PARTY TOURISM

Beyond Fun and Excess: The Social Dynamics of Party Tourism

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ABSTRACT

This essay provides a brief introduction to party tourism, that is travel (typically undertaken by people under 30) for the explicit purpose of indulgence in drinking, dancing, and other party behavior. Though the phenomenon (of which the US Spring Break is the most well-known example) has generated strong disapproval since its emergence in the 1950s, I argue that it is important for scholars to not reject the practice as simply vulgar, dangerous, and/or exploitative. Embracing it as the go-to solution to revitalizing or diversifying a city’s assets under the umbrella term of the night-time economy (NTE) is equally problematic. Staying away from both moral panic and festive-touristic enchantment, this essay thus strives to uncover the complexities of party tourism and presents it as an advantageous entry point to a variety of subjects, including the construction of masculinity, the evolution of urban space, the tourist gaze, and more generally, racial, economic and social inequalities.
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This section of issue 5 of the Journal of Festive Studies, which explores the concept of “party tourism,” is situated at the intersection of tourism studies and festive studies. These two fields have much in common, as notions of escape, time out, and liberation are projected onto both festivals and travel. The study of tourism allows for an exploration of many key concepts and themes: identity, culture, migration, globalization, ecology, etc. Tourism raises major geopolitical and cultural issues: sometimes instrumentalized for propaganda purposes by authoritarian regimes, it also contributes to the dynamism of cultural practices that it helps to preserve or to the standardization of the cultural landscape. ¹ Though there are certainly issues of greater consequence in the world—as historian Hasso Spode wrote in 2010, “going to war and going on vacation don’t have the same impact on a country’s destiny”—tourism practices nevertheless offer a valuable perspective on the social environment.² In this case, the study of party tourism, a massified form of tourism, partakes of the academic goal of de-hierarchizing cultural practices. It aims to overcome the dominant values that lead us to despise (vulgar) tourism in favor of the (noble) practice of travel.³ As geographers Pau Obrador-Pons, Mike Crang, and Penny Travlou write:

> Mass tourism offers a distinctive form of entertainment—more "vulgar" and "corporeal"—that clashes with the sophistication and detachment of middle-class forms of travel, the values of which underpin dominant conceptualizations of tourism. The significance of the banal in tourism has been systematically overlooked by dominant perspectives which have privileged the exotic and the spectacular. There has been little interest and respect for the banal practices and pleasures of ordinary tourists. In downplaying the banal, dominant perspectives have reproduced a social hierarchy of travellers and tourists, thus sanctioning a set of ideological and social distinctions that is as much a stake in class distinction as an actual description of tourist practices.⁴

¹ For legal reasons, a maximum age limit is usually not mentioned in the conditions of sale of specialized tour operators. It can, however, often be found in the advertisements for party tours or the names of the organizations that sponsor them (for instance, the famous English Club 18–30 agency). This type of holiday is generally designed for people from eighteen to twenty-five or thirty (depending on the company and the holiday).

The following contributions aim to go beyond the trivial and banal appearance of the subject and to give due attention to this phenomenon of party tourism. What does festivity do to tourism and what does tourism do to festivity?

While many types of festivity—religious celebrations, film festivals, and traditional local festivals—have been turned into tourist events over the past 150 years, what is generally referred to as “party tourism” (i.e., travel whose main motivation is to party) is more specific. I use the term to refer to a type of party that is generally urban, commercial, and privatized, targeting a young clientele, focused on the massive consumption of psychoactive substances (alcoholic or otherwise), and giving rise to tourist travel.

Party tourism can, of course, be transgenerational (as is the case with many ferias in the south of France, for example). However, forming an “in-group” based on age is often crucial in these festivities.⁵ Indeed, marketing professionals see the development of party tourism as a means of attracting the younger customer segment.⁶ This generational segmentation is quite new. In many older festivals, the whole community participated, at least until a certain time of night. By focusing on the young (sixteen-to-thirty-year-olds), major nightlife entrepreneurs have reinforced the generation gap. Now, youth is hardly a uniform category. Different party destinations attract different types of clientele (in terms of gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, etc.).
Events targeting youth take place in distinct locations: “mass youth tourism” or “vacation clubbing” take place in seaside resorts; orientation parties for first-year business school students generally take place in privatized spaces; stag (bachelor) and hen (bachelorette) parties are commonly organized in city centers. In addition, tourist trips with a central festive motivation may be linked to a one-off event (such as a festival), to a seasonal fabric (think of certain European seaside resorts, for example), or to a permanent festive fabric (as is the case in certain cities like Berlin or New York or islands like Ibiza).

