

Rollers are not a Subgenre: An Investigation into the Relationship between Internet Memes and Participant Behaviour in Online Drum and Bass Communities

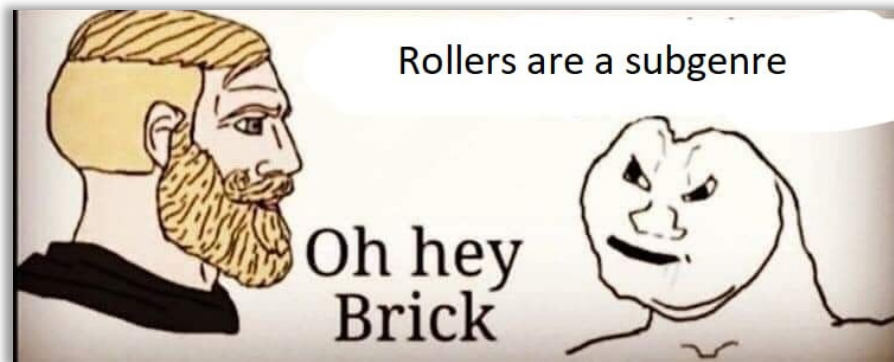


Figure 1. Woodward. Portion of screenshot of post media used in post 42.

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This thesis is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of MA Creative Events Management. I, Jessica Woodward confirm that, except where other sources are acknowledged, my contributions are my own unaided work. The total word count is 13,177 words.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jessica Woodward', with a stylized, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jessica Woodward

11th March 2021

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I. ABSTRACT

There is a growing, albeit recent, academic interest in the use of internet memes as subcultural capital within online communities. Society is becoming increasingly digitised, increasing numbers of individuals are connecting within online communities surrounding areas of interest. With a focus on internet meme usage within online drum and bass music communities, this research examines how internet memes are used within these groups in relation to existing knowledge such as genre theory, subcultural capital, fandom and communities of practice.

A netnography was conducted, collecting archive observational data from the Facebook group *DnB Memes*. From this, the data was coded using a thematic approach, and examined through an interpretivist lens, this research develops theory regarding how internet memes influence participant behaviour, individual identity formation and collective identity formation in the context of the drum and bass community. The findings indicated that, within the context of the DnB Memes community, memes constituted subcultural capital and played a significant role in influencing the behaviours of group members.

As increasing numbers of individuals become active internet users, our social world becomes more digitised. This research forms a starting point in developing theory surrounding the use of internet memes in online drum and bass communities. Thus, contributing to the growing knowledge and theory regarding online social behaviours.

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1: INTRODUCTION

Rapid and continuing advances in digital communication technologies are reshaping our social world. As of January 2021, there were 4.66 billion active internet users worldwide (Johnson, 2021). This ever-increasing number of individuals actively engaging in online practices is leading to the emergence of what Prattichizzo describes as *'The Social Network Society'* (2015:310). Digital social networks have become dominant aspects of everyday life, in many ways overtaking the organic, and this in turn has had an impact on the way that cultural media is produced, distributed and experienced. This digitisation of media and the emergence of global social media can be attributed to media democratisation within *Web 2.0*.

Sfetcu defines *Web 2.0* as, 'the evolution of the Web towards greater simplicity (requiring no technical knowledge of computer for users) and interactivity (allowing everyone, individually or collectively, to contribute, share and collaborate in various forms)' (2020:2). Through the introduction of new interfaces, *Web 2.0* allows users greater possibilities than simply withdrawing information, facilitating meaningful interactions between users (Sfetcu, 2020). Consequently, media functions not only as technologies in *Web 2.0*, but as environments or *social liquid ecosystems* (Prattichizzo, 2015).

Although memes and memetic practices have existed prior to its online incarnation (Gal, 2018), web 2.0 has provided a fertile ground for the internet meme to develop and flourish as a new form of digitised cultural communication. As Gal (2018) suggests, on the one hand memetic practices allow individuals to express creativity and originality through the production of memes. On the other hand, memetic practices have allowed individuals to

achieve a sense of belonging through exchanging memes as cultural or subcultural capital within online communities.

It has become apparent that developing knowledge and understanding of this ever-evolving digitised society achieves a greater understanding of contemporary social behaviour. Therefore, it is appropriate to critically examine internet memes as tools for powerful cultural and subcultural communication. There is evidence in the growing literature surrounding memes, that there currently remains a gap in 'academically rigorous' (Davison, (2012:122), knowledge. On the surface, internet memes can be perceived as shallow or insignificant (Nissenbaum & Shifman, 2015), perhaps due to the low level of technical skill required to produce them (Esteves, 2018). However, in recent years, memes are becoming increasingly recognised as influential artifacts of significant cultural value (Esteves, 2018).

This research seeks to contribute to the growing academic understanding of internet memes as powerful cultural artifacts, tools of communication and tools of identity formation. Using the drum and bass musical genre as a subcultural basis from which to do so.

The drum and bass musical genre, alongside other musical genres that can be classified as embodying club culture (Thornton, 1995), constitute a significant cultural phenomenon that has dominated leisure and escapist behaviour in the modern age. Although club cultures largely revolve around the physical, sensory experience of live event or rave attendance (Goulding & Shankar, 2011), the culture, characteristics and behaviours of the drum and bass musical genre are deeply steeped within subcultural knowledge and identity formation. As suggested by Best *et al* (2017) 'the more one immerses his or herself in the subculture and

the more traits typical of that subculture he or she adopts, the greater his or her subcultural capital will be' (2017:35). With this, it can be argued that the behaviours of those who identify within the drum and bass subculture do not occur solely within live event spaces, but within all subcultural spaces these participants inhabit. As Praticchizzo states, 'Music is an active and essential ingredient in the composition of social and identity experience' (2015:309). Therefore, it can be noted that within the *Social Network Society*, digital spaces have become communities in which fans of the drum and bass musical genre congregate to produce, exchange and contest subcultural capital and knowledge. With this, dedicated drum and bass meme groups have emerged.

A netnographic study was selected for this enquiry, as it enables researchers to critically examine and build an understanding of digital social worlds (Kozinets, 2015). This enquiry uses the *DnB Memes* Facebook group as a case study. Formed in March 2018, the private Facebook group with over 50,000 members. The group's description is as follows: 'Home to the largest community of Drum and Bass ravers, DnB Allstars represents DJs, MCs, Skankers, Jumpers and Bassline Lovers across the globe. This group's sole purpose is for funny memes regarding dnb (NO DJ BASHING)' (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/DnBMemes/about>). In the case of this research, this group appears to place importance on online community behaviours, as well as genre specific subcultural knowledge and behaviour, whilst existing specifically as a meme group. Therefore, it is a valid case study subject for this enquiry.

Drawing upon current literature, this enquiry will examine the use of internet memes on the DnB Memes Facebook page through the lens of genre theory, communities of practice theory and fandom theory in order to gain an understanding of how internet memes are utilised in

subcultural practices specific to the drum and bass community. With this, is it hoped that theory can be developed regarding how internet memes are used and can be used within subcultural communities to develop collective and individual identities, influence participant behaviour and create and share subcultural knowledge. Using the drum and bass community as a starting point, further research can take place examining other subcultures and online groups.

2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Current literature has been examined exploring a range of cultural, subcultural and behavioural factors that are considered to be involved in these online communities, with the aim of developing new theory and knowledge regarding the behaviours of participants within online drum and bass meme groups.

2.1: Genre Theory Definitions

By gaining an understanding of theories surrounding genre, it is hoped that a greater understanding of the characteristics of that which falls within specified genres can be determined. When seeking clarity on definitions of genre theory, it became apparent that its applications span a plethora of theoretical forms, practices and formats, such as literature, theatre, film and music. Through this, definitions and criticisms have emerged.

Mendoza-Halliday suggests that, 'To talk about music is to talk of categories.' (2017:1), and with this, one of the most common forms of musical categorisation is the genre. This definition of genres as systems of categorisations is mirrored by Frith, who proposes that categorisation is an abundant part of popular culture, 'these are so much a part of our everyday lives that we hardly notice their necessity' (1996:75). However, not all theorists agree with the definition of genre as systems of categorisation. In recent years, researchers have identified a shift in theory surrounding genre, challenging the traditional perceptions of genre as categories and building an understanding that connects kinds of media to kinds of social actions (Bawarshi & Reiff). Devitt (1993) suggests that the view of genre as categorisation is not only trivial but also potentially destructive. The work of Devitt (1993)

focuses on genre concepts in literary theory and proposes new unified theory of genre which 'entails purpose, participants, and themes' (1993:576).

This view argues that genre is more complex and evolving in its nature. Sparling echoes this view in regard to musical genre in Cape Breton Gaelic Culture, stating that, 'Traditional classification systems attempted to be totalizing in nature, systematizing everything relevant' (2008:408). Genres can be regarded as rules that are rooted within society, prone to change as a result of any behavioural, ideological or societal shift (Sparling). As Sparling suggests, 'Genres and genre systems often give the appearance of being neat and tidy and straightforward when in fact they are complex human constructions that have nebulous, permeable, and shifting boundaries.' (2008: 408)

This creates a challenge in defining genre. Mere categorisation is seen by some theorists as insufficient, and an understanding of the social impact of genres is regarded as vital in truly understanding what genre is. Eideallyn states that 'While each genre can be characterised on the basis of the fictional conventions that construct and regulate its world, the actual force of these conventions can be felt by looking at their functions' (2016:[online]). Scholars have encountered challenges in constructing genre systems without encountering outlying leftover material that could fit multiple categories, this has led to an understanding of the importance of social context for understanding how and why texts are labelled in particular ways (Sparling). Fabbri offers a definition of musical genre, 'A set of musical events (real or possible) whose course is governed by a definite set of socially accepted rules' (1981:52), placing importance on the role of society and human behaviour.

2.2: Genre Theory Applications to Drum and Bass

These definitions and theories surrounding genre help to shape current understanding and theory with specific regard to the drum and bass musical genre. Quinn suggests that the roots of drum and bass emerged in the English hardcore rave scene of 1991-2 (Quinn, 2002). The genre evolved from the UK Jungle sound which was developed as an assertion of a UK black musical identity (Quinn, 2002). Quinn (2002) suggests that Jungle was encompassed into drum and bass naturally through expansion of the genre. However, McLeod suggests that as the Jungle genre was widely associated with black communities and perceived to be linked with drug abuse and violence, the drum and bass musical genre emerged to rebrand the UK Jungle sound to remove the 'otherness' and give it greater universal appeal to allow it to be more widely consumed by white audiences (McLeod, 2001). Although McLeod and Quinn both perceive the roots of drum and bass as a form of expression of UK black cultural identity, both theorists have contrasting perceptions of why the genre evolved to become part of the overarching drum and bass musical genre. While McLeod deems the evolution to be a form of cultural rebranding, Quinn suggests that while the roots of the genre emerged from a 'formulation of a music that could represent a 'black' population and counter its experience of marginality' (2002:8), viewing the genre entirely in this way risks limiting the genre and undermining what he describes as 'the mobilisation of a unified and racially-determined collectivity' (2002:8).

One aspect of the drum and bass musical genre that is seemingly mirrored within other electronic music genres is the prevalence of subgenres. As McLeod suggests, 'the continuous and rapid introduction of new subgenre names into electronic/dance music communities is

equalled by no other type of music' (2001:60). Stylistic, technological, cultural and commercial offshoots emerge within the ever-evolving nature of the drum and bass genre, and with this, information regarding the identity and political-economic institutions of these offshoots can be examined (McLeod 2001). McLeod offers a number of suggestions as to why subgenre naming occurs. One suggestion being that subgenre naming occurs as a merchandising strategy. Through this, marketers create new sub genres to brand and market what McLeod describes as, 'the next big thing' (2001:67). Additionally, marketers utilise subgenre identities as branding when creating flyers for events and raves. This branding allows marketers to convey the type of music that will be played (McLeod, 2001). This perspective can also be seen in the work of Frith, who proposed that clubs and club nights use musical labels within their visual material, 'to attract a particular sort of crowd and thus to ensure a particular sort of evening' (1996:84).

Another suggestion put forward by McLeod is that subgenre naming exists as a subcultural 'gate keeping device' (2001:73). Where the parameters of the subgenre and its subculture separate it from the general population. With the process of entry requiring the acquisition of relevant cultural capital and the assumption of a specified identity entrenched with language and aesthetic hierarchies (McLeod, 2001).

