ik hoop zoiets niet te zien dat is gewoon zwaar ranzig. Heb zelfs een keer letterlijk zonder te lullen gekotst toen ik er 2 zag zoenen." (Best)

34 "Ik vind het gewoon ronduit vies, vooral als er gewoon mensen langs komen." (Hollandsche Rading)

35 "Daar krijg ik echt kippenvel van jah...brrrrr...hoe kunnen mensen daar ook maar IETS van voldoening uit halen. Gaat mij echt de pet te boven en kan ik me heel druk om maken. provocerend gedrag! maar het stomme is dat het toch aantrekkelijk is, dat er toch zoveel mannen lopen :S" (Hollandsche Rading)

36 "Toevallig wonen mijn ouders t.o. deze HOP, en ik kan je zeggen het is daar echt verschrikkelijk. Ik ben aardig wat gewend maar mijn moeder vroeg mij een keer boven te komen kijken en je weet niet wat je ziet. Groepsseks etc. gewoon te ranzig voor woorden en inderdaad ze staan daar gewoon op 'klanten' te wachten." (Hollandsche Rading)

37 "Ik vind dat iedereen er lekker op los moet s"ksen als hij / zij daar behoefte aan heeft, maar om dat nou op deze manier te doen, nee das bij de beesten af." (Hollandsche Rading)

38 "MIJN GOD....ben ik nou de enige 'niet-tolerante' persoon die hier zwaar geschokt door is? Wat mankeert die kerels???? Gat-ver-damme..." (Hollandsche Rading)

39 "Van mij mogen ze allemaal een dikke boete krijgen. Bah bah. Zieke mensen hoor." (Hollandsche Rading)

40 "Doe het gewoon lekker thuis met je gay vrienden weet je." (Overlanden)

41 "Ken me niet verrotten ze huren maar een hotel of spreken af bij een van de twee thuis." (Overlanden)

42 "Begrijp ik nou goed dat die flikkers gefaciliteerd worden in hun exhibitionisme? Laat de smerlappen lekker thuis aan de gang gaan, zoals normale homofielen!" (Overlanden)

43 "Bespottelijk, die smerlapperij in het openbaar. En dat er voor dergelijke strapatsen door de overheid verkeersborden worden neergezet, je verstand staat er van stil." (Overlanden)

44 "Sexen must thus doen of in een bordeel." (Groene Ster)

45 "Wat een onzin zeg. Weer van dat linkse gelul. Dit soort toestanden worden echt te gek gewoon." (Groenekan)

46 "Begrijpelijk. Maar waarom kunnen ze hun 'spelletje' gewoon niet thuis,gehuurde kamer,..... spelen?" (Groenekan)

47 "Waarom kunnen die heren niet ff thuis met elkaar aan de slag gaan. Ik vind het gewoon ranzig dat zoiets buiten moet." (Best)

48 "Dat ze maar ergens op hotel gaan." (Hollandsche Rading)

49 "Opkankeren met die flikkers, ik sta ook niet in het bos, waarom motten die vieze reetriders weer iets apart hebben." (Overlanden)

50 "De natuur is van iedereen, behalve in Slotervaart. Daar hebben homo's meer rechten dan de rest van de bevolking. Waar je als gewone burger een boete voor krijgt, daar geven ze je in Slotervaart een lintje voor. Is dit nu wat de homo-beweging bereikt heeft? Een gebied opeisen waar je enkel welkom bent als je ook homo bent. Stel je het omgekeerde maar even voor: een bordje "verboden voor homo's". Dan schreeuwend de nichten moord en brand." (Overlanden)

51 "Ik ga daar toch ook niet met een vriendin in de bosjes liggen rukken? En ik zou daar ook nog is een flinke boete voor krijgen!!!" (Overlanden)

52 "Waarom moeten er voor homo's zulke exclusieve rechten komen. Niks tegen homo's. Maar waarom moeten we dit accepteren." (Overlanden)

