

IS THE PARTY OVER?

Prosumer Report

HAVAS

2023





Throughout history, sociability has been a core human trait. Across geographies and social classes, people have gathered for protection, to trade and share resources, and to celebrate occasions of all sorts, whether it be births, religious events, the joining together of families, or the lives of those lost.

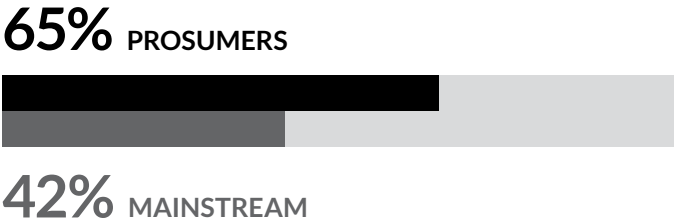
Human sociability extends far beyond such formal occasions, however. Put simply: We like to shake loose with people we enjoy, typically fueled by some manner of intoxicant—be it the mead quaffed by medieval knights, the wines of ancient Greece, the coca leaves chewed by indigenous peoples of South America, or any of the vast array of social lubricants popular in the modern era.



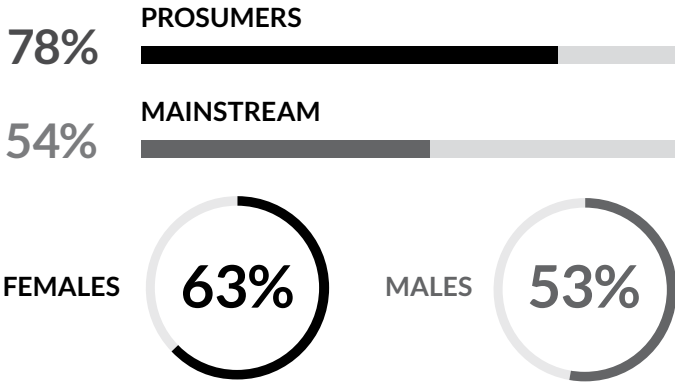
Partying Is Our Social Glue

Social gatherings are far from superficial. They fulfill deep needs and aspirations, helping people to feel part of a group and exposing partygoers to new people, ideas, and customs. Partying is so ingrained in human culture, in fact, that two-thirds of Prosumers surveyed for our latest study deem it a “vital need.” In China and India, agreement with that statement is even higher, exceeding 85%.

Partying is a vital need (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



When I dance, I feel alive (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



Dancing, in particular, makes people—including 78% of Prosumers—feel alive. There is something elemental about it, connecting people in primal ways to the beat, the natural world, and one another.

SOCIABILITY AND CATHARSIS

In the modern era, people attend parties for all sorts of reasons. Primarily, they want to gather with friends and meet people. Eight in 10 Prosumers say meeting people is what makes parties fun and exciting.

I love going to parties to gather with friends I already know

78% PROSUMERS



64% MAINSTREAM

I love going to parties to meet new people

67% PROSUMERS



45% MAINSTREAM

Meeting new people is what makes parties fun and exciting (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

80% PROSUMERS



57% MAINSTREAM

For significant proportions of the sample, however, parties are more than social occasions. They're a way to blow off steam. Moreover, more than a third of global Prosumers use parties to forget about all that's going wrong in their personal lives or in the world around them. Done right, parties can serve as a form of escapism, catharsis, and even therapy. Nearly 8 in 10 Prosumers and more than two-thirds of the mainstream say throwing parties and celebrating is the only way they can escape the sadness of the world.



Throwing parties and celebrating is the only way to escape the sadness of our world

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

78% PROSUMERS



68% MAINSTREAM

I love going to parties to forget about what's going wrong in my life

42% PROSUMERS



32% MAINSTREAM



41% GEN ZS



17% BOOMERS



I love going to parties to forget about what's wrong in the world

38% PROSUMERS



27% MAINSTREAM

It's no wonder, then, that parties have become an integral part of pop culture, featured in movies and on TV and elevated through massive celebrations such as Coachella and Burning Man.