The next suggestion offered by McLeod is that subgenre naming exists as an example of accelerated consumer culture. Within the drum and bass genre, rapidly emerging subgenres indicate the sheer volume of new music being generated and consumed. McLeod suggests that this can be seen as 'an exemplary model of planned obsolescence' (2001:69). Additionally, there is a view that participants within the drum and bass musical genre are less

concerned with stars or personalities than other musical genres. It cannot be denied that influential individuals exist, Quinn highlights a 'trio of major personalities - Goldie, Grooverider and Fabio' (2002:2) and McLeod highlights Goldie and Roni Size (2001). However, it is also possible to be popular and successful whilst remaining connected to the underground (McLeod, 2001). This viewpoint is echoed by Hesmondhalgh, who suggests that 'Dance music cultures have, over many years, been somewhat less concerned with authorship, with performer identity' (1998:238). This can be seen within the drum and bass musical genre through the existence of the *white label*. These 12-inch records are adorned with a plain white label, offering no details of who produced the record. Additionally, drum and bass artists often create pseudonyms that obscure their identity (Hesmondhalgh, 1998). Hesmondhalgh proposes that this rejection of the star system reflects a 'celebration of collectivism' (1998:239) within dance music culture, placing importance on other values such as 'immediacy and sensuality' (1998:238).

Perhaps the most apparent cause of genre naming proposed by McLeod is due to stylistic differences and evolution within the sound of the music itself. This echoes the more traditional conceptions of genre as forms of categorisation, as it allows music with similar sounds and themes to be identified within an overarching genre yet also be categorised by smaller more detailed characteristics. To an outsider of these communities, these differences may be unnoticeable. However, insiders to the communities are keenly aware of these differences (McLeod, 2001).

With this, insiders of these communities can sometimes contest subgenre naming. Curiously, a debate emerged within the drum and bass community regarding the categorisation of the

'roller', as Marino recounts in their 2019 article for *UKF* magazine titled, '*Rollers Are Not a Subgenre, You Muppets!*' This debate focused whether or not drum and bass rollers, which Marino defines as 'any track with a rolling bassline or beat structure.' (2019, [online]) should be classified as their own subgenre. This triggered what Marino describes as a 'meme war' (2019, [online]) across social media communities, with individuals using the meme format to voice their opinions and try to persuade others to support their point of view. Marino strongly disagrees with the proposition of classifying rollers as a subgenre 'There are jump up rollers, jungle rollers, neurofunk rollers, liquid rollers... hell, even jazz and rock have their rollers' (2019, [online]). Marino suggests that the term roller can be attributed to a track of any genre with the roller style of drums or baseline, and therefore cannot be defined as a subgenre, As Marino states; 'Rollers in no way defines any subgenre. In fact, more often than not, it unifies them.' (2019). Marino goes on to highlight the sheer volume of subgenres within drum and bass and suggest that this could in fact be negative for the genre by pigeonholing the music and its producers, limiting creative freedom, contributing to divisiveness within the scene and in fact hindering the evolution process of the genre (Marino, 2019).

2.3: Origins of Club Culture

The culture, characteristics and behaviours that form the drum and bass musical genre can be considered an intrinsic part of 'Club Culture'- a cultural phenomenon that has dominated leisure and escapist behaviour since its emergence in Ibiza during the 1980s (Goulding & Shankar, 2011). Thornton defines club culture as 'the colloquial expression given to youth cultures for whom dance clubs and their eighties offshoot, raves, are the symbolic axis and working social hub' (1995:12). Rief (2009), Goulding & Shankar (2011) all recognise Ibiza as

the source of club culture. However, Reif suggests that, 'The discourses on nightclubbing culture are still very UK-centred' (2009:2), and that 'Club cultures remain inflected by local histories, traditions, social, political and economic circumstances' (2009:3).

Key characteristics and behaviours of participants in UK club culture can be identified. For example, participants of the UK club culture community are frequently associated with the use of 'designer' or 'club' drugs (Rome, 2001). This in turn has contributed to a poor perception of club culture by outsiders and a lack of consideration of club culture within mainstream discourse. Additionally, traditional free party events were made illegal in 1994, triggering a shift in the cultural spaces used by event participants. As Thornton states, 'Dance cultures have long been seen to epitomize mass culture as its worst. Dance music has been considered to be standardized, mindless and banal, while dancers have been regarded as narcotized, conformist and easily manipulated' (1995: 12).

Alongside this poor outsider perception and understanding of club culture, its participants embrace counter-cultural and subcultural behaviours that further separate themselves from mainstream media and culture. As Thornton suggests, 'Club crowds generally congregate on the basis of their shared taste in music, their consumption of common media and, most importantly, their preference for people with similar tastes to themselves' (1995:14). Clubbers and the spaces that they inhabit have deep connections to liberation, transgression and freedom (Reif, 2009). With this, clubbing can be considered an escapist practice, where individuals engage in a process of temporarily leaving the rules of every-day society through entering the clubbing space, returning to society after each event has concluded (Goulding & Shankar, 2011). Additionally, as Reif suggests, 'youth and popular culture studies have a long

history of engaging with the theme of authenticity' (2009:7), which highlights the separation of what those participating within the culture deem as authentic and inauthentic. Thornton extends this view by highlighting three hierarchies within club culture: the authentic vs the phoney, the 'hip' vs the 'mainstream' and the 'underground' vs the 'media' (Thornton, 1995). This serves as a subcultural gate keeping device, as Thornton suggests, 'To be 'hip' is to be privy to insider knowledges that are threatened by the general distribution and easy access of mass media' (1995: 16).

2.4: Club Cultures and Subcultural Capital

Drawing upon the three dominant presentations of capital proposed by Bourdieu (1986): *economic capital, cultural capital and social capital*, Thornton (1995) presents an additional presentation of capital: *subcultural capital*. Thornton defines 'hipness' (1995:21) as a form of subcultural capital, suggesting independence of the mainstream, and a demonstration of rebellion or escape from trappings of parental class (Thornton. 1995). Building upon this, Best *et al.* (2017) define *subcultural capital* as 'the measures taken by individuals to accumulate status within a social domain, often by differentiating from the mainstream' (2017:32). Thornton suggests that subcultural capital is objectified 'in the form of fashionable haircuts and well-assembled record collections (full of well-chosen, limited edition "white label" twelve inches and the like)' (1995:22) and embodied through demonstration of 'being "in the know", using (but not over-using) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles' (1995:22). Most importantly however, Thornton highlights the importance of demonstrating 'second nature' (1995:22) levels of knowledge and behaviour, suggesting that, 'nothing depletes capital more than the sight of someone trying too hard'

(1995:22). Best *et al* call attention to criticisms of Thornton's theory of subcultural capital, stating that some believe it to be withholding the importance of class within subcultures, oversimplifying the cultural practices of young people, and romanticising subcultures as sources of resistance (Best *et al.* 2017). However, through an examination of *Chance The Rapper's* success through the lens of subcultural capital, Best *et al.* (2017) challenge these criticisms (2017:36). Their findings suggested that authenticity and relevancy with audiences of identified subcultures maximised opportunity and commercial success for artists. However, strategies in acquiring subcultural capital 'cannot easily be done alone without the aid of other forms of social, economic, or embodied cultural capital' (Best *et al.* 2017:47).

2.5: Communities of Practice

When examining the practices of participants within the drum and bass community, the concept of communities of practice, or CoPs can be investigated to consider its potential applications to online drum and bass meme communities. The origins of communities of practice emerged in the work of Wenger and Jean Lave, who challenged traditional views surrounding concepts of learning and knowledge exchange, as Farnsworth *et al* state, 'In Particular, they argued that learning does not rest with the individual but is a social process that is situated in cultural and historical context' (2016:3). Vollenbroek defines communities of practice as, 'a social network where people in an organisational context come together around a common topic, passion or interest and regularly interact on- and offline with a focus on knowledge management, innovation, learning and social networking' (2019:9). Additionally, Wenger and Wenger offer the following definition, 'Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to

do it better as they interact regularly.’ With this, it can be observed that theorists place emphasis on the importance of working with others when learning (Vollenbroek. 2019). Additionally, communities of practice bring together individuals with shared values, passions or interests in order to further each individual’s knowledge, skills and to solve problems.

Despite the similarities seen in the above definitions, McGrath *et al* criticise the concept of communities of practice, stating that that interpretations may be inconsistent or at odds with one another, or that some theorists apply CoP theory in a ‘cosmetic fashion’. (2019 [online]). Pyrko *et al* (2019) introduce the concepts of *Networks of Practice*, and *Landscapes of Practice*. These expand on the traditional concept of CoPs that rely on their own, local situated practice. Networks of practice are what Pyrko *et al* describe as ‘looser social formations, but their members are nonetheless oriented toward the same practice’ (2019:485). Members are connected via a network and shared practice; however, they may not know one another directly. Similarly, landscapes of practice are broader than traditional CoPs, not all members are likely to know each other. However, unlike NoPs, LoPs do not entail a network, rather a totality of practitioners. (2019)

2.6: Online Communities of Practice

Another potential issue with the traditional concept of communities of practice is that it may be less applicable in a digital context. Vollenbroek’s (2019) acknowledges the potential for online communities of practice, ‘By initiating a CoP, organisations are increasingly opting for online community software to take full advantage of the possibilities to reduce social distance between employees and thereby optimize knowledge exchange’ (2019:11). Palmer

(*n.d*:[online](#)) also recognises the possibilities of online communities of practice, suggesting that online social media platforms can help to create more dynamic communities of practice, providing ongoing and records of previous learning, which are accessible regardless of time zone or geographical location (Palmer, *n.d*:[online](#)). One consideration when examining behaviour within online communities of practice is what Vollenbroek describes as the ‘90-9-1 principle’ (2019:78), which states that on collaborative websites, 90% of the participants only read content, 9% of the participants edit or comment on content and 1% of the participants actively create new content’ (2019: 78). With little to no face-to-face interaction, members of online CoPs feel less social pressure to contribute and may instead act as passive observers. (Vollenbroek, 2019).

Identity plays a significant role within communities of practice, both in terms of the individual participants identity and the shared community identity. As Zhang & Watts suggest, ‘the formation of member identities is embedded in practice. It is through engaging in community practice that members establish who they are in regards to pursuing the joint enterprise’ (2008:56). Through examination of an online travel forum, Zhang & Watts (2008) found that through the exchange of text-based messages, members of the community fostered high levels of engagement online, clearly indicating that the forum manifested a joint enterprise. Considering the potential for lessened engagement in large number online group sizes, Zhang & Watts felt that, ‘even though less than 10 percent of all members contributed regularly, there were no identifiable adverse effects resulted from light participation: light participants dedicated to the joint enterprise as much as regular participants’ (2008:66).

2.7: Fandom

Fandom as a concept can be defined as communities in which fans of a cultural product not only consume the culture surrounding their *fandom*, but creatively engage in the production, distribution and consumption of its own culture (Lanier & Fowler, 2013:284). Community member's commitment to the object of their *fandom* acts as a cultural gate keeping device, separating them from non-fans (Lanier & Fowler, 2013). Lanier and Fowler declare that early scholars examining fans and fandoms primarily associated fans with passive audience members or consumers, rather than active participants. Among others, Lanier and Fowler have criticised this approach, as it, 'denies the active nature of fandom' (2013:285). As Lamerichs (2018) suggests, 'fans actively work with the blanks in the source text that spark their imagination and give way to oppositional readings' (2018:17). Despite positive notions of engagement and production, fandom communities have garnered negative perceptions through associations with hysteria and obsession (Malik & Haidar 2020). Although fandom communities flourish in off-line spaces such as convention events, the internet has provided a space for increased fan practice visibility and allowed greater numbers of people to actively engage in fandom groups (Lamerichs, 2018).

It is important to consider the online behaviours of music fans on social media. As Prattichizzo suggests, 'In general, music has always played a leading role in the diffusion of communication technologies' (2015:314). For many consumers the search for music has become a continuous, constant and collaborative process (Prattichizzo, 2015). Additionally, Prattichizzo believes that social networks have become spaces that go beyond distribution and consumption to serve as co-production environments, facilitating collaboration and

production (2015). With this, parallels can be drawn between the behaviour of music fans online and the behaviour *fandom* communities. Additionally, Social media facilitates increased opportunities for communication between both fans and music practitioners (Mjos 2012).

Building upon the level of knowledge and cultural (re)production within *fandoms*. Hills argues that parallels can be drawn between *fandom* and communities of practice. Prior knowledge surrounding participatory culture and *fandom* present these communities as lacking expertise within the context of communities of practice. However, Hills argues that this assumption is problematic, 'I will argue that wishing away the cultural power discourses of expertise – whether at a participatory or pluralist level – fails to illuminate how media fandom iterates forms of expert knowledge' (2015:[online]). Examining the *Doctor Who* fandom in relation to Wenger's model of communities of practice, Hills concludes that within the *Fandom*, '*Doctor Who* isn't simply an iconic text to be treated with reverence but rather a series of possibilities to be newly unfolded' (2015:[online]). Hills highlights how fan culture displays individual expertise, rather than 'entirely reconfiguring a traditional expert paradigm through web 2.0's collective intelligence' (2015:[online]).