The type of music on offer can mark the boundaries between different types of party tourism. The divide between commercial and alternative music, even if it is—like any attempt at categorization—partly unsatisfactory, appears operative for understanding the different offerings of party tourism. The international geography of alternative festivities largely does not overlap with that of mainstream festivities. Indeed, the choice to attend the alternative Boom Festival in Portugal or to travel to mainstream Ibiza in Spain is a social marker.

Research on party tourism has largely focused on Anglo-Saxon tourists, though scholars have also studied Dutch tourists in eastern Europe and European tourists visiting the seaside resort of Lloret de Mar in Spain. In any case, party tourism and its analysis remain largely Western-centric. We hope that some of the contributions to this issue will spark fruitful dialogue and renewed interest in party tourism practices involving non-Western tourists. However, before presenting the section’s rich offerings, let us delineate the contours of party tourism in more detail.

**The Birth and Rise of Party Tourism**

Tourism is a recent practice, the massification of which dates back less than one hundred years, while festivity has existed for thousands of years. Nevertheless, the type of festivity discussed in this section responds to contemporary arrangements. Over the twentieth century, festivity slowly became a leisure activity more than a religious or memorial act. This change transformed festivals into commodities. Party tourism, which combines two recreational practices, is part of this dynamic.

Before developing the idea of party tourism more theoretically, I would like to discuss one of its best-known avatars: the US “Spring Break,” which generates billions of dollars annually. Indeed, youth global party tourism may be seen as an outgrowth of Spring Break culture. The term “spring break” refers to a spring vacation in North America for students. Since the 1950s, this intermission has been associated with intense festivity and tourism. Little by little, the custom has taken hold of going away for several days during this period to party more or less nonstop among young people, generally in an oceanfront location, with excess alcohol, and with the promise of occasional sexual relations. Contrary to what the inordinate media coverage may lead one to believe, for most young people, it is an opportunity to get away, to relax, and to return to their families. However, the touristic-festive phenomenon, a highlight of university life, has rapidly gained a mythical status in the Western world.

The festive Spring Break phenomenon as we know it today is based on preexisting practices: as early as the beginning of the twentieth century, some students used spring break to go to the

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9. I use “Spring Break” to refer to the festive phenomenon and “spring break” to refer to the holiday’s temporality.

seaside with friends. Their numbers were limited and their destinations varied widely. It took a combination of factors, including an increase in student numbers, the postwar birth of a “youth culture,” the massification of tourism and the media, and the political will to attract young visitors, to turn it into the massive cultural phenomenon that it is today.

Spring Break in its current form was born in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, after World War II. In the 1930s, Fort Lauderdale had been a small coastal town with a population of less than eighteen thousand. In 1935, it started hosting the Collegiate Aquatic Forum, an intercollegiate swimming competition, the innocent breeding ground for the future festive Spring Break. Several hundred competitors started flocking to Fort Lauderdale every spring from all over the United States. In addition to the competition, youngsters participated in concerts, enjoyed the beach and bars, and invited their non-swimming friends. Competitors and accompanying persons made up a student tourist population, boosting the local economy. In the early 1950s, the municipal team decided to broaden this market and launched a campaign to promote the resort to over five hundred higher education establishments. The campaign was successful: in the spring of 1954, Fort Lauderdale welcomed some ten thousand students, and several national magazines published reports on “the greatest college town in the country” (Holiday magazine 1954).