53 "Waarom moeten die homo's toch zo nodig seks in het openbaar hebben? Laat ze dat lekker thuis doen..." (Overlanden)

54 "Als men se" wil kan dat op volop ander plaatsen, hotels etc, dan in de buitenlucht / homo ontmoetingsplaatsen. Als iemand in het openbaar ongevraagd zijn *** uit zijn broek haalt, word hij opgepakt voor openbare schennis. Als er op homo ontmoetingsplaatsen se** plaatsvindt moet dat dan maar kunnen." (Best)

55 "[Begrijpelijk. Maar waarom kunnen ze hun 'spelletje' gewoon niet thuis,gehuurde kamer,..... spelen?]]a precies, snap ik ook niet. Hetero mensen hebben toch ook gewoon seks in huis, athans normaal gesproken? Of desnoods in een hotel?" (Best)

56 "Ik voel me namelijk ook behoorlijk achtergesteld als hetero." (Best)

57 "Ik eis gewoon ook een afwerkplek voor hetero's." (Best)

58 "Het gaat mij erom dat er nu mensen zijn die hun eigen plekkie krijgen en ik en de andere hetero's niet" (Best)

59 "Zodra hetero's besluiten om ook spontaan ergens buiten te gaan neuken (met vreemden), dan krijgen we ook en plekje...ik zie het er niet van komen, maar iemand moet beginnen.. dus ga je gang." (Best)

60 "Vind het echt erg die dingen, waarom eigen plekken enzo, tis al erg genoeg dat ze er zijn, en dan krijgen ze openbare plekken, doe t dan op een industrieterrein na 8 uur in de avond ofzo." (Hollandsche Rading)

61 "Tsja, voor hetero's is buitenseks ook niet toegestaan voor zo ver ik weet." (Hollandsche Rading)

62 "Dacht dat sex in het openbaar verboden was.... Oh nee, het gaat nu over homo's, touchy point voor ruimdenkend Nederland, dus de homo's mogen lekker buiten euh....met de trekker door de modder rijden () Belachelijk...gewoon afschaffen die handel en even op de wallepjes speciaal voor homo's een bordeeltje opzetten....Wat is er trouwens mis met de discotheken etc., ik dacht dat er ondertussen genoeg plekken bestonden voor homo's om elkaar te leren kennen? Nee hoor, vind het niet kunnen...Homo's willen dezelfde rechten als de hetero's.....dan krijgen ze ook de zaken erbij die ons verboden worden." (Hollandsche Rading)

63 "Tsja, het is een beetje dubbel...Groepsseks tussen hetero's in het openbaar is ook verboden. Je hebt heel NL in de hoogste boom als bekend zou worden dat dat ergens toegestaan zou zijn. Voor homo's wordt echter een oogje dichtgeknepen, ook als ze zowat op een rijtje in de bosjes staan en je dus wel degelijk kunt spreken van een "groepsgebeuren". Positieve discriminatie heet dat..." (Hollandsche Rading)

64 "Als een hoertje op een parkeerplaats gaat rondtippelen dan wordt ze opgepakt maar van homo's schijnt het wel geaccepteerd te worden." (Hollandsche Rading)

65 "Ik heb niks tegen homo's hoor... maar dit vind ik echt niet nodig. Doen hetero's toch ook niet?! Wie moet er niet discrimineren, die groep zondert zichzelf af, en dat draagt niet bij aan de positieve mening over homoseksualiteit!" (Hollandsche Rading)

66 "Hetero's zijn ook niet bezig buiten seks te hebben? Waarom homo's dan wel?" (Hollandsche Rading)

67 "Ik snap dit echt niet.. dat ze anoniem willen blijven, mij best. Maar moet dat nou allemaal "legaal" toegelaten worden?!Wij mogen dat toch ook niet?! Zou lekker zijn." (Hollandsche Rading)