Malik & Haidar's (2020) also investigate possible parallels between online fandom communities and communities of practice, Through an investigation into the online community *K-Pop stan twitter*. Malik & Haidar found that, 'the K-Pop fandom possess all the characteristics required for CoP and henceforth a place of learning. The members of K-Pop stan twitter engage in online interactions, form interpersonal relationships owing to their shared interests, and perform several goal-oriented activities as a group' (2020:2). However,

Malik & Haidar (2020) identified power hierarchy as a new element within online communities overlooked by existing scholarship of CoPs. Traditionally, CoPs are advocated as communities where individuals are joined by their shared interests and goals and all members are equally welcome to contribute to the community (Malik & Haidar 2020). However, results from the study conducted by Malik & Haidar identified 'big accounts (accounts with a large number of followers) as the "leaders"' (Malik & Haidar 2020:10), these leaders create and maintain trends for other members of the community to follow. To conclude, Malik & Haidar identified the *K-Pop stan twitter* community as more than 'just a group of fans gathered together. It is a platform where they are actively collaborating and coordinating their efforts towards a goal. In the process, they are learning from fellow community members' (2020:14).

2.8: The Internet Meme

As stated by Anderson & Keehn, 'It would be an understatement to say that the internet meme has reshaped our social world' (2020:57). To pinpoint the origins of the meme, Bristow offers an insight, suggesting that instances of rebuses and readymades throughout history served as precursors to the modern meme, such as Marcel Duchamp's 1917 artwork titled *Fountain* (2019:18). Davison (2021) offers a different origin of the meme, drawing upon the work of Dawkins, who identified the distinctions between culture and genetics in influencing human behaviour, proposing that any non-genetic behaviour can be described as a meme. (Davison 2012). Throughout the evolution of the web, visual material in a range of forms have been integrated, supported and denigrated within online communication (Highfield & Leaver 2016). As Highfield and Leaver point out, 'The contemporary visual social media landscape replete with GIFs, selfies, emoji and more is the latest iteration of networked communication

with a long-running theme: we have always found ways to be visual online' (2016:48). Visual social media content has been identified as key aspects for presenting and fashioning online identities (Highfield & Leaver 2016). With this, Dawkins' traditional definition of meme has evolved, hijacked in a sense by what is now known as *Internet Memes*.

Pettman, who also draws upon Dawkins' consideration of memes as similar to cultural genes, defines memes as 'a "cultural unit" for carrying ideas, symbols, or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through media' (2019:27). When considering internet memes, Pettman states that 'memes have begun to describe those deliberately clunky images, with accompanying text, designed to make us laugh, feel and/or think, and that circulate primarily through social media, spreading like a virus' (2019:28). A similar definition is offered by Nissenbaum, & Shifman, who define internet memes as 'digital items with common characteristics that are imitated and reiterated around the web' (2015).

Key shared characteristics can be identified within these definitions: First, internet memes take the form of a cultural digital product, such as an image, video or piece of text. Second, internet memes are heavily reliant on the reproduction, remixing and redistribution capabilities offered by the technology of *web 2.0*. As Cannizzaro suggests, 'The newest forms of media have established internet memes' (2016:562). Culturally, the desire to share, remix and repurpose capital has been a prevalent aspect of society throughout history (An Xiao 2019), and this behaviour remains commonplace within social media networks, with media artifacts going 'viral' and being remixed as internet memes. (Cannizzaro 2016). Esteves (2018), highlights the minimal technical skill required to create internet memes as a driving force in placing them 'in the most democratic of categories when it comes to internet

creativity' (2016:24). However, Esteves also states that the democratic nature of communication on *Web 2.0* poses the risk of overlooking the repressive aspects of digital media. Although internet memes by their nature work on a principle of democratic creation and communication, they require a high level of cultural literacy for viewers to understand (Esteves 2016).

Despite these definitions, some theorists recognise a gap within current academic knowledge regarding internet memes, when offering a definition of internet memes, Davison suggests that, 'there are numerous online sources (Wikipedia, Urban Dictionary, Know Your Meme, Encyclopaedia Dramatica) that describe internet memes as the public perceives them, but none does so in an academically rigorous way' (2012:122). Cannizzaro echoes this view, highlighting that the most comprehensive resources for information on internet memes appear to be found within online and electronic ephemera (2016).

Although internet memes seemingly appear simple, shallow or insignificant, they are a distinctive product of current digital culture (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2015). Internet memes and cultural capital are deeply intertwined both through their unique creation processes and to the social dynamics they are rooted in (Yus 2018). An Xiao (2019) argues that online and offline culture are now so closely intertwined that they can now be considered to be one, with online cultural actions possessing the power to influence culture at large in both subtle and compelling ways (2019) As An Xiao suggests: 'Memes are the media through which we test and iterate and envision and contest the type of society we want to live in. They may seem inconsequential, but they contain within them a world-changing, movement-building capacity if provided the right soil and the right care' (2019). Anderson & Keehn (2020) draw

upon the *Ok Boomer* meme as an example of memes as consciousness building and social commentary. This meme trend is 'meant to express the political frustration of millennials and younger generations with what they see as a fundamentally inequitable and hostile political landscape' (2020:57). With this, the meaning of the meme goes far beyond the image, conveying a narrative entrenched with political theorising necessary for building social movements (Anderson & Keehn 2020:57).

The work of Nissenbaum & Shifman explores the potential social functions of memes within online communities, adopting a netnographic and grounded theory approach with a focus on the *4chan /b/ board*. Their findings were isolated into three categories: Memes as (sub)cultural capital, Memes as unstable equilibriums and Memes as discursive weapons (2015). Most notably, their findings focused on instances in which commenters did not follow community etiquette, resulting in condemnation from other users, 'Our analysis revealed three main motivations for such condemnation: alleged misuse of meme templates, disputes over the framing of particular units as memes, and reliance on memes prevalent in other communities' (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2015). These incidents demonstrate the role that memes play in what Nissenbaum & Shifman describe as 'maintaining distinctions based on cultural knowledge' (2015). Those who used memes incorrectly were ousted from the community, suggesting that memes can constitute their own cultural gate-keeping devices (Nissenbaum & Shifman 2015).

The relationship between internet memes and online communities can also be seen in the work of Chaumont (*n.d*), who offers the term *Memesis* to refer to 'the process of a community creating itself through the spreading of its culture' (2011:[online]). Through a decentralised

production and dissemination process across digital platforms, a constant birth death cycle in which memes must be spread or face disappearance, and self-definition through speed (Chaumont 2011), *Memesis* 'not only is the example of how digital communities are reshaping the traditional structures of gathering individuals to a cause, by indirectly adding them in the production, but is also showing a part of ourselves as social individuals in the process' (2011:[online]).

Online memes impact on both cultures and subcultures, where they are utilised in the communication of issues surrounding areas of interest (Esteves 2016). Esteves (2016) conducted an investigation exploring subculture and memes within online *Lolita* communities, concluding that not only do internet memes impact on subcultures, but 'subcultures are yet another sphere that makes use of online memes for bonding and communicative purposes, partaking too in the inclusive/exclusive divide that has been noted in other forms of online meme interaction' (2016:164). Meme making and sharing can take place in a 'public battlefield' (Esteves, 2016:164), in which cultural group members can express complex points of view.

The growing literature on internet memes and online communities demonstrates that although not immediately apparent, internet memes hold significant value (Esteves, 2018) and have implications in influencing community behaviour, identity formation and subcultural capital. Additionally, internet meme communities have been identified as sharing characteristics with communities of practice. However, there is evidence of a gap in current literature that examines these behaviours in relation to musical genres. This gap forms a key part of the originality of this research.

3: METHODOLOGY

3.1: Research Design

This research aimed to explore gaps in current knowledge and understanding surrounding the relationship between internet memes, online behaviours and identities of participants of online drum and bass fan groups. The following research questions have been formulated:

- How are internet memes used within online drum and bass meme groups?
- What kind of behaviours take place within drum and bass meme groups? With a focus on collective and individual genre identity formation, fan behaviour, communities of practice and memes as subcultural capital.
- Do internet memes constitute (sub)cultural capital to the point that they can be considered integral to the functioning of these communities?

In order to provide an insight into these questions, a focus on observation was decided upon. Clough and Nutbrown (2012:54) offer the following definition of observation, 'Our working definition of observation here is simply 'looking' – looking critically, looking openly, looking sometimes knowing what we are looking for, looking for evidence, looking to be persuaded, looking for information' (2012:54). With this, it was decided that the most applicable research approach for this study was to conduct a netnography, with a focus on participant observation. Kozinets *et al.* (2014: 262) define netnography as an, 'established approach to qualitative research, whose name draws together the terms 'Internet' and 'Ethnography' (262). The development of the netnography approach emerged as online social spaces became increasingly recognised as rich and open cultural sites, and as such can serve as

important fields for social scientific research (Kozinets *et al.* 2014). Additionally, netnography critiques traditional cultural theory, suggesting that culture and community are less stable than prior theory suggested, with individuals liberated from ascribed culture and community through online selective identity formation (Kozinets 2015). Specifically, netnography allows the researcher to build an understanding of digital social worlds, the contexts that make these worlds possible, and the social forms advanced within these worlds (Kozinets 2015). As Kozinets identifies:

‘simply opening a mobile phone and typing in some search terms is not, in itself, netnography. Netnography is, instead, specific sets of research positions and accompanying practices embedded in historical trajectories, webs of theoretical constructs, and networks of scholarship and citation; it is a particular performance of cultural research followed by specific kinds of representation of understanding’ (2015:2).

With this in mind, it became imperative to ensure that the research design complimented a philosophical principle (Ryan 2018). As Chilisa, and Kawulich (2012:1) suggest, ‘A paradigm is a way of describing a world view that is informed by philosophical assumptions about the nature of social reality’. Therefore, the data collected throughout this enquiry will be examined with consideration of the Constructivist / Interpretivist paradigm. Interpretivism argues that knowledge and reality are subjective, based on lived human experiences, and the researcher’s values and beliefs cannot be completely separate from the research enquiry (Ryan 2018). Chilisa and Kawulich (2012:10) suggest that through an Interpretivist lens, communities’ stories, belief systems and claims of spiritual and earth connections find space

as legitimate knowledge' (2012:10). The data collected from this enquiry largely focuses on the behaviour and participation of individuals within drum and bass communities that use internet memes. Therefore, this paradigm was appropriate for data analysis, as it enables researchers to consider factors such as behavioural aspects based on participant experiences (Alharahsheh & Pius 2019). Additionally, in contrast to the Positivist paradigm, the Interpretivist paradigm allows research to remain focused on the specific topic at hand, avoiding more generalised and inflexible interpretations (Alharahsheh & Pius 2019).

3.2: Data Collection Design & Data Analysis Design

The netnographic research enquiry involved a case study examining the 'digital traces' (Latzko-Toth *et al.* 2017:200) left by participants on *DnB Memes: a private Facebook group* in which participants create, re-create and distribute internet memes relating to the drum and bass musical genre. As of March 2021, the Facebook group has over 50,670 members across the world. This case study involved examining archive data posted by group participants from the 1st of November 2020 to the 31st of November 2020, totalling 98 individual posts. The process involved the researcher adopting a non-participatory approach. It was important to consider the possible pitfalls in collecting archive and non-participatory data, as this approach risks missing opportunities for ongoing co-creation (Costello *et al.* 2017) and raises the potential for what Jaimangal-Jones (2014:43) describes as 'ethnocentrism', which results in the researcher misunderstanding the meaning and significance of the participant's behaviour. As Jaimangal-Jones (2014:48) suggests, conducting research as a 'participant observer requires a complex process of identity negotiation and performance to ensure role performance credibility'. With this in mind, this approach was decided upon as the researcher

has been a member of this Facebook group since the 15th of March 2018. Therefore, a non-participatory approach was deemed to reduce bias (Costello *et al.* 2017). Additionally, it can be argued that using pre-existing data sets can add important information and save valuable resources with regards to data collection (Schensul, S 2013). As Kozinets *et al* (2014:266) suggest, “pre-existing cultural membership can smooth entrée into an unnoticeable and much more personally complicated introspective event”.