In addition to Florida’s climate, the state’s legislation made it a Spring Breaker paradise: from the 1930s until 1987, the legal drinking age in Florida was eighteen, compared with twenty-one in most American states. A 1959 Time article on Fort Lauderdale (nicknamed Fort Liquordale) was headlined “Beer and the Beach” and contained this facetious statement by a student: “It’s not that we drink so much…. It’s just that we drink all the time.” Florida’s student spring celebration was starting to make a splash. The article closed with this answer from a female student to the question of why she chose to vacation in Fort Lauderdale: “This is where the boys are.”

His curiosity piqued, literature professor Glendon Swarthout spent a week in Fort Lauderdale that same year. What he observed became the subject of a bestseller: Where the Boys Are, published in 1960. The book tells the story of four young girls who decide to spend their spring vacation in Fort Lauderdale to have fun and meet boys. The release of the book and, above all, its movie adaptation in 1960 established the tourist-festive practice as an American tradition.

By the 1960s, other Florida towns were hosting a few Spring Breakers, but Fort Lauderdale received most of the youngsters. Until the mid-1980s, it remained the destination for beachside Spring Break festivities. However, the subsequent increase in the number of participants (370,000 in 1986), the growing number of incidents, and pressure from certain residents prompted local authorities to change the city’s tourism model. A series of dissuasive measures (restrictions on alcohol consumption, increased surveillance of nightclubs, etc.) and media statements by various local representatives was effective: attendance decreased to 20,000 young people in 1989. The party was over in Fort Lauderdale (although it has made a comeback in recent years), but Spring Break was on the move.

From the mid-1980s onward, the Spring Break market expanded and diversified. The
harmonization of drinking age legislation through the National Minimum Drinking Age Act in 1984 forced Florida to raise the minimum drinking age to twenty-one. This new legislation led Spring Breakers to cross the US border to party in Jamaica, Mexico, and the Dominican Republic, where the legal drinking age was eighteen. This time, it was not a film but a TV show that seized on the phenomenon and gave it international scope. In 1986, after being turned down by Fort Lauderdale, MTV decided to cover Spring Break from Daytona Beach, Florida, and to organize concerts and entertainment. From 1986 to 2014, the channel played a decisive role in the history of Spring Break, dictating the new trendy destinations (Panama City Beach in Florida, Cancun in Mexico, Negril in Jamaica) and encouraging many brands to take an interest in an event now broadcast nationally and internationally. It also introduced many countries to the images of over-the-top parties and drunken teenagers in swimsuits eager to undress that have become synonymous with Spring Break.

Today, the US Spring Break represents a significant market for brands targeting a young audience (alcoholic and energy drinks, tobacco, sportswear, etc.), for airlines and travel agencies, and for tourism stakeholders in the various host destinations. For example, in 2013, Spring Breakers spent 170 million dollars in Florida’s Panama City Beach alone (excluding transport and accommodation), that is, an average of 315 dollars per tourist, 615 million dollars, including flights and hotels. The practice has since spread unchanged to Canadian students.

Australia was the first country outside North America to offer an event directly inspired by the American Spring Break. In 1975, Geoff Lewis took over as manager of the Broadbeach International Hotel on the Queensland coast south of Brisbane, a modern, oversized hotel for the area at the time. The hotel had already changed hands several times since its construction. At the time, it was owned by a major beer brewing group, Queensland Brewery. Hoping to come up with ideas to alleviate the hotel’s problems, particularly its low occupancy rate in November and December, the group sent Lewis to a hoteliers’ convention in Chicago. At this convention, he heard about Spring Break and made the trip to Fort Lauderdale. Noting the event’s success, he decided to promote the idea of an end-of-school-year celebration to universities in Queensland. At first, the experiment was minimal, involving only the Broadbeach Hotel and attracting around five hundred people (unexpectedly, more high school students than university students).