68 "Overall ter wereld vozen mensen in bosjes, maar dit is erg geconcentreerd op 1 plek helaas. Het park is van iedereen! Niet 1 plek die speciaal is voor de homo;s. (en de verdwaalde hetero's)." (Hollandsche Rading)

69 "Zouden hetero-ontmoetingsplekken ook zo gedoogd worden?" (Hollandsche Rading)

70 "Seks er gewoon op los, als je beide erachter staat in wat je doet Je leeft maar 1 keer dus opf'cken met al die regeltjes.. homo, hetero, bi ontmoetingsplaatsen naast elkaar parkeerplaatsen inrichten." (Best)

71 "Waar het hier om gaat is dat er daar, nagenoeg in het openbaar, seksuele handelingen worden verricht. De meeste mensen in Nederland zijn daar niet zo'n voorstander van, of dat nou gaat om homo's of hetero's doet niet ter zake." (Groekekan)

72 "Maar hetero's doen het toch ook wel eens in de bosjes, in de duinen en op het strand." (Fences)

73 "Dit echter neemt niet weg dat mensen die homoseksueel/lesbisch zijn dezelfde rechten hebben als de zgn hetero's." (Overlanden)

74 "Zolang ze mij niet lastig vallen heb ik er geen probleem mee." (Overlanden)

75 "Sinds wanneer zijn hetero's heilige boontjes? boek s een ticket naar Ibiza, genoeg geneuk op t strand. ook hetero's! Vergeten hoe t was in Llorett met je Heterovrienden...? Nog nooit een chickie op t strand gepakt? (jammer joh) en ik heb ze (heterostellen dus) seks zien hebben in de IT, ja de discotheek, toen ie nog bestond. Homo's zijn een makkelijk doelwit, vandaar deze domme al jaaaarenlang durende kut discussie!" (Overlanden)

76 "Heel veel mensen hebben ooit wel eens seks gehad in de open natuur. Ook hetero's." (Overlanden)

77 "Kortom: buitenseks vindt plaats door alle geleidingen, ook de hetero's." (Groene Ster)

78 "Ik stoort mij er wel degelijk aan, ongeacht de seksuele voorkeur van de mensen die er seks willen. Je doet zulke dingen maar fijn thuis, of in een besloten club. Ik walg van deze praktijken." (Code of Conduct)

79 "Hoezo, heb je er last van dan? Van mij mogen ze hun gang gaan hoor, zolang ze niemand lastig vallen. Dat gefrustreerde gedoe als het over se** gaat ook altijd." (Code of Conduct)

80 "Heterostellen parkeren ook vaak bij de Nieuwe Meer, en uit mijn heterotijd weet ik dat twee voeten tegen de voorruit betekend dat dat stel niet aan lingo'en is." (Groekekan)

81 "Je wilt niet weten waar en overal op parkeerplaatsjes ze mekaar afwerken.. ongeacht je voorkeuren." (Best)

82 "Ik denk dat er meer plekken voor de heteroseksuele mannen en vrouwen zijn en je wellicht de plekken niet kent..." (Best)

83 "Tja, het zijn niet alleen homo ontmoetingsplekken. Zoals die achter Riant en Bruggelen (bij Apeldoorn A1) daar komen ook gewoon m/v stellen. Het zijn dus absoluut niet alleen homo's. Ik bedoel dus dat 'we' niet alleen de mannen moeten beschuldigen, er komen ook zat vrouwen/stellen." (Hollandsche Rading)

84 "Naar wat ik me heb laten vertellen wil je bij Kootwijk 's nachts ook niet parkeren ivm stellen die daar hun behoeftes 'halen'." (Hollandsche Rading)

85 "Ik vind dat homo's en hetero's te allen tijde gelijk moeten worden behandeld. Dat betekend in dit geval dus geen seks langs de snelweg of in het bos." (Hollandsche Rading)

