PARTY TOURISM

What Happens Stays: Reflections on Doing Camera-based Research in Lloret de Mar

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ABSTRACT

Although celebration is a classic anthropological subject, little research has been done on party holidays. After high school graduation, Dutch youth head to Lloret de Mar in Spain for a party holiday to losgaan, or get loose. This term implies the breaking of boundaries, a sense of liberation and freedom. But to get loose, you need to hold on: to friends, a holiday lover, gender and nationality identifications, and to your phone. The visual ethnographic film titled Lloret '18 invites you to question the freedom implied in nightlife, tag along with Dutch youth on their adventures and reflections, and consider the ways social media shapes our realities. This article considers the value of ethnographic filming in a party setting as well as the ethical issues that its practice raises.

Fig. 1. https://vimeo.com/381060571/b988bad5f5

KEYWORDS

- Celebration
- Coming of age
- Gender
- Identity
- Nationality
- the Netherlands
- Nightlife
- Spain
- Tourism
- Visual anthropology
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Social Sciences and the Party Holiday

When telling others about doing anthropological research on party holidays, I am often met with laughter. Although celebration is a classic anthropological subject, party holidays only recently became part of the festive landscape and are often seen as involving morally questionable youth in search of fickle relationships.¹ Though party holidays are considered banal and lowbrow, one might hypothesize that youngsters there look for and achieve forms of effervescence that are mind-expanding² at the dawn of adulthood, playing a fundamental role in shaping contemporary life biographies.³ As visual anthropologist Mattijs Van de Port suggests, maybe we ought to take seriously the kitsch, the bad taste, and the hoggish as new sacral experiences.⁴ He stresses how people attempt to meet up with the extraordinary through bodily practices and seek to grapple these experiences into sensible stories.

What constitutes a party holiday? In her analysis of the spring break phenomenon, social anthropologist Alix Boirot delineates it as a set of Western practices occurring as early as the 1950s in the United States, a custom in which young people visit a seaside destination for a few days, celebrating more or less uninterrupted with excess alcohol and casual sex.⁵ Specifically in a Dutch context, party holidays gained fame through the movie Costal (2001) as well as the reality television series Oh Oh Cherso (2010) and Zon Zuipen Ziekenhuis (2012), literally translated as “sun boozing hospital.” Several seaside towns around the Mediterranean Sea have gained reputations as party holiday destinations, including Albufeira, Portugal; Chersonnissos, Greece; and Lloret de Mar, Spain. These seaside destinations have been highly commercialized by holiday companies and the nighttime economy (NTE). In Lloret de Mar there are several clubs, cafés, and cafeterias catering specifically to Dutch customers by advertising in Dutch, selling typically Dutch fast food, playing Dutch music, hiring Dutch artists, and employing Dutch-speaking personnel.

Boirot as well as Daniel Briggs et al. point out that most research on the topic of youth on party holidays is problem-focused.⁶ In other words, most of the existing literature focuses on risk-taking in sexual behavior and substance use, assessed through quantitative⁷ or qualitative methods.⁸ In their ethnography on young British tourists in Ibiza, Briggs et al. state that the tourists “seem to be free to be whoever they want to be and do whatever they want to do.”⁹ However, the party holiday context demarcates a limited range of possibilities under the banner of freedom. Being “free” seems to translate into “risky and transgressive behavior.” In opposition to this risk-oriented discourse, earlier anthropological research considered tourism, “even the recreational sort of sea, sex, and sport [.] a ritual expression of deeply held values about health, freedom, nature and self-improvement, a re-creation ritual which parallels pilgrimages.”¹⁰ However, Malcolm Crick points out the danger of approaching the tourist endeavor as a sacred quest that might rather represent the anthropologist’s zest for meaning.¹¹

The concept of liminality is often employed in studies of tourism and seaside holiday destinations.¹² Anthropologist Suzanne Clisby describes the seaside as having “a long tradition

4. Mattijs Van de Port, Dat wat rest . . . Over sacralisering en de ongenijmhed van het bestaan (Amsterdam: Vrije Universiteit, 2010).
as a site of hedonism, pleasure, illicit and even transgressive desire: it is a liminal site not only geographically, as the edge of the land, but also socioculturally, in that it provides a place away from daily life. Tourism is often deemed a liminal phenomenon, being temporarily constrained and a socially acceptable space to center pleasures including sexuality. The NTE is also associated with liminality. Dick Hobbs et al. describe it as a space where the routinization of liminal practices takes place. They describe “the strip,” a street filled with bars and clubs functioning as a zone of liminality that creates the impression of being set aside and secluded from the principal arenas of normative, nonliminal social life. The NTE poses as a zone of infinite possibilities, providing a sense of communitas and flaunting a repertoire of liminal symbols including imagery relating to overt sexuality, inebriation, and egoism.