The researcher considered the importance of note taking within netnographic or ethnographic research and observation-based research (Jaimangal-Jones 2014), with this in mind, the researcher produced an Observation Taxonomy to compile all recorded data and notes throughout the research period. Bell and Waters (2014:145) highlight the following components when considering online engagement, Community, Content and Conversations’. Although phenomenological enquiry often utilises qualitative methods (Fox et al. 2014), the researcher decided to adopt a mixed methods approach with regards to data collection. As Anderson (2016:233) suggests, ‘All research methods have their limitations’, by utilising a mixed methods approach of both quantitative and qualitative methods can be complimentary (Hesse-Biber 2010) with both methods offsetting one another’s strengths and weaknesses (Anderson 2016). With this in mind, the following qualitative elements were selected for data collection:

- Post format
- Visual language
- Text & audio
- Tone of post

- Topics / themes
- Notable comments / responses
- Additional notes

The following quantitative elements were selected for data collection:

- Date and time of postings
- Number of *responses*
- Number of *comments*

By defining these parameters for data collection, the researcher aimed to keep the data quantity manageable and prioritise *depth* within the data collection process (Latzko-Toth 2017). As Kozinets suggests, data ‘can be polished like a corporately created production, or raw and crude, full of obscenities and spelling errors’ (2015:5). With this, the researcher decided to record data exactly as it had been seen, refraining from correcting spelling and grammatical errors, or removing obscenities.

It is important to consider ethical factors associated with observational, non-participatory research, and ensure that researchers work in a way that protects participant from any risks of danger or embarrassment (Clough & Nutbrown 2012). As Facebook users can post from personal profiles or from artist ‘pages’ under pseudonym names, all results from this study omitted full names and personal details of participants, recording participant initials only.

As advised by Kozinets *et al.* (2014:270), 'The purpose of netnographic data analysis is to organise the collected products of participation and observation into a rigorous, meaningful, and useful form of research output'. The researcher decided to follow what Kozinets *et al.* (2014:269) describe as an 'old-fashioned, hands on approach to netnographic data analysis', collecting and processing the data manually, rather than utilising any preprogramed web-mining or content analysis software. (Kozinets *et al.* 2014). As this study has been informed by previous research and existing theory, a deductive approach to grounded theory analysis was utilised with the aim of building new understanding (Getz & Page, 2016). The coding of the data involved what Kozinets (2014) describes as labelling and categorising data by "emic" field-level meanings. With this in mind, the researcher adopted a thematic approach to analysis, sorting and coding the data (Caulfield, 2019) by identifying key themes and identifying sub-themes within these in order to identify patterns, processes, commonalities and differences within the data (Fox *et al.* 2014). This process involved several iterations, with repeated reading and coding (Fox *et al.* 2014) to ensure thorough analysis. As Urquhart suggests, 'The *connecting* of the categories is as important as the naming of them' (2012:9), therefore, key consideration was made of the relationships between the data. In addition to a thematic approach to analysis, the researcher applied discourse analysis in order to gain an understanding of the socio-historic context of the language used within the data set (O'Leary, 2004).

4: RESULTS

Below is a sample of coded data of the observed behaviours taking place on the *DnB Memes* community from 00:00 on the 1st of November 2020 to 23:59 on the 30th of November 2020.

Please see appendix number 1 for the full coded data document in Excel format.

Please see appendix number 2 for the full Observation Taxonomy document in Excel format.

4.1: Results: Sample of 10 posts from Genre Coded Data

POST NUMBER	GENRE		
	GENRE IDENTITY	SUBGENRE NAMING	RAVE CULTURE
5	Genre specific language used in post text: 'Jungle is MASSIVE'	<p>Meme draws upon distinctions between subgenre <i>Ragga Jungle</i>, <i>Jump Up</i> with <i>Ragga Samples</i> and <i>Old School Jungle</i>, mocking those that label genres incorrectly or appropriate associated cultures</p> <p>Text in post: 'Dudes who shout "Jungle is MASSIVE" before playing a jump up tune with ragga samples' Poster mocks those who mistakenly label subgenres and appropriate associated cultures</p> <p>CS commented: 'As an American still pretty new to dnb, I've been wondering why there were 2 really distinct sounds that both called themselves jungle. Thaaaat makes sense lol' CS identifying different subgenres and acknowledges their own misunderstanding</p> <p>HS commented: "🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 OI mate</p>	Theme of authenticity: Identifying and targeting 'phoney' or inauthentic community members

		<p>have you heard this fat old school jungle tune? Plays Ed Solo - no no no'</p> <p>HS Imitating and mocking those that name this track as Old School Jungle</p>	
8	<p>Genre specific language used in image text:</p> <p>'Day 929473 with no raves just shouted "Fuck off" when the Eastenders theme song came on!'</p> <p>'Fuck off' used within the community by individuals as a positive reaction to music during mixes, livestreams and live raves.</p>		<p>Real-life raves limited due to Covid-19: rave culture relies on events, event practitioners and attendees have responded by hosting online events, festivals and live-streams</p> <p>Escapist behaviour from everyday life: particularly during lockdown</p>

22	<p>Disgusted facial expression depicted in image accompanied by caption: 'This is the highest form of compliment a DJ can receive' : Accociated with the DnB community, regarded as a positive response to music (S)</p> <p>JBB comment: 'FUCK OFFFFFFF' Fuck off language accociated with drum and bass community - used to show appreciation and positive reaction to music(D)</p> <p>SA posted a comment: 'Don't forget the gunfingas too' AD replied to comment: 'Two in the air yo.'</p> <p>'Gun fingers' hand gesture accociated with drum and bass community (D)</p> <p>RD posted a comment: 'Much better than fuck off' Fuck off language accociated with drum and bass community (D)</p> <p>DM posted a comment: 'Would say 🙌 that's more effective.' Fuck off language (and hand gesture) accociated with drum and bass community (D)</p>		
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37	<p>Meme presents a defensive and confrontational response to non-DnB fans insulting DnB: Text in image: "Drum n bass is shit" "It's just noise" 'Me:' Beneath 'me' are images used to present a confrontational and defensive reponse: Meme presents a defensive and confrontational response to non-DnB fans insulting DnB: Text in image: "Drum n bass is shit" "It's just noise" 'Me:' Beneath 'me' are images used to present a confrontational and defensive reponse: person cracking their knuckles, second panel is a photograph of a man clicking their neck, third panel shows a man doing leg stretches and the final panel shows a finger pressing the 'Caps lock' keyboard button.</p> <p>Meme encourages individuals to defend the collective genre identity</p> <p>ASF and TK comment exchange debates DnB vs Techno: ASF comment: 'Probably prefers techno the NONCE' TK reply: 'techno is superior to dnb' ASF insults TK: ASF reply: 'From the looks of it you like them young to'</p>		
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38	<p>Meme refers to those who listen to <i>Heavy Jump Up DnB</i> at the gym as 'chads' implying superiority over those who listen to other genres</p>	<p>Subgenre naming and debate in image text: 'Virgins listen to dubstep at the gym. Chads listen to heavy jump up DnB'</p> <p>Refers to Incel internet subculture, virgins = inferior, chads = superior</p> <p>Meme suggests heavy jump up is superior to dubstep</p> <p>Extensive subgenre naming in comments: 'KN comment: 'Alphas listen to neurofunk'</p> <p>IK comment: 'Jump up 🤢'</p> <p>MP comment: 'And Kings listen to liquid' JT reply: 'How am I meant to hit a PB listening to touch by hybrid minds' MP reply: 'use power liquid?'</p> <p>AA comment: 'People who are just there to improve their health and live longer lives listen to Rollers.'</p> <p>KR comment: 'Alphas listen to wobblers'</p>	
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		<p>AF comment: Heavy jump up? Is that just a fog horn in the corner of the room that's loud af?</p> <p>NG comment 'You: listening to jump up. Me:' with attached image with caption: 'why are you gay?'</p> <p>CV comment: 'Why everybody hates dub in this shitty group, I fkn mean its bass music,'</p> <p>RD reply: 'One your on a DNB MEMES page two things with that name DNB and MEMES ok jokes and dubstep is 🤔🤢'</p> <p>Comments from MO and LS challenge subgenre naming and the accociated behaviours: MO comment: 'Being a genre elitist is virgin'</p> <p>LS comment with image: 'Nooo you can't generalise an entire genre reee' with attached image depicting a man talking in depth about dubstep to a woman who appears uninterested</p>	
42		<p>Meme mocks those that regard 'rollers' as a subgenre. The meme image depicts a poorly drawn, out of proportion figure</p>	

		named 'Brick' a speech bubble above them reads, 'rollers are a subgenre' and is pitied by a figure that appears to be their father	
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47		<p>Text in image: 'When the DJ drops a liquid tune in the middle of a jump up set' 'Ciggie?' mocks the liquid subgenre and implies that jump up event attendees would want to go outside for a cigarette during the track.</p> <p>Community members respond to the post via the comments: JB comment: 'I'm like that whenever a jump up track is played. Jump ups the worst' JT replied with image mocking those who insult jump up. JB replied: 'uh oh pinched a nerve did I haha??? That's correct though it is just shit. No reasoning at all it sounds like shit how simple is that?? Anyone that listens to jump up needs a doctor @pace. Jog on little boy' (D)</p> <p>AA comment: 'Fixed it' with a re-post of original meme image, edited to read: 'when the DJ drops a jump up set'</p> <p>DDG comment: 'Jump up heads will never learn about proper drum and bass</p>	
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		<p>they just like kick snare bass strictly! response to DDG DB posted reply: 'ok dnboomer' DDG posted reply: 'you clearly don't understand the term boomer 😂'</p> <p>ML comment: 'dnb fans born after 1993 cant appreciate liquid...all they know is foghorns, smoke they spliffs, skank, be mcs, listen to jump up and lie' ML mocks younger community members, other members respond: BC reply: 'wow wow "intelligent" dnb 🍊' JP reply: '*tagging ML* *tagging Facebook page: 'ok DnBoomer' '(93)' (D)</p> <p>DR comment: 'That's nothing, the wrongest when dj drops a shiti jump up, in the middle of a neuro set... 🤢' ST posted reply with image depicting an edited image of a 'Now that's what I call music' album cover, edited to read: 'Now thats what I call a neurofunk moment' Neurofunk moment = term reffering to when neurofunk fans act in a way that seems superior to others (D)</p> <p>MM comment: 'I play every genre. Most people dig my sets. However liquid i play</p>	
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		<p>in the beginning or last track, bc it often takes out the energy, except when it has strong dancefloor drums and then you can switch into something harder soon after the first bars of the drop, people love to have a moment of hearing something to sing to or something they know, that then drops back into the harder side again'</p>	
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59	Use of artist psydonym name: Guv	<p>Meme mocks Liquid DnB subgenre: Image shows photographs of a woman and a male car mechanic having a conversation: Speech bubble in top panel: 'My car is making a horrible noise' Speech bubble in bottom panel: 'Have you tried Turning off the 100% liquid mix'</p> <p>FH comment highlights divide between sub genres: 'Keeping the sub genre war alive one post at a time'</p> <p>""CR comment: 'Liquid gets to disrespected and I'm not here for it' ESE replied: 'People lack depth and that's not our problem.' FH replied: 'sorry but only people with the highest IQ listen to jump up and that's fact.' AF replied: ' I mean if I'm trying to go to sleep or wanting to hear elevator music, sure, liquid is tight then'</p> <p>CR comment: 'People who hate liquid think Guv is the best dnb producer of all time'</p> <p>CL comment: 'This will displease the Liquid community'</p> <p>FH replied: 'that's what I was going for'</p>	<p>JD image comment: The image has text that reads: 'Liquid Drum n Bass is just smooth jazz for people who do ketamine' links the subgenre to drug use Comment references drug use Drug use associated with rave culture</p>
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		<p>CL replied: 'after that you gotta fight their boss which is 3 dudes in flowered shirts 😂😂😂'</p> <p>FH replied: 'they're no match for the ultimate chav jump up final boss'</p> <p>JD image comment: The image has text that reads: 'Liquid Drum n Bass is just smooth jazz for people who do ketamine'</p>	
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71	<p>Post challenges subgenre naming, instead prioritising appreciating the drum and bass musical genre in its entirety: Text in image: 'Bill's just happy you love Drum and Bass.'</p>	<p>Meme serves as a peacekeeping attempt in light of subgenre debates and conflicts: Text in image: 'Bill doesn't care if you listen to Neurofunk or Jump Up. Bill doesn't care if you use a controller, cdj's or turntables. Bill doesn't care if you go clubbing or raving. Bill's just happy you love Drum and Bass. Be like Bill.' However, community members continue to debate in comments section: NH comment: 'Fuck Bill. Neurofunk and Jump Up are shit.' DS posted reply: 'opinions are not facts' HS posted comment: 'what dnb do you listen to then' NH posted reply: 'hahaha triggered little melts. Listen to some real DNB' MW posted reply: 'Uh ok. Look out guys. It's that fog horn slag your mother warned you about.' NH posted reply: 'Foghorns are for little pricks aswell... which is most of this group by the look of it' LSM posted comment: 'Bill knows that rollers aren't a subgenre' SN posted comment: 'Bill cares if you like liquid tho 🤔🤔🤔🤔'</p>	
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		<p>AS-H posted comment: 'yeah but foghorns are boring'</p> <p>AS-H posted reply to own comment: 'Besides that, yeah go Bill!'</p> <p>TSM posted reply: 'im with ya on the fog horns, i use to love them but now far far far too over used.'</p>	
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76	<p>Meme shows a social media status insulting the DnB musical genre: Text in image: 'Drum n bass is by far the shittest genre of music there is' the original poster has captioned it: 'Gotta be Joking 🙄'</p> <p>Meme encourages individuals to defend their collective genre identity, demonstration of unity within the genre against outsiders</p> <p>SS comment draws upon personal experience: 'Ive met so many people that have said this that then change there mind if you play say afterglow or something more melodic and chilled, point is let people grow into it and dont shove it down there throats and everyone likes a form of dnb'</p> <p>LD comment draws upon personal experience: 'I used to say this... when I actually heard drum and bass... I changed my mind....'</p> <p>AY comment: 'Some is shit some is good, just like any other genre of music'</p> <p>CSS comment with image attached: With</p>	<p>Commenters draw upon subgenres in response to post:</p> <p>FF posted comment: 'edit the tweet but replace drum n bass with jump up or bassline and u have the current answers'</p> <p>KO posted comment: 'Probably thinks drum and bass is all like Macky Gee and has based his whole opinion of the genre on it 🙄'</p> <p>YB posted comment: 'Definitely not a neurofunk moment...'</p> <p>CL posted comment: 'Forgot to put the "Liquid" in front of it probably'</p> <p>FBB posted comment: 'I mean yea rollers maybe but dancefloor/neuro/tech is 🌊🌊🌊'</p>	
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	caption: 'Everyone loves drum & bass some people just havent found the right tune yet!!'		
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Figure 2. Woodward. Genre observations taking place on DnB Memes throughout November 2020.

