"Take a Knife and Drain Your Life"

A Netnographic Analysis of Drain Gang’s Fandom, Subcultural Activity and Community Cultivation Online.

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Abstract

The thesis examines the subcultural activities and online fan community of Drainers (fans of the music collective Drain Gang) through TikTok. A netnographic analysis of fans’ engagement and community cultivation through prosumption is done through participation observation.

Samples taken using a non-probability purposive sampling method are analyzed, categorized, and coded. By using theories of prosumption, uses and gratifications and a contemporary online take on subcultural theory from Bennet (2004) as well as Genova et al. (2022), the samples provide an insight into Drainers and their subculture.

Results from the study suggest that community within TikTok is easy to find, yet difficult to regulate. It can thus be both a space for creative participation and opportunity for exploring identity as much as it can be for receiving negative comments and further stigmatization. Regardless of the app’s implications and limitations, it does successfully provide a platform for fans to connect, bond, share ideas and create authentic identity and a subcultural status.

While plenty of previous research concerning fans and their communities exist, this study is through researcher’s immersion opening up a discussion about Drain Gang’s subculture and fans, which is essentially an untouched area of research. Although limitations are present such as lack of possibility to pick samples on TikTok based on publication date, as well as bias while collecting samples, it provides an insight into the online community and subculture which can be used to further explore the topic.

Keywords: Drain Gang, Drainer, Fandom, Online Fan Community, Subculture, Netnography, Community Cultivation, Prosumption, TikTok.
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1. Introduction

The internet is filled with viral stars that seem to have their audience living in a digital space. Under this category falls Drain Gang, a music group from Stockholm, Sweden. The collective was formed in 2013 and consists of four members known under their aliases: Bladée, Ecco2k, Thaiboy Digital and Whitearmor. Bladée being the most famous and releasing the most amount of music, has become somewhat of a ringleader for the collective, coined as the "Drain Gang CEO". In an interview held by Horvat (2022) it is brought forward that Bladée is a "writer, fashion designer, creative director, artist, and a founding member of Drain Gang", while under his legal name, Benjamin Reichwald is explained as a "friend who collects toys, loves crystals, wants his own shade of purple, and dislikes any form of classification".

While Drain Gang been active since 2013 their place in the spotlight was not always a given. Due to their nonsensical style, music, artwork and social media presence, they’ve been met with an audience who has memeified them. However, thanks to their unique approach to art the collective has ”amassed a cult following for their Extremely Online strain of underground rap”. Even though the group might be difficult to make sense of, with years of not being taken serious, they are now ”recognized for their elusive yet enigmatic online presence, the members of Drain Gang are fashion-forward outsiders, whose lo-fi aesthetic has inspired a distinct style amongst its super dedicated legion of fans” (Dazed Digital, 2022).

In an interview with a Drainer, she ”expressed her love for draining”, furthermore she comments on the music saying “I think its association with the internet, individuality and interesting new sound are what have drawn many people to this genre, but also what causes many people to call it ’trash’” (Rawat, 2022). Later she clears up some confusion about the public eye on the genre suggesting that ”a central message of Bladée’s music is that everything is trash – its value is only what we give it. This value the internet gives to Drain Gang is why they will likely continue to grow as a group” (Rawat, 2022). It almost seems that the style is comparable to a cryptocurrency, which value is created by the public. While they have accumulated a serious following over the span of their career, the group really "LVL-up as more people switched-on and became exposed to the group’s logged-on
sound, each blissed-out dance-pop soundbite drawing fans further into their euphoric world. Their 2022 world tour sold out in a matter of minutes, while fashion campaigns with Marc Jacobs Heaven signal the collective’s move towards global domination” (Yalcinkaya, n. d.). By Primavera Sound (2022), the group is introduced as: ”not a supergroup, but a suicide squad. How can you resist hanging with the antiheroes?”.

My fascination with this collective is due to the self proclaimed Trash-aesthetic that the group uses and how their fans buy into and participate in their portrayal of self to reinforce the subculture and cultivate community online. Through their rapid increase in popularity among Gen Z through TikTok since the pandemic, with views related to #draingang surpassing a total of 1.4 billion on TikTok (2023b) as of October 13th 2023. I find it interesting how the fandom is cultivating an online community considering the mentioned circumstances.

The goal of this research is therefore to better understand the motives for Drainers participating in everyday activities such as TikTok, and how it allows the subculture to manifest. By seeing how fans participate in prosumption and fan community engagement through certain hashtags on TikTok as well as relevant TikTok-sounds, I hope to make some sense of the uses and gratifications, their subculture, and potentially find patterns as to how fans cultivate the community around Drain Gang.

Through the study I intend to better understand the following questions:

RQ 1: Which are driving motives for Drainers to participate in prosumption on TikTok?

RQ 2: How do Drain Gang fans participate in prosumption to cultivate community on TikTok?

RQ 3: How are Drainers’ activity on TikTok displaying and reinforcing subcultural identity?
2. Background

To better understand what the research object is, a section about the artists and the fans will be clarified. By doing so I aim to bring light to why it is of interest to analyze the music collective’s fans. The background includes Drain Gang as a musical and artistic collective, with focus on their ‘CEO’: Bladee. Additionally it entails an overview of Drainers and some of their known tropes.

To uncover this area, both published interviews with the artists as well as the fans have been consumed. As they for the longest part of their career were private artists, it was only possible to find about a handful of interviews of their 10 year career-span. Since the information about Bladee is the most attainable as well as him having the most amount of follower, he is the artist which will be examined the most.

2.1 Drain Gang and Bladee

Bladee’s musical journey started as a child creating and releasing intense punk music with absurd lyrics, together with now collaborator Ecco2k. Later on during their teenage years they started making music with Thaiboy Digital and Whitearmor (Evergreen, n.d.). Since then, the collective merge "leftfield pop with euphoric trance, elegant ambient and their own tender interpretation of contemporary rap” (Ochefu, 2022).

Rather than writing biographical lyrics, Bladee’s reveals his ethos as an artist to be sharing "states of feeling and being”. Furthermore, he claims that it’s not really about him, partially masking himself with autotune in his songs he explains that his job is to ”express ideas” and that the ”important part of being an artist” and a ”public person” ultimately is to ”share what you learn and inspire people” (Borrelli-Persson, 2021). They further explain the matter in an interview, that even if the song is not from their own perspective or concerns something has has ever happened, ”those feelings are still real”. The process of writing lyrics is compared to painting a picture, and that there’s ”always a core idea that's based in truth” which you can
hear in its "essence". Ecco2k sums it up saying that "just because it’s made up doesn’t mean it’s not sincere or authentic" (George, 2023).

The music is arguably inimitable, yet easy to sort out among the crowd of other artists. Written on a fan forum you find the music referenced as: "tough never stagnating or relying on a formula, one can often identify a Drain Gang song” (Evergreen, n.d.). Put into other words, the "Auto-Tune-Heavy and high-tech music often sounds like a cacophony created by a suicidal robot” and is described by Drain Gang member Ecco2k akin to "throwing car battery into a washing machine” (George, 2023). With a notoriously peculiar sound, the collective have amassed a long list of "insufficient and obscure genre categorizations that are humorous in their failure to capture something so amorphous and otherworldly” (George, 2023).

Not only is the music important to their phenomenon as a music collective, the visuals matters just as much. With an aesthetic and artwork explained as "esoteric visuals” consisting of "grainy selfies snapped in what might be someone’s bathroom” and "superimposed edits of illegible text and numbers” has helped them to create a "digital personality that’s reflected in the passion of their hardcore fanbase” (Ochefu, 2022). In this way, Drain Gang have successfully "spent the last decade building a sonic, aesthetic, and material universe complete with its own mythology and lore. Spawning a system of belief that comes with a singular look, sound, and language” (George, 2023).

At the same time that they have their differences as artists, with every album from each member being ongoing stages of metamorphosis, they all share certain qualities which include "hyper-artificial instrumentation influenced by video game culture and trap; atmospheric reverb that simulates a sensation of depth; vocals smothered in Auto-Tune and often delivered in falsetto, mumbles, whispers, or shrieks” and most importantly: "lyrics that center on the suffering and elation of what it means to be alive and online in the modern world” (George, 2023). While by Angell (2022) they are explained to have a depressive singing style, "often hedonistic lyrics over atmospheric production".

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2.2 Drainers

Drainer is the unofficial name for fans of either or multiple members of Drain Gang. They are not distinguished from their following of the individual artists. Hence, it’s possible for a Drainer to be a fan of one of the artist but not the other.

As earlier mentioned the community is chronically online, and the reason why Drain Gang’s art is so relate-able to generations online is due to their art being a ”direct representation of the ways late Millennials & Gen Z express themselves”(Aryeetey, 2021). By discussing topics such as ”mental health, gender expression, drug enjoyment and drug addiction by combining absurdist elements” they are targeting the mentioned generations as these topics are defining for ”Gen Z internet culture”. Through this process they are successfully able to connect openly with an audience who is receptive and hungry for this authenticity (Aryeetey, 2021).

As a result of their transparency, their fans worship the members of the avant-garde collective like deities and are ”regarded as emblems” in that which Gen Z values in its stars: ”vulnerability, openness about mental health, and slightly unpolished personas”, which makes them come off as unfiltered artists, rather than curated industry plants (George, 2023). With their heart on their sleeves and a fearless attitude with both sound and style, their amassed cult following has boomed in recent years (Ochefu, 2022).

The earlier mentioned trash or lo-fi aesthetic is acknowledged by their fans. Who actively take part and reinforce the idea that the music by Drain Gang is in fact a horrible listening experience at first, where ”self-proclaimed fans have admitted to loathing certain tracks upon first listen” (George, 2023). There’s plenty memes with catch phrases such as ”the music kinda of sucks, but you get used to it” circulating the internet. Another hypothetical scenario is in which a Drainer takes over the aux cord to play Drain Gang’s music in a social settings such as a party or on a romantic date. The punch line is repeatedly how it causes social embarrassment, where the implied message is that outing yourself as a drainer is ”akin to revealing yourself to be an outcast or monster” (George, 2023).
Although a self-deprecating view from there fans common occur, you can simultaneously find youtube comments on videos where otherworldly qualities are attributed to Drain Gang’s members such as ”Ecco is transcending everything we’ve come to know as a species”, while Bladee frequently is referred to as an angel (Ochefu, 2022)

Their ability to ”articulate a strain of suffering that is specific to the internet age” resulted in a fandom which includes fans from two extreme poles within the political spectrum. Where there in the past was a divide between right leaning, mentally fragile incels, and on the other there are the left leaning progressive humanitarians. Both sides have found the artists to provide a safe space and the clash in political ideology has led to intense arguments over various digital platforms, representing a ”microcosm of the broader culture wars” (George, 2023).

Thanks to the queer-themed incorporations by Bladee and Ecco2k (such as Ecco2k as female in the Amygdala music video), the fandom has shown an increase of the LGBTQ+ presence online. Forums which in the past been have disproportionately riddled with incels are now used by their ”queer, trans, and nonbinary fans” to discuss the ways that ”Drain Gang has helped them to identify gender dysphoria and to embrace their own identities” (George, 2023).

Mitgas, an official Drain Gang discord moderator explains how the fanbase has developed from being a crazy, and arguably toxic place from around 2016 when the music was darker and the members were more secretive - until now where the artists are in a better place mentally, which is heard through the music and consequently has yielded a change in fans. The fans are now more open and accepting and the joking culture has grown and become a staple part of the fandom (George, 2023)

A cult followership such as Drainers, partially finds its strength in its fans idea of ”spiritual supremacy”. The fans know they are part of something truly special and constantly insulate and detach themselves from mainstream norms, which in turn results in a more ”radical form of devotion” (George, 2023). Even if that might go against what people find to be healthy, as long as it means acceptance and companionship from others alike, Drainers will commit. For
Drain Gang and their fanbase this is exemplified when a street interviewer is asked a Drainer waiting in line for concert as to whether going to a Drain Gang show is a red flag he replies "Drain culture is just embracing the red flag” (George, 2023).

3. Literature Review

The following section will cover an overview of relevant research material to the field of study covering media and communication. Previous academic literature regarding fans, fandom, music fans communities and TikTok communities will be presented, as well as pointing out the study’s contribution to the field.

3.1 Fan Studies and Fandom

Fan studies is due to evolving technology, a fasting-moving, ever adapting and multidisciplinary study, which is used to make sense of fandom within media (Booth & Williams, 2021). Fandom is according to (Fiske, 1992) often times associated with different forms of popular culture or public figures "that the dominant value system denigrates” (p. 30). Thus it has its roots in subordinate groups of people, ”particularly with those disempowered by any combination of gender, age, class and race”, making it a natural form of resistance (p. 30).