Anthropologist Victor Turner describes communitas as a moment occurring during liminality when symbols of rank and status may be shed and people experience a profound connection to one another. Various techniques are employed to achieve a sense of communitas among tourists including body techniques, speech and sound effects, crowd effects, and alcohol. Hobbs et al. deem this a pragmatic approach to marketing the liminoid. Studies on British youth on party holidays in Ibiza suggest that the marketing strategy is productive: these youth spend a lot of money to gain the party experience used in the construction of life biographies, creating an interdependence between the party holiday destination and its consumers. These conceptions of liminality and the liminoid inform how to consider Dutch youth enacting losgaan specifically in the setting of a party holiday destination. They allow us to understand why youth behave differently in this setting and to look out for typical liminal behaviors like rituals and experiences of communitas.

To make sense of these holidays, it is important to center on youth experiences. This could broaden the understanding of youth on holiday by not taking a problem-focused approach. Qualitative methods like in-depth interviews and participant observation can provide a deeper understanding of youngsters’ moral compass by considering it to be embedded in their socio-material reality. Moving away from the lenses of health and social normativity creates room for other experiential perspectives to arise, permitting considerations of reality as multiplex, continuously made and remade through interactive practices and relations between various actors. Different terms have been employed to point out the (inter)active making of reality, including “construction,” “performativity,” and “enactment.” Enactment, according to philosopher Annemarie Mol, points toward activities rather than actors, allowing us to find out what different knowledges do in practice.

Much research has been done on British youth, but little ethnographic research exists about Dutch youth on holiday. In Dutch, the party holiday is commonly described as a moment where you can losgaan: let loose, go crazy, get detached, or be unconstrained. Let lose of what? Considered through an anthropological lens, the party holiday is a compressed time-space where youngsters experience a detachment from home and its sociocultural norms in the postgraduation phase, during which transgressive behavior is allowed, providing new experiential possibilities. Sociologist Don Weenink stresses the excitement and intense social cohesion Dutch youth experience during “recreational” youth violence. He proclaims these moments “moral holidays;” a temporal disregard of daily moralities, and extends this to party vacations.
Although there may be different moral registers present in the time-space of Lloret de Mar, morality is not something easily left at home. Boirot states that despite notions of liberation, age standards and gender inequalities are reinforced on party holidays. To foreground enactments of losgaan is to foreground a discursive term that can shelter a whole array of practices under its umbrella. Using a material-semiotic approach allows for embracing the multiplicity of the term instead of solidifying it. The word losgaan is ambiguous. It suggests boundaries and limitations that embody a normative social order. Observing the ways Dutch youth enact losgaan exposes how the implications of freedom differ among differently categorized people. Enactment allows for an intersectional approach without being limited to the evident axes of difference like gender, race, and class. Other themes like friendship, education, and social media have proved fruitful in anthropologist Willemijn Krebbekx’s research amongst Dutch teenagers. Employing the concept of enactment helps to focus on the empirical practices and relations that constitute losgaan in the specific setting of the party holiday.

How do these youngsters achieve the extraordinary through their transgressive behaviors and how do they reflect on them? The film Lloret ’18 explores party holidays as a time-compressed liminoid space through a visual ethnography of Dutch youth experiences taking place in the particular setting of the seaside holiday economy. It illustrates normative and ritualized practices in a social environment that is portrayed and perceived as a rule-free space, asking: How do Dutch youngsters enact letting loose in Lloret de Mar? This article focuses on filming as a method for research on festive events. It discusses the relevance and role of the camera in this research framework.

Methodology
To understand how Dutch youngsters let loose during a party holiday, fieldwork was conducted in Lloret de Mar, Spain, from June 6 to September 2, 2018. Methods that were applied aimed for audiovisual output through film recording, as well as (participant) observation and semi-structured interviews conducted on- and off-camera. Ethnographic field notes were taken on the phone and elaborated on in a fieldwork diary. As the partying occurred every day of the week, research took place on approximately three nights per week, supplemented with daytime hangouts, interviews, and observations. Fifteen semi-structured interviews were held with various stakeholders in Lloret de Mar to consider party holidays from the various perspectives of a local resident, several guides working for the Flemish travel agency Jongerentravel.be, Dutch cafeteria owner Hoite, and Dutch youth (tourists as well as seasonal workers). The main informants, Ellen and Thomas, were interviewed multiple times over the summer. Many informal interviews were held with Dutch tourists. Film recordings were coded in the editing program Final Cut Pro.