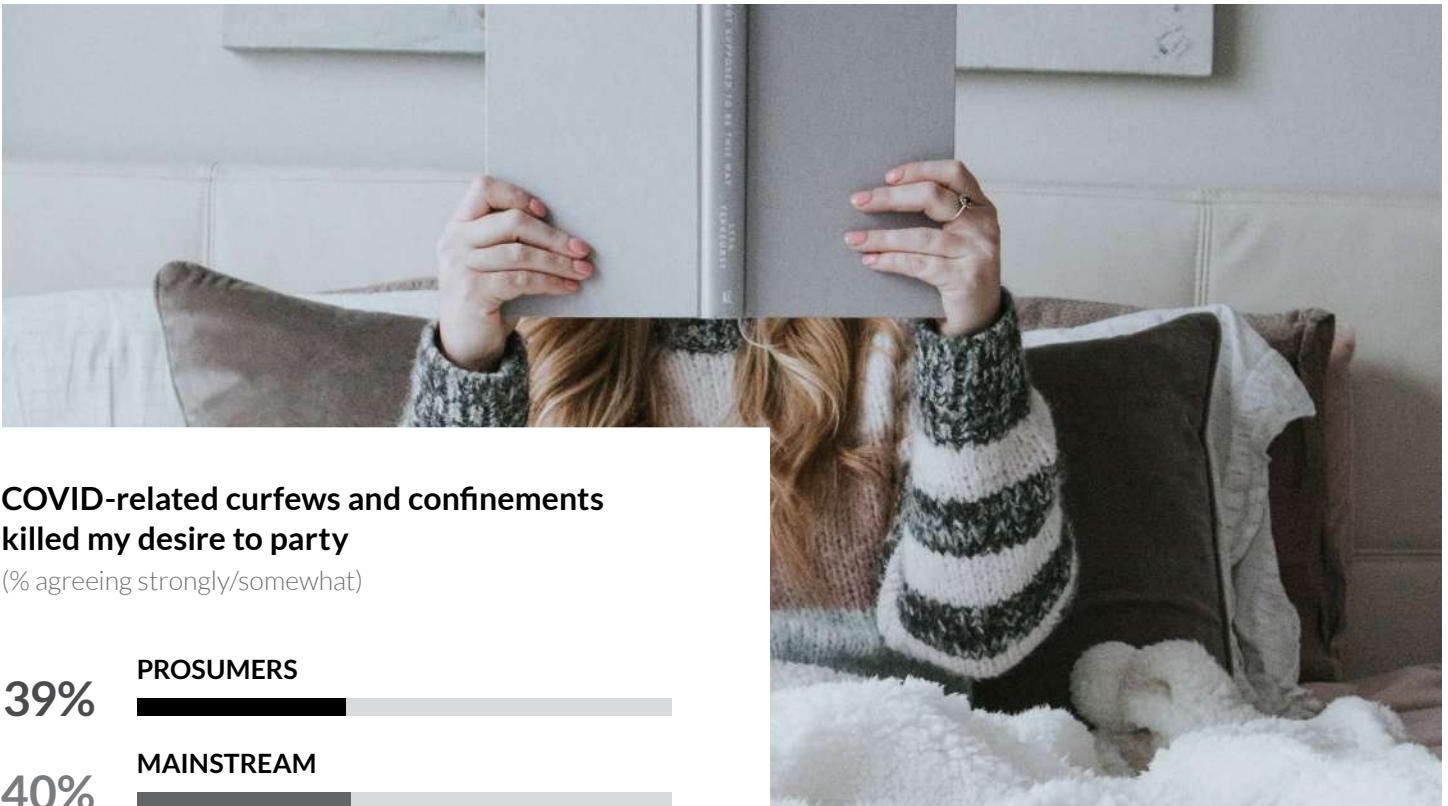


If Parties Make Us Feel Alive, Why Are They Dying?

Even before the global pandemic erected barriers to socialization, party culture was under assault. Stories of **spiked drinks** and **sexual violence** made headlines. Bar managers posted signs warning patrons not to leave their drinks unattended and devised **code words** women could use to alert staff to a problematic patron and secure a safe ride home. On top of that—from Paris to Orlando—the horrors of terrorism and gun violence began to visit pubs, nightclubs, and other popular gathering spots. Why risk going out when danger lurks around every corner?