Nevertheless, the idea spread to other coastal hotels in the 1980s. Surfers Paradise became an important destination for weeklong end-of-school-year celebrations for high school students from Queensland, New South Wales, and Victoria. By the decade’s end, what became known as Schoolies Week had become an established student practice throughout Australia. Today, the Gold Coast remains the most popular destination, although Schoolies are celebrated elsewhere in the country (Airlie Beach in the Whitsundays in the northeast and Rottnest Island opposite Perth in the southwest) and even outside of the country (in Fiji and Vanuatu). Unlike the festive US Spring Break, Schoolies primarily involve high school students. However, young people who have already graduated or have yet to graduate from high school (known as toolies and foolies, respectively) also participate. Thus, the US Spring Break directly inspired the Schoolies, and tourism practices, imaginaries, and cases of conflicts with locals have been similar ever since. Nevertheless, this historical link with Spring Break is not particularly well known. For example, it is not highlighted on pages promoting the Schoolies, nor in most press articles (some mention the
American Spring Break but only as an element of comparison).

In Europe, the youth party travel industry took a long time to consolidate, starting in the 1990s and especially the 2000s with specialized tour operators (TOs) offering packages that added nightclub passes and open bar access to the classic transport and hotel packages. The United Kingdom was a pioneer in this field, with the creation of Club 18–30 in 1968. Travel agencies and TOs for young people now offer festive holidays from April to September. Destinations are presented as total party venues. Over the past thirty years, new party resorts targeting the under-twenty-fives have sprung up, and long-established seaside resorts have specialized in the young and festive clientele. All the specialist European TOs work with more or less the same resorts: places with an adapted local offer (numerous bars and discotheques in particular). Lloret de Mar and Magaluf are a must in Spain, as are Ibiza, Calella, and Salou (which appeal mainly to French customers). The most popular Greek destination is Hersonissos (called Chersonisos in Germany and in the Netherlands). The Mediterranean island of Malta is also associated with youth party tourism. Novalja in Croatia, on the island of Pag, is a more recent party destination but one with a fast-growing reputation. Two Bulgarian seaside resorts are also considered party capitals: Goldensands (Golden Sands) and Slantchev Briag, better known abroad as SunnyBeach (Sonnenstrand for Germans).

In Europe, Spring Break is mainly used as a marketing label rather than a seasonal designation. This word allows young tourism companies to benefit from a prior imaginary at no cost since “Spring Break” is not a registered trademark. The seasonal Spring Break phenomenon has not become an institution in Europe. Nevertheless, the US Spring Break has profoundly influenced the imagery and imagination of those involved in party tourism. While seaside resorts have long been associated with nightlife, the US Spring Break brought new elements and established itself as a benchmark for festive vacations. Partly because European springs are colder than Florida’s, it is the summer vacations that young Europeans favor for their party breaks.

Spring Break, Summer Break, Schoolies, and other festive trips: the young people who participate in these different events or the destinations that host them have much in common. Their ages and motivations are similar; they share a certain visual symbolism (taken from the US Spring Break), music (there is an annual Spring Break Miami–Ibiza–Cancun–Lloret de Mar compilation), and behaviors (notably excessive drinking and unbridled sexuality). What we have here is a transnational tourist-festive phenomenon. The TOs of party tourism for young people, some of modest size, others belonging to large groups, sell a marketed, secure, relatively reproducible, and segmented product.

This brief history of party tourism already suggests its rich analytical potential. Indeed, it is a transnational phenomenon that involves many players at different levels (TOs, residents, print and TV media, tourists, and governments). It has significant economic weight but also a potential for nuisance and land-use conflicts. It is, even more fundamentally, a youth, “in-group” phenomenon with a powerful and highly sexualized tourist imaginary. This deserves more comment.
A Sexualized Imaginary

“Bikinis and big booties—y all! That’s what life is about!” says Alien (James Franco) in the 2013 film *Spring Breakers*. In party tourism, posters and promotional clips evoke a holiday’s imaginary of freedom, mainly through the promise of unbridled sexuality, a freedom and a promise aimed at white heterosexual men. Inspired by the festive US Spring Break, these events have familiar and recognizable imagery: the beach, bikini-clad girls, alcohol, and the staging of its excessive consumption, complemented by swimming pools, palm trees, and colossal parties. The male gaze undeniably guides the imagery of party tourism, as is made clear by this report published in June 2007 in *FHM*, a famous French magazine aimed at heterosexual men, with a “humorous” tone and erotic content:

> After rock, France has imported another American leisure activity for young people: Spring Break. On the program: sea, sex & vomit. *FHM* took the bus to the fiesta. Sexier than a Ford Mustang GT 390 and more intoxicating than a can of Diet Coke, the best American invention of all time, Spring Break, is finally catching on in France. Until now, it had been an unattainable fantasy. A guy’s dream, a real one. Beautiful, topless, drunk, and single girls served up on a sandy beach in the sun, all to the accompaniment of music and a never-ending open bar. That should be the dictionary definition of “paradise.” In this case, it’s the American concept of Spring Break.