Fandoms and fan communities are highly social, as their existence and well being is dependent on the interaction between fans. Jenkins (2013) explains that fan reception is not able to exist in complete isolation, but is rather dependent and shaped "through input from other fans and motivated, at least partially, by a desire for further interaction with a larger social and cultural community” (p. 76). Meaning that the fans depend on each other for their meaning making and ultimately for creating and maintaining their fandom, fan community and ability to participate in ‘fan talk’ as referred to by (Fiske, 1992). Cooper (2015) claims that the root of fandom is in "individual engagements” that are “reinforced via social participation” (p. 109). Sandvoss (2005) additionally points out that ”many of those who label themselves as fans, when asked what defines their fandom point to their patterns of consumption” (p. 7).
Audiences of all kinds participate in various degrees of semiotic productivity, producing meanings and pleasure that “pertain to their social situation out of the products of the culture industries” (Fiske 1992, p. 30). However, fans often take this to the next level, producing content which can circulate and help define the fan community. The fans thus create their own culture with “systems of production and distribution” which lies outside the scope of cultural industries “yet shares feature with them which more normal popular culture lacks” (Fiske 1992, p. 30). It suggests that fans are “active rather than passive”, they are multifaceted individuals rather than “monolithic zombies” and they are “aggressive investigators and critical commentators rather than docile receptors” (Cooper, 2015, p. 109).

Fans through their dedication are at times depicted as “psychologically defunct stalkers and killers” where fans who had carried out murders were assumed to be partly or motivated by their fandom (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 1-2). Speculatively, the negative depiction and connotation of fandom can be connected to a ”celebration of the media’s own power and influence” which is a popular theme among media producers (p. 2). It additionally fulfills the ”ideological function” in displacing fears of media effects and shifting them on to ”psychologically and socially inept fans” (p. 2).

It is further argued that one that beneath the ”representation of fandom as a social and psychological pathology”, there runs and underlying criticism of ”modern life and mass culture” (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 2). The argument is met with the opposing view that criticism of the complexity of modern life is overlooked and ignored by highlighting fandom as a ”convenient scapegoat for profoundly disturbing occurrences” (p. 2). Fandom and its form as an agency fits perfectly into the explanation of disastrous events within mass media. The occurrences are by the media repeatedly attempted to shine light on the individuals actions and personalizes the actions rather than the structural forces at hand (p. 2).

Early academic studies of fandom points towards an emphasis on structure. The fandom is seen as a “consequence of mass culture needing to compensate for a lack of intimacy, community and identity” (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 2). However, ethnographic and auto-ethnographic studies show that relationships are complex between fans as agents and the
In today’s day and age with the technological advancements such as the internet, fandom have turned into a “common and ordinary aspect of everyday life” while biased representation of fandom is being less common (Sandvoss, 2005, p. 3). It to a point where finding “realms of public life which are unaffected by fandom” is next to impossible (p. 3).

Fans and fandom can be viewed in various ways and is mainly broken down into two versions by Sandvoss. Although, it ultimately operates as a mirror and with an outcome of research depending on our ”angle of vision” (2005, p. 8-11)

**First**: As an individual effort, determined by the frequency which the fans emotionally consume the chosen media or idol.

**Second**: As a phenomenon that is determined by the engagement with specific objet of media and content creation within the context of a community.

### 3.2 Music Fans and Fan Communities Online

Galuszka (2015) explains audiences’ empowerment as a consequence of internet and social media. The use of technology among fans provides them with the opportunity to express opinions and preferences publicly as well as through private messages (p. 27).

Fan communities concerning celebrities or musical artist, organize networks around objects and heroes to worship, with whom the fans have an emotional connection to. In cases where people are struggling to find reasons to live, it is suggested that heroes are necessary for the individuals well-being. Something which often times happens during adolescent years (Lacasa et al., 2016, p. 46). The admiration for the hero is referred to as idolatry, a word which refers to strong fan attachment and happens when fans bond with their hero by listening, admiring their skills, persona and ultimately find someone to follow (p. 54).

The negative associations with fans is emphasized by some research. The focus is then on the fan ”as a lonely person, a social isolate, pursuing parasocial gratification in their individual
homes” where it’s believed that the fan have their social needs met through ”imaginary interaction” (Stever, 2009, p. 8). To the contrary, many fans conduct big parts of their activity through and within their community, where fans are actively taking part in ”redefining popular media through fiction, artwork, videos and other forms of expression” and are through this process making an attempt at paving the way for a more democratic representation of culture through mass media (p. 8-9). As fans currently are able to gain access to inexpensive sophisticated media tools, they are more than ever engaged in the creative process by writing their own media stories (Stever, 2009).

As mentioned, fandom often times carry a negative connotation as it is in eyes of academic seen as a ”certain pathological way”, the obsessive worshipping of celebrities is however considered by many academics a niched sort of fandom and more than often a community based fandom is a healthy addition to the fans’ lives (Stever, 2009, p. 8-9).

Teenagers are found to be especially good at making use of the social networking platforms as they understand their ”unique potentials to both transmit particular message and find new audiences” (Lacasa et al., 2016, p. 62). The young fans use strategies such as looking for other users’ profiles to find connections with similar interests, something which is not possible offline. By participation through social media the fans can thus unite with other fans ”in pursuit of a particular goal oriented activity” (p. 62-63).

Because of TikTok’s audiovisual nature, sharing pre-existing content is limited and ”users inevitably become the content”, every TikTok user thus becomes a performer who externalize their opinion and character ”via an audiovisual act” (Medina Serrano et al. 2020, as cited in Avdeff, 2021, p. 96). Importantly, audience is also commonly ”platform-dependent, owing to the conventions and cultures apparent within interfaces and platforms” (Avdeff, 2021, p. 96).

Through online community, fans are provided with a space where they can emotionally express and share daily concerns. This supports that fan communities are welcoming spaces where youth can develop their identities (Lacasa et al., 2016, p. 63). Through online social media platforms, fans are able to share their subjective experiences and have them validated, which holds importance concerning topics which youth find difficult to address (Avdeff,
TikTok as an app has thus become a place of validation, where "youth are figuring out their place in the world" (Avdeff, 2021, p. 96).

### 3.3 TikTok and Community

Social media platforms is a place for people to seek entertainment, information and other like-minded people sharing similar experiences. As each platform hold its own differences natural that they all provided different result in the users quest to find what they seek, both positively and negatively. According to Milton et al.’s (2023) study regarding community building aspects of TikTok, they’ve found that the structure of community within TikTok is "permeable, allowing for self-discovery and understanding not found in traditional online communities" (p. 1). TikTok as a platform does not fulfill original criteria of what a community entails, which would require a connection to a physical place (McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 8). However, it does fulfill Gusfield’s (1975) view on relational community which regards "quality of character of human relationship, without reference to location” (as cited in McMillan & Chavis, 1986, p. 8). Many scholars work show that social media is able to provide a sense of community to users online. However, due to each platforms unique affordances, community tend to have platform-dependent characteristics (Milton et al. 2023, p. 3).

TikTok as an app saw a significant surge in popularity and downloads during the 2020 pandemic and has as off September 27, 2021 more than a billion monthly users (TikTok, 2021; Milton et al. 2023). In their own words TikTok (2021) claim that their "global community is remarkable in its ability to reach millions of people across generations. From music, food, beauty and fashion to art, causes, and everything in between, culture truly starts on TikTok" (p. 1).

TikTok works mainly as an algorithmic community-platform where the infinite For You Page provides users with personalized, attention-grabbing videos. The community is topic or 'tok'-based, referencing whatever strain of interest or community the user shows interest in. As the platform provides easy access to users interest, some users view the platform to primarily
“identify and construct community” based on users view of their own identity (Milton et al. 2023, p. 2).

Due to TikTok’s algorithmic nature, Milton et al. (2023) found that communities are perceived by users in conjunct with how the content is present, allowing participants to find a space where they “feel they belong” (Milton et al. 2023, p. 15). A large proportion of TikTok users are youth, which means that teen and young adults are presented with a freedom and versatility that enables opportunities for “traditionally stigmatized communities to flourish online” (Milton et al. 2023, p. 1,3).

However, the platform has its limitations as it is publicly open and algorithmic based. In another study, Rochford and Palmer (2022) found that although TikTok has the potential to foster supportive communities, the algorithmic circumstances makes it just as much of a place where people looking for support can find each other, as it does for people who are hostile to the community. Their study rather supports the fact that TikTok can be used as a starting point for community-building, and a tool to funnel interested and curious people to other closed spaces such as forums or Discord-channels, where communities can be independent of algorithms (p. 84, 93).

### 3.4 Contribution to the Field

As the aim of the study is to analyze online prosumption, community engagement and subcultural activities of Drain Gang’s fans, the study provides contribution to the field by filling some of the existing gaps.

First and foremost, this study helps to provide further knowledge and fill the gap of subcultural studies within social media, specifically on TikTok. A claim which Genova et al. (2022) supports in that research within the field covering subcultures existing on digital media is fragmented, as structured academic books on the topic are lacking (pp. 3, 7).
Furthermore, the study examines why and how young people use TikTok in a transgressive way. Which without extended knowledge, it is unlikely to grasp online subcultural activities (Genova et al. 2022, p. 4).

Thirdly, research uncovers information about cultivation of community on TikTok, creating subculture regarding Drain Gang, and how online spaces are made for Drainers to find others like them.

Lastly, the study shines light on how fans who actively admit hating the very thing that they claim to simultaneously love and where tropes as ”the music kind of sucks, but you get used to it” and other self-deprecating themes are being explored (George, 2023).

4. Theoretical Framework

The following section outlines the theoretical framework used for this study. Firstly, prosumption among music fans online will be covered. Secondly, the theory regarding Uses and Gratifications will be used. As a last perspective, Subcultural theory will be applied to the study.

4.1 Prosumption

Through social media, the value of fandom has evolved, which Galuszka (2015) refers to as a ”new economy of fandom”, in which fan communities are empowered to make use of the ”democratizing potential” that modern social media holds, to collaborate and communicate with artists independently and unaffected by the ”mediation of the traditional recording industry” (p. 25). This process has according to Galuszka (2015) the potential to restructure the power of fandom and redefine ”what it means to be a fan” (p. 25). Cole’s (2011) results supports the argument that cultural production can foster social change, making prosumption a transformative power (p. 447, 459).

While media producers and distributors on a large scale still remain remain powerful, a distinction between consumption and productions are seemingly blurring as more fans
successfully influence how content is created and distributed “through their networked online creativity, interactions and, sometimes, activism” (Hodkinson, 2017, p. 89-90). The merging of production and consumption has been sought to be defined by theorists through usage of terms such as produser and prosumption (Bruns 2008 as cited in Hodkinson, 2017, p. 90). The term is further explained as a phenomenon which is closely tied to social media where ”consumers are producing themselves” (Ritzer, 2010, as cited in Zajc, 2015, p. 31). It is distinguished by its connection to social media, since compared to both public and commercial mass media, it has successfully enabled the potential of bringing ”public communication to life” and has thus shifted prior past passive consumers of media to ”audiences that actively participate in the production of content” (Zajc, 2015, p. 32).

Other academics have understood the merged word as the combination between ”professional” and ”consumer”, where it’s claimed that a prosumer is ”somebody that thinks they know what they are doing, but really don’t” (Cole, 2011, p. 451). Cole does however clarify that the focused understanding of the word is a combination between a ”producer” and ”consumer” (p. 451). This more popular understanding of the word is how this study will make use of the term.

4.1.1 Music, Fandom and Prosumption

Technological advancements have empowered fans with numerous tools and platforms to share their fan-related creations online, enabling them to connect with like-minded enthusiasts over online community spaces (Yi, 2018, p. iii). This shift in the digital landscape has expanded the realm of fan creativity and engagement, including fan fiction, covers, fan art, skits, and much more (p. 22).

Blaikie and Priest (2019) argue that much of everyday social life unfolds routinely, where individuals are operating in a ”taken-for-granted, unreflective attitude” (p. 118). It’s only when external inquires, such as those by social scientists, or disruptions to their social life occurs that the social actors are compelled to seek and construct meanings and interpretations.
Social scientists may therefore have to employ procedures that encourage this reflection in order to "discover the meanings" (p. 118).

The audience and thus prosumer, possess the ability to reject "the preferred meaning" of media content and instead reinterpret it in a way that opposes or critiques its intended message (Michelle, 2007, p. 211). Through oppositional reading, prosumers and content creators are able to reshape and alter narratives, potentially challenging those which affirm "hegemonic interests within the wider society" (p. 211).

Cluley (2013) brings forth the argument that the simultaneous combination of production and consumption can be used as resistance to the existing social landscape or industry as the prosumer participates without the constraints of financial expectation, rather thanks to the joy of creating and the willing to participate in a community (p. 15). Avdeff (2021) also brings forward that democratic environment such as social media, where prosumption predominantly takes place, provide opportunities for resistance to both dominant and hegemonic norms, both in an online space as well as offline (p. 91).

Jenkins claim that "fandom does not preserve a radical separation between readers and writers", fans are not simply consuming "preproduced stories", rather they participate by manufacturing their own stories, media and art (2013, p. 45). Fans’ individual and collective interpretation of work allows the fans to experience and engage with the media "beyond its initial consumption" (p. 45).

Avdeff (2021) points out that that themes such as "community formation, collective identity, and audience engagement are common frameworks" within research of social media (p. 90). However, due to TikTok’s "relative newness", there is a lack of TikTok-specific established framework of analysis (p. 90).