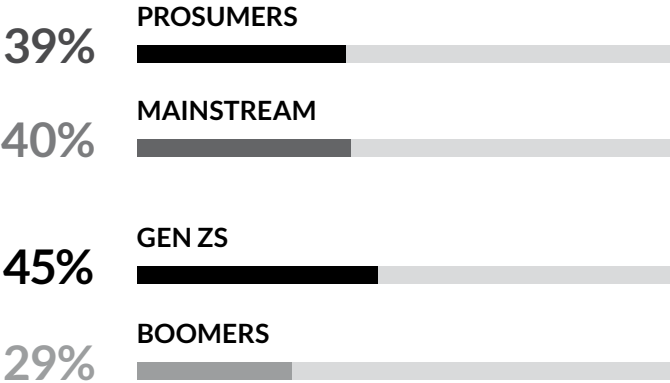
And then along came COVID-19.

The lockdowns and social restrictions that followed prevented people from gathering. And yet, the impact extended beyond local mandates. Among young people especially (45% of Gen Zs versus 29% of boomers), COVID-related curfews and confinements killed their desire to party. After all, in a world facing multiple existential threats, what was there to celebrate—and why take the risk?



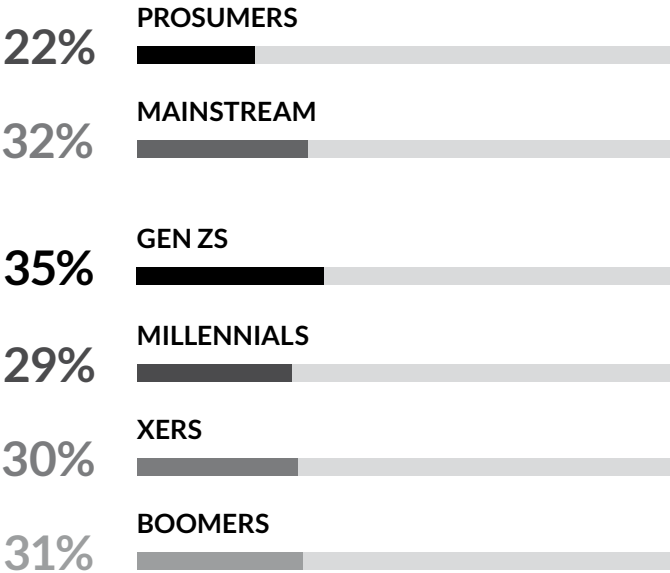
COVID-related curfews and confinements killed my desire to party

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



People who party and celebrate while the world is on the verge of collapse (wars, climate change, etc.) are selfish

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



Suddenly, partygoers were seen as irresponsible. More than a third of Gen Zs began to view people who party in the face of a world on the brink of collapse as selfish. Celebratory practices long associated with community and camaraderie were now deemed antisocial and irresponsible by a significant portion of the population.

This trend wasn't entirely new. With so many forms of in-home entertainment available, nightclub culture has been on the decline since the 1970s. In France, most of the nightclubs that thrived in the disco era have closed. In the United Kingdom, the *Times* **posited** that no nightclubs would remain open beyond 2030.

This mix of trends led Havas Group to question the role of parties today. If sociability is an innate human trait, how will we express ourselves and engage with one another in a post-party culture? And what role can brands play in supporting the wants and needs of consumers in this space? To find out, we commissioned a survey of some 13,000 women and men in 30 markets worldwide. We discovered that the very nature of partying has changed, including where, why, and how we do it.



Too Much Partying Killed the Party

Parties used to be special—and highly planned—occasions. Village fetes and festivals were rife with tradition and sometimes pageantry. Among the upper crust, house parties were formal, often ostentatious affairs. What better way to show off one's wealth and sophistication? Invitations to certain events were highly anticipated, coveted, and exclusive.

In modern times, society's approach to sociability shifted. Parties began to take place whenever, wherever, and however participants liked. And brands worked overtime to turn even the most minor occasion into cause for celebration. We ushered in the Era of Hyperfestivity. The result: Parties were devalued. When social events are constant, there is no longer any buildup of anticipation or extended appreciation afterward. People immediately move on to the next event. Overplaying the festivity card turned something exceptional into a thing that was meaningless and trivial.