Spring Break, “paradise,” “a guy’s dream, a real one”: why? Because, in a deeply sexist way of thinking, it is by definition made up of pretty, naked, drunk girls (meaning they are uninhibited, so they can express their sexual desires more easily, but they are also more vulnerable) who are single (meaning, again in a sexist way, they are looking for a partner). Furthermore, these young women are “served,” not on a platter, but on a sun-drenched beach, with unlimited music and alcohol. Promotional videos and iconographic elements on the websites of specialist agencies in Europe, Australia, and the US reveal the imagery of this vision of paradise, a paradise for heterosexual men populated by sexually available women-objects. Another example of this kind of association between Spring Break and sexual imagery is *Girls Gone Wild*, which began in 1997. The show’s crew attended parties, often at Spring Break destinations. They encouraged young women, almost always intoxicated, to expose their breasts or engage in sexual acts.

The young women who go on these trips are not always aware of this sexual imaginary. Some of them are quickly distressed by it. It is common for them to keep to themselves during their stay and return home from the parties quite early. Still, some women party tourists are conscious of and attracted to this sexualized imaginary. A party tourism vacation allows some young women to express a desirable self-image or unbridled sexuality. Sometimes they choose to go there trying to emancipate themselves from the injunctions to “be remarkable without being noticed, to be sexy without being vulgar,” which mainly target young working-class girls. Of course, it is an ambivalent liberation: it may be argued that they have merely internalized the male gaze. The theorist behind the concept, Laura Mulvey, explained that women in cinema are treated as icons rather than actual characters: they are used for male aesthetic pleasure. Female characters are, therefore, erotic objects for male characters and thus for viewers of all genders and sexual orientations, according to the principle of identification. In this way, women internalize the reified status they are given to see. However, presenting oneself as desirable and seeking sexual relations are neither emancipating nor coercive. Caution is needed in dealing with such issues.

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In any case, most party tourists are men. The Mexican resort town of Cancun, a Spring Break mecca for young Americans, has earned the nickname “Mancun” for its preponderance of male tourists. There are several reasons for this. As we have seen, advertising tends to use the male gaze. Additionally, the practices promoted at these parties are generally gendered as masculine (excessive drinking and casual sex). The sexual imaginary remains largely fantastical: the desire of male tourists to multiply sexual acts is fraught with many pitfalls, and casual sexual relations are no more common on this type of vacation than elsewhere.

Moreover, the desire of young tourists to travel among boys only is a significant factor in the scarcity of women. My fieldwork has shown that party tourism is a homosocial practice. While young male tourists regularly lament the lack of women, many sideline women and emphasize male-male relationships through their practices and discourses. The evocation of women is instead a litany that distances them from the suspicion of homosexuality. The women who are present are subjected to stereotypical visions, the fruits of a sexual (and sometimes sexist) tourist imagination. Above all, they are a means of strengthening the bond between men.

**Studying Party Tourism**

Before the 1990s, commercial urban festivities were mainly studied for the nuisances and land-use conflicts they spawned. Analysis of the economic aspects of the festive night began to be linked to the rise of marketing strategies highlighting the nightlife of postindustrial cities, such as Manchester and Berlin. What has come to be known as the NTE (Night Time Economy) is now seen as a way of revitalizing or diversifying a city’s assets. The NTE “refers to the rise of a vibrant nightlife within city centers, marked by the deregulation of the licensing system, the development of the alcohol industry, the falling cost of the product, and the focus of nighttime spaces on drinking.” Festive life is increasingly presented as an element of attraction and influence for cities. The idea that bars and nightclubs are just as much a part of a tourist city’s leisure offering as monuments and department stores is gaining ground: “the city that never sleeps,” “the 24/7 city.” Alongside the image of the night as a dangerous temporality, an image of a young and playful night is developing.