4.2: Results: Sample of ten posts from Fandom Coded data

POST NUMBER	FANDOM			
	FAN BEHAVIOUR	SUBCULTURAL GATEKEEPING	SUBCULTURAL CAPITAL	COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE
5		<p>Meme identifies and mocks members of the community that incorrectly name subgenre <i>Ragga Jungle</i> as <i>Jungle</i></p> <p>Meme also mocks individuals that appropriate culture by using images of white individuals dressed in traditional African clothing</p> <p>EG: Text in post: 'Dudes who shout "Jungle is MASSIVE" before playing a jump up tune with ragga samples'</p> <p>Comment by HS posted comment: '🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 Oi mate have you heard this fat old school jungle tune? Plays Ed Solo - no no no'</p>	Jungle is massive	<p>CS posted a commented acknowledging their geographical limitations in accessing the culture. However, CS also acknowledge that they have gained knowledge through community membership: 'As an American still pretty new to dnb, I've been wondering why there were 2 really distinct sounds that both called themselves jungle. Thaaaat makes sense lol'</p>

15	<p>Image in post creatively re-interprets DnB track 'Balaclava' - Shy Fx: image is of a packet of Balclava on a shop shelf, the text overlaid on the image reads: 'can't see me face' using lyrics from the track</p> <p>Text comment by MT edits the lyrics of the original track to fit with the content of the post: 'Sprinkle with nut... carving a slice, honey pastry.... Taste really nice... Buy me some cakes Baklava BUY ME SOME CAKE BAKLAVA 🤔🤔'</p> <p>LM image comment recreates the joke: shows the poster holding a bottle of Rubicon guava drink over their face with the caption 'Can't see my face, bottle of guava'</p> <p>SW image comment</p>	<p>Rave culture language: 'Coming thru' 'coming thru' usually used in the context of event / party attendance or being a part of the scene (D)</p>	<p>Subcultural membership gained through understanding of 'coming thru'</p> <p>Meme demonstrates media engagement and re-creation</p>	<p>Collective identity formation Shared passion: Raving</p>
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	<p>recreates the joke: shows a photograph of a bottle of Cava wine, with hand drawn text to edit the label to read 'balaclava' and a caption on top reading 'can't see me face'</p> <p>Meme post and comments demonstrate creativity from members of the community and how they create content interpreting the DnB track 'Balaclava' - Shy Fx</p>			
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23	<p>Image is a creative interpretation of fan behaviour and depicts a 'fan': Image uses a heavily edited photo of Leonardo Di Caprio, edited to be holding a cigarette and phone with music Identifying app 'Shazam' open, holding his other hand up making a 'gun fingers' gesture. The text in the image reads: 'When you're in a lockdown stream and the DJ drops a fresh banger.'</p> <p>Commenters mention other artists / events admired by community members: DW comment: 'We're on chase and status stream 🙌 anyone watching?'</p> <p>JM posted comment: 'whole stay at home set' referring to Stay at Home Festival in April 2020</p>	<p>Image depicts genre specific behaviours: 'Gun fingers' non-verbal hand gesture associated with the genre that may be challenging to understand for outsiders</p>	gunfingers gesture	<p>Subject of meme represents a typical DnB 'fan' contributing to collective identity formation Shared passion: DJing</p>
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27	<p>Individuals defend their national DnB communities and call for cross-geographical unity: KSC comment highlights cultural history: 'Imagine ignoring the entire history and culture of the best part of 30 years of drum and bass almost ENTIRELY from the UK for the sake of a few months locked down. Kids these days, y'all be movin fast.'</p> <p>ST comment highlights cultural history: 'Stop this shit. It's akin to when your younger sibling wants to come out and party with you when he's only 12. The UK inspired people from all over the world with this genre spawned from the Caribbean diaspora and there is no getaway from that. Nz has some great producers and dj's some of which have gone on to be internationally recognised and some yet to</p>		Discourses on club culture traditionally very UK centred – evidenced in KSC and ST comment.	Text in post: 'I hate to say this but right now: NZ DnB > UK DnB' Meme highlights UK and NZ community differences: geographical community limitations particularly during Covid-19 pandemic. New knowledge generation through group activity
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	<p>be. So please stop with this we're better than you now fuckry.. Nz has the talent, but neither the depth of history or numbers for this continuing thought process to hold any water. Carry on together.. See that word? Together. Peace and love.'</p> <p>DR comment: 'All dnb scenes are equal in that all of them are fucking epic, peace'</p>			
41	<p>Image used in meme creatively re-interprets the UK Covid-19 government briefings to promote and so appreciation for DnB artist <i>Metrik</i>: by using a still taken from a briefing from UK prime minister Boris Johnson, the image has been edited, replacing Boris Johnson's head with the head of DnB artist <i>Metrik</i>.</p>	<p>GE comment: 'Come on you just need to take it a litttle bit further' takes meme post image, edits and re-posts a new version: this new version includes an illustration of a 'gun fingers' gesture above: hands, an illustration of an angry face with #@! logos over the mouth above: face (Bass face)</p>	<p>gunfingers gesture Bass face</p>	<p>Original poster promotes a live stream being run by <i>Metrik</i>: 'Metrik livestream season 2 tomorrow night, hands face bass at the ready 😂'</p> <p>Shared passion: Raving</p>

	<p>The UK government's Covid-19 safety message: 'Hands, face, space' has been edited to display: 'hands, face, bass'</p> <p>The text in post reads: 'Let's be honest, this is the briefing we actually want to see from Downing Street 😂'</p> <p>Metrik livestream season 2 tomorrow night, hands face bass at the ready 😂'</p>			
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47		<p>DB identified as incorrectly using 'DnBoomer' and mocked for doing so: DDG comment: 'Jump up heads will never learn about proper drum and bass they just like kick snare bass strictly!' response to DDG DB posted reply: 'ok dnboomer' DDG posted reply: 'you clearly don't understand the term boomer 😂'</p> <p>AE comment: 'You man are uneducated in the scene 😂😂' mocks the meme poster for demonstrating a lack of knowledge or understanding of the DnB community</p> <p>ML comment: 'dnb fans born after 1993 cant appreciate liquid...all they know is foghorns, smoke they spliffs, skank, be mcs, listen to jump up and lie' ML mocks younger</p>	<p>DB identified as incorrectly using 'DnBoomer' and mocked for doing so: DDG comment: 'Jump up heads will never learn about proper drum and bass they just like kick snare bass strictly!' response to DDG DB posted reply: 'ok dnboomer' DDG posted reply: 'you clearly don't understand the term boomer 😂'</p> <p>AE comment: 'You man are uneducated in the scene 😂😂' mocks the meme poster for demonstrating a lack of knowledge or understanding of the DnB community</p> <p>AT comment: 'Ok DnBoomer'</p> <p>Reference and genre-specific reinterpretation to 'Ok Boomer' meme. Used pedomenantly in youth culture and youth subcultures to mock older generations ('baby boomers')</p> <p>DnB community have created a</p>	<p>MM comment demonstrate and share specific knowledge of DJ equipment: 'I play every genre. Most people dig my sets. However liquid i play in the beginning or last track, bc it often takes out the energy, exept when it has strong dancefloor drums and then you can switch into something harder soon after the first bars of the drop, people love to have a moment of hearing something to sing to or something they know, that then drops back into the harder side again'</p> <p>Shared passion: DJing</p>
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		<p>community members, other members respond: JP reply: '*tagging ML* *tagging Facebook page: 'ok DnBoomer'* '(93)' (D) Younger community members established divide between themselves and older community members, 'Ok DnBoomer' demonstrates gate keeping behaviour between sub-communities</p>	<p>separate group dedicated to mocking 'DnBoomers' known as Ok DnBoomer: https://www.facebook.com/groups/818585108602702</p>	
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<p>49</p>	<p>Meme text is a provocative, fictional representation of a jungle fan: 'To be fair, you have to have a very high IQ to understand jungle. The vibe is extremely subtle, and without a solid grasp of breakbeats most of the rhythms will go over a typical listener's head. There's also General Levy's nihilistic outlook, which is deftly woven into his characterisation - his personal philosophy draws heavily from Narodnaya Volya literature, for instance. The junglists understand this stuff; they have the intellectual capacity to truly appreciate the depths of these rhythms, to realize that they're not just nasty- they say something deep about LIFE. As a consequence people who dislike jungle truly ARE idiots- of course they wouldn't appreciate, for instance, the weight in</p>	<p>Coppypasta format is designed to provoke 'outsider' community members that are unaware of the format</p> <p>Commenters mock those that incorrectly interpret the post: EG: JW: 'Do u really have to understand music to enjoy it 🤔'</p> <p>CP replied: 'swoosh'</p> <p>JW replied: 'it's true tho, I'm fed up with posts like this Cus people like u think they have some sort of power over other Cus they " understand " it better than them, fact is bro if you enjoy the music then who actually cares 😂'</p> <p>CP replied: 'Maybe I'm reading this wrong, please tell me you know this is copy pasta 😂'</p> <p>JW replied: 'I didn't read this all the way through as I couldn't be bothered and what is copy pasta 😂'</p> <p>CP replied: 'F this is literally</p>	<p>Coppypasta format: Reposted 6 times by 6 individuals</p> <p>TR posted comment: 'Delicious pasta'</p> <p>CP replied: '*Tags TR* Just like momma used to make'</p> <p>RSS posted comment: 'Excellent coppypasta, hooked a fair few people with that'</p> <p>Jungle is massive</p>	
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	<p>General Levy's existential catchphrase "WICKED WICKED, JUNGLE IS MASSIVE" which itself is a cryptic reference to Turgenev's Russian epic Fathers and Sons I'm smirking right now just imagining one of those addeleated simpletons scratching their heads in confusion as M-Beat's genius unfolds itself on their soundsystems. What fools... how I pity them. 😂 And yes by the way, I DO have a jungle tattoo. And no, you cannot see it. It's for the ladies' eyes only- And even they have to demonstrate that they're within 5 IQ points of my own (preferably lower) beforehand.'</p>	<p>just a huge joke, I'm sorry you fell for the bait m8 😂'</p> <p>CB posted comment mocking those that use an incorrect version of jungle is massive: 'Imagine making a post about being a Jungle connoisseur and then getting the quote wrong 😂 JUNGLIST MASSIF'</p>		
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50	<p>Image suggests that those who have DnB are more emotionally fulfilled than those who focus on more material aspects of society: Image shows an illustration with two figures walking away from a store, figure on the left is pushing a cart carrying a number of boxes labelled: 'stuff, bits, latest craze, bits & bobs, useless stuff, more stuff, shiny new things, big TV, new car, new clothes, exotic holidays' with a speech bubble above saying, 'is that all you need?' Figure on the right is carrying one box labelled: 'DNB' with a speech bubble above saying, 'Yes'</p> <p>This representation of an emotional response to the genre demonstrates the passion and commitment of community members and DnB fans</p>	<p>Image suggests that those who have DnB are more emotionally fulfilled than community outsiders who focus on more material aspects of society</p>	<p>DnB presented here as an alternative to conventional societal desires or norms</p>	<p>Collective identity formation</p>
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64		<p>Meme post identifies the subject of the video as an outsider and mocks / ridicules them. This is because they incorrectly label the track 'Gammy Elbow (VIP)' – DJ Zinc and Chris Lorenzo as DnB when it is a bassline track. The track is playing in their video and the video has captions: 'if ur a dnb fan listen to this banger' 'like to stay on dnb tiktok 🥰🥰🥰🥰' and 'Need to find some dnb mates 😎'</p> <p>A number of commenters ridicule her further: CS comment: 'Didn't even have to turn the sound on to realise it wasn't gonna be dnb'</p> <p>YT comment: 'I just cringed an enourmous amount'</p>	Subcultural membership gained through identifying and mocking the 'outsider' who lacks subcultural knowledge	Collective identity formation
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		<p>RC comment: 'Dnb = disappointment n broken in her language'</p> <p>JS comment: 'I can understand why she's made the misstake but yer sorry sweetheart but that ain't dnb it's baseline x'</p> <p>MS comment: 'Not only is it not dnb, but she didn't even manage to get the gun fingers right' MS mocks her for incorrectly using 'gun fingers' gesture</p> <p>SP posted comment: 'how to genuinely offend any DnB fab hah...'</p> <p>YAK posted comment: 'C R I N G E dnb is obviously fast dubstep.'</p> <p>BD posted comment: 'These are the type of people that are killing dnb'</p> <p>JW posted comment: 'If you</p>		
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		<p>are looking for DnB friends I would strongly suggest by starting in the correct genre... darn tootin' kids!!'</p> <p>RECL posted comment: 'When you ordered your DnB-Girlfriend from wish 🤔👉'"</p>		
67	<p>Text in post shows artist appreciation: 'Always pushing the boundaries. Never stays the same. It's incredibly difficult to come up with a new sound and style these days.</p> <p>The did it.</p> <p>Since Ember they are somewhere else. I love their old tunes like Far Away or You Cry. But i love just as much their new style. Sound design masterclass, unique, fresh, clean sounds of incredible quality. They are respected through the entire scene. That's how know they are gods.</p>	<p>Commenters mock poster for overt show of appreciation towards artists:</p> <p>DR posted comment: 'Someone get me the teleporter, I seem to have stumbled into Dnbtalk ffs'</p> <p>AH posted comment: 'I've been loving their livestreams lately. Realise this is dnb memes but rate this dudes opinion aha'</p> <p>AH replied to own comment: 'Bit cringe though'</p> <p>LV posted comment: 'Isn't this group a meme group not an artist appreciation</p>	<p>Coppypasta: Reposted 8 times in comments by 8 individual users</p> <p>HH posted comment: 'instant copy pasta seriously'</p> <p>JR posted comment: 'Honestly how can people not see a coppypasta from a mile off 🤔'</p> <p>AH comment describes the post as 'cringe'</p>	<p>Community draws distinction between DnB Memes group and DnB Talk group</p>