While analysing prosumers and content on a platform it is important to understand that in today’s digital landscape, the existence of community and identity is both "cross-platform” yet are simultaneously "platform-dependent" (Avdeff, 2021, p. 90). Each social media
provides nuance for self-presentation and other forms of communication, it does so while relying on "technocultural conventions that are specific to a platform" (p. 90-91).

Avdeff (2021) suggests that individuals are temporarily brought together for "ambient affiliation" through reception of media and participation in various cultural activities relating to the media. While this temporary connection might not always reach the level of a full-fledged community, it is a significant element in contributing to the community’s formation (p. 91).

4.2 Uses and Gratifications

When examining the cultivation of online fan communities through social media, Uses and Gratifications lends itself as a valuable analytical tool. Rather than focusing on "whether audiences are or are not affected by media messages” the approach of Uses and Gratifications seeks to "understand how audiences actively select and utilise media for their own purposes.” (Hodkinson, 2017, p. 82).

Uses and Gratifications places emphasis on the "centrality of the individual in the audience-media use-effects relationship" (Haridakis, 2013, p. 1). The research guided by this perspective suggests that consideration towards the audience member’s "individual differences, expectations, goals, levels of purposiveness and activity when using media to satisfy their needs and desires” is necessary to understand media effects (p. 1). Which according to Haridakis (2013) is the reason as to why the perspective holds strength and endurance as a tool (p. 16). Ultimately, Uses and Gratifications suggests that audiences are "goal-directed, purposive, and motivated in their selection of media” to meet their needs and desires (p. 1-2). They actively and intentionally choose media for certain intentions (Bulduklu. 2019, p. 903). This can to an extent be influenced by their "social and psychological characteristics” (Haridakis, 2013, p. 2). Uses and Gratifications also recognizes that "many effects - perhaps most - are unintended” (p. 2)

The idea of the individuals needs being a key factor is reinforced by Halloran (1970, as cited in Hodkinson, 2017) "we must get away from the habit of thinking in terms of what the media
do to people and substitute it for the idea of what people do with the media” (p. 82). Furthermore, Hodkinson explains that ”the model is essentially a functionalist one, in the sense that it regards mass communications content as a resource that emerges to fulfill individual needs and goals and, in turn, enables society as a whole to function more effectively.” (Hodkinson 2017, p. 83).

Haridakis (2013) further explains that although motives for using social media overlap with usage of traditional media, there is a social aspect which is distinct to the use of social media that is reflected in its characteristics (p. 15-16). The contemporary environment for media in which the participants have more choices and the ability to extend the use of media from solely receiving, to creating and sharing it, puts the individual in a spotlight for research in a way that was not done in the past (Haridakis, 2013, p. 16). Through uses and gratifications one can look further than traditional communication models like the ones of Lasswell, which viewed media in a linear fashion with media encoders, audience reception and effects (Hodkinson 2017, p. 82)

To better make sense of the theory, attempts have been made to categorize themes of Uses and Gratifications. Exemplified below, early distinguishing themes from McQuail et al. (1972) are presented:

- ’Diversion’: a short-term escape or emotional release, enabling suspension of everyday routines and problems.
- ’Personal relationships’: a substitute for face-to-face social companionship, a facilitator of relationships or a source of community belonging.
- ’Personal identity’: a resource for the development or reinforcement of personal values, meanings and a sense of one’s place in the world.
- ’Surveillance’: a source of knowledge, information and engagement with the world.

(as cited in Hodkinson 2017, p. 83)

The new media technologies provide audience with options such as ”interactivity, non-hierarchical structure and ubiquity” (Bulduklu, 2019, p. 903). The audience have adopted a plethora of digital technologies into their option to communicate. Albeit, the adoption of
multiple forms of communication instead of ruling out mediums in favor of others is thus questioned in terms of the needs each fulfills (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010, p. 350). Users tend to "employ a range of tools for communication" rather than embrace one single social media which fulfills all their needs. (Quan-Haase et al., 2002). It suggests that "one type of social media does not replace another", rather it gets "integrated into a bundle of media" that the user utilises (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010, p. 350). This points towards each social media having their own strength and weaknesses in terms of the communication that it accommodates the users (Quan-Haase & Young, 2010).

The relevance of online social networking sites has increased the need to understand "social uses and effects of media that permit receiving, sharing, and creating messages” (Haridakis, 2013, p. 15). The technologies of media can be considered tools and the way in which people have adapted and found ways to make use of these tools to satisfy their needs is a key element in media research. With an emphasis on "individual differences, social contexts of media use, activity and the importance of motives and needs", uses and gratification proves itself as a valuable tool in the process (p. 16)

4.2.1 Uses and Gratifications Within Media Fandom

To understand the uses and gratifications of fans within media, an understanding of motives is important for this research project. In Earnheardt & Haridakis (2008) study, a collection of driving motives from various researches have been collected and categorized as follows:
- Entertainment / Relaxation
- Self-esteem / Achievement
- Companionship
- Learning / Social Interaction
- Pass time / Escape motivations
(p. 168-169)

Although the study is based in uses and gratification within sport-fandom, similarities of reasons are possible to find and the framework will thus be used as a basis for this study. Below is an overview with further information regarding the categories which have found to
be useful in the analysis of samples from Drainers’ TikToks and how they cultivate community online by taking part in prosumption.

Social Interaction - Companionship

Social interaction and relationships are one of the key component of fandom. According to Clerc (1996, as cited in Deller, 2016, p. 237), the most "primal instinct" of fans is to talk to other about their shared interest. Fandom thus functions as an "alternative social community" (Jenkins, 1992, as cited in Deller, 2016, p. 237).

As a result of stigmatization by society and media, fans find other with common interest to "seek solace, community and understanding” (Deller, 2016, p. 237). By participating in fan talk, the fans have an opportunity to find others who are like them which provide them with pleasure and relief. Fulfilling both Jenkin’s and Clerc’s claim and finding companionship within their community.

Through the fans common purpose and shared interest, social online interactions within the community allow them to build friendships, strengthen their bonds and social ties, and as well as practice "self-disclosure” (Kim & Kim, 2017, p. 232, 243). To maintain the social community, trust among the fans is necessary as the fans practicing self-disclosure "must trust the other party will reciprocate” and in return "make themselves vulnerable to them.” (p. 232, 243)

By participating and interacting in the fan communities as well as having established their social identity through self-categorization, attachment and feelings towards other members will be cultivated which leads to stronger identity with the community and in turn allow them to reach a higher level of trust (Kim & Kim, 2017, p. 234). The companionship found in the communities have a positive impact social life’s of the community members (Han et al., 2019, p. 1)

The interaction within the fandom are additionally more trustful and loyal within the community when there is trust among the fans towards the artists (Kim & Kim, 2017, p. 235).
Through the trust gained through social vulnerability and self-disclosure, they are more likely to "communicate one to one via direct messengers", strengthening their bonds and adding nuance to the relationships (p. 235).

As a result of others engagement and trust within communities in conjunction with online anonymity and "non-face-to-face interaction that cyber-space affords" fans are "less likely to refuse self-disclosure" to strangers (Kim & Kim, 2017, p. 235).

**Entertainment - Escape Motivations**

A sense of pleasure, through meaningful entertainment or passing time through escapism is an important motive of fandom. Through fan community online, participants are encouraged to share themselves and collaborate with each other through online engagement (Kim & Kim, 2017, p. 240). Opportunities for interaction are crucial for the well being of the fan community as "interaction-oriented online community design may encourage fans to create their own contents and share ideas". It essentially needs to be a socially stimulating playground for fans (p. 240).

It is important to understand that entertainment for fans might not always be in a quick rewarding hedonistic matter. To the contrary, studies show that "fun and pleasure" does not reflect the full spectrum and that "entertainment can be used as a means of experiencing not only enjoyment, but also so as a means of grappling with questions such as life’s purpose and human meaningfulness". These are known as "eduaimonic concerns" and "reflect the use of media entertainment as a means of contemplating ‘truth’-seeking-life’s poignancies and vulnerabilities, even if at the expense of the experience of hedonic pleasure" (Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 1001). This broadened concept helps to shine light on the paradox of using media for "sad" or "tragic" entertainment purposes by suggesting that "greater insight or meaningfulness is the more important and sought after outcome from consuming such fare" (p. 1001).
While understanding that motivations for "entertainment consumption are recognized to be diverse", the end goal of entertainment is commonly assumed to be for enjoyment (Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 984).

Self-Esteem / Achievement

As self-esteem and achievement is included in Maslow’s (1943) hierarchy of needs at a level of esteem, it fits to be a driving motive for media fandom. Through fan community engagement, a sense of self-esteem can be acquired as it is found to increase efficacy within the community (Han et al., 2019, p. 1). The collective efficacy within online communities can be found and is strengthened by the social identity of the Drainers as they view themselves as part of the group. Thus, when something spectacular is achieved by other fans or the artists themselves, they can connect themselves and their sense of belonging to the community, thus attaching the achievement of others to themselves and boosting their own self-esteem. On the contrary, fans are able to protect their self-esteem and sense of accomplishment when things are going less well for the artist or community by changing the narrative and use of pronouns from “us” to “they”. In this way, individuals will seek social groups to maximize their self worth and will consequently make use of “favoritism, attribution biases, social comparisons, and other cognitive processes” which will allow fans to main a favorable and positive image of whichever group they belong to and is in short explained with the following statement: “I belong to this group, this group is good, therefore I am good” (Sloan & van Camp, 2008, p. 138).

4.3 Subculture

Subculture will be applied as a third lens to analyze the data in this study. It will be used to examine how people take part in everyday activities such as social media prosumption and online community engagement to shape a identity in line with a certain subculture.

Many attempts have been made to make sense out of music, style and transgressive youth culture. In the 1970’s and 1980’s the CCCS theorized subculture based on youth’s activities,
highly associated with class differences. Work from Cohen and Hebdige regarding their use of
the term 'subculture’ has been referenced a lot, although already through the mid 1980’s and
onwards it has been pointed out that the theory of subculture is quite flawed by scholars
including Maffesoli, Bennett and Hesmondhalgh and more (Bennett, 1999; Hesmondhalgh,
2005)

The flawed nature of theory’s traditional use is due to many reasons. Although, most
importantly for this study is that it does not reflect the current state of contemporary culture,
which is viewed as ‘taste culture’ rather than ‘class’ or ‘parent’ culture since ”consumption
patterns often transcend class-based distinctions” (Williams, 2003, p. 61). As such, it suggests
"rigid lines of division” which are obsolete, as social life is in actuality fleeting, with little to
no evidence of structure from groups themselves (Bennet, 1999, p. 603-604).

Williams (2003) further the arguments supporting the fluidity of music subcultures which are
"constituted by the experiences of both producers and fans (not to mention the fact that
producers are also music fans)” and at a core subcultures are centered around people ”who
gather and interact with others based on shared interests, values and beliefs” (p. 62).

To expand the understanding of subculture, the concept of ‘tribes ‘was introduced by
Maffesoli (1996, as cited in Hesmondhalgh, 2005) which takes the fluidity in mind. Explained
to be "without the rigidity of the forms of organization with which we are familiar, it refers
more to a certain ambience, a state of mind, and is preferably to be expressed through
lifestyles that favour appearance and form” (p. 24).

The theory of subculture is not as straight forward and applicable as initially thought and
seems to have multiple understandings. Even though one might speak of Drain Gang and their
fandom as a subculture it is still apparent while looking at the fans, that they all have their
own differences and that the rigidity of the term ’subculture’ in a traditional sense can
therefore not be applied to this research project as a sole theory. Other terms should be taken
into consideration such as: tribes, neo-tribes, scene, genre. Through the consideration of
multiple of these concepts a more nuanced picture can be painted where fluidity is considered.
Hesmondhalgh (2007) brings forth the complexity of the problem and that supports the process of taken more understandings of style, music and social life and a search for a "new master-term to unite the fields of youth and popular music studies should be abandoned".

However, the cultural complexity regarding young people’s construction of alternative culture in conjunction with everyday activities online was never properly academically examined (Bennett, 2004, p. 171). As public spaces are less accessible to youth and "increasingly subjected to surveillance", the internet and technology’s importance in enabling leisure space for youth to express themselves freely is increasing and leading to and increase of engagement in online transgressive activities behind closed doors, in their bedrooms, rather than open spaces (Genova et al. 2022, p. 3-4). Transgressive behavior and activities is seen here as a "violation of moral or social boundaries" (p. 8). Thus, with the wake of internet and online communities, subculture as a theory has an opportunity to be re-analyzed and reinvented as youth are accessing virtual spaces and offered with the possibility to innovatively construct their identities online. The fluidity, cultural exchange and opportunities for identity formation through internet which offers a formation of 'subcultural spaces’ for youth are making researchers re-imagine how subcultures are formed as it has not been examined in great detail (Bennet, 2004, p. 162-163; Genova et al. 2022, p. 3).