Most young Dutch people encountered in Lloret de Mar, both tourists and work staff, were from rural provinces of the Netherlands. The film features people from Flevoland, Drenthe, Friesland, Groningen, and Brabant, ranging between eighteen and twenty-three years old and mostly white. The Dutch youngsters in Lloret often come from a working-class background and have gone through practice-oriented education. In Lloret, they seek a low-cost holiday or employment in the NTE. For some, it was the first time they had been on holiday so far from home. This fact contributed to the impressiveness of Lloret de Mar. For many, it was their first time visiting...
clubs as big as Tropic’s. For Brian, it was his first journey by airplane. In the film we hear him complaining to Ellen that he became very nauseated on the plane home. The friend group from Drenthe also mentioned this experience. After their holiday, they would return to working full-time jobs at eighteen years old.

Tourists had not yet arrived in large numbers at the start of research in early June. This gave me time to develop relationships with Dutch youngsters who came to Lloret de Mar to work during the holiday season. Some had arrived earlier, at the beginning of May; others arrived at the beginning of June, like Ellen. This straight white woman, age nineteen and turning twenty over the summer, was from Groningen and worked as a bartender at the Dutch party café De Peetvader. Working in a highly social environment introduced her to many young Dutch tourists, so that she became an informant as well as a sponsor. Before coming to Lloret, she was studying to be a security guard, but after failing one exam multiple times she lost her motivation. She found De Peetvader’s job offer online and applied. Ellen described working in Lloret as an amazing opportunity to gain work experience. She had not bartended much before and Leo, her boss at De Peetvader, did not demand an extensive résumé. Ellen considered the Netherlands a place full of rules and regulations and saw Spain as open and relaxed in comparison. Both she and Thomas mentioned not excelling at school and longing for freedom.

Thomas, a straight white man working at Dutch cafeteria De Koe (The Cow), also turned twenty over the summer. He expressed a similar opinion on the Netherlands, saying he felt ill at ease there with all the rules and regulations. “I’m from De Achterhoek [a rural area in the northeast of the Netherlands], and it’s so small. It’s all about who you know there. If you are rich, you are good, if you aren’t then, well. . . . You are outside a bit. I have no friends there.” He also mentioned being dyslexic and only learning English when he was abroad for the first time in Panama. After traveling there in 2017 he felt a bit lost and isolated after returning to the Netherlands and decided to come to Lloret de Mar to work and feel like he was on holiday, even though he worked daily shifts from 5 p.m. until 3 in the morning.

Thomas and Ellen both said Lloret is “work hard, play hard”; they worked seven days a week for at least eight hours a day, and often went out afterward. They became more exhausted as the season progressed and found themselves entangled in job-related dilemmas. Ellen’s boss, girlfriend, and coworkers started to criticize her, from which a negative work atmosphere arose that drove her to return home halfway through August, sooner than planned. Thomas was living with his colleagues. He confided that one of them snitched to their boss that he smoked marijuana regularly. Although consuming alcohol daily was commonplace, getting stoned was considered unproductive and unprofessional. This confrontation alienated Thomas from his colleagues and roommates, leading him to befriend the workers from the discotheque Bumper’s, who lived next door. Whereas Ellen gladly invited company along on her adventures, Thomas preferred to spend time one-on-one. He did not want to share his hangouts with the Bumper’s crew and downplayed their connection when they asked to tag along.

Although many observations and informal interviews took place in Lloret, most tourists were filmed only once. It was difficult to encounter them before they were halfway through their one-week holidays, and I often only gained their trust by the last day. Sometimes it was hard
to schedule a filming session, as they planned to visit clubs where filming was not allowed, or they considered filming a nuisance during their holiday. It was part of the nature of the holiday destination, where people coming and going is commonplace.

Gaining Access and Permission to Film

Lloret is a highly sociable environment where the Dutch working in the tourist industry form a community of their own. Ellen’s contacts in the NTE helped me to get in touch with various research locations and gatekeepers. With several places like Dutch/Flemish party cafés Boozers and De Peetvader, a deal was made to create short promotional clips in exchange for permission to film there. De Peetvader became a central place in my research for meeting and interacting with people. The setting was less oriented toward dancing and more toward conversation or banter, with music playing in the background. This is where Ellen worked, where her boyfriend, Brian, visited, and where the friend group from Friesland first came into view. Boozers was also a highly sociable environment that many Dutch-speaking people working in the nightlife frequented. This was the case with Nicole, a party manager at Belgian travel organization Jongerentravel.be, who became a sponsor by permitting observations at the outings she organized, as well as interviews with two of her employees. At Bumper’s, another Dutch club, the manager permitted filming as long as no compromising footage would be shot. Bumper’s was visited around ten times to film and get in touch with new interlocutors.

Another space where participants were found was the Facebook group “Lloret de Mar 2018, ik ben er deze zomer bij [I’m there this summer]!” People who posted questions there were sent private messages. As a female researcher I found it easier in the club setting to approach men, whereas Facebook made it more comfortable to approach women. This was in line with the social script of the parties in Lloret’s clubs and bars catering to tourists: the heteronormative atmosphere facilitated contact between men and women. Online was a less invasive tactic for women as they could choose to reply (or not to) in their own time. Some people explicitly said immediately they had no interest in being filmed, while others gave enthusiastic consent.