	<p>When they fuckin mixed Time by Hans Zimmer with Loa is no jokes one the most beautiful things i've ever heard in my entire life. Their symphonic orchestra concert was absolutely beautiful and epic. Tell me who the hell does that? Who would even thought about something like that?</p> <p>Reinhard & Markus ❤️ Thank you guys so much. Can't wait to see where your music goes in next few years.'</p>	<p>one?'</p> <p>CB posted comment: 'Are we taking the piss out of people that love DnB now? Is that what we're doing 🤔'</p> <p>DJ replied with image: Illustration of a bearded man: side profile with caption: Yes.</p> <p>DF posted reply: 'it's a meme group my dude. Some jokes are funnier than others I guess 🙄'</p> <p>JD posted comment: 'I mean yeah true, but this is DnB Memes bro, think you got the wrong group 😂😂😂'</p>		
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Figure 3. Woodward. Fandom observations taking place on DnB Memes throughout November 2020.

5: DISCUSSION

In order to develop knowledge and theory surrounding the behaviours taking place on the *DnB Memes* Facebook group, the observational data collected has been analysed with consideration of knowledge and literature surrounding genre theory, club culture and subcultural capital, communities of practice, fandom and internet memes, as identified within the literature review.

As suggested by Anderson & Keehn, the meme has played a vital role in reshaping our social world (2020:57). Analysis of the data yielded insightful results, shedding light on how memes are used within the *DnB Memes* community, functioning as subcultural capital with which community members create, convey, contend, distribute and (re)distribute cultural and subcultural matter. Additionally, consideration of the use of memes as tools of self-definition (Chaumont 2011) and identity formation can be made.

5.1: Genre

In regard to the drum and bass (DnB) musical genre, a number of instances of observed interactions and behaviours can be explored as examples of genre specific behaviours. As McLeod suggests, the prevalence of sub genres is an aspect of electronic and dance music genres that is equalled by no other genres of music (McLeod, 2001:60). Within the collected data, a number of instances of subgenre naming occur. For example, this behaviour is evident in post number 38 (figure 4). This post uses an image with a white background with black text overlaid, the text reads, 'Virgins listen to dubstep at the gym. Chads listen to heavy jump up DnB'. Dubstep is a genre of music that emerged in UK the early 2000s, drawing influence from

previously established genres such as hardcore, jungle, DnB, UK garage and two-step, Jamaican reggae, dub / dancehall, US funk, r&b, electro, house, techno and hip-hop, and European forms of electronic dance music (Albiez 2017). The use of *Chads* and *Virgins* within meme post is used to represent superiority, with *Chads* presented as superior to *Virgins*. This conveys the idea that those who listen to the subgenre heavy jump up DnB are superior to those who listen to dubstep. Thus, this post serves as a subcultural gate keeping device (McLeod, 2001:73) within the community, defining a social distinction between those that listen to heavy jump up DnB and those that listen to dubstep. McLeod posits the idea that subcultural gatekeeping could be a dominating factor in the emergence of new subgenres, suggesting that subgenre naming is 'deeply bound up in both the political-economy and group identity formations of electronic/ dance music communities' (2001:74).

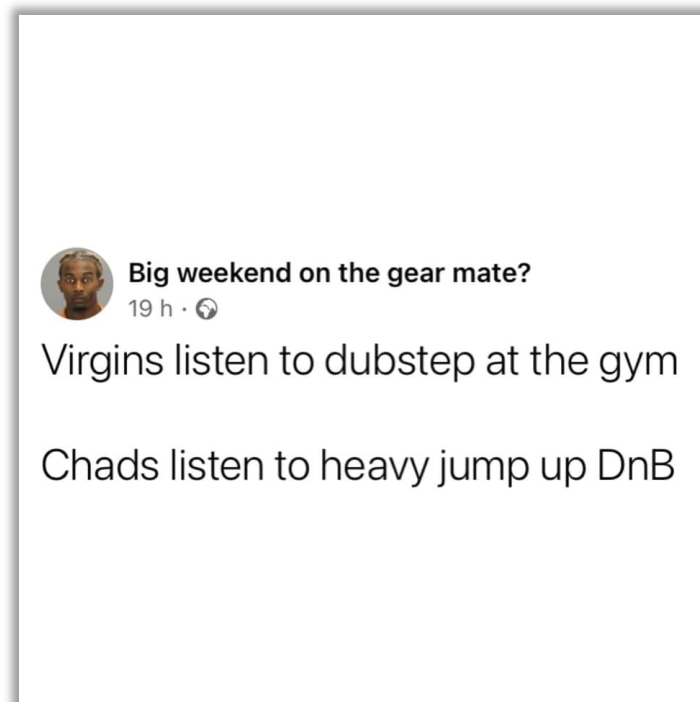


Figure 4. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 38 on DnB Memes.

This behaviour is further evidenced within the comments on post 38 (figure 4). For example, KN commented 'Alphas listen to neurofunk', MP commented, 'And Kings listen to liquid', and a comment from KR stated that, 'Alphas listen to wobblers'. With each of these comments, members of the community have identified subgenres within the drum and bass musical genre and declared their superiority.

Another example of subgenre naming behaviour found in the collected data can be seen in post 47 (figure 5). This meme uses an image with a white rectangle at the top, black text is overlaid which reads, 'When the DJ drops a liquid tune in the middle of a jump up set' below is a photograph of movie character *Austin Powers* with yellow text overlaid, the yellow text reads, 'Ciggie?' This post highlights stylistic distinctions between the subgenres jump up and liquid DnB, suggesting that individuals attending a jump up DJ set at an event would dislike the use of a liquid tune within the set, instead choosing to leave the dancefloor to go out for a cigarette or 'ciggie'. This post supports McLeod's theory of subgenre naming occurring due to stylistic differences and evolution within the sound of the music itself (McLeod, 2001). Although both liquid and jump up are identified within the overarching drum and bass musical genre, they are sub categorised by smaller, more detailed characteristics. Within this, there is also an element of subcultural gatekeeping, as although it is evidenced that community members recognise these distinctions and express opinions regarding them, outsiders of the community may not immediately recognise the differences between these subgenres. (McLeod, 2001). This is further evidenced through the post comments, where community members detail their level of understanding of stylistic differences between music that is identified within the drum and bass genre. For example, MM posted a comment stating:

'I play every genre. Most people dig my sets. However liquid i [sic] play in the beginning or last track, bc [sic] it often takes out the energy, exopt [sic] when it has strong dancefloor drums and then you can switch into something harder soon after the first bars of the drop, people love to have a moment of hearing something to sing to or something they know, that then drops back into the harder side again'.



Figure 5. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 47 on DnB Memes.

As discussed in the literature review, Marino (2019) identified a debate taking place within the online drum and bass community regarding whether or not rollers should be recognised as a drum and bass subgenre. Marino's text attempted to draw the debate to a conclusion, finding that, 'Rollers in no way defines any subgenre. In fact, more often than not, it unifies them' (2019:[online]). However, there is evidence within the DnB Memes community that this subject was still being debated in November 2020. Firstly, this can be seen in AA's comment on post 38, which read, 'People who are just there to improve their health and live

longer lives listen to Rollers'. Additionally, this can be seen in post number 42 (Figure 6). This meme post uses an image consisting of a three-panel comic strip, each panel depicting an illustration of a bearded man on the left-hand side, the first panel shows an illustration of a woman with black hair on the right-hand side. The woman is asking the man, 'Dad why am I named rose?' The man replies, 'When you were young a rose fell on your head'. The second panel shows an illustration of a woman with blonde hair on the right-hand side, the woman is asking the man, 'Dad why am I named Daisy?' the man replies, 'When you were young a daisy fell on your head.' And the third panel shows an illustration of a poorly drawn, out of proportion figure, the figure appears to be speaking to the man, stating, 'Rollers are a subgenre' to which the man replies, 'Oh hey brick'. Through both the style of the illustration and the use of repetition of the text in the first two panels, this meme uses the structure of the conversation to communicate the idea that a brick fell onto the individual claiming rollers to be a subgenre. Thus, this post insults the intelligence of those claim rollers to belong to their own subgenre. However, this post can also be considered as an inside joke within the community, drawing upon the debate and serving in itself as a subcultural gatekeeping device, separating those community members who understand the context of joke from those that do not.

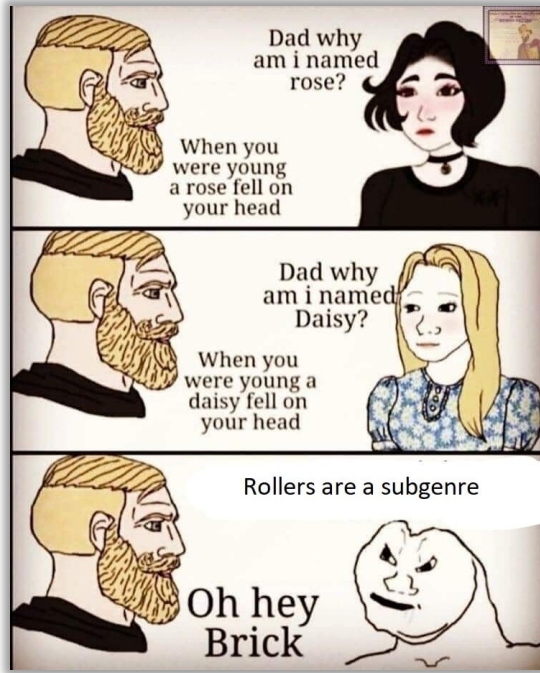


Figure 6. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 42 on DnB Memes.

Despite a number of observed instances of subgenre naming behaviour, there is also evidence of behaviour that challenges subgenre naming. This supports the work of Marino, who suggested that the sheer volume of emerging subgenres has a negative effect on the drum and bass genre by pigeonholing the music, limiting creative freedom, contributing to divisiveness within the scene and hindering the evolution process of the genre (Marino, 2019). One example can be found on post 38 (figure 4), In response to this post, MO posted a comment stating that, 'Being a genre elitist is virgin'. By imitating the text in the image of post 38 MO is insulting genre elitist individuals. Another example can be seen in post 71 (figure7). This meme uses an image with a white background, featuring a stick figure on the right-hand side, beside the stick figure is black text that reads, 'Bill doesn't care if you listen to Neurofunk or Jump Up. Bill doesn't care if you use a controller, cdj's or turntables. Bill doesn't care if you go clubbing or raving. Bill's just happy you love Drum and Bass. Be like Bill'.