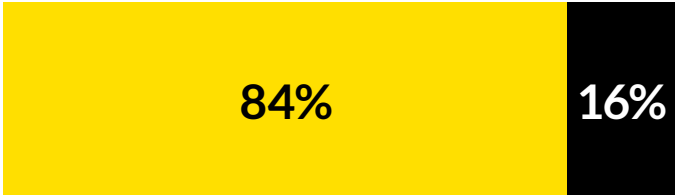


DAY IS THE NEW NIGHT

In past eras, part of the allure of parties was that they took place after dark. People dressed up and went out to get a bite of the forbidden apple. Darkness added a sense of glamour and exclusivity—the satisfaction of knowing one was enjoying life to the fullest while others slept.

And now? Now, celebrations take place at any hour. Young people perform dances for TikTok in the streets between classes or on their way to work. Music surrounds us from morning to night, with the average person now listening to more than **20 hours of tunes a week**. Why blow through your paycheck at a club when you can be your own DJ at home? When asked to choose between two options, only 16% of Prosumers said, “The truest parties happen at night when other people are sleeping” versus 84% who chose “A party can happen whenever and wherever.” Even three-quarters of Gen Zs chose the latter.

Which comes closer to your point of view? (Choose one | Prosumers)



⋮
A party can happen whenever and wherever

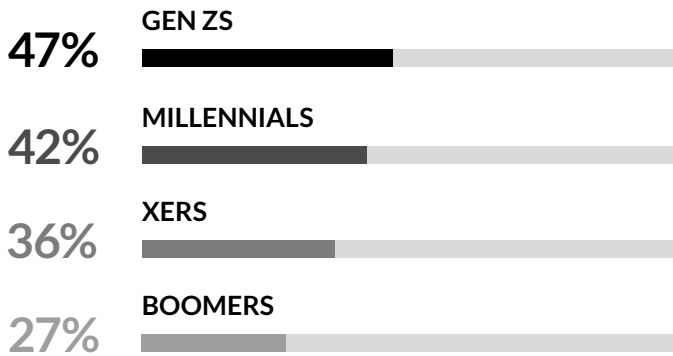
⋮
The truest parties happen at night when other people are sleeping

There has also been a shift toward late afternoon and early evening gatherings—leaving plenty of time to get home for dinner and put the kids to bed. One **survey** in France found that 6 in 10 employees consider after-work socialization an essential part of their work lives. And studies have shown that companies whose employees regularly socialize outside work hours reap **multiple benefits**, including decreased turnover and stress.

FROM HOMO FESTIVUS TO HOMO COMFORTUS

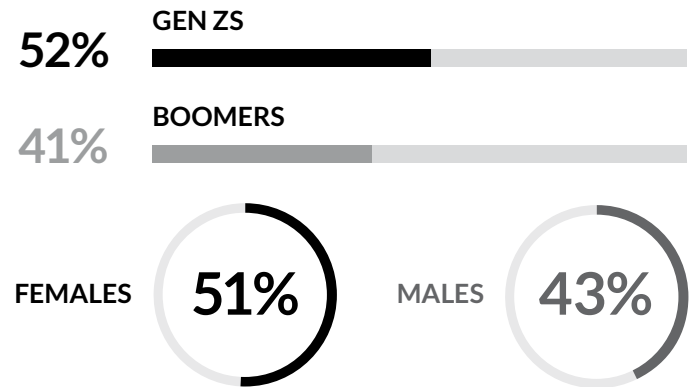
With so many ways to entertain ourselves at home, Generation COVID has perfected the art of slothdom—as expressed in the current trends of **bed rotting** and **carcass time**. In a dramatic shift from previous generations, who sowed their oats by spending as little time at home as feasible, Gen Zs have grown adept at shutting out the external world. Why go to the cinema when you can stream movies on demand? Why sit in a restaurant when DoorDash, Uber Eats, and other services can deliver a meal to the comfort of your home?