Several clubs denied authorization to film, with one citing the privacy of their employees as a reason. It may also have had something to do with them not properly checking the age of their clientele. Although the club displayed a multitude of signs prohibiting people under eighteen from consuming alcohol, people working in the NTE said these should be considered idle decorations mandated by law. When I ventured out during the night to interview people, the police prohibited continuation of filming without a permit. Getting a permit took a long time and explicitly prohibited the portrayal of Lloret de Mar in another way than “the reality of the city as a family tourist destination” (see image 2). Lloret exists not only as a geographic location but also as an image in people’s minds and on television screens. Newspaper articles routinely depict Lloret as a Sodom and Gomorra for Dutch youngsters.26 While holiday travel agencies employ this boisterous image to their advantage, the city council has initiated several campaigns to promote Lloret to a different tourist audience, as well as extensive street campaigns demanding peace and quiet. Also, because Spanish law prohibits filming the police it was not possible to capture the violence toward crowding youth during the night, which was at times abundant and excessive.

Doing Camera-based Research

Various considerations guided the visual research in the field and the way the camera was used. At first it was strange to be alone in such a highly sociable setting, with the camera providing a pleasant raison d’être. Yet at times the camera felt like an encumbrance. Its immortalizing mechanical eye was in sharp contrast with Lloret de Mar’s fleetingness. It seemed that the very nature of the camera as a recording device denounced the magic of holiday encounters. The camera was often a disruptor of the flow of the moment. This became more apparent in the nightlife context that stimulates being in the here and now, which motivates inebriation that makes you forget, while a camera is there to remember. Cameras were employed, but on smartphones, on the youth’s own authority, often via Snapchat, a social media platform on which content disappears twenty-four hours after posting. Its fleeting nature allowed for the sharing of holiday experiences usually considered to be meant to stay within the confines of the city, often expressed as “what happens in Lloret, stays in Lloret.” This catchphrase is in opposition to the purpose of audiovisual research, as the footage would last to be edited after the summer.

By employing a recording device, the relationship between researcher and interlocutor becomes very explicit, something that can be pleasantly straightforward yet also disturbing to the atmosphere. Training a camera on participants communicates that information about them is being taken in. Essayist Susan Sontag describes the act of taking a photo as “to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge and, therefore, like power.” 27 This is also true of filming, and, to reclaim power, interlocutors often put on a performance for the camera. This became very obvious in the nighttime but was subtly present in other situations as well. For instance, in the film Marte from Urk initiates the conversation about religion on the balcony. Throughout the day and night, she remained aware of the camera and chose to position herself in front of it in a certain way, enjoying its gaze. Others experienced being documented as a status symbol, putting “their camera crew” on their Snapchat story. As the participants also filmed themselves regularly to

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share with their friends on social media, they demonstrated awareness of how film registers. For instance, Aron did not want to be filmed in the evening while he and his friends became more drunk. He expressed concern about the impact of this kind of footage on his future career. In another case, a girl asked me to delete footage that had been shot the previous night while she was drunk. Ellen directed as well, asking not to be filmed when she wasn’t confident about her appearance. This film awareness was reassuring in the employment of the “appropriating device.”

When discussing the camera in the field, it is important to point out who was holding it: a white Dutch woman in her late twenties. Being relatively young made young people open up to me quite easily, although after revealing my age (twenty-eight) I was often deemed “too old for Lloret.” Being a woman was an advantage in gaining access to the nightlife and establishing contact with men, or having emotionally open conversations. As people often did not know what the term meant, introducing myself as a “cultural anthropologist” quickly shifted to saying, “I’m making a film about young Dutch people in Lloret de Mar for my studies” because it was a more comprehensive and straightforward answer to the question.

Several methods of employing the camera were tried out. Formal interviews rarely proved productive. They remained shallow as people were too aware of the camera. They did not understand why interviews should be conducted multiple times, saying, “But we already did this, right?” With and without the camera all kinds of performativity occurred. Nightlife triggers performatative behavior, and its young actors are not well rehearsed in these performances. They were very occupied with their social circle, adopting a “cool” attitude. When interviewing young people on the street at night a social script arose concerning “how to behave when drunk at night and a camera appears.” People walk up to the camera, shout cursing words or sexually explicit sentences, wave their middle fingers, all in good nature, and then jump out of the shot laughing. When interviewing them at night youngsters indicated that the pace of questioning was too slow, saying “Next question!” when a moment of silence was drawn out. They had places to go and therefore the interviewer should speed up. Deep “hanging out” proved more productive. The most authentic recordings took place when out with people who had become familiar with the research. They had grown more comfortable with the presence of the camera. Their initial hyperawareness wore off so that the camera’s registration disappeared into the background. Often this happened while they became more inebriated, which raised ethical considerations.