Along these economic and sociological studies of party tourism, researchers examine the protagonists’ practices, representations, and discourses. Indeed, while the festive framework proposed by tourism and party promoters aims to limit surprises—party organization leaves little room for improvisation—the perception may be different at the individual level, with the unexpected emerging from the loopholes of “specifications.” Guests play as important a role in the party as the organizers: the framework guides but only partially constrains. Like tourism, partying is a leisure activity.

Among the protagonists of party tourism around the world, many youths are still living with their parents, and this may be their first vacation with friends. A week away from home means they can dispense with many constraints. Young tourists take pleasure in time transgressions (going to bed at dawn, sleeping during the day), dietary transgressions (eating only fast food, drinking a lot of alcohol and smoking a lot of cannabis, even during the day), and sexual transgressions...
Leash and Out of Control: Masculinities


(kissing many partners in the same evening). Significant quantity is not enough: excess is sought. This desire for excess, for intensity in pleasures, is a way of performing freedom. As philosopher Sebastian de Grazia noted in his book on leisure: “Fun and freedom often seem almost synonymous.” 32 It is both the quantity (of partners, alcohol, etc.) and the frequency that make it a transgression. The cosmopolitan crowd adds to the effervescence. Rarely do these young people experience such crowded days and nights or such an international crowd in their everyday lives. As Obrador-Pons, Crang, and Travlou write after evoking the festive nights of Benidorm, Spain, “we need to take seriously the emotional productivity of the mass in mass tourism.” 32 The crowds and their effervescence are an integral part of the pleasure of a tourist experience of this kind.

Nevertheless, while the actors (partygoers and party promoters) do indeed mobilize these representations of freedom and transgression, we need to remain measured about their practical application, particularly in the contemporary, commodified festivities that interest us. The tourist and/or festive contexts influence individuals but usually do not radically transform them. The ordinary catches up with the tourists and revelers, and despite the enchantment expressed, their social categories, such as class, race, gender, sexual orientation, and other attributes, may be transgressed but are not erased. The party is not the same for everyone. Anthropologist Suzanne Clisby, in her research on young English people staying in Brighton, shows how working-class women, because they are constantly referred to by their class and gender, do not experience the liberation put forward in holidaymakers’ discourses. 34 The actors can think of party tourism holidays as spaces of freedom, but they need to be studied outside the frame of these conventional and enchanted representations too. We must not fall into the illusion of a hedonistic paradise that ignores the continuity of domination. Indeed, tourism management researcher Nuno Ribeiro, in his research on the US Spring Break, takes issue with studies concluding that it is a particularly transgressive practice, writing that “Spring Breakers’ behavior is but a continuation—albeit an exaggerated one—of practices they already engage in during the rest of the academic year.” 35 Thus, festive pleasure is both transgressive and highly ritualized.

Indeed, the contemporary urban party, a veritable consumer product, tends to exacerbate spatial segregation and discrimination. 36 Young people’s festive practices obey a “norm of sociability” rather than a desire to transgress. 37 Gender norms, which determine a hierarchy between genders and sexualities, are not eliminated but often amplified. Not everyone can afford to fully appropriate the partying space. Social anthropologist Hazel Andrews, in her research on British tourists in Mallorca, and sociologist Mark Casey, in his study of a comedy series featuring British tourists in Benidorm, have noted this: despite the impression of a normative relaxation in the vacation context, gender norms are not suddenly erased and are even sometimes reinforced. 38 Because this type of vacation attracts mostly men (at least as far as Spring Breaks and the like are concerned), these spaces can be seen as privileged sites for constructing masculinities. 39 The festive and tourist enchantment that makes us see these spaces as out of the ordinary needs to be overcome, therefore, but without falling into another reductionist trap: that of deviance as a reality for all.

