

PARTY MORALS

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Summary

The transgressive ways people often behave in when drunk may seem chaotic, and may appear to be an effect of their drunkenness. However, decades ago, MacAndrew and Edgerton (1969) demonstrated that alcohol intoxication by itself does not lead to transgressions of social norms, and that explanations for drunken behaviors are to be found in the social contexts of drinking practices. Their finding is the starting point of this thesis, in which I explore and explain the moral order of youth party practices. In the introductory chapters, I outline the theoretical background and methods used. In the article *Drinking and Moral Order* (Fjær and Pedersen, 2015) we examine intracultural variation in drunken behaviors by comparing two extended parties that center on drinking. We show that drunken comportment is culturally heterogeneous, and explain the difference in moral orders between the two parties as expressions of differences in value priorities. In the article *I'm Not One of Those Girls* (Fjær et al., 2015) we analyze the moral positioning of participants in a particularly liberal party practice, and show how even within that context, there is a sexual double standard. While many of the young women we interviewed positioned themselves against the moral figure of “the slut”, regardless of whether and how they participated in the hookup activities of the party practice, the young men were relatively free to morally position themselves in ways that aligned with their behaviors. In the article *Departies* (Fjær and Tutenges, 2017), we conceptualize extended youth parties as a type of party practice where participants depart from their everyday life in several, intertwined ways. During these lengthy, and usually alcohol-fueled parties, participants’ moral departures occur in concert with spatial, temporal, stylistic and experiential departures. This type of party practice highlights how the altered moral orders of party practices are culturally produced. In the final article, entitled *In Defense of Qualitative Interviewing* (Fjær, forthcoming), I describe two types of critiques of qualitative interviewing that have implications for studies of moralized practices in particular. After reformulating the critiques

as methodological challenges, I show how researchers – by facilitating stories when interviewing, using multiple indicators in analysis, and through comparative analysis – can draw valid conclusions from interview data on morality and moralized practices. In that way, I provide a methodological defense of the approach used in the first two articles, bolstering the argument that there is an altered moral order to even seemingly chaotic youth parties.

References

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Fjær EG and Pedersen W (2015) Drinking and moral order: Drunken comportment revisited. *Addiction Research & Theory* 23(6): 449–458.

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MacAndrew C and Edgerton RB (1969) *Drunken Comportment: A Social Explanation*. Chicago: Aldine.