Ethically conducting visual research was challenging, for instance in the warranting of anonymity when requested, specifically among young people in precarious situations in which alcohol consumption was abundant. Several ethical stances were taken. First, people were approached in public spaces, informed about the purpose of the filming, and assured that nothing would be made public without their consent. It was stressed the popular media imagery of drunken youngsters was not the imagery that was sought after. During filming they were reminded that they had authority over the recording and that they could stop it whenever they pleased. Consent to film was always sought when they were sober, as well as multiple times throughout the recordings. Staying in touch with participants afterward allowed for the possibility of a change of heart. In this way the influence of intoxication on consent was taken into account.
Choices in Filming and Editing

The film aims to give ethnographic insight into how Dutch youngsters enact losgaan in Lloret de Mar. Camera-based research on the practices of youth on holiday allows for the messiness of such an intense experience to be captured in the editing of a film. Van de Port points out the discrepancy between the messiness of reality and (type)written text, which always produces an ordered visual experience. The enactment of losgaan involves many multisensory inputs: the parties are typically fast-paced and feature loud music, flashing colored lights, and bodies bumping into one another. These physically invasive stimuli and their allure are not easily translated through writing. Even thick description of such an encounter can hardly convey the phenomenological experience, being expressed in neatly arranged black-on-white text.

Audiovisual methods can capture the appeal of such experiences as the medium itself addresses the viewer's senses directly. Cinema and media theorist Vivian Sobchack describes the effect of film as our bodies' physical understanding of the sensuous stimuli on display. This "complex reciprocity of body and representation" is hard to grasp in words, yet instantly familiar from cinematic experiences. It affects the body, which, for instance, starts moving along with a song intuitively.

The film was mainly shot with a handheld camera, using a stabilizer. This provides footage with smoothness in the movements and makes the viewer feel close to the people filmed. The aim was to contribute a certain reflexivity to the image of the partygoer. In terms of media awareness, the laughter that this research topic triggered among anthropologists and nonanthropologists alike indicates that the concept of a "party holiday visitor" is a familiar part of Western discourse. The image of Lloret de Mar as a party town is considered lowbrow, its visitors superficial people behaving foolishly while consuming excessive amounts of alcohol. Perhaps it is also the lack of rational or long-term decision-making that comes into play during the party holiday, in getting drunk or making lasting choices like getting a tattoo. Pierre Bourdieu considered class as interwoven with taste.

In the film, Aron offers an important comment in that respect, saying how he likes his party holiday, and while others might not think of it that way, he and his friends experience affinity in Lloret because of a shared interest. This provides the film with a contextualization of their choices and appeals to a broader notion of how humans connect. The film also portrays partygoers’ reflexivity, as when Marte speaks about religion, Ellen offers thoughts on her work experience, Brian talks about being in love, and Stijn expresses ambivalence about getting a tattoo. Joey, Aron, and Carlos give their views on Lloret and Snapchat, and Thomas shares his nocturnal philosophizing on Dutch national identity and youth.

The main threads interwoven throughout the film are the city of Lloret de Mar, which both facilitates and restricts celebrating tourists, and interlocutors’ reflexivity as well as their balancing act of getting loose and holding on: to their Dutch nationality; to notions of race, gender, and sexuality; to old friendships balanced with newfound love; and to their phones. Following the daily and nightly rhythms of the city, the film reflects the experience of time by youth—seeing the sunrise after spending the night awake, sleeping until midday. It is also visible in the disenchanting image of a discotheque in broad daylight and the transformation of the city after the sun sets and the neon lights gain luminescence.

Youngsters’ phone use was included in the film without attributing to it a negative moral value.

Wide-ranging condemnations of new media, as currently happening with the smartphone, follow a course similar to outcries about the depravity of youth: with every new generation (or medium), a new outrage commences.\textsuperscript{32} Susan Sontag specifically addresses the employment of the camera "to take possession of space in which they are insecure . . . documenting sequences of consumption carried on outside the view of family and friends . . . the device makes real . . . what one is experiencing."\textsuperscript{33} The film shows youths’ extensive use of the phone, sometimes the way Sontag describes it, as a mediator between its user and the world or as a power tool in an unfamiliar setting. In Lloret youngsters also employ the camera on their cell phones to document their experiences and directly report them to the folks back home via social media. As Aron points out in the film, Snapchat documenting is similar to people making photo albums. However, it does not dominate their holiday experience. The people in the film employ their phones to take pictures together, to share their experiences with their friends and family, to play party games, or to share songs. In these cases phone use promotes sociability. The display of Snapchat and its various functions allows insights into youths’ digital lifeworlds, as well as what the researcher’s camera was not allowed to film, like the riots at night and the police’s violent response.