Instead of been connected through clear "stylistic unity, collective knowledge” or particular physical scenes and places, youth culture is within the digital realm seen as cultures which are based on shared ideas, regardless of space and time (Bennett, 2004, p. 163). A new understanding of subcultures by academics is that the internet serves as a places where youth can creatively participate in "symbolic negotiation of everyday life”, offering "cultural participation” and possibility to manage and promote their own concern, ideas, authentic identities and "collectively display its 'subcultural’ status””, which is framed around "knowledge, power and exclusivity” (Bennett, 2004, pp. 168, 169, 172; Genova et al. 2022, p. 3). Through participation in late technological trends, the youth can display subcultural capital, by sharing what is exclusively 'in the know’ among those who share the skills and knowledge to understand the trends (Bennett, 2004, p. 169). Thanks to a transition from traditional subcultural media such as fanzines, to social media, youth are able to communicate
their ideas with less costs, at a higher speed, and increased potential audience and more opportunity for interactivity (Genova et al. 2022, p. 7). The term subculture will therefore during this paper be referenced as the later concept applicable to online communities.

5. Research Puzzle

This section outlines the research puzzles and methodology of this study. The process and reasoning for how the research is laid out in terms of understanding the research paradigm, qualitative methods, data sampling and analytical process.

5.1 Methodology - Logic of Inquiry

To analyze the fandom of Drainers and their everyday activities on social media, the most suitable logic of enquiry is an abductive one, aiming to "understand social life in terms of social actors’ meanings and motives" (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 118). Through an abductive logic of inquiry, meanings and interpretations are incorporated alongside motives and intentions that is directing peoples’ behavior and is used in their everyday lives. Consequently, the social world which the member exist in is experienced and perceived from the inside. It is thus the researcher’s task to "discover and describe this ’insider’ view”, rather than to ”impose an ’outsider’ view on it” (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 112).

According to Blaikie and Priest (2019) the researcher can apply this approach to discover why people act and interact the way they do by ”uncovering the largely tacit, mutual knowledge, the symbolic meanings, intentions and rules, which provide the orientations for their actions” (p. 118). The mutual knowledge which the community members uses to interact with one another and to make sense of the social activities is the “fundamental subject matter of the social sciences” (p. 118).

Through an abductive inquiry of logic applying an approach where research is done from the bottom up, an understanding of Drainers uses and gratifications can be identified within media prosumption. Through abductive logic the development of descriptions is included, as
well as the process of generating theory which is grounded in "everyday activities, language and meanings of social actors" (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 120). It involves two stages:
- Describing the activities and meanings
- Developing categories and concepts which help to provide a basis for which the problem can be better understood.

The meaning of the social world which the community resides is assumed to be idealist ontological according to abductive logic. The community of Drainers provide meaning by interaction and access to the social world can be reached with the epistemological assumption: according to the community, from the inside, authentically, without any applied filters (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 121-122).

5.2 Research Paradigm

A research paradigm can be explained as a "lens through which we view the world", which for this study would be interpretivism. According to Collins, the paradigm "does not aim to report an objective reality, but rather to understand the world as it is experience and made meaningful by human beings". Which ultimately means that inherently things don’t hold meaning, and it is only made when "meaning-making subject interprets them." (2010, p. 38-39; Schmidt, p. 7-8).

Interpretivism is actively rejecting the objectivist view that "meaning resides within the world independently of consciousness.". The paradigm is ultimately characterized as the "interplay between a conscious, meaning-making subject and the objects that present themselves to our perception." (Collins 2010, p. 38-39; Schmidt, p. 8).

Because the state of a social reality is not a pre-determined, rather "it is produced and reproduced by its members" the pre-existing interpretations regarding social worlds prior to inception of the social scientists research project, "it is possible to study social life from the inside." (Giddens, 1976, as cited in Blaikie and Priest, 2017, p. 98; Schmidt, p. 8).
An interpretive approach is used with the aim to "describe, understand and hopefully explain any area of social life by first getting inside that world and learning how the inhabitants conceptualize and understand it (Blaikie and Priest, 2017, p. 98; Schmidt, p. 8). As the goal of the study is to examine and analyze prosumption on social media of a certain fanbase, interpretivism is a suitable approach in researching the community from the inside by going through TikTok content. The chosen approach allows for an analysis from a social perspective of how humans give meanings to things over time. An earlier mentioned concept in an interview by a fan regarding Drain Gang and their art (Schmidt, p. 7).

By collecting qualitative material in forms of videos and comments from personal users through TikTok, the goal of the study is to better understand how the fans' prosumption cultivate community, rather than achieving absolute understanding of what each piece of prosumed content means (Schmidt, 2023, p. 8).

Within interpretivism, an understanding of reality as people perceive it is essential. The focus lies with the participants perspectives, interactions and developed patterns over specific periods of times. As such, netnography lends itself as a useful method for interpretivism as it allows the researcher to understand these perspectives and patterns better and thus analyze their interaction in the social world which they perceive (O’Donoghue, 2018, p. 179).

5.3 Method - Netnography

Netnography is the method used for this research, which is an ethnographic approach to research subjects existing in a virtual space. Ethnography is according to Hammersley (2006) commonly seen as a "specific form of qualitative inquiry" (p. 3). Duffett (2013) explains ethnography as "the deep study of human cultures in the places where they happen” (p. 61). The process entails studying "what people do and say in particular contexts” from a "first hand"-perspective, to understand and describe the actions and activities that the subjects engage in (Hammersley, 2006, p. 4). Simultaneously the researcher ought to maintain "an
analytical understanding of perspectives, activities and actions” which often times can be in
different or in conflict with ”how the people themselves see the world” (p. 4).

Duffett (2013) explains that traditionally speaking ethnographic studies are carried out by
researchers staying with a specific social group that they study and gather information by
immersing ”themselves in an experience of its cultural world” (p. 260). This process of
observing should theoretically allow the researcher to start ”recognizing patterns and drawing
conclusions” (p. 260). Through immersion and better understanding of the subjects, the
researcher is acting as a sort of ”cultural translator” who is hopefully able to ”explain the alien
ways of a different cultural world” as the researcher has ”entered it as a surrogate for ‘normal’
readers” (p. 260). For the research to be as successful as possible the immersion should be
committed.

Duffett (2013) additionally brings forth the argument that an ”ethnographer should ideally be
an ‘insider’ who knows the culture that they are studying well enough to really allow it to
speak for itself” (p. 263).

Kozinets (2010) points out that much like ethnography, netnography is used for studying
”culture and community”, but online (p. 6). To specify, Kozinets & Gambetti (2020) claim
that netnographic studies ”always focus on social media and technoculture” and consistently
includes immersion by the researcher to culturally make sense of ”language, power, identity
and desire” in the space where social interaction and technology intersect (p. 7). Ultimately it
is used in application as a ”technocultural lens” to conceptualize and make sense of core
elements that distinguishes us as humans and allow us to bond (p. 7-8). Through this process
Kozinets & Gambetti (2020) argues that netnography allows us to understand what something
means when it is posted on social media (p. 8).

Kozinets (2010) furthermore suggests that using netnography as a method has proven to be
useful to reveal ”interaction styles, personal narratives, communal exchanges, online rules,
practices, and rituals, discursive styles, innovative forms of collaboration and organization,
and manifestations of creativity” (p. 3).
Connections between fans are according to fans themselves commonly established within communities referred to as “fandom” (Cavalcanti et al., 2021, p. 4). Most often the social spaces are based around “technological communication platforms, such as social media or online forums, which are used to connect individuals and expand their knowledge” towards the thing that connects them (p. 4).

Jensen (2013) suggests that thanks to media, room for engagement and involvement is facilitated through access of smartphones and tablets, social media is thus consequently “increasingly mobile” with a low threshold for participation (p. 311; Schmidt, 2023, p. 4). Additionally, Jun (2022) suggests that ”communication through visual contents has become the new normal” with mediums images and photographs are seen as primary communication tools and that people who use social networking sites which rely on visual communication use it for identity seeking and self-expression (p. 1).

Considering this information regarding netnography, social networking services and that the goal of the research is to make sense of the specific fandom of Drainers, TikTok lends itself as a good platform to carry out netnographic research as it allows easy access to interaction between fans and thus the researcher is able to participate in and observe ”spontaneous and natural online dialogue” (Schembri & Tichbon, 2017, p. 194).

5.4 Data Collection

The source of data for this research is TikTok, a social networking site accessible to the public. The data is specifically relating to Drain Gang and Drainers either through hashtags and/or TikTok-sounds which includes music or references from Drain Gang.

By searching through hashtags or keywords, users can find specific content related to the keywords that prosumers and creators of videos have used to make themselves easy to find and reachable for the community. These videos will appear when searched for, alternatively they will be displayed on a relevant users’ For You Page, which is TikTok’s algorithmic feed
that accustoms content for each user based on their expected interests derived from their online interaction on the app (Vandernick, 2022).

By searching for specific content on TikTok the research is done applying participation observation, which according to According to Blaikie and Priest (2019) is the foundational method to collect data for an ethnographic study. The process "involves a researcher in one or more periods of sustained immersion in the life of the people being studied" (p. 227-228). Participation observation as a main method to collect data provides an advantage by allowing the researcher to fully immerse within the social group, while other qualitative data collection methods such as qualitative interviews "keeps the researcher removed from the natural setting", thus, "individual behaviour and social interaction will be reported rather than observed" (p. 228).

Blaikie and Priest (2019) points that data either comes as "numbers or words" (p. 180). Even if the source material is presented as visual media such as images, videos or sound, that information has to be described and translated into either words, numbers or both, for the analysis to be able to take place (p. 180).

The data that is being collected is considered as ‘primary data’ as the data is generated by the researcher who is "responsible for the design of the study from which the data come” (Blaikie and Priest, 2019, p. 178). Primary data can come from several sources, but is "characterized by the fact that they are the result of direct contact between a researcher and the source” and is advantageous in the sense that the control of the production and analysis of data lies within the hands of the researchers and is therefore also in a position to judge the quality of the data (p. 178).

The data collected over TikTok has been done through a "natural social setting”, as the research has been done by entering a specific "area of social activity” to "study people going about their lives” (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 182). More specifically, the social setting is considered a "meso-social phenomena” which includes "communities and crowds” (p. 184). Communities is in this case used to refer to loose forms of social life organized around
common interests. It is also applicable to "collective behaviour" as well as "social movements", which is very much in line with the behaviour of online prosumers (p. 184).

While deciding on the method for picking the samples, the aim of the study as well as the resources are to be taken into consideration. Considering this the study is using qualitative methods and they are resource intensive, a smaller selection of samples is used (Blaikie & Priest, 2019, p. 195). The sample size is picked using a non-probability sampling method. As the music collective and prosumers participation has grown in size for surrounding Drain Gang, and the task is to find posts by fans who are engaged and attract a response from other Drainers and thus representative of the fandom, probability sampling would not suffice as it could possibly result in videos from people who might not be engaged in the community or who might not see themselves as Drainers. The choice of sampling method does not allow for all videos or the complete extent of the population to be examined, which is on one side a weakness. However, this choice of research design is possible to justify "on the basis that it is better to have some knowledge, which is restricted because of the type of sample, than to have no knowledge of the topic at all" (p. 194). When applying a non-probability method in the research design, it is still possible to select data in a way "that it is possible to make a judgement about the extent to which they represent some population or group" and in turn hopefully allow the researcher to achieve a sound foundation for making the judgement (p. 194-195). While this process excludes data from a large pool of population, the argument can be made that applying this method can "produce a richer understanding of social life than is possible with less in-depth and wider span quantitative method" (p. 195).

With the aforementioned arguments, a non-probability sampling method known as purposive sampling will be used, as it allows the researcher to select data samples from the population that better fit the purpose of the study. This is done with the help of certain criteria based on the field notes and experience of the immersion done during the research (Daniel, 2012, p. 87).

The sampling method is suitable as the following criteria amongst others are fulfilled: ”target specific elements of the population”, ”extremely small sample size targeted”, ”research has an
exploratory purpose” and that the "purpose of the sampling is to provide an illustrative example” (Daniel, p. 69).

Some of the more notable weaknesses of the non-probability sampling is the "inability to estimate sampling error” and that it inherently includes bias from the researcher, as the researcher is deciding what is included in the samples as ”the selection of the elements for the sample is dependent on the feelings of the researcher” (Daniel, 2012, p. 68-69).

However, the subjectivity of the selected samples ”may be an essential aspect of a study” as some studies might be focused on ”certain members of the population” (Daniel, 2012, p. 68). Thus, giving a nonzero probability for prosumers to be selected for the research might be ”wasteful and inconsistent with the purposes of the study” (p. 68). Then, a personal judgement from the researcher might be more appropriate for selecting specific "elements from the population” (p. 68).

The samples are chosen based on their fit for the study, which is founded in the researchers understanding of Drainers as a fandom and their communication. This understanding is directed by trends and patterns found while taking field notes during the immersion, as well as the years of exposure to Drain Gang and Drainers.