Leisure activities, particularly those for young people and the working class, are often considered worrying and deviant. Since the advent of working-class leisure activities and mass tourism after the Second World War, elites have worried about the depravity of “the lower sorts.” Party tourism, combining a double factor of relaxation (tourism and partying) and featuring youths,
a demographic historically generating moral panics, has often been the subject of harsh and negative judgments and of sensationalist articles in the press.\textsuperscript{40}

Moreover, many studies focus on the risks taken by party tourists and suffer from a questionable moralistic orientation, particularly on issues of "sexual promiscuity." Of course, the excesses of alcohol and outbursts associated with this type of holiday are undeniable. Excessive drug use has serious health consequences, and the behavior of partygoers creates serious land-use conflicts. Nevertheless, nuance is essential. Commentary on this type of partying often serves a disillusioned discourse about today’s youth. In addition, from the point of view of many young revelers, the risk lies not in excess but in boredom. For many, drinking excessively, smoking, or taking ecstasy is not "a challenge to life."\textsuperscript{41} Far from this romantic vision, young people adopt a pragmatic one. They fear boredom at all costs; substances reduce this "risk." As sociologist Lisa Wade points out, drawing on the work of gender studies professor Clare Hollowell, "having fun" is serious business for young people.\textsuperscript{42} The quest for pleasure requires an investment of time, possibly money, and technical management. Naturally, because these young tourists find themselves in an environment they consider designed for partying, they indulge in excess. This is what the researcher specialist in alcohol consumption Kevin Brain calls "calculated hedonism": beyond the morally charged discourse on uncontrolled excess associated with the term "binge drinking," in reality, young people carefully prepare and manage these moments of pleasure.\textsuperscript{43} Sociologist Sébastien Tutenges also recognizes this trend in his research on Danish party tourists on Sunny Beach in Bulgaria.\textsuperscript{44}

It is easy to disqualify young people’s informal festive practices because we see no trace of sacredness in them and to dismiss them as vulgar practices of mass consumption, or to read them as a symptom of a society that no longer offers solid professional prospects to its youth. Parties would then appear as meaningless moments, nothing more than anomic due to the lack of hope in the future of idle individuals, with excess masking the futility of nights of alcoholic wandering. But it goes without saying that local festivals and dances have never been free of commercial exchange. Fairs and street vendors have always been part of public/civic festivities. The point is not to perpetuate a false opposition between small, "traditional," local, supposedly noncommercial festivals and invented, exaggerated, artificial urban festivals. Festive traditions are constantly being reinvented and (re)born. Small-scale celebrations are not incompatible with the pursuit of profit, and urban festivals are not inherently soulless. Research should therefore extricate itself from moral judgments and eschew both condemnation and enchantment, in other words, stay "beyond good and evil."\textsuperscript{45} An excellent way to do this is to look at these celebrations from the perspective of local communities, as some of the contributors to this issue do.

\textbf{Contents of This Section}

The combination of texts and images that follows covers different parts of the world, including destinations that are less traditionally associated with party tourism. In addition to research articles and an interview, the section comprises a documentary film and academic research presented in the form of a comic, thus reflecting the ambition of the \textit{Journal of Festive Studies} to showcase a diversity of formats, methodologies, and perspectives associated with the study of festivity. In addition to improving our understanding of party tourism, these five contributions open up rich critical perspectives on the crucial matters of social class, race, and gender inequalities.
The section opens with an article by Hazel Andrews, a sociologist who conducted an ethnographic study of British youth tourism in the resort town of Magaluf on the Mediterranean island of Mallorca. Andrews explores the notion of the carnivalesque (placing it in the context of contemporary practices, especially artistic and political) and the myth of the Land of Cockaigne, linking them to party tourism. This comparison could lead to a reductive dichotomy between everyday and vacation time, with the latter as a total inversion of the former. Andrews avoids this pitfall by qualifying her argument, showing that the inversion does not work mechanically, for example, concerning gender: in Magaluf, inequalities between men and women persist, and the objectification of women can be extreme (although, as she writes, again with nuance, “Indeed, some [women] found Magaluf liberating”). Above all, this literary, historical, and ethnographic work is a stimulating look at the stigmatization of popular working-class festive practices such as party tourism in Magaluf. It places the festive practices of these young tourists, especially their perception by the middle and upper classes, in historical perspective.