\textbf{Representing Losgaan through Visual Narrative}

The film \textit{Lloret ‘18} seeks to present an ethnographic account of Dutch youth on party holiday. The selection of film material was guided by the aim of representing key elements in losgaan, and making meaning through a juxtaposition of the fragments. To contextualize the substantive choices made in the film it is important to have an understanding of the discourses and practices around losgaan.

Throughout the film we do not hear people use losgaan as an active verb: nobody says, “We are doing losgaan!” To comprehend losgaan is to understand how groups of Dutch youngsters render losgaan from a discursive and imagery term into specific practices. In the film, Marte analyzes the inclination to get drunk and losgaan as liberating behavior that is considered taboo in her conservative hometown, the strictly Protestant village of Urk. Marte says she is rejected by her Protestant parents because she is free-spirited. By saying so she suggests being outside the grip of restrictive religious powers, while she ties her practice of rebellion, losgaan, to her identity by saying she \textit{is} a free spirit. By disconnecting herself from her Protestant background by identifying as free-spirited, she commits to enactments of freedom that she determines to be taboo, like losgaan.

As pointed out in the theoretical framework, most scientific research on party holidays is risk-oriented and morally judgmental, mainly considering health detriment. In this way scientific research contributes to the discourse by condemning transgression, appealing to rationality, and hence creating norms of moderation. In \textit{The History of Sexuality} Michel Foucault depicts a speaker’s motivation to describe sex and power in terms of repression: if sex is repressed and silenced, then speaking about it has the appearance of a deliberate transgression, placing the orator to a certain extent beyond the reach of power.\textsuperscript{34} But according to him, no one can escape power. This rhetoric is just an illusion. Extending Foucault’s analogy of repression, we can consider the imaginatively liberating enactment of losgaan not as a norm-free practice but as regulated through various discourses entangling it in normativity and morality, especially those surrounding gender and sexuality.
When Don is asked what losgaan entails, he responds, "Well, first you drink, you get drunk a bit, you hang out, listen to music. Then, you go to the club, you bring on the hard stuff, the strong liquor, tequila shots, that kind, and then we get loose, we dance, and we hook up. Hook up! We get the girls! Kevin, if you bring home a girl, does she get to spend the night, or is she out the door when you're done?" Scoring or hooking up, having casual sex, is part of the discourse of losgaan. Scoring indicates a quantitative measure: it is not inherently about the sexual act and what that entails, but more about adding to your number of sexual partners. As Lloret is a place where youngsters meet others from outside their home sphere and its social control, people expect a different sexual normativity: girls are supposed to be "easier," to give in to having sex more quickly and more willingly than they do back home. Boirot points out that this is not necessarily the case, much to the disappointment of male tourists.35

For men, scoring is viewed positively, while women are condemned for having a high number. This difference between men and women, but also between tourists and seasonal workers, was visible in Lloret. Tourists had limited time without daily obligations. Therefore, relationships developed quickly and the experience was intensified, as in the connection between Brian and Ellen. They both felt infatuated and were genuine in their trust, with Ellen aiming to move to Brian's hometown of Breda upon returning to the Netherlands. Whereas Brian felt challenged by the short time frame of his vacation, having precious little time to divide between his newfound love and his friends, Ellen experienced it differently. Her time in Lloret was plentiful and she took into account the other people she would meet and had met before him. The different experiences of time created friction. However, she still regarded her sexuality in normative terms: as her "number" (of sexual partners) would last far beyond this summer, she was concerned not to add too many people to it, but doing "things" did not count. This echoes Suzanne Clisby's observations of Brighton's seaside, where working-class women are reified to their class and gender and therefore do not experience the carnivalesque context as liberating.36

Thus, while losgaan is shrouded in notions of freedom, rebellion, and liberation, normative expectations for intersecting social identifications come into play in its course. In the film the progressive process of losgaan that Don describes above is visible in the various friend groups.

**Depicting the Process of Losgaan**

Friendship was a category of identification emphasized in enacting losgaan. Girls often adjusted their appearance before losgaan by applying make-up and changing clothes. In the film we see the girls from Urk doing each other's hair and make-up, consulting each other on their choices. Through this a social agreement is made: Am I pretty? Do I look good like this? It also prevents transgression: Is this too much mascara? Don't I look too girly, or too sexy? This physical preparation is a gendered practice, enacted by girls in a collective manner, but men also took care of their looks before a night out. It had to be done casually, as this grooming was considered a feminine practice: "that's gay" can be heard in the film, even when it concerns using a pink toothbrush.