86 "En het ligt niet alleen aan de homo's, ook veel hetero's doen er aan mee." (Hollandsche Rading)

87 "Laat die mensen ook een plek hebben..." (Hollandsche Rading)

88 "Laat lekker iedereen die dat graag wil seks hebben in de buitenlucht!!!" (Hollandsche Rading)

89 "Ik schop ze de rotkanker als ik ergens loop met me kinderen en ze staan elkaar te fapnichten." (Overlanden)

90 "Het feit is,dat homo cruise gebieden gedoogd worden in sommige gemeentes,zoals hier in Zoetermeer,nog geen 100 meter waar kinderen op het strand zitten!" (Overlanden)

91 "Gadverdamme. En dan lopen je kinderen daaro..." (Overlanden)

92 "Wat about de kinderen die daar door het bos spelen?: "Mamma, waarom zit die mijnheer zijn plasser in die andere mijnheer?." (Overlanden)

93 "Maar kun je als ouder met kinderen bv. er tegen aan botsen?" (Groene Ster)

94 "Als men zo geaard is, mij best, maar val een ander daar niet mee lastig en confronteer zeker in een recreatiegebied of andere openbare plekken kinderen met die situatie. Ik heb het jaren geleden meegemaakt met mijn zoon die toen nog maar 7 jaar was en wij daar zaten te vissen. Plots zegt hij tegen mij dat daar drie mannen in de blote kont tegen een boom treintje aan het spelen waren. Je schrikt je een punthoofd en ben behoorlijk kwaad

geworden, zo erg dat ik met een flinke dikke tak die achterladers heb verjaagd. Als men het op die manier wil doen.... het zij zo maar laat andere mensen met rust. Dus geen bord en niet tolereren in de Groene Ster." (Groene Ster)

95 "Waarom moeten andere mensen, ouders met kinderen, daar ongevraagd aan worden blootgesteld??" (Code of Conduct)

96 "Vind het maar vies al die rommel bij spelende kinderen en niet alleen bij kinderen!" (Groenekan)

97 "Als ik kinderen had dan zou ik echter toch niet willen dat ze getuige konden zijn van de vrijetijden van anderen, in een auto of tegen een boom." (Groenekan)

98 "Tegenhouden doe je het denk ik niet, maar vervelend is het soms wel. Ik denk dan, stel daar op de hei, dat daar een klein kind rondrijdt of weet ik wat. Blegh moet er niet aan denken dat ze die mannen daar zo bezig zien." (Hollandsche Rading)

99 "Lijkt me sowieso toch iets om niet iedereen ongevraagd mee op te schepen, iedereen moet toch ongestoord over straat c.q. door de natuur kunnen lopen en je bent er niet zo blij mee als je jonge kinderen er per ongeluk tegen aan lopen." (Hollandsche Rading)

100 "Als je er met een kind langs rijdt per ongeluk. Die kindjes zien dat, die schrikken zich toch helemaal rot?" (Hollandsche Rading)

101 "Nee, ik vind het echt not done in een park waar elke dag veel mensen met kinderen komen. Want ze kunnen niet meer vrij in het park spelen en op ontdekking in de natuur. Dan stuiten ze op hele andere dingen helaas... (en ja ze pakken het inderdaad op)." (Hollandsche Rading)

102 "Vind het ook niet meer dan normaal dat als je besluit om seks te hebben in de openbare ruimte je dat tenminste niet doet op een tijd dat daar kinderen rond fietsen dat is toch niet normaal." (Hollandsche Rading)

103 "Een ontmoetingsplek vind ik prima, maar dan moet dat wel duidelijker worden aangegeven/afgezet en er dus geen kinderen etc. de dupe van worden..." (Hollandsche Rading)

104 "Biologisch en psychisch correct. Romeinen, Grieken en oudere volken kenden de homo liefde al. Je kunt ontkennen op grond van je religie tot je een ons weegt." (Overlanden)