The criteria are (1) intended to prevent a complete homogenous representation of Drainers in terms of Gender. Additionally videos (2) had to have clear connection to Drain Gang or Drainers, supported by a minimum use of a Drain Gang-related sound, and/or have a Drain Gang-related hashtag. The samples (3) had to contain niched focus of content without the inclusion of excessive hashtags that were irrelevant to the study (note that the video with references to anime are still considered relevant as anime aesthetic is relevant to Drainers). The videos (4) had to have attracted some comments making clear references to Drain Gang or Drainers’ communication online. Lastly, the videos (5) had to be representative of ideas, tropes or trends which are relevant within the Drainer community. The ideas, tropes and trends are determined through the researcher’s years of exposure to the subculture, as well as field notes and patterns gathered during the immersion.
Unfortunately TikTok does not provide a possibility to filter posted videos based on their date of publication, and was a limitation in the ability to sample data from a specific time period. The choices of samples were found while using keywords and hashtags such as #draingang, #draingangcore, #drainer as well as searching for TikTok-sounds (in this case songs by Drain Gang) on the app and including videos which as much as possible gives a representative illustration for how the fandom operates on TikTok and how they cultivate their own culture and community.

5.5 Analytical Process

The research lays its foundation in Earnheardt & Haridakis’s (2008) studies regarding motives within media fandom. Motives which are highlighted in media fandom are as follows (p. 168-169):

- Entertainment / Relaxation
- Self-esteem / Achievement
- Companionship
- Learning / Social Interaction
- Pass time / Escape motivations

Important to note is that while the study is referencing Earnheardt & Haridakis’s findings as a foundation for an analysis, the motives were originally derived from motives of sports fans and released in 2008, before online prosumption had properly started blooming. Considering that the aim of the study is to understand to today’s online music fans, adaptations and/or extension will be made based on Earnheardt & Haridakis’s categories to more suitably reflect uses and gratifications of Drainers’ contemporary prosumption and community engagement on TikTok. A version of new categorize using Earnheardt & Haridakis’s categories has already been adapted by Ősze (2023), which is the guideline for the categories while making use of the system of categorization and coding from Cavalcanti et al. (2021).
Unlike Ősze’s (2023) system of having 7 categories, this study will make use of 5 motives, as is originally explained by Earnheardt & Haridakis (2008, p. 168-169). The system used to analyse the data is derived from Cavalcanti et al.’s (2021) study of indie music fans. Where categories are linked to codes regarding fan interaction online.

Below two tables are displayed, one which displays the categories which are found in the study alongside Earnheardt & Haridakis’s (2008) findings, while the second displays the codes of communication that were found while analysing the data. Just like Ősze’s (2023) system, the coding and categorization for this study is a simplified system of Cavalcanti et al.’s (2021) netnographical analysis of fans.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnheardt &amp; Haridakis</th>
<th>Extended/Adapted For This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Entertainment / Relaxation</td>
<td>Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 Self-esteem / Achievement</td>
<td>Accomplishment / Creative Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 Companionship</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4 Learning / Social Interaction</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5 Pass time / Escape Motivations</td>
<td>Escapism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1. Analytical Categorizations*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cod 1 Affirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 2 Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 3 Cynicism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Communication Codings*

As displayed in table 2, Cod 1 is connected to comments sharing words of affirmation to their fellow Drainers. Cod 2 is connected to the comments which recognize the content from the prosumers where they can see eye to eye and bond with other fans. Lastly, Cod 3 are assigned to comments which display a sense of cynicism towards the prosumers and other users commenting on the videos in regards to their appreciation towards Drain Gang.
By applying categorization and coding to analyze Drainer’s in their fandom of uses and gratifications, and subcultural activities, the hopes are to find and illustrate representation in how community among Drainers is cultivated and the subculture is reinforced.

6. Ethics

In this section the ethical consideration taken into account for the study and throughout the research project will be brought forward. Including the researcher’s position, general ethical consideration as well as study specific ethical considerations.

6.1 Researcher’s Position

According to Layder (2013), when conducting small-scale research, “topics close to one’s own experiences” may be appropriate, however, “it is of the utmost importance not to let personal views, ideas, opinions and prejudices cloud your thinking”. Staying neutral is key and as far as is possible with the limitations of the study in consideration, the ”research projects must be conducted ’objectively’ - that is, freeing them of the personal biases and preferences of the researcher” (p. 2-3; Schmidt 2023, p. 13-14).

Considering the statement, it is important to mention that I have been a passive bystander of Drain Gang their artistic journey since 2013, and did not find them after their rise to fame. This does mean that I have a good idea of how the fandom operates and how the community is represented before beginning the thesis. While still in the beginning of carrying out the research, I would not consider myself a fan, yet I have grown fond of plenty of their songs and do appreciate their art more now than before. Although, I would still not consider myself a ”Drainer”.

As suggested by Layder (2013), I have tried my best to stay on an objective and neutral path while analysing the content. However, the use of the non-probability purposive sampling has included an inherent bias, as it is the basis for the sampling. This is partially shaped my perception of subcultures and social media among other factors (Schmidt, 2023). Although my bias is taken into account into the study, which causes a certain limitation to its
objectivity, it is also what allows a representative illustration of Drainers to be brought forward (Blaikie & Priest, 2019; Daniel, 2012). Considering the method, scale of samples and perspective of one individual, the reader is urged to take this information into consideration in mind while reading and not take these reflections as concrete truths about the fandom and the cultivated online community of Drainers, as that would not be possible to conclude in this research project alone. Instead see this as an invitation to discuss how cultivation appears among young fans, especially Drainers on TikTok.

6.2 Ethical Consideration

While conducting research, Emmison et al. (2012) argues that ”ethical concerns are an important part of all good research, and should be present from the moment you start considering any research project”. Additionally it is pointed out that ”regarding ethics, there is no time when the researcher shouldn’t be ’alert to the possibility of issues arising’, regardless of the size of the research project.” (p. 7-8; Schmidt, p. 13-14).

As the goal of the research is to understand the community of Drainers better, while considering the ethics of the research it has been accounted for that ”social research that involves human participants has the potential to produce beneficial results, it also has the potential to cause them harm” (Blaikie and Priest, 2019, p. 67; Schmidt, p. 13)

While several guidelines how to conduct social research are available, the approach varies depending on the field and topic. The complexity of ethics lies in that there are no concrete or easily applicable rules beyond copyright laws. Instead, each research project has it own specificities and that when the researcher is presented with ethical decisions, the researcher might as a result ”rely on their own convictions and commitments” as to how to navigate the ethical questions and course of action (Rose, 2016, p. 369; Schmidt, p. 14).

According to Emmison et al. the fundamental points of ethical research are following:
- ”Acting with integrity.
- Respecting the rights of others.” (2012, p. 8; Schmidt, p.14)
Because of this, it is important to keep in mind of the ethical guidelines, the study’s goal, as well how the end result could cause potential harm to the subjects involved while conducting the research. Thus, the anonymity of the participants have been kept when possible.

All the source material for the study (screenshots of videos and comments) has been taken from TikTok, which is a publicly accessible space on the internet to which users with public accounts agree to TikTok’s terms regarding accessibility (TikTok, 2023a). Content on online forums can be considered ethical to use as source material when it is publicly accessible. The researcher is thus not required to actively ask individuals or the community to study them (Tuikka et al., 2017, p. 2).

To accommodate as much anonymity as possible the study relies on Bruchman’s (2002) light disguise, which provides the researcher with the following framework.

- Allowed to name the community - in this case ”Drainers”.
- Names, pseudonyms and other identifying details are changed.
- Verbatim quotes are allowed, even though they can be used to identify the an individual.
- Potentially harmful details about individuals are to be omitted.

This means that members of the community could possibly guess who is being discussed while outsiders are likely able to figure out who is who through investigating the matter closer (Bruckman, 2002, p. 230).

A common assumption that ”all images that identify individuals are in some way unethical” is arguably faulty as the ”wealth of information” which is conveyed through visual material, such as a photograph or moving images displaying a person or space in time can potentially be important that it ”overrides the right to anonymity” for whom or that which is depicted. In addition, anonymizing visual content can potentially have a harmful effect as ”obscuring faces or landmarks can be dehumanizing and thus disrespectful to those pictured”. However, with all due consideration that the possibility that some of the users from the samples are minors,
7. Results: Presentation and Analysis

This section covers the netnographic data acquired during the observation of Drainers’ TikToks as well as analytical remarks. The five categories explained in the analytical process is presented in chronological order with samples that are representative and relevant to each category and discussed in detail. The visual imagery is translated into words to fulfill Blaikie and Priest’s (2019) first step of conducting bottom-up research, ”describing activities and meanings”, to later develop ”categories and concepts which help to provide a basis for which the problem can be better understood” (p. 120). This is in a parallel manner connected to the codings of the comments found in the comment sections of the mentioned videos.

7.1 Categorization of Videos

The categorization done in this thesis is based in motives found through Earnheardt and Haridakis’s (2008) study. Through immersion in the subculture and acquiring insider knowledge, videos have been watched and sampled to best fit themes of Drainer’s engagement online. Furthermore the videos have been analyzed to best fit the five motives mentioned by Earnheardt and Haridakis, the categorize have then been extended/adapted to better fit the subculture, this process is based on the researcher’s personal and holistic understanding of the subculture from years of exposure as well as immersion throughout the research.

7.2 C1 Entertainment and Humor

Entertainment/Relaxation originally found by Earnheardt & Haridakis (2008) (extended to Humor), are foundational motives for fans’ uses and gratifications within media. The results suggest that Drainers and their community are predominantly centered around entertaining one another. Nearly all samples display community engagement in the comments which had
humor incorporated in the video, allowing for comedic comments or references to be made. Unlike Earnheardt & Haridakis’s suggestion, there seems to be no obvious motive for relaxation in the prosumption, nor the comments. However, it does not exclude the possibility that both prosumers and engaged community might find peace and comfort in creating and watching the content.

Drainers found new ways and committed to existing tropes to make entertaining videos for fellow Drainers. Examples of less conventional Drainer humor is Video 5 where a fan is filmed being in the crowd before a Drain Gang concert, pretending to make a phone call to Bladee. The fan explains that others in the crowd are being mean to them and that they would like for them to stop. Lastly, the fan makes a request to Bladee to play the song 'Western Union’, as the first of the set.

The video is met with Cod 1, 2 and 3 comments. Starting off with a thread of a Cod 2 comment, another user comments ‘That’s my friend yall’, where the depicted Drainer replies ”hi baby hahahaha’ and the first commenter replies ’Jamey be making them jokes making the fyp laf’. The thread of comments suggests that the engagement online is met positively, allowing for alternative community cultivation (Deller 2016).

Other users find joy in the content answering with Cod 2 comments: ‘I’m really happy to have made it to bladee Tok yesssss’ and ‘ironically the first song on the set list is western union’ to which someone replied ‘How is that ironic she requested it 🤔’. On the other hand, one Cod 3 comments asked ”why don’t you just call taylor up”, implying that the fan does actually not belong at the concert and is a poser for TikTok only. The combination of comments suggest
that the space has the potential to cultivate community, but is not safe from hostility (Rochford and Palmer, 2022).

In Video 3, the creator is capturing a real life scenario where they are in a karaoke facility without the option to listen to Drain Gang, and opts to put on Bladee on their phone and the microphone next to the phone to be able to sing along. This is met with both Cod 2 comments such as: "Drain finds a way" and Cod 3 comments like "Newgen" and "They definitely came from tik tok", once again claiming the user to be a poser. In this video the user is backed up by other users who is verifying the creators commitment to the music collective.

In Video 7 a meme is displaying 3 options to select: I’m sane, I have Friends, I listen to Bladee. From which only 2 out of 3 can be chosen. This is met with Cod 2 comments making lyrical references to Drain Gang songs and agreeing to the lack of sanity. The lyrical references and agreements made are a sign that subcultural language is present within the community and only those with sufficient subcultural capital will understand (Genova et al., 2022).

Video 25 further exemplifies sharing ideas and the value of understanding subcultural language to understand and participate in the community: Drainer displaying how other people involved in the community will take and edit their selfies with text displaying on screen: "How draingang Mfs be taking pics". The creator is met with Cod 2 comments: "me in 2020💔", "once you join dg u automatically light up like that", "need the filters", "SO ME" as well as recurring Cod 3 comment: "Newgen". The video and comments hints towards an aesthetic which only invested fans are participating in.

In Video 12 subcultural capital is displayed in a different way: Drainer reenacts themselves initially complaining about the music being bad, then fast forward listening to the music and following the aesthetic of the Drain Gang and Drainers with a text displaying: "me now that it finally clicked". This is met with Cod 2 comments saying "It always clicks. It took me like 3 years", met with a Cod 3 comment from other user saying "if you have to force yourself to hear something for 3 years to like it you don’t like it". The video and comments are
referencing the common joke within the community how the music sucks, but you get used to it. As such the video and comments suggests exclusivity and power afforded to those engaged within the community, sharing ideas and creating authentic identities to display a subcultural status (Bennet, 2004).

This is additionally exemplified in Video 21: Drainers making a reenactment of TikTok trend where people ask strangers on the street what song they’re listening to. Passing Drainer is asked and looks down on their phone and displays *Amygdala - Ecco2k & Bladee* while answering "Drake", seemingly because they are ashamed of their actual music choice. The creator is met with Cod 2 comments: "that song is so embarrassing to listen to even in my own room i feel embarrassed", "no cuase if someone asked me what song im listeninf to and it was amygdala i wouldnt answer"[sic]. This is once again making fun of how bad Drainers claim Drain Gang’s music is.