The transition to "get loose" involved a change of mentality by "pregaming" or, in Dutch, *indrinken* (lit., drinking in). Youngsters would gather to drink alcohol while mingling and chatting with a small group of friends and acquaintances, reinforcing bonds between the group members.
before they go out into the public sphere, to the clubs to dance and socialize. The film displays the various playful ways that groups of friends collectively consume alcohol to get to a similar level of intoxication. The Frysian friend group in the villa has a big bucket of booze sitting on the table with multiple straws. In this way, they all ingest the same drink with the same percentage of alcohol. The girls from Urk play a card game in their apartment that involves taking shots when they lose, whereas Joey, Aron, and Carlos employ an app on their phone to play the drinking game "Piccolo." This game in particular is interesting as it involves binary questions, with the answer tied to taking several sips from a drink. In the film we see the questions "If you had to redo a year at school, take two sips" and "If you lived in more than three cities, take one sip." The physical act of the sip indicates your answer and simultaneously reveals connections to other people within the group, echoing a confessional nature. As they are getting to know one another better, the game fortifies social connections between participants of the game.

After pregaming, the youngsters venture out into the public sphere of Lloret. In the Spanish town, many rural youngsters encounter larger discotheques than they have experienced in their hometown. Tropics, the biggest club in Lloret, had a two-sided reputation: as it was the biggest club, it was the most impressive too, and many famous Dutch artists performed on its stage. But it was often very crowded. Dutch boys often said they disliked all the men brushing up next to them. Their perception of heterosexual masculinity was threatened by that, and they proclaimed this crowding to be "gay," becoming aggressive as a defense mechanism. Then, as Carlos says in the film, "We first went to Tropics, but then we found Bumper's." Bumper's is a smaller club and dons a Dutch image: they employ Dutch street promoters, play a lot of Dutch artists, and both bar personnel and visitors are Dutch-speakers. Similarly, the girls from Urk prefer the party café Boozers, "not only because they're Dutch, but also because they [the bar personnel] don't give a shit." Knowing to speak the same language as your fellow club visitors, being familiar with the music, being around others not afraid to transgress: this counters some of the unpredictability that comes with entering the nighttime economy of Lloret. Clubs played into this insecurity, employing street promoters (proppers) of a specific nationality. Dutch proppers would wear a blue, white, and red striped elastic band around their upper arm; by wearing the Dutch flag they indicated they could be addressed in Dutch.

Aron, Carlos, and Joey explicitly identifying as Dutch disrupts the stereotypical image of white Dutchness otherwise visible in the film. It was important to include them in the film to show, through an intersectional lens, how various intersecting social and political identifications created specific modes of discrimination among Dutch people in Lloret. Ellen regularly used Dutch racist slurs when commenting on Black people on the street, assuming they weren’t Dutch and therefore wouldn’t understand her language. Often derogatory terms were combined, as in the film when a group of rowdy youngsters mix antisemitism and homophobia, yelling "Alle Joden zijn homo [all Jews are gay]." A chant frequently heard echoing through Dutch soccer stadiums now bounced off the walls of a Spanish alleyway.

Thus, to enact losgaan Dutch youngsters would prepare by engaging in ritualized practices, preparing their bodily appearance and their state of mind. To open themselves up to the possible adventure of losgaan in Lloret Dutch youth would often connect with their friends by playing drinking games, warranting a similar level of intoxication. In Lloret, the suggested liberation of losgaan is continuously constrained through ritualized practices reinforcing normative notions.

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of gender and sexuality. Masculinity means to exclude all notions of anything vaguely feminine. To enact proper femininity means to be appealing to heterosexual men, but not in an overt way. In losgaan in Lloret I witnessed no liberty to explore sexuality beyond the heterosexual norm. It is not even included within discourse on sex, yet discriminatory phrases are not held back. Considering these gendered enactments and corrections it becomes evident that within the confinements of the “free-spirited” losgaan normative ideas on gender and sexuality are reinforced. In the film this is evident in the interaction with Ellen and her boss at the start of the movie, to establish how women’s sexuality is policed. To balance the unpredictability that came with losgaan in Lloret, Dutch youngsters looked for familiarity. This was provided by the commercial actors promoting Dutchness as an attribute of their party. This Dutchness was often perceived as exclusively white, an image disrupted by the presence of Aron, Carlos, and Joey.

But what exactly did Dutch youth let loose of when pursuing losgaan? A core aim in losgaan appeared to be losing awareness or consciousness of what people were doing: a lack of control seemed the goal and was achieved. During intoxication people embraced transgressive behavior that was also a bonding experience, providing a sense of adventure and experiences that they documented through Snapchat and reminisced about afterward. It often involved behaviors deemed “silly” or “funny,” like stealing a road sign or getting lost. Sometimes youngsters would transgress their physical capacities by consuming alcohol in amounts their bodies could not handle and they would throw up. The embarrassment that this behavior aroused was soothed with an explanation of the level of intoxication. Responsibility for the behavior was attributed to alcohol, an agent that accounts for recklessness and irrationality. To ingest this agent is to surrender oneself to unpredictability and the possibility of adventure.

