

## **Hot Spots and the 24-Hour City: pleasure, anarchy and control**

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'24 hour drinking - R U Up 4 It?' was the question that the Labour Party texted young people on their mobile phones in 2001. Extended licensing hours had been identified as a key component of 24-hour city policies in the early 1990's and were delivered in many ailing town centres. City centre locations such as Manchester and Camden Town attracted new residents and the bar, club and music scenes flourished. Latterly this 'virtuous circle' appears to be under threat, if not in fact to have split open. The tensions between economic growth, a relaxation of licensing laws and the ideal of urban renaissance have reached a point where the former are in serious danger of undermining the latter.

This paper examines the construction of these 'hot spots' or 'party streets', arguing that a combination of media coverage, interpersonal communication, local policies and a pre-existing physical infrastructure combined in forming their popularity. Deficiencies in the 'old infrastructures' of public transport and face to face policing have led to their re-definition as problem areas in which crime and social incivility are rife. The paper finishes by speculating if new technologies of surveillance will solve their problems or whether a more holistic approach is required to manage these hybrid zones of pleasure.