I often find excuses not to go out with friends because I feel lazy (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



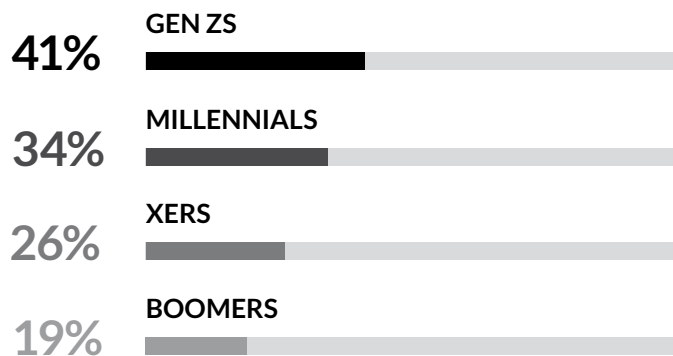
On a typical weekend night, I prefer to stay home and watch Netflix rather than go out (e.g., to a restaurant or concert)

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



In just a few years, we've left behind the FOMO (fear of missing out) era and entered the era of FOGO (fear of going out). Staying home isn't just about vegging out; it offers protection from external threats. More than 4 in 10 Gen Zs say they avoid parties because they're scared of potential abusive or violent encounters. That's more than twice the proportion of boomers who say the same.

What don't you like about parties? I'm scared of potential abusive or violent behaviors



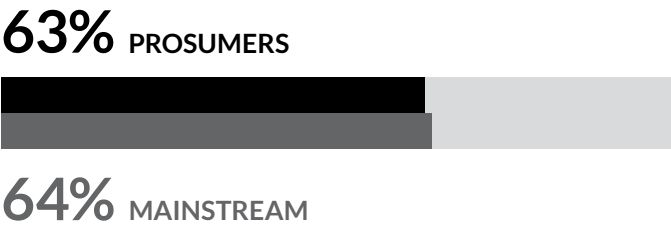


My Safe Space

Our homes are now the epicenter of social life, with around two-thirds of Prosumers and the mainstream saying they party more at home or in the homes of friends rather than venturing out to clubs or big events. Responses were consistent across all age groups.

I tend to party more at home / at someone's home rather than in clubs or at big events

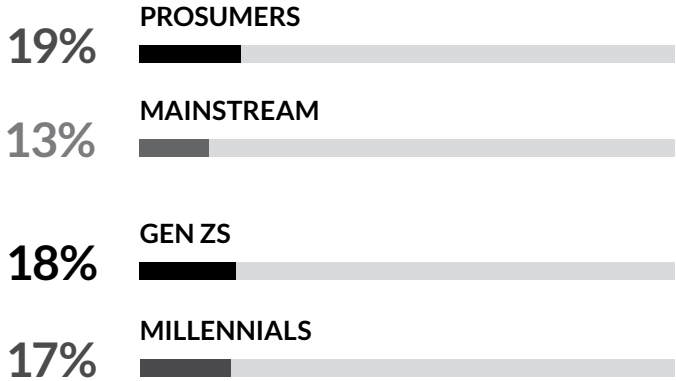
(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



GET YOUR CONTROL FREAK ON

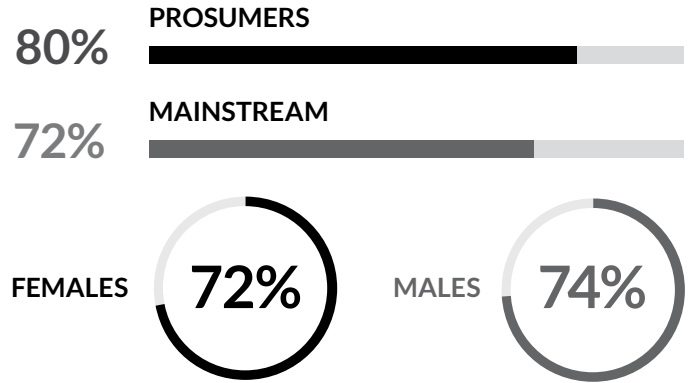
Most people's inclination today is not to let loose but to monitor and attempt to control virtually everything—an understandable response to a world in chaos. Accordingly, we see that fewer than 1 in 5 Prosumers and Gen Zs love going to parties to lose control. The clear exceptions to this question are the samples in China and France, a majority of whom party to lose control.