These adventures are collectively recounted within friend groups long after the party holiday is over, according with research that considers the party holiday as a part of the construction of life biographies. In the film, Brian and his friends inscribe the memory on their body with a tattoo saying, “Good times, Lloret ‘18.” They did not attribute much to the image, two skeleton hands toasting beer bottles. They had found it on Google and thought it was cool. Immortalizing this holiday on their body indicates the importance of such a communal story, warranting a bond now made forever visible on their body.

These enactments of losgaan are not exclusive to the context of Lloret de Mar, or Dutch youth. For many young tourists, being in Lloret de Mar evoked a multitude of behaviors that tormented the city: peeing on the street, littering, shouting loudly, screaming slurs, ringing strangers’ doorbells at 4 a.m., and leaving the beach strewn with empty bottles. These are pungent images that only reinforce the image of partygoers that already exists. Editing the film meant balancing the blasé and the profound, the aggressive and the vulnerable, or as heard in Lloret at night, “we’re just here to get wasted and get fucked up” but also, “I don’t have anyone to talk about my feelings with.” In the end the film oscillates between both, but the profound has the final say. This imitates the process of getting to know people in Lloret. Men especially would come off as steely at first, taking on a cool persona with a “don’t care, just drink” attitude. People often became more relaxed as the night progressed and less concerned with the attitude they were giving off. One-on-one, they would sometimes drop their guard and broach sensitive topics. These moments became valuable because they presented such a stark contrast to the common image of the party tourist and the way they initially presented themselves. That emotional depth momentarily...
arising seemed like a discovery, something rare and precious, and I felt it should therefore have the final say. That is why the film ends with Thomas’s thoughts on the Netherlands.

Concluding Notes on Filming as an Ethnographic Method in a Party Setting

Scholarly discourse on party holidays is often risk-focused and morally judgmental. Doing camera-based research on party holidays in Lloret de Mar allowed for a more holistic approach, focusing on the rituals and normative practices surrounding losgaan, while considering the morality surrounding sexuality and gender that youth themselves enact.

Although employing the camera sometimes seemed to be contrary to the nature of the party holiday, it had multiple benefits. Not only did the camera provide a motive to be alone in a highly sociable setting, but it also made the relation between the researcher and the interlocutors pleasantly explicit. Filming motivated a thorough understanding of continuous consent as well as explicit ethical stances. The young interlocutors showed awareness of the registering mechanical eye by directing the researcher. Combining filming with other anthropological methods like deep hanging out fostered relations of trust with the interlocutors that permitted a more vulnerable portrayal of them.

Employing audiovisual methods also helps to transmit the appeal of these party holidays. Through film spectators quickly become emotionally involved with the people portrayed, bonding with them by witnessing intimate moments. The music contributes to the sensorial perception of film, as described by Sobchack.39 The enchantment in Lloret’s liminoid nighttime is found in the moments when all the categorizations that are stressed in losgaan are bypassed for the duration of one song, with lyrics you don’t understand but that strike a chord within, like “Con te Partiro.”

It is a moment that can give you goosebumps, an emotional and physical way of knowing rather than having to do with rationality. In communitas the constant enactments of social expectations enveloped in losgaan make way for the experience of a connection with the people that surround you, friends and strangers alike. Communitas can be described as an effect of the here and now, and therefore experienced as something very real. Communitas is the foundation for stories to be told in the future, and perhaps it lingered in the stories that Dutch youngsters heard from Lloret veterans, making them choose Lloret de Mar as a party holiday destination. Experiencing communitas as a viewer together with the depicted partygoers can be a way of bonding and expand the viewers’ understanding of their motives.

Creating an ethnographic film also permitted me to focus critical attention on forms of blatant racism, by splicing together an antisemitic yell and a cleaning trolley sweeping the alleyway through which it resounded. At the same time this film aspires to nuance the simplistic but pungent portrayal of partygoers as hedonistic tourists. Dutch young people in Lloret de Mar often come from the rural provinces and a working-class background, and have rarely had the privilege of taking a vacation abroad by plane. Partaking in their casual conversations allowed these aspects of their lives to come to the forefront. Through film, subtle vulnerabilities arose. In depicting common human experiences, ethnographic film on "lowbrow" topics can thus help counter the stereotypes that plague certain demographics.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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HOW TO CITE


The Journal of Festive Studies (ISSN 2641–9939) is a peer-reviewed open access journal from H-Celebration, a network of H-Net: Humanities & Social Sciences Online, and is the inaugural journal published through the H-Net Journals initiative. It can be found online at https://journals.h-net.org/jfs.