The next contribution aims to enrich our understanding of these popular festive and tourist practices by creating new images far removed from the sensationalism often employed by the media. Anthropologist Annemarije Rus’s visual ethnography, titled “Lloret 18,” sensitively portrays the experiences of young Dutch tourists and seasonal workers in the seaside resort of Lloret de Mar, Spain. Without being angelic, Rus’s careful use of camera and music encourages viewers to better apprehend the motivations of these young people. Party tourists are no longer idiotic hordes of risk-takers but touching young individuals with feelings (love, joy, sadness) and flaws (they are capable of making the occasional racist or sexist comment). The film also illuminates the social construction of the party, with its preparation, norms, and rituals. Rus accompanies her work with an article designed to contextualize and analyze it. It offers a rich methodological and ethnographic reflection on party tourism and visual anthropology applied to festive and touristic objects. Her stimulating analytical description of her work allows one to better understand the benefits and difficulties of ethnographic filmmaking. The detailed presentation of the protagonists of the film, their social origins, and the way they approached the shooting is fascinating and perfectly complements the work.

Work on party tourism often focuses on the Global North, but sociologist Sitinga Kachipande’s analysis of the Lake of Stars (LOS) Festival broadens the scope of this research by shedding light on an annual musical and festive event in Malawi. The article looks at a different kind of party tourism temporality—not a holiday but an event—and explores the particularities of a festival characterized by its “party with a purpose” model. The author adopts a fairly balanced critical perspective by brilliantly presenting the complexities of a model that seems virtuous in many ways but not without contradictions. Kachipande illustrates how the LOS Festival, while promoting cultural awareness, tourism growth, and the empowerment of Malawians as active participants, simultaneously perpetuates the global inequalities inherent in tourism and development. The article examines the complex web of racialized, classed, and gendered power dynamics within the global tourism industry. When it comes to tourism issues, it is essential to take an interest in the agency of local people, to get away from the “impact perspective” (a negative effect that seems mechanical and that defenseless inhabitants have to endure). While showing the inequalities suffered by Malawians, the author presents them as subjects rather than passive victims of the tourism industry. This engaging article provides a deep insight into an original form of party tourism.
The fourth piece in this section also allows us to shift our perspective in many ways. While most of the contributions come from sociologists and anthropologists, this one is the result of a collaboration between R. Benedito Ferrão, assistant professor of English and Asian and Pacific American studies, illustrator and satirical cartoonist Angela Ferrão, and urban designer and artist Maria Vanessa de Sa. It looks at a category of tourism that is still understudied—domestic tourism (that is, tourists traveling in their own country)—while capturing the perspective of an area’s residents. More specifically, the original and pertinent form of the comic shows how Goa—which has a unique history in India, having experienced four centuries of Portuguese rule that ended only in 1961—has become a periphery of pleasure to both foreign and Indian tourists. This situation has led to significant challenges concerning the tranquility of local people, their culture, and the local environment. This comic presents these elements in a highly inventive way.

Finally, an interview with Thomas Thurnell-Read, who has been studying alcohol, drinking, and drunkenness from a sociological perspective for almost fifteen years, provides a comprehensive insight into his academic journey. By tracing his research trajectory from stag party tourism to a broader exploration of alcohol culture, the interview reflects on the notion of masculinity and its place in tourism and festive studies. In addition, Thurnell-Read subtly explores the social role of English pubs among different sections of the population. His nuanced approach to understanding the complexities of alcohol consumption through the prism of class and gender is a notable highlight, contributing significantly to a broader understanding of these multifaceted phenomena, free from moral bias.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Alix Boirot is a postdoctoral researcher with the French Institute of Health and Medical Research (Inserm), based at Aix-Marseille University. She received a PhD in social anthropology from the School of Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences (EHESS) in Paris. Her thesis focused on party tourism and masculinities, with a deep and long ethnography in the Spanish seaside resort of Lloret de Mar. She is now interested in bartenders and their relationship to alcohol, and is increasingly involved in public health research (health literacy, addictions, etc.).

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