I love going to parties to lose control





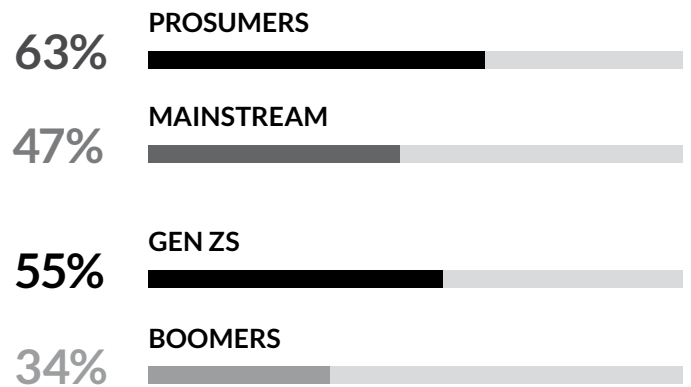
It's important to me to maintain control at parties to avoid being accused of inappropriate behavior afterward (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



This makes even more sense in the age of smartphones when any misbehavior or embarrassing moment is likely to be captured and shared via social media for all to see (and judge). Nearly two-thirds of Prosumers and more than half of Gen Zs consider smartphones part of the fun of parties, but we have all seen evidence of their use backfiring.

Using smartphones (posting stories, TikTok, etc.) during parties is part of the fun

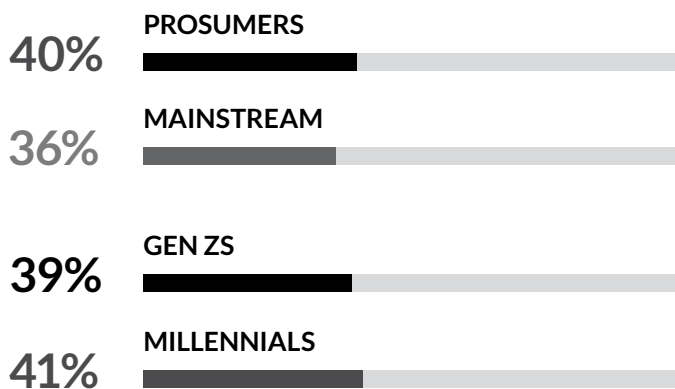
(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



With social interactions now so stylized, staged, and documented, how is anyone supposed to let loose without fear of the consequences?

To an extent, this is about maintaining control of one's physical self. Some 4 in 10 Prosumers and younger respondents want to avoid negative bodily impacts, including headaches and fatigue.

What don't you like about parties? I'm tired the day after (headache, lack of sleep, etc.)



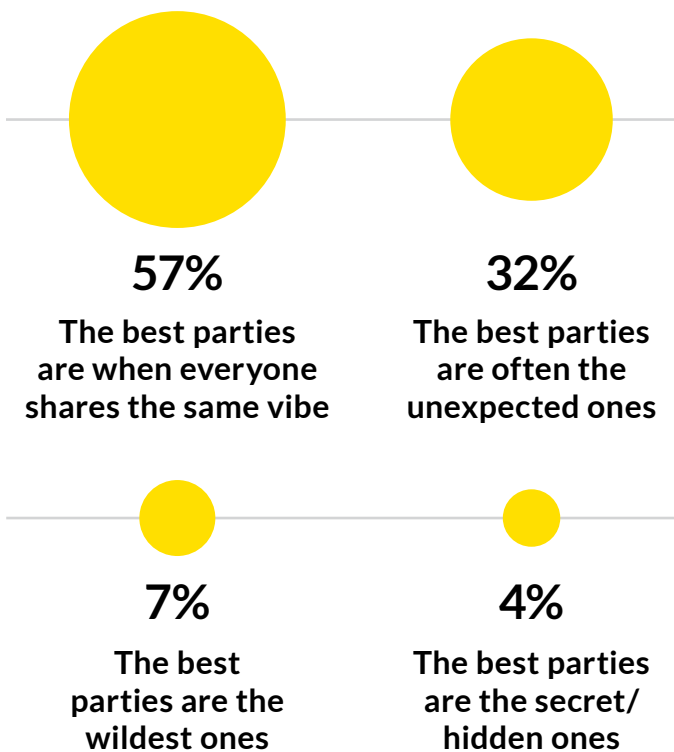
The desire for control extends to wanting to avoid unintended (or later regretted) consequences. Fully 8 in 10 Prosumers believe it's important to stay in control to avoid being accused of inappropriate behaviors. This sentiment is held by a relatively equal proportion of men (74%) and women (72%) and is especially prevalent among Prosumers in India (95%).