105 "Dit gedrag vind zijn oorsprong nav onderdrukking en gaat honderden jaren terug en wordt nog vaak gepraktiseerd door dikwijls GETROUWDE "HETEROSEKSUELE" MANNEN die niet homo durfde te zijn tgv hun omgeving." (Overlanden)

106 "Het is niet vreemd dat er nog steeds cruising area bestaan, dat heeft alles te maken met het feit dat homoseksualiteit in de ogen van sommigen nog steeds een taboe is. Daarvoor hoeft je niet ver te kijken, je ziet hier ook al reacties voorbijkomen waar in staat dat homoseksualiteit zelfs een ziekte zou zijn." (Hollandsche Rading)

107 "Tsjja, we hebben het er met ons allen zelf naar gemaakt dat dit gebeurt..... als de hele achterlijke Nederlandse bevolking niet zo homofob was, had je deze plekken helemaal niet nodig." (Hollandsche Rading)

108 "Eigenlijk zouden de HOP's niet nodig moeten zijn. Maar hoe komt het dat deze HOP's er zijn en waarom blijft het verlangen naar anonimiteit dan zo groot? Komt dat door de bekrompenheid van mensen? Struisvogelpolitiek? De Kerk? Het is toch te erg voor woorden dat een stel volwassen mannen seks/korte liefde in bosjes moeten zoeken omdat ze er niet normaal voor uit kunnen komen dat ze homo zijn. Dat ze net zoveel van een man kunnen houden als een heteroman van zijn vrouw houdt? Een tekort aan respect en begrip, dat is wat deze mannen er toe brengt om op een mooie zomerdag anonieme seks te zoeken met alle risico's van dien..... Ze kunnen en mogen zichzelf niet zijn in hun eigen omgeving en tja, dan is het een logisch gevolg dat ze dat elders gaan zoeken." (Hollandsche Rading)

109 "Ik heb er geen problemen mee, maar ben dan wel 1 van de weinigen. Hier in de buurt heb je als homo gewoon géén kans om andere homo's op een 'normale manier' te ontmoeten en ja, wat moeten ze dan doen? Ze doen het ook niet in het openbaar, maar redelijk diep achter de struiken. Hetero's doen het ook hoor, straf iedereen dan." (Hollandsche Rading)

110 "Mensen zéppen wel dat ze 'voor' homo's zijn maar heeeeel veel zijn dat echt niet. Er zou veel meer acties moeten komen voor een 'leefbaar' Nederland voor homo's want dat is het niet voor veel." (Hollandsche Rading)

111 "[...]dat er vaak veel verdriet achter zit, mensen die stiekem naar dit soort plaatsen gaan, simpelweg omdat ze doodsbang zijn alles kwijt te raken in hun dagelijkse leven en vaak al jaren mét die angst leven. Triest, intriest." (Hollandsche Rading)

Appendix 3: Leaflet ‘Blue at pink meeting place.’

The leaflet ‘Blauw op de roze ontmoetingsplaats. Suggesties voor de politie op Homo-ontmoetingsplaatsen’ (‘Blue at the pink meeting place. Suggestions for the police at Gay meeting places’) has two goals:

- the improvement of the know-how in relation to gay meeting places by connecting internal and external knowledge;
- and, contributing to professional actions of police men at gay meeting places by giving suggestions in which way prevention and repression in a balanced way can achieve an acceptable approach for all parties.

In the leaflet it is argued that closing gay meeting places is not a solution when disturbances are experienced from these. The advice is given to look for solutions to reduce possible disturbance, while keeping in mind the vulnerable position of the visitors.

Moreover, it is advised that the professional police man attempts to bridge both worlds and increases mutual respect between parties. Besides to increase safety it is recommended that the police visibly patrols at gay meeting places regularly. Furthermore visitors of gay meeting places are informed with the help of signs about the codes of conduct at gay meeting places.