In a similar fashion Video 20 points towards the importance of a subcultural understanding: Drainer posing in front of the camera with text displaying: ”You’re tripping if you’re into drainers” and shortly after reenacting tripping and falling to imply they are attracted to drainers. The creator is met with Cod 2 comments like "they'll play you so bad", "suddenly i have perfect balance", "its either a drainer dates a drainer or a drainer stays alone for the rest of their life." Cod 3 comment "Newgen". This video and the comments suggests at the recurring joke that Drainers are social outcasts and that their romantic life is lacking (George, 2023).

Video 8: Drainer’s friend is playing songs by Bladee and the Drainer guesses them within seconds with text on screen saying (POV: you get an intense amount of female attention). This is met with Cod 1 and Cod 2 comments.

Video 9: Drainer dressing up as different members of Drain Gang. Met with Cod 1 comments.

Video 13: Drainer using aging filter pretending to be in a nursing home and making a Bladee reference stating ”Me in the year 2095 in a care home when I hear a nurse talk about how her
husband won’t “be nice to me” and how is “draining” her income to fuel is alcohol addiction”.
This creator is met with with Cod 1 and Cod 2 comments.

7.3 C2 Self-esteem / Achievement and Accomplishment / Creative Output

Furthermore, Self-esteem and Achievement are a combined motive recognized by Earnheardt & Haridakis (2008) in their study of media fandom. Through this study the category has been extended to accomplishment and creative output from fans in videos where fans are reassuring their self-esteem by participating in prosumption and getting recognition and affirmation from other Drainers of their participation and accomplishments. Although only some videos are categorized with C2 as their primary category, examples of achievement, accomplishments and creative outputs can arguably be found in all videos, as making a TikTok in itself is an accomplishment and has a creative output. However, for this motive, videos with a more notable creative output showing off an accomplishment of sorts will be highlighted to exemplify these videos.

In Video 2 a Drainer is showing off their bagpiping skills, standing in a forest playing a version of ‘Into Dust’ by Blaadee. The Drainer shows off an unusual and difficult skill gaining admiration from fellow fans in the chat. The video is met with multiple Coded comments such as Cod 1: ‘I live for these’. Cod 2: ‘IM GONNA BLEEEEED IN THE CLUB’, ‘imagine walking in the forest and all of a sudden you hear some guy playing bladee on his bagpipes’, ‘He did it in the drain forest too’ and ‘blood on the hand’. The comments are acknowledging the prosumer’s effort of the TikTok as the song which is being covered has a music video made in a similar forest where Blaadee is wearing similar clothes, with hands covered in blood. Including frequent Cod 3 comment: ‘Newgen’, implying that the fan is a newcomer and is not been in the community pre-TikTok.
The community makes further references to subcultural language, referencing earlier produced content by Drain Gang as well as signs of achievement in the comments as other Drainers connect their self-esteem to the accomplishments of other Drainers (Sloan & van Camp, 2008, p. 138).

Similar similar signs of achievement and accomplishments are displayed in Video 4: two Drainers reenacting the outro for Bladee’s OKK, which transitions into his song Mallwhore Freestyle. This is met with Cod 1 comments saying ‘this is art this will be in history’ and ‘best video to touch the internet’. Cod 2 comments include: ‘i want the mallwhore intro written on my grave’ as well as Cod 3 comment ‘Newgen’, *answered by creator* ‘Get a job man…’.

7.4 C3 Companionship and Support

Not only are the fans providing entertainment for themselves and others as well as displaying accomplishments and creativity. An additional driving factor for fans within media is to find others like them, to find a support-network and peace in that they’re not alone in their activities or experience.

One common trope, which a lot of the fandom is built around, is how being a Drainer equals to being a social outcast and that Drainers (especially boys) are not able to find romantic partners. Several videos play on this trend and long lasting meme which is since long used in Drain Gang forums (George, 2023).

In Video 14 it is exemplified by a prosumer’s video where they are jokingly stating that they are going to conversion camp and therefore won’t be online much the following week. The video is met with a supportive network of Cod 1 comments such as ‘idk if this is fr but gl. U aren't broken don't let them tell you otherwise’
and ‘That’s emotional abuse you should reach out to child protective services’. Other comments are recognizing the situation and being supportive, but in a more comedic manner (seemingly since it is not true according to the creator). These Cod 2 comments include: ‘ecco2k will utterly destroy any religious teachings. the ultimate palette cleanser to remind you that it’s ok to be whoever you want to be’, ‘the camp will not work as long as you stream ecco 😍’, ‘You can’t turn a man who listens to Bladee straight. It defies logic’ and ‘what more could anyone need for survival’ which was answered by ‘not even air if i have Crest pumping through my veins’ by another user. This video display how support, companionship, understanding can be sought after and found in online communities (Deller, 2016).

This is also displayed in Video 15: you can see a Drainer with their head buried in their arms with a text explaining how they showed their friends Bladee, Ecco2k and Whitearmor’s music and now they don’t want to be friends anymore. This video is met with Cod 1: ‘Friends come and go but drain is forever’ as well as Cod 2: ‘My parents heard, now I’m homeless’, ‘Good this is a true drainer lifestyle’, ‘so real…’ and lastly Cod 3: ‘Newgen’

As well as in Video 16: Drainer crying and looking into the camera with text on screen: ”when they won’t let me crawl into their skin and live there as a parasite”. Met with Cod 1 comments: ‘I know the ladies felt this one’ - *Answer by user 2*: ‘We most certainly did’.

7.5 C4 Learning/Social Interaction and Community Engagement

The motive of social interaction (combined with Learning in Earnheardt & Haridakis, 2008 study) comes as no surprise within media fandom in an era of prosumption, community engagement online is a key part of modern fandoms. Drainers make no exception from this motive and posting a TikTok is inherently in itself opening up to community engagement, however some prosumers seem to have been more interested in the social interaction and community engagement with their contributions. First example is Video 6 which is posted by an apparent new Drainer who films themselves listening to ‘Reality Surf’ by Bladee saying that someone let them know about the artist on their own live stream recently, next scene is
them going down on their knees showing gratitude and happiness as they are listening to the song.
This is met with Cod 1 comments such as: 'Glad you got into Bladee!', 'wait until u hear ab ecco2k' which someone answers 'i love it when he moans in my ear'. Similar Cod 2 comments recognizing the new Drainer are shared like 'It's finally happening', 'GOOD MUSIC TASTE ERA??', 'HES A DRAINEEER', 'LISTEN TO YOUR HEART' as well as 'I'm scared of becoming a drainer' which turns into a thread of answers: 'if you fear it its only a matter of time', *answer* 'me too i’m so close to slipping', *answer by another user* 'You’ll fall in eventually. I guarantee you any drainer has hated their music at one point and gave in out of the blue. It’s gonna happen'. As in many other videos, there are Cod 3 comments saying: 'Newgen' and 'this is so sad'. Here the user is participating in self-disclosure to open up themselves for other Drainers to find them and engage with the community. By social vulnerability this they can win other fans’ trust and build new relationships (Kim & Kim, 2017).

In Video 10 a similar pattern is displayed from the video creator as well as within the comments: Drainer making fun of the experience of first listening to Bladee being confused, compared to 1112th time listening to Bladee and having and great listening experience. Video met with Cod 2 comments: 'This song is just unreal', 'This song is ass but I still like it', 'It’s ass but I love it' and 'bladees music sucks but u get used to it'.

In Video 11, the user makes a statement to gain attention from the community: "im sorry dawg but ecco2k and that drainer she is so trash someone had to say it". This is mostly met with Cod 2 comments such as: 'stage 1: denial', answered by another user saying 'denial > acceptance > appreciation'. Another user goes on to say 'it’s good, but when i stopped
listening to draingang i swear my mental health improved 😞 'which is met by a Cod 3 comments saying 'It's literally music y'all r so dramatic’ to which an additional user answers 'You woudln’t understand the #drainlife’. Other Cod 2 comments are referencing Drain Gang lyrics such as ‘I shot click click click’ and ‘western union 6 0 0 0’ while others show their process of appreciation saying 'bladee sounds good after the 1000th listen 😊😊😊’, 'we were all like this at the start’ and ‘That’s what I used to say’.

7.6 C5 Pass Time / Escape Motivations and Escapism

The last out of five motives which is found by Earnheardt & Haridakis (2008) to be a key elements to media fandom is the motive to pass time and escape reality. Once again, the use of TikTok is inherently a form of escapism as one lets go of their responsibilities while scrolling online or posting content. Therefore the motive of passing time is to some degree applicable to all of the videos that have been created. It is also tightly overlapped with Entertainment as all videos are to some degree entertaining.

Some videos have shown to have less substance than others and therefore have been viewed as a way for the prosumer to simply pass time. Most notable are Video 19 and Video 22. Where in Video 19 two Drainers are displayed posing in a similar way to Bladee at a bus stop while listening to the song 'Peroxide’ by Ecco2k as he is singing ”at the bus stop, crushing rocks” and on the screen there is a text suggesting that the Drainers are mentally unstable. This has gained less traction in the comment section but mostly met with Cod 2 comments such as 'this could possibly be ecco2k’, 'facts’ and 'so real’. These are thus hinting towards a subcultural language which only Drainers would understand the meaning of (Genova, 2022).

Video 22 seems to also not have much of a deeper substance rather than just being a video to pass time. It is displaying a Drainer claiming that Ecco2k is their Jesus while dancing and posing in their bedroom to a 'Calcium’ remix by Ecco2k. The video is positively met with Cod 1 comment 'Ur the most beautiful man ive ever seen’ as well as Cod 2 comments such as 'In love with this song , i miss 2019-2021 music’, 'Bro made an absolutely insane album then just dipped’.
Video 1: Drainer filming themselves riding in the back off a vehicle off road on what seems to be a farm or plantation, while carelessly drinking a canned beverage and spitting out the liquid turning it into a fountain. This is the only video where the creator makes a comment ‘I’m a tik tok girly’. Met with several Cod 1 comments: ‘My soul craves that feeling’, ‘Ur free’, ‘This is so Jubilant’, ‘how i’m tryna be’, ‘people don’t understand, this is the dream’. In addition to Cod 2 comments saying ‘My summer plans’, ‘American Dream’, ‘Drainers are in every faucet of life’ and ‘Country drainer’. This video is at first glance showing signs of motives of escapism. It is however after seeing the comments, that more substance is uncovered. Firstly, the creator comments on the video, addressing identity, gender and showing signs of vulnerability through their self-disclosure (Kim & Kim, 2017). The comments are affirming the vulnerability and seemingly gaining trust where the creator is authentically building identity in line with the subculture.

Video 17: Two drainers dancing around to Drain Gang music with an elderly person in an permobile wheelchair moving their vehicle around and ‘dancing’ along. Met almost exclusively with Cod 1 comments: ’drainpa pulled up in a rover’, ‘Recently lost my grandpa. This made me smile’, ‘Favorite video I’ve ever seen almost shed a tear so sweet so kind’.

Video 18: Drainer looking at the camera tired with text on screen: ”Though I got Covid at the Drain Show… I was the first person to hear this live. A small price to pay”. Met with Cod 2: ‘it's like whay ecco said loss and gain are the same’, ‘The feeling in you 😊😊😊😊😊😊😊’, ‘😊’.
Video 23: Animated scene showing a boy and a girl looking intensely at each other and then the girl leaving with the text "I told her I listen to Bladee” displaying on screen. Met with Cod 1, 2 and 3 comments.

Video 24: Drainer filming themselves, with text displayed on screen: "i forget how chronically online i am sometimes like nobody irl knows who bladee is”. Met with Cod 2 comments: ‘it's cuz the average drainer doesn't go outside’, ‘I was on the train n a guy asked me if I listened to bladee, never have I ever felt so disrespected yet so heard’.

7.7 Concluding Analysis

It is apparent once Drainers’ prosumption is analyzed, that their community cultivation is based in their niched subcultural communication patterns, while opportunity to share their interests with other Drainers is allowing them to fulfill their most basic instinct, providing them with an "alternative social community" (Clerc, 1996, as cited in Deller, 2016, p. 237; Jenkins, 1992, as cited in Deller, 2016, p. 237). Which according to Blaikie and Priest (2019) is the "fundamental subject matter of the social sciences" (p. 118).

Drainers are as suggested by the study prepared to push social norms and admit to stigmatized behaviors by involving in transgressive activities (Genova et al. 2022). The participation is potentially due to the already existing stigmatization by society and media, knowing that their participation can provide them with “solace, community and understanding” from other Drainers (Deller, 2016, p. 237).

Thanks to the partial anonymity of online communities, their participation is more likely to result in self-disclosure to others online. In this way, further trust among the community members is instilled, leading others to self-disclose and reciprocate, further strengthening the bonds of the community members. This sort of encouraged collaborative subcultural community engagement is according to Kim & Kim (2017) crucial for the community’s as the well being of it is dependent on the interactivity, play-fullness and sharing of ideas.
The categorization of the samples suggested that entertainment, escapism were major motives for Drainers to participate in subcultural activity. While entertainment is often associated with hedonistic pleasure, it does not reflect the full spectrum that entertainment has to offer. Rather than joy and humor, entertainment can be connected to "eduaimonic concerns", such as meaningfulness, purpose in life and other vulnerabilities, even at the absence of hedonic pleasure (Oliver & Raney, 2011, p. 1001). The broadened concept helps us understand how subcultural activities which include entertainment themed with sadness and tragedy, provide meaningfulness to Drainers and further enjoyment (Oliver & Raney, 2011).