FROM GOING WILD TO GETTING WISE (OR BORING?)

The unexpected and spontaneous don't make us dream anymore. When asked which sorts of parties are best, just 7% of Prosumers and 10% of Gen Zs chose "the wildest ones." People gravitate toward parties where everyone shares the same vibe—and, more often than not, that vibe appears to be *chill*.

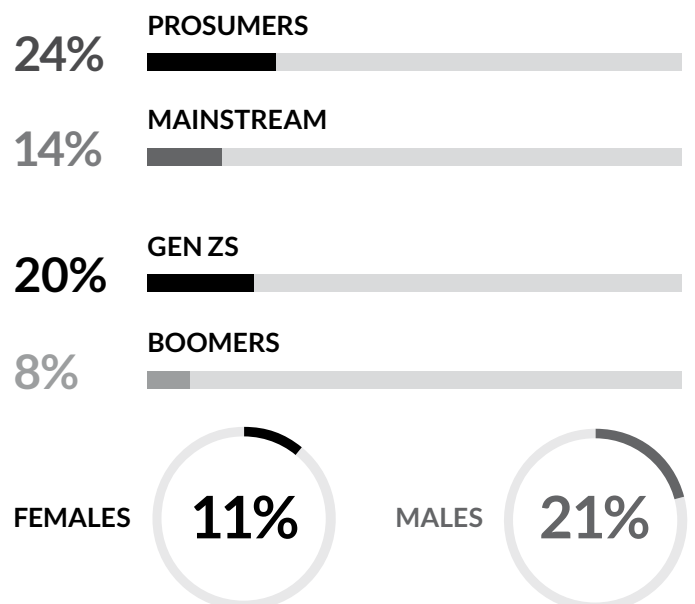
Which comes closer to your point of view? (Choose one | Prosumers)



Gone are the days of spontaneity and excess. We have turned into a society of planners, willing to take only calculated risks, if any at all. Maybe this has something to do with seeing "perfect" party setups on social media. Or perhaps it's simply that if we venture outside our cocoons, we want some assurance that the experience won't lead to regrets.

Today, even the notion of going to parties to flirt is on the decline. When pried from their homes, people are likelier to hang out with friends than risk encounters of the unknown—and uncontrolled—kind.

I love going to parties to flirt

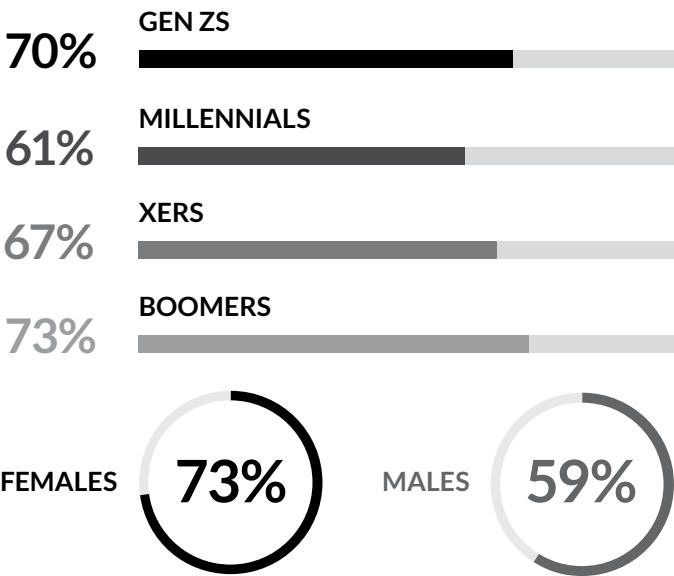