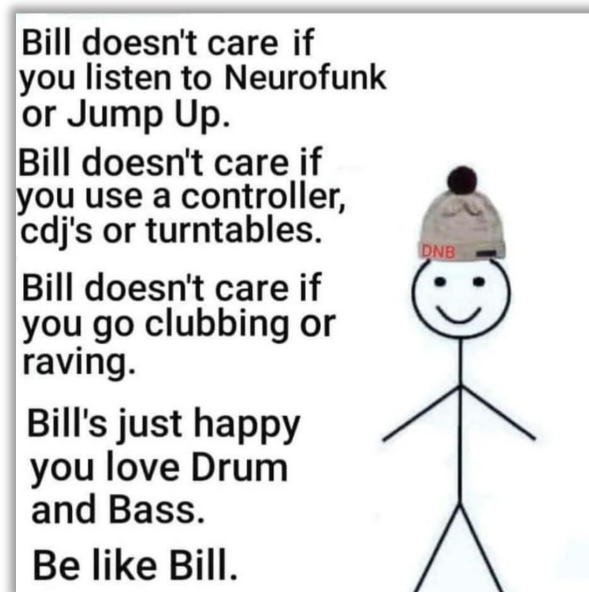


Figure 7. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 71 on DnB Memes.

This meme acts as a peacekeeping attempt, challenging divisive aspects of the community such as subgenre naming. This is evidenced in the meme text 'Bill doesn't care if you listen to Neurofunk or Jump Up'. However, some members of the community were observed rejecting this post, instead continuing to name subgenres and debate their value. For example, NH posted a comment stating, 'Fuck Bill. Neurofunk and Jump Up are shit' and AS-H posted a comment, 'yeah but foghorns are boring'. Additionally, a comment was observed from LSM that linked this post to the debate regarding rollers, their comment reads, 'Bill knows that rollers aren't a subgenre'. This continuing reoccurrence of community members utilising memes in order to debate subgenres may be due to what Chaumont (*n.d*) describes as a 'constant birth / death cycle' (2011:[online]) of memes, whereby the cultural or subcultural meanings of memes disappear if they are not reproduced and continually distributed.

Within the literature review, one key behaviour which was identified as being applicable to the theory surrounding both genre and fandom was that of subcultural gatekeeping. As

already discussed, there is evidence within the data that suggests a link between subgenre naming and subcultural gatekeeping behaviour within the *DnB Memes* community. However, there is also evidence present within the data that supports additional theories surrounding subcultural gatekeeping. For example, with regard to club cultures and raving, participants within club cultures typically embrace non-conformist, subcultural behaviours in order to strengthen their own community identity and separate themselves from mainstream media and culture (Thornton, 1995). One of the most evident examples of subcultural gatekeeping in relation to club culture which was identified within the data was the use of genre specific textual language, body language/gestures, and visual language by community members. Used in this context, these behaviours serve as subcultural capital, which was defined by Best *et al.* as ‘the measures taken by individuals to accumulate status within a social domain, often by differentiating from the mainstream’ (2017:32). Post 22 (figure 8) makes extensive use of genre specific behaviours as subcultural capital. The meme features a photograph of sports personality *Roy Hodgson* pulling a disgusted facial expression, above is a black rectangle with white text overlayed, the text reads, ‘This is the highest form of compliment a DJ can receive’.



Figure 8. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 22 on DnB Memes.

The facial expression depicted in the image is what the DnB community refers to as a *bass face*, to which the DnB community has assigned its own meaning. When used in this context, the facial expression expresses a positive response to music, often used during an event. However, to outsiders, this facial expression typically denotes a disgusted or negative response. Therefore, the facial expression serves as a form of subcultural capital, with understanding of it required as a route of entry into the DnB Memes community. Further examples of this behaviour can be seen in the comments section of post 22 (figure 8). Firstly, three comments were identified that used the term 'fuck off' in the specific subcultural context of the *DnB Memes* community. JJB posted the comment, 'FUCK OFFFFFFFF', RD posted the comment, 'Much better than fuck off' and DM posted the following comment, 'Would say

👉 that's more effective.' With the middle finger emoji used to represent 'fuck off' in a non-verbal form. Like the *bass face*, 'fuck off' has a positive perception assigned to it by the *DnB Memes* community, however, outside of the community this phrase is considered an obscenity and an insult. Secondly, SA posted a comment stating, 'Don't forget the gunfingas [sic] too' to which AD replied, 'Two in the air yo.' *Gun fingers* refers to a hand gesture which resembles a gun, this gesture is associated with the DnB community, with individuals making the gesture when dancing to DnB music at raves and events. Members of the community use this language and these behaviours to demonstrate their subcultural membership. Therefore, these behaviours can be identified as embodied forms of drum and bass subcultural capital, supporting the theory of subcultural capital put forward by Thornton (1995).

5.2: Fandom

As Thornton suggests, although successful subcultural membership requires a demonstration of being "in the know" (1995:22) of relevant subcultural language and behaviours, it is highly important that subcultural community members demonstrate their levels of knowledge and behaviour in a natural way, as Thornton states, 'nothing depletes capital more than the sight of someone trying too hard' (1995:22). This plays an influential role in subcultural gatekeeping behaviour, whereby individuals isolate and shun those that do not naturally belong in the community. As described in the literature review, fandom theory echoes similar instances of subcultural gatekeeping behaviour, suggesting that fan community members utilise the commitment, passion and knowledge for the subject of their fandom to separate themselves from non-fans (Lanier & Fowler 2013). One example of this behaviour can be seen in post number 5 (figure 9).



Figure 9. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 5 on DnB Memes.

This post features three photographs of Caucasian individuals wearing what appears to be traditional African garments. The image is accompanied by a caption that reads, 'Dudes who shout "Jungle is MASSIVE" before playing a jump up tune with ragga samples'. This post draws upon both subgenre naming and authenticity in order to demonstrate subcultural gatekeeping. By identifying individuals that incorrectly label what the creator describes as jungle as jump up tracks with ragga samples, the meme creator is targeting individuals that display this behaviour, suggesting that they are inauthentic members of the community and not real DnB fans. This is supported through the use of the photographs in the image, which presents Caucasian individuals appropriating traditional African culture. Additionally, this is further emphasised by the use of 'jungle is massive' in the post text, suggesting that these individuals attempt to use genre specific language, but do so falsely to label the incorrect

subgenre. Ultimately, this post serves to highlight a distinction between authentic and inauthentic community members or DnB fans, and mock those that do not easily display authentic subcultural capital and community membership. On post 5, an additional comment by HS was observed that strengthened this behaviour, the comment reads, '🤔🤔🤔🤔🤔 Oi mate have you heard this fat old school jungle tune? Plays Ed Solo - no no no' Through this comment, HS demonstrates their own subcultural knowledge by imitating and mocking individuals who incorrectly promote the track 'No No No' by *Ed Solo* as old school jungle when it does not stylistically fit into this subgenre.

Another example of fan behaviour coupled with subcultural gatekeeping was observed in post number 64 (figure 9). This post used a video taken from social media platform *TikTok*. The video features a young woman wearing a black hoodie sitting on a bed, accompanied by strobe lighting in various colours, the woman is seen dancing and attempting a gun fingers gesture. Various captions are overlaid on the video, such as, 'if ur [sic] a dnb fan listen to this banger', 'like to stay on dnb tiktok 🥰🥰🥰🥰' and 'Need to find some dnb mates 😎'. However, rather than using a DnB track as audio for the video, the video features a bassline track, 'Gammy Elbow (VIP)' by *DJ Zinc and Chris Lorenzo*. Although contemporary bassline shares some characteristics with jump up DnB (Ravens 2019:[online]), it originally emerged from Sheffield in the early 2000s, 'out of speed garage and house by trimming back the vocals and bumping up the low-end (Ravens, 2019[online]).

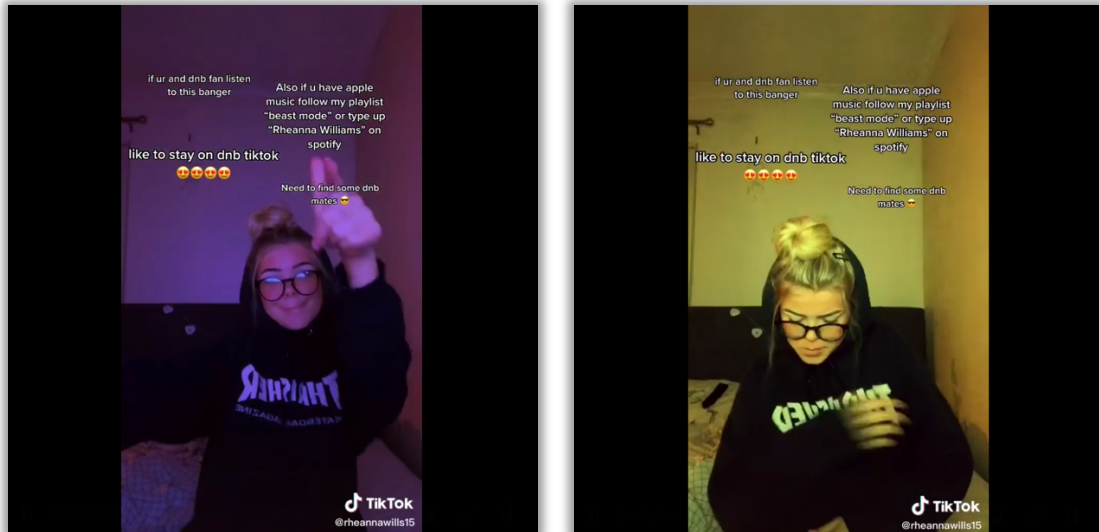


Figure 10. Woodward. Screenshot of post media (video) used in post 64 on DnB Memes.

This meme post received a negative response from the DnB Memes community, with one comment from YT stating, 'I just cringed an enourmous [sic] amount'. Individuals demonstrated high levels of subcultural gatekeeping behaviour within the comments in order to identify, isolate and mock the video subject. Primarily, individuals highlighted the incorrect naming of the audio track as DnB. For example, a comment from JS stated, 'I can understand why she's made the mistake [sic] but yer [sic] sorry sweetheart but that ain't [sic] dnb it's baseline [sic] x'. Additionally, a comment was observed by CS, suggesting that they, 'Didn't even have to turn the sound on to realise it wasn't gonna [sic] be dnb'. These comments serve to ridicule the video subject for displaying inauthentic fan behaviour, this is further emphasised by MS, who posted the following comment, 'Not only is it not dnb, but she didn't even manage to get the gun fingers right'. With regard to fandom, this post also prompted responses from the DnB Memes community that displayed their dedicated fan behaviour and commitment. By negatively responding to the video subject, individuals declared and defended their own commitments to the musical genre and the fan community. In particular, a comment left by JW suggested, 'If you are looking for DnB friends I would strongly suggest

by starting in the correct genre... darn tootin' [sic] kids!!' This comment highlighted the rejection of the video subject by DnB fans, suggesting that they would not successfully make 'DnB friends' unless they displayed authentic fan behaviour and subcultural knowledge. Another example can be noted in a comment by SP, who stated that the behaviours witnessed in the video would cause offense to DnB fans, 'how to genuinely offend any DnB fan hah...'. Also, a comment was posted by BD suggesting that, 'These are the type of people that are killing dnb'. Both of these comments demonstrate how these individuals defend the subject of their fandom in light of outsiders, they also highlight a distinction between authentic DnB fans and inauthentic DnB fans, suggesting that inauthentic fans pose a risk to the integrity of the community.

As noted in the literature review, fandom communities are characterised not only by their commitment to the subject of their fandom, but also by the high level of creativity demonstrated by fandom community members. As suggested by Lamerichs, fandom communities work imaginatively and creatively with blanks in source products in order to produce and distribute their own self-created material (Lamerichs, 2018). Behaviour of this nature was observed in post number 15 (figure 11). This post featured a photograph of an assortment of baklava in a box. Above the label on the box the following caption in white text can be seen, 'Can't see me face'. This meme is a play on words, creatively reinterpreting and referencing the lyrics 'can't see me face, balaclava' from DnB track 'Balaclava' by *Shy Fx*.



Figure 11. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 15 on DnB Memes.