Further common categories were community engagement and social interaction and the repeatedly vulnerable communication from Drainers confirm Kim & Kim’s (2017) suggestion that younger generations operating online are open to exposing themselves in a media culture as they are accustomed to what online fan communities are and result in them potentially seeing it as a space for intimate communication. As youth and fans are provided with social networks, allowing them to directly connect with other people with similar interest, they have to assess the online space’s status before they will participate. Whether it will be an occasional meeting ground for strangers, or whether it will act as a living room with exclusive access, or something between the two, could determine the outcome of the platform as a safe space or if they’ll be met with hatred (Mudrick et al., 2016; Genova et al. 2022; Rochford & Palmer, 2022).

The study further suggests that TikTok as a platform has furthered the possibility for cultural participation and innovation of subcultural activities to shape the narrative of subcultural identities (Bennett, 2004). In providing youth with technological advancements, it gives them the opportunity to demonstrate expertise within their field of interest, enabling them to push against what is viewed as normality (Bennett, 2004; Genova et al. 2022). Using a public platform such as TikTok furthermore provides Drainers with the ability to create a discussion within each video posted in the comments. In this way ideas can be discussed in depth and subcultural references can be made (Genova et al. 2022). In TikTok’s visibility to outsiders is what provides Drainers with the opportunity to transgressive activities as the content somehow has to be able to reach the “normalised audience” to drive an outrage, offer a
"mechanism of resistance” and provide an “instrument of social change” (Genova et al. 2022, p. 8).

A way for Drainers to weed out the fans from the outsiders over TikTok is in its "subcultural language”, where "icons, special characters, nicknames, new words and memes” are used to build a subcultural universe and "people, things, places, actions” are coded with words that only those who are authentically invested, belong to the subculture or have enough subcultural capital will be able to truly decode and understand. (Genova et al. 2022, p. 184).

While subcultural studies have taken a step back due to its invalidity to analyze what is colloquially referred to as subculture, this study suggest that using the theoretical lens in a contemporary way will provide further insight to the concept as subcultures will remain. "People will always seek out new public and digital spaces to ensure their voice is heard” and "transgression will always find a way to exist” (Genova et al. 2022, pp. 185, 187).

8. Conclusion

The rapid increase in listeners of Drain Gang has led to an increase in Drainer prosumption. This research has addressed the unusual, self-deprecating subculture and online community analysing how fans are utilizing TikTok through a lens of prosumption, subculture and uses and gratifications.

Firstly, the findings of the study suggest that fans commonly participate in prosumption to fill their needs identified by Earnheardt and Haridakis (2008). Through categorizing Drainer videos and coding comments through participation observation, this study suggest that prosumption and their invitation to community engagement work in conjunction for fans to communicate a certain expertise or knowledge between others with the same interest to bond, strengthen ties, form community, build authentic identities and display a subcultural status collectively (Bennett, 2004; Genova et al. 2022).

Furthermore, patterns and tropes of communication of humor and suggest that the users use certain indicators such as insider slang, memes, references and symbolism to contribute to the
subcultural community and inform others that they are engaged within the Drain Gang subculture (Genova et al. 2022).

Additionally, the research supports that the algorithmic nature of the platform allows for curious people to get involved in the fandom and engage with the community, as it simultaneously opens up the non-existing gates to the community for outsiders with potential malicious intent. The study shows that TikTok serves as a platform for finding and enabling subcultural community engagement, which is determined and guided by users own identity. Because subcultures and their participants often times are socially stigmatized and the limitations to build a safe space within TikTok, the platform might potentially be better suited as a funnel where fans can identity with subcultural ideas and communication and move towards closed communities that are possible to regulate (Rochford & Palmer, 2022; Milton et al. 2023).

As research concerning Drain Gang is sparse, the contributions of this thesis provides support to further studies of the topic and subcultures on social media in general. The research is considerably limited in terms of data and perspectives, with an inherent bias in the sample selection. Although the limitation of bias was partially included in the insider information of being a bystander for close to 10 years, while committing to an immersion of the topic during and sometime before the time of the field work began, it also enabled the insider knowledge necessary.

Further limitations include that fans, fandom, artists and peoples’ interest, perception and commitment change over time. As TikTok did not allow for a sampling based on publication dates, limited control was allowed in terms of the time span for which the data was published. It is therefore important to note that this study should not be taken as concrete truth, but rather as a guide to consider while analysing subcultures over social networking sites in the future. For further understanding of the matter, further research of interaction and community engagement online could be applied, as well as the examination of selected Drainers and their participation over time in addition to semi-structured interviews with Drainers and other relevant social actors, to gain further knowledge and insight.
9. References


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10. TikToks

Video 1. “Live Laugh Love” #fyp #country.

Video 2. #bagpiper #bagpipes #celtic #draingang #bladee #drain #ecco2k #thaiboydigital #viral.

Video 3. #bladee #draingang.

Video 4. #draingang #bladee #9teengang.

Video 5. hey bladee.

Video 6. thank you to the person that put me on to bladee.
https://www.tiktok.com/@daymondwh0/video/71625786973580261?lang=sv-SE

Video 7. #bladee #draingang.
Video 8. certified crest hater #music #musetok #draingang #bladee #ecco2k.  

Video 9. 😊😊 #fyp #draingang #dg #bladee #ecco2k #thaiboy #whitearmor.  

Video 10. Hahaha #bladee #bladeecity #bladeedg #kiddeath1995 #bladeelover #draingang #draingangedit #drainganggg.  

Video 11. istg its an acquired taste but ngl that crash crash crash shi is so bad but catchy.  

Video 12. dg til i rip 💯.  

Video 13. #fyp #music #draingang #bladee.  

Video 14. be back in a week dw i’m just going to summer camp away from my phone #pridemonth #bladee #draingang.  

Video 15. #bladee #draingang #xd.  

Video 16. just speaking the truth.  

Video 17. (no title).
Video 18. Not having to leave my house for 5 days does sound very fun tho #fyp #foryoupage.

Video 19. Help. @cat #draingang #drainganggg #draingangcore #draingangcoreaesthetic #bladee #thaiboydigital #ecco2k.

Video 20. “GTB until i die” iykyk #xyzbca #tiktok #foryoupage #perth #fypシ #viral #asian #trending #drainger #draingang #gtb #bladee #ecco2k.

Video 21. drain gang fan in real life? (real) #draingang #drain #bladee #ecco2k #music #musectok.

Video 22. opening up a rave in my room come thru :3 #ecco2k #draingang #n3xu5h0.
https://www.tiktok.com/@n3xu5h0/video/7283354047720131883?lang=sv-SE

Video 23. she doesn't get it #bladee #draingang #lightyagami #deathnote #fyp #foryoupage #anime.

Video 24. there's like three ik at school #fyp #music #mucore #bladee #ecco2k #thaiboy #draingang #yunglean #sadboys #dg.
https://www.tiktok.com/@panch1k0/video/7084297167376092458?lang=sv-SE
11. Appendix

Table 1 - Analytical Categorization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Earnheardt &amp; Haridakis</th>
<th>Extended/Adapted For This Study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 Entertainment / Relaxation</td>
<td>Humor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2  Self-esteem / Achievement</td>
<td>Accomplishment / Creative Output</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3  Companionship</td>
<td>Support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4  Learning / Social Interaction</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5  Pass time / Escape Motivations</td>
<td>Escapism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 - Communication Codings.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coded Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cod 1 Affirmation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 2 Recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 3 Cynicism</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Note: Coding of comments within longer threads are mentioned as: *Answer by user #**. User-numbers are not cross-video related.)

Video 1: Category: C5  
Secondary Category: C1,  
Title: “Live Laugh Love” #fyp #country  
Content: Drainer filming themselves riding in the back off a vehicle off road on what seems to be a farm or plantation while carelessly drinking a canned beverage and spitting out the liquid turning it into a fountain.  
Sound: Girls just want to have fun - Bladee & Ecco2k
### Comments:
**Creator *Cod 1*:** I’m a tik tok girly

**Users:**
**Cod 1:**
- Ur free
- This is so Jubilant
- My soul craves that feeling
- how i’m tryna be
- euphoric
- people don't understand, this is the dream

**Cod 2:**
- This is so real
- American Dream
- My summer plans
- Drainers are in every faucet of life
- Country drainer

---

### Video 2:

**Category:** C2

**Title:** #bagpiper #bagpipes #celtic #draingang #bladee #drain #ecco2k #thaiboydigital #viral

**Content:** Drainer standing in the forest playing Into Dust on a bagpipe

**Sound (Original):** Into Dust - Bladee (Bagpipe Cover)

**Comments**

**Cod 1:**
- I live for these

**Cod 2:**
- He did it in the drain forest too
- blood on the hand
- imagine walking in the forest and all of a sudden you hear some guy playing bladee on his bagpipess
- IM GONNA BEEEEED IN THE CLUB

**Cod 3:**
- Newgen
### Video 3:

**Category:** C1  
**Secondary Category:** C2, C5  
**Title:** #bladee #draingang  
**Content:** Fan putting microphone to mobile phone speaker to put Bladee music on at karaoke bar when it was not available.  
**Sound (Original):** Waster - Bladee (Singing along)  
**Comments:**  
**Cod 2:**  
- Drain finds a way  
- was it all a wasteee  

**Cod 3:**  
- Newgen  
  - **Cod 2:** *Answer from user 2* where!!??!!??!!  
  - **Cod 1** *Answer from user 3* she been on this shit for years now  
  - **Cod 2** *Answer from user 4* this comment is so silly  

- They definitely came from tik tok  
  - **Cod 1** *Answer from user 5* she been on for like 7 years bru 😭😭😭  
  - **Cod 3** *Answer from original comment* Me wen I lie  
  - **Cod 1** *Answer from user 6* she’s been on dg for years literally I’ve been following her for a while  
  - **Cod 1** *Answer from user 7* dont make fun of her she is so cool

### Video 4:

**Category:** C2  
**Secondary Category:** C1  
**Title:** #draingang #bladee #9teengang  
**Content:** Fans reenacting the contents of the outro of the Bladee song called OKK.  
**Sound:** OKK - Bladee
**Comments:**

**Cod 1:**
- this is art this will be in history
- best video to touch the internet

**Cod 2:**
- i want the mallwhore intro written on my grave (referencing to the sound being used)
- personality = dg

**Cod 3:**
- Newgen
- *Answer from creator*: Get a job man…(creator)

---

**Video 5:**

**Category:** C1  
**Secondary Category:** C2

**Title:** hey bladee

**Content:** Drainer standing in the crowd waiting for Drain Gang concert to start pretending to call Bladee asking him for people to stop being mean. The fan also requests a song on the phone call.

**Sound:** (Original Sound)
**Comments:**

**Cod 1:**
- That's my friend yall
  - *Answer by Drainer in video* hi baby hahahaha
  - *Answer by original commenter* Jamey be making them jokes making the fyp laf
- This is going to be the intro to his next album watch 😇
- this me hehe hiiiiii 😁💋
  - *Answer by user 2* INTERNET BESTIE 💘 💘 💘
  - *Answer by original comment* i can’t believe this video is still making rounds omgffffgggggg
  - *Answer by user 3* literally it never ends

**Cod 2:**
- ironically the first song on the set list is western union
  - *Answer by user 4* How is that ironic she requested it 😐
  - **Cod 3** *Answer by user 5* so many people really don’t know what irony is
  - **Cod 3** *Answer by user 6* and you aren’t sure about sarcasm methinks
- can you ask him to play reality surf pls
- I’m really happy to have made it to bladee Tok yessssss

**Cod 3:**
- why don’t you just call taylor up

---

**Video 6:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>C4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Category:</td>
<td>C3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td>thank you to the person that put me on to bladee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong></td>
<td>New person who just found Bladee goes on their knees and shows gratitude to someone who has showed the music to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound:</strong></td>
<td>Reality Surf - Bladee</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Comments:
Cod 1:
- Glad you got into Bladee!
- wait until u hear ab ecco2k
  - *i love it when he moans in my ear*
  - *He not ready*
Cod 2:
- It's finally happening
- No way
- GOOD MUSIC TASTE ERA??
- HES A DRAINEEER
- I'm scared of becoming a drainer
  -  *Answer if you fear it its only a matter of time*
  -  *me too i'm so close to slipping*
  -  *You'll fall in eventually. I guarantee you any drainer has hated their music at one point and gave in out of the blue. It's gonna happen*
- LISTEN TO YOUR HEART
Cod 3:
- Newgen
- this is so sad

Video 7:
Category: C1
Secondary Category: C4, C3
Title: #bladee #draingang
Content: Meme displaying 3 options to select: I'm sane, I have Friends, I listen to Bladee. Where only 2 out of 3 can be chosen.
Sound: Best Buy - Bladee
Comments:
Cod 2:
- I'm insane and no friends but I listen to bladee😎😎
  -  *Answer by user 2* All real
- i only listen to bladee none of the other ones
- see my bro get a hundred thousand I might cry
### Video 8:

**Category:** C1  
**Secondary Category:** C2, C4, C5  

**Title:** certified crest hater #music #musictok #draingang #bladee #ecco2k  

**Content:** Drainer’s friend is playing songs by Bladee and the Drainer guesses them within seconds with text on screen saying (POV: you get an intense amount of female attention).  