This demonstration of creativity in response to a popular track is continued in the comments. For example, one user, MT, takes a selection of lyrics from the original track and creatively rewrites them to make them relevant to the meme: 'Sprinkle with nut... carving a slice, honey pastry.... Taste really nice... Buy me some cakes, Baklava, BUY ME SOME CAKE, BAKLAVA 😂😂'. Furthermore, some individuals posted photo comments featuring additional examples of play on words inspired by this track. Firstly, LM posted a photo comment (figure 12), the photo appears to be a selfie however the individual's face is obscured by a bottle of Rubicon guava drink, the caption reads, 'Can't see my face, bottle of guava'. Secondly, SW posted a photo comment (figure 13), the photo depicts a bottle of Cava wine, the label has been edited from 'cava' to 'balaclava' and a caption stating, 'can't see mi [sic] face' has also been added.



Left: Figure 12. Woodward. Screenshot of comment by LM on post 15
 Right: Figure 13. Woodward. Screenshot of comment by SW on post 15

Another observed incident of fandom creativity was noted in post 41 (figure 14). The creator of this post has taken inspiration from the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. This post features an image taken from a televised Covid-19 briefing made by UK prime minister *Boris Johnson*. However, the image has been edited, with Johnson's face obscured behind an image of DnB producer *Metrik*. The subject is pictured standing behind a plinth which features a blue image, on this image are symbols, the first symbol depicts hands accompanied by bubbles, with the caption 'hands', the second symbol presents a face mask with the caption, 'face', and the final symbol has been edited to depict a speaker emitting sound, accompanied by the caption 'bass'. The image is accompanied by the following caption, 'Let's be honest, this is the briefing we actually want to see from Downing Street 🤪 Metrik livestream season 2 tomorrow night, hands face bass at the ready 🤪' By editing an image of the UK prime minister during a Covid-19 briefing, the meme creator has creatively re-interpreted current events to make a joke, referencing and promoting DJ *Metrik's* upcoming livestream.



Figure 14. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 41 on DnB Memes.

A comment with an image (figure 15) on post 41 (figure 14) by user GE extends upon the joke, their comment reads, 'Come on you just need to take it a littttle [sic] bit further'. The image takes the same image used in the post itself. However, the symbols used to present 'hands' and 'face' have been edited, with 'hands' now presented by a gun fingers symbol and face represented by a symbol of an angry facial expression, with the mouth covered in symbols to represent obscenities. This comment demonstrates how users on DnB Memes not only creatively re-interpret products relating to the DnB musical genre, but also re-create the memes featured on the page in order to demonstrate knowledge relating to the DnB subculture. Thus, this supports Lanier & Fowler's theory that fandom communities not only consume the culture surrounding their fandom, but creatively engage in the production, distribution and consumption of its own culture as a fandom community (Lanier & Fowler 2013:284).



Figure 15. Woodward. Screenshot of comment by GE on post 41.

Curiously, despite the above examples supporting the theory that fandom behaviour takes place on DnB Memes, one post was observed that was rejected by members of the DnB Memes community for displaying overly overt fan behaviour. The post in question, number 67, was a text post, the text reads as follows:

‘Always pushing the boundaries. Never stays the same. It's incredibly difficult to come up with a new sound and style these days. The [sic] did it. Since Ember they are somewhere else. I love their old tunes like Far Away or You Cry. But i love just as much their new style. Sound design masterclass, unique, fresh, clean sounds of incredible quality. They are respected through the entire scene. That's how know they are gods. When they fuckin [sic] mixed Time by Hans Zimmer with Loa is no jokes one the most beautiful things i've ever heard in my entire life. Their symphonic orchestra concert was absolutely beautiful and epic. Tell me who the hell does that? Who would even

thought about something like that? Reinhard & Markus ❤️ Thank you guys so much.

Can't wait to see where your music goes in next few years.'

The creator of the post is displaying overt fan behaviour demonstrating intense appreciation, knowledge and dedication of DnB artists Reinhard and Markus, who perform under the pseudonym names *Camo and Krooked*. However, due to the context and placement of the post, it was rejected by individuals in the comments. For example, LV posted a comment stating, 'Isn't this group a meme group not an artist appreciation one?'. Additionally, a comment from JD was observed 'I mean yeah true, but this is DnB Memes bro, think you got the wrong group 🤔🤔🤔' and a comment from DR stating, 'Someone get me the teleporter, I seem to have stumbled into Dnbtalk ffs [sic]' These comments highlight the distinction between DnB Memes and DnB Talk, a sister Facebook group that welcomes more direct fan and knowledge exchanges. It can also be noted that this rejection of overt fan behaviour could support Thornton's theory of subcultural capital being depleted by an individual 'trying too hard' (1995:22). This is shown in a comment from AH, who states, 'I've been loving their livestreams lately. Realise this is dnb memes but rate this dudes opinion aha' AH then replies to their own comment, 'Bit cringe though'. By describing the post as 'cringe' AH highlights that the post does not feel natural within the community.

5.3: Communities of Practice

CoPs can be defined as social networks where individuals come together around a shared topic, passion or interest and regularly interact on- and offline, with a focus on knowledge management, knowledge exchange and networking (Vollenbroek, 2019:9). Aspects of the

DnB Memes community appear to support this definition, as it provides an online social network which brings together individuals who share a passion for the DnB musical genre, raving and DJing. Furthermore, DnB Memes provides a not only a space for a group of fans to communicate regarding the object of their shared passion, but also a platform where they are actively collaborating (Malik & Haidar 2020:14), through the process of creating, distributing, recreating and discussing memes. Additionally, it has been acknowledged that online social media platforms have the potential to build communities of practice that are more dynamic and more widely accessible to individuals regardless of time zone or geographic location. Palmer (*n.d*:[\[online\]](#)). Evidence of this was observed on the DnB Memes community. For example, in post number 5, the following comment was posted by CS, 'As an American still pretty new to dnb, I've been wondering why there were 2 really distinct sounds that both called themselves jungle. Thaaaat [sic] makes sense lol' Through this comment, CS acknowledged limitations in their own knowledge surrounding DnB subgenres, suggesting that their geographical location has an impact on this. However, CS states that through the meme post they have obtained new knowledge.

Further evidence of the DnB Memes community bringing together DnB fans from different geographical locations is evidenced in post 27. This is a text post which states, 'I hate to say this but right now: NZ DnB > UK DnB'. Through this post, the creator sparks a debate regarding the quality of the DnB scenes in the United Kingdom (UK) and (New Zealand). In response to this, individuals shared cultural knowledge regarding the history of the genre and called for members of the community to be unified. For example, user ST posted the following comment:

'Stop this shit. It's akin to when your younger sibling wants to come out and party with you when he's only 12. The UK inspired people from all over the world with this genre spawned from the Caribbean diaspora and there is no getaway from that. Nz has some great producers and dj's some of which have gone on to be internationally recognised and some yet to be. So please stop with this we're better than you now fuckry.. [sic] Nz has the talent, but neither the depth of history or numbers for this continuing thought process to hold any water. Carry on together.. See that word? Together. Peace and love.'

As identified within the literature review, the formation of identity is deeply embedded within community practice (Zhang & Watts, 2008). There is evidence that suggests collective identity formation takes place within the DnB memes community. For example, post number 50 (figure 16). This post shows an image depicting two illustrated figures leaving a shop. One figure has is pushing a platform trolley adorned with a number of boxes with labels such as, 'latest craze', 'shiny new things', 'new clothes'. The other figure is carrying one box, labelled, 'DnB' The individual with many items has a speech bubble above them asking, 'is that all you need?' and the other individual has a speech bubble above them replying, 'yes.'



Figure 16. Woodward. Screenshot of post media used in post 50 on DnB Memes.

This post serves as a contributor to collective identity formation as it presents the DnB musical genre and its associated subculture as an alternative to conventional societal desires or norms, suggesting that those who identify as members of the DnB community feel fulfilled by the object of their shared passion.

It is important to note that traditional definitions of CoPs placed emphasis on community learning in organisational (Vollenbroek, 2019), and management (Squires *et al*, 2013) contexts. With this in mind, there is evidence to suggest that aspects of the DnB Memes community do not support traditional definitions of CoP theory, as no formal organisational learning objectives were evidenced within the collected data. However, there is certainly evidence to suggest that the DnB Memes community provides a space for individuals to create, share and formulate knowledge regarding the DnB genre and subculture. Hills (2015) argued that traditional theory surrounding fandom failed to acknowledge fandom

communities as spaces for individuals to demonstrate and exchange expert level knowledge. As internet memes can be regarded as requiring minimal technical skill to produce (Esteves, 2018) there is a risk that these artifacts can be assumed to carry minimal expert knowledge in their creation and formation of meaning. However, despite these assumptions, memes can in fact require high levels of cultural or subcultural knowledge in order for viewers to understand them. This has been evidenced throughout the data through the use of memes as subcultural capital. Therefore, the formation of expert knowledge in meme creation and knowledge cannot be overlooked. In this context is it possible to draw parallels between the DnB Memes community and CoP theory, perhaps in a less formal context.

6: CONCLUSION

We are living in an ever-evolving digital world, where media platforms serve as not only communication technologies, but digitised environments (Prattichizzo, 2015). Despite appearing superficial or insignificant in the first instance (Nissenbaum, A. & Shifman, 2015), the internet meme has come to dominate the digital media and communication landscape, serving as powerful cultural and subcultural products with significant social functions (Nissenbaum, A. & Shifman, 2015).

In light of this digital evolution, the significance of developing knowledge and theory regarding internet memes and social behaviours is ever more apparent, and this holds notable implications for the future of digital media communications. This study makes a starting contribution to the process of developing theory regarding internet memes and online music communities.

The findings from this study suggest that within the DnB Memes Facebook group, memes were utilised as subcultural capital and played a significant role in influencing the behaviours of group members. Genre was found to play a vital role in behaviour and the formation of community identity. Drawing upon the work of McLeod (2001) extensive instances found within the collected data supported theory regarding subgenre naming as subcultural gatekeeping. This, coupled with knowledge and theory surrounding fandom posited by Lanier & Fowler (2013) and Lamerichs (2018) highlighted the significance of subcultural gatekeeping behaviour in both individual and collective identity formation. Most notably, there were a number of instances that utilised subcultural gatekeeping behaviours to mock outsiders, in turn strengthening the inner community and allowing individuals to demonstrate their own

subcultural capital and knowledge. However, it was noted that fan behaviour had to remain appropriate as per the subcultural rules of the community, as Thornton suggested, capital can be depleted when an individual tries too hard (Thornton, 1995) and there was evidence to suggest that overt fan behaviour was rejected by group members. Referring to Thornton's theory of subcultural capital (2015) a number of observed behaviours supported this theory. Not only were genre specific language, gestures and imagery utilised as subcultural capital, but the memes themselves served as subcultural capital, with high levels of cultural understanding required for successful and sustained entry into the community.

With regard to communities of practice (CoP), the data collected presented evidence that supported the work of Hills (2015), Malik & Haidar (2020), who highlight the relevance of CoP theory to online fandom communities. Specifically, it was evident that the DnB Memes community provides a platform that brings individuals from across geographical locations together through a shared passion for the DnB musical genre. In turn, this allows community members to communicate, share, learn and establish both individual and collective identity through the production and exchange of internet memes. Additionally, there was evidence of group participants demonstrating expert knowledge. However, the researcher acknowledges that not all aspects of CoP theory, namely the significance of formal and organisational knowledge exchange and learning within communities of practice were evidenced within the data. Therefore, additional research examining the relevance of CoP theory to the DnB Memes community, with consideration of Pyrko's theory of *Networks of Practice* (2019) would be useful to develop a greater depth of knowledge.

The researcher acknowledges limitations in adopting a non-participatory approach to data collection, primarily, the fact that there were no opportunities for co-creation between the researcher and participants (Costello *et al.* 2017). Therefore, a suggestion for future research is to adopt an active participatory approach, to examine how co-creation can be utilised to yield a greater depth of results.

Finally, the researcher recognises the significance of the Covid-19 pandemic on live raves. Throughout the data collection period live events were restricted due to health risks and worldwide limitations on social interactions. With this, a vast majority of participants of the DnB Memes community were unable to attend in-person events. Therefore, the researcher suggests further studies to be conducted after the Covid-19 pandemic, in order to determine whether or not live event attendance has an impact on the online behaviours of community members.

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8: APPENDICES

8.1: Appendix one

Link to full coded data document in Excel format.

<https://falmouthac->

[my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/jw174582_falmouth_ac_uk/EXcu5zIF4chMvgMj3wiJedM](https://falmouthac-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/jw174582_falmouth_ac_uk/EXcu5zIF4chMvgMj3wiJedM)

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8.2: Appendix two

Link to full Observation Taxonomy document in Excel format.

<https://falmouthac->

[my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/jw174582_falmouth_ac_uk/EcDkQbu0-](https://falmouthac-my.sharepoint.com/:x:/g/personal/jw174582_falmouth_ac_uk/EcDkQbu0-99Oj83z0EQJoIYBdRfIF2HOCfot0ISzD727lw)

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