**Sound:** (Original Sound).  

**Comments:**  
**Cod 1:**  
- i want him.  
- competitive draining  

**Cod 2:**  
- i unliked so fast after u said that about crest  
- “Answer by user 2” he jus hasn’t memorized them yet  
- crest is the greatest album ever created by man  
- what he say abt crest?!🤔  
- crest is so amazing what  
- crest is unfortunately undoubtedly mid

### Video 9:

**Category:** C1  
**Secondary Category:** C4, C5  

**Title:** 😄😄#tiktok #draingang #dg #bladee #ecco2k #thaiboy #whitearmor  

**Content:** Drainer dressing up as different member of Drain Gang.  

**Sound:** Hotel - Lawsy (Sound used for TikTok trend)  

**Comments**  
**Cod 1:**  
- can i see your nails omg  
- ecco2k one looks more like bladee than bladee  
- Accurate now give me all of them  
- if she isnt like this i dont want her  
- the wa one so accurate  
- this is so cute made me laugh in a nice wholesome way very epic post
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video 10:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Category:** C4  
**Secondary Category:** C1, C3, C5 |
| **Title:** Hahaha #bladee #bladeecity #bladeedg #kiddeath1995  
#bladeelover #draingang #draingangedit #drainganggg |
| **Content:** Drainer making fun of the experience of first listening to Bladee being confused, compared to 1112th time listening to Bladee and having and great listening experience |
| **Sound:** Unreal - Bladee |
| **Comments:**  
**Cod 2:**  
- This song is just unreal  
- This song is ass but I still like it  
- It's ass but I love it  
- bladee's music sucks but u get used to it |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video 11:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Category:** C4  
**Secondary Category:** C5 |
| **Title:** istg its an acquired taste but ngl that crash crash crash shi is so bad but catchy |
| **Content:** person putting the text: "im sorry dawg but ecco2k and that drainer she is so trash someone had to say it" on top of a video of them looking confused while listening to Drain Gang. |
| **Sound:** Western Union - Ecco2k & Thaiboy Digital & Bladee |
| **Comments:**  
**Cod 2:**  
- stage 1: denial  
  - denial > acceptance > appreciation  
  - western union 6 0 0 0  
  - 1 shot click click click  
  - drain gang 4life  
  - it’s good, but when i stopped listening to draingang i swear my mental health improved 💀  
  - It's literally music yall r so dramatic  
  - You wouldn't understand the #drainlife  
  - bladee sounds good after the 1000th listen 😀😢😢  
  - we were all like this at the start  
  - That's what I used to say |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video 12:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Category:** C1  
**Secondary Category:** C4, C5 |

| **Title:** dg til i rip 💯 |

| **Content:** Drainer reenacts themselves initially complaining about the music being bad, then fast forward listening to the music and following the aesthetic of the Drain Gang and Drainers with a text displaying: "me now that it finally clicked". |

| **Sound:** Reality Surf - Bladee |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Comments:</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cod 2:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- It always clicks. It took me like 3 years  
  - Cod 3 *Answer by user 2* if you have to force yourself to hear something for 3 years to like it you don't like it  
  - *Answer by user 3* Took me like 2 listens  
  - *Answer by user 4* took me a month 😒 😒  
  - *Answer by user 5* took me like 3 months haha  
  - i'm never giving in  
  - Cod 3 *Answer by user 6* There's no way people listen to bladee unironically  
  - *Answer by user 7* i do  
  - *Answer by user 8* I second this  
  - i listened to bladee and pretended to not like him and i went offline to listen ti him so it wouldnt show on my fm 😒 |

| Cod 3: |
- newgen |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Video 13:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Category:** C1  
**Secondary Category:** C2, C5 |

| **Title:** #fyp #music #draingang #bladee |

| **Content:** Drainer using aging filter pretending to be in a nursing home and making a Bladee reference with the following text on screen: "Me in the year 2095 in a care home when I hear a nurse talk about how her husband won't "be nice to me" and how is "draining" her income to fuel is alcohol addiction" |

| **Sound:** Be nice 2 me Interpolation |
Video 14:

**Category:** C3  
**Secondary Category:** C1, C5  

**Title:** be back in a week dw i'm just going to summer camp away from my phone #pridemonth #bladee #draingang

**Content:** Video of a iPod Classic on screen with "The Flag is Raised - Bladee & Ecco2k" on the screen and playing with text on screen saying: "i'm going to c0nv3rsi0n camp for the next week so i won't be active but at least i'll have bladee😸💕"  

**Sound:** The Flag is Raised - Bladee & Ecco2k

**Comments:**

**Cod 1:**
- idk if this is fr but gl. U aren't broken don't let them tell you otherwise.  
- That's emotional abuse you should reach out to child protective services

**Cod 2:**
- ecco2k will utterly destroy any religious teachings. the ultimate palette cleanser to remind you that it's ok to be whoever you want to be  
- the camp will not work as long as you stream ecco 😻  
- You can't turn a man who listens to Bladee straight. It defies logic  
- what more could anyone need for survival  
- "Answer by user 2": not even air if i have Crest pumping though my veins
### Video 15:

**Category:** C3  
**Secondary Category:** C1, C4, C5

**Title:** #bladee #draingang #xd

**mContent:** Drainer sitting with face buried in their arms with a text on screen: "I let the listen to Bladee Ecco2k and Whitearmor and they said they don't want to be my friends anymore 😣"

**Sound:** Calcium Remix - Ecco2k

**Comments:**  
**Cod 1:**  
- Friends come and go but drain is forever

**Cod 2:**  
- My parents heard, now I'm homeless  
- Good this is a true drainer lifestyle  
- so real…

**Cod 3:**  
- Newgen

---

### Video 16:

**Category:** C3  
**Secondary Category:** C5, C1

**Title:** just speaking the truth

**Content:** Drainer crying and looking into the camera with text on screen: "when they won't let me crawl into their skin and live there as a parasite"

**Sound:** The Flag is Raised - Bladee & Ecco2k

**Comments:**  
**Cod 1:**  
- I know the ladies felt this one  
  - *Answer by user 2*: We most certainly did  
- You alrdy know i will let u <3  
- why can't these type of girls go to my school 😳

- i listen to bladee

---
### Video 17:

**Title:** (no title)

**Content:** Two drainers dancing around to Drain Gang music with an elderly person in an permobile wheelchair seemingly moving their vehicle around 'dancing' with the girls.

**Sound:** The Flag is Raised - Bladee & Ecco2k

**Comments:**

**Cod 1:**
- drainpa pulled up in a rover
- Ayyyy keep your boy smilin like that, I'm sure you made his year
- This shi so wholesome
- Recently lost my grandpa. This made me smile
- grandpa raised the flag on Iwo Jima so the grandkids could boogie to The Flag is Raised. true poetry
- Favorite video I've ever seen almost shed a tear so sweet so kind
- hes just happy to be there 😭😭😭

### Video 18:

**Category:** C5  
**Secondary Category:** C1, C4

**Title:** Not having to leave my house for 5 days does sound very fun tho #fyp #foryoupage

**Content:** Drainer looking at the camera tired with text on screen: "Though I got Covid at the Drain Show… I was the first person to hear this live. A small price to pay"

**Sound:** The Flag is Raised - Bladee & Ecco2k

**Comments:**

**Cod 2:**
- how immaculate was the vibe when this got played
- The feeling in you 😍😍😍😍😍
- it's like whay ecco said loss and gain are the same
- A MINUSCULE PRICE TO PAY EVEN
- a small price to pay for greatness
- I Got a pic with thaiboy life is good
| Video 19: | Category: C5  
Secondary Category: C1, C4  
Title: Help. @cat #draingang #drainganggg #draincore #draincoreaesthetic #bladee #thaiboydigital #ecco2k  
Content: Two drainers posing individually at a bus stop in front of the camera in a similar way to Bladee with the text: "POV: Mentally unstable" displaying.  
Sound: Peroxide - Ecco2k  
Comments:  
Cod 2  
- this could possibly be ecco2k  
- facts  
- so real |
| --- | --- |
| Video 20: | Category: C1  
Secondary Category: C4, C5, C2  
Title: “GTB until i die” iykyk #xyzbca #tiktok #foryoupage #perth #fyp シ #viral #asian #trending #drainer #draingang #gtb #bladee #ecco2k  
Content: Drainer posing in front of the camera with text displaying: "You’re tripping if you’re into drainers" and shortly after reenacting tripping and falling to imply they are attracted to drainers.  
Sound: original sound - Elsas extra (unrelated TikTok sound)  
Comments:  
Cod 2:  
- I’m on that 2014 gravity boys shield gang activity  
- they’ll play you so bad  
- suddenly i have perfect balance  
- its either a drainer dates a drainer or a drainer stays alone for the rest of their life.  
- Ppl who dont know what drainers are are missing out fr  
Cod 3:  
- Newgen |
### Video 21:

**Title:** drain gang fan in real life? (real) #draingang #drain #bladee #ecco2k #music #musictok

**Content:** Drainers making a reenactment of TikTok trend where people ask strangers on the street what song they’re listening to. Passing Drainer is asked and looks down on their phone and displays *Amygdala - Ecco2k & Bladee* while answering "Drake", seemingly because they are ashamed of their actual music choice.

**Sound:** Amygdala - Ecco2k & Bladee

**Comments:**
- Cod 2: real
  - that song is so embarrassing to listen to even in my own room i feel embarrassed
  - "Answer to self": that song got me wanting to go to a girls sleepover to pillow fight and paint eachother’s nails and gossip while twirling my toes in the air n shi😂💯
  - no cuase if someone asked me what song im listenjnf to and it was amygdala i wouldnt answer
  - if the song has ecco2k then it's valid

### Video 22:

**Category:** C5  
**Secondary Category:** C4

**Title:** opening up a rave in my room come thru :3 #ecco2k #draingang #n3xu5h0

**Content:** Drainer in their bedroom dancing and posing in front of the camera while listening to the remix for "Calcium - Ecco2k" and displaying text on screen: "ecco2k is my jesus".

**Sound:** Calcium Remix - Ecco2k

**Comments:**
- Cod 1:
  - Ur the most beautiful man ive ever seen
- Cod 2:
  - In love with this song , i miss 2019-2021 music
  - Bro made an absolutely insane album then just dipped
  - This calcium remix was the only thing I listened to back in 2021😂
  - Ecco on top
  - i got asked if this video was helpful
### Video 23:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>C5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Category:</td>
<td>C1, C3, C4, C5, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td>she doesn't get it #bladee #draingang #lightyagami #deathnote #fyp #foryoupage #anime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong></td>
<td>Animated scene showing a boy and a girl looking intensely at each other and then the girl leaving with the text &quot;I told her I listen to Bladee&quot; displaying on screen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound:</strong></td>
<td>whimsical.mp3 by mimofr - mimofr (Unrelated tiktok sound)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comments:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 1:</td>
<td>they r normies they don't understand us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 2:</td>
<td>Drainer for life 👌</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cod 3:</td>
<td>Newgen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Video 24:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category:</th>
<th>C5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Secondary Category:</td>
<td>C4, C1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td>there's like three ik at school #fyp #music #mucore #bladee #ecco2k #thaiboy #draingang #yunglean #sadboys #dg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong></td>
<td>Drainer filming themselves, seemingly in class for school with text displayed on screen: &quot;i forget how chronically online i am sometimes like nobody irl knows who bladee is&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound:</strong></td>
<td>The Flag is Raised - Bladee &amp; Ecco2k</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Comments:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Cod 2: | I ask people if they're drainers 5 seconds into a convo  
- "Answer by creator" social life in shambles  
- it's cuz the average drainer doesn't go outside  
- My concept of what is and isn't mainstream has been ruined by TikTok tbh.  
- Bladee is goated spread his music in your school  
- my mom does  
- I was on the train n a guy asked me if I listened to bladee, never have I ever felt so disrespected yet so heard |
**Video 25:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Category:</strong></th>
<th>C1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Secondary Category:</strong></td>
<td>C4, C5, C2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title:</strong></td>
<td>#draingang #ecco2k #bladee #thaiboy #instagramfilter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content:</strong></td>
<td>Drainer displaying how other people involved in the community will take and edit their selfies with text displaying on screen: &quot;How draingang Mfs be taking pics&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sound:</strong></td>
<td>Peroxide - Ecco2k</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

**Cod 2:**

nah that jus how i look
- me in 2020
- me in 2020💔
- Wht are the filters
- once you join dg u automatically light up like that
- need the filters
- SO ME

**Cod 3:**

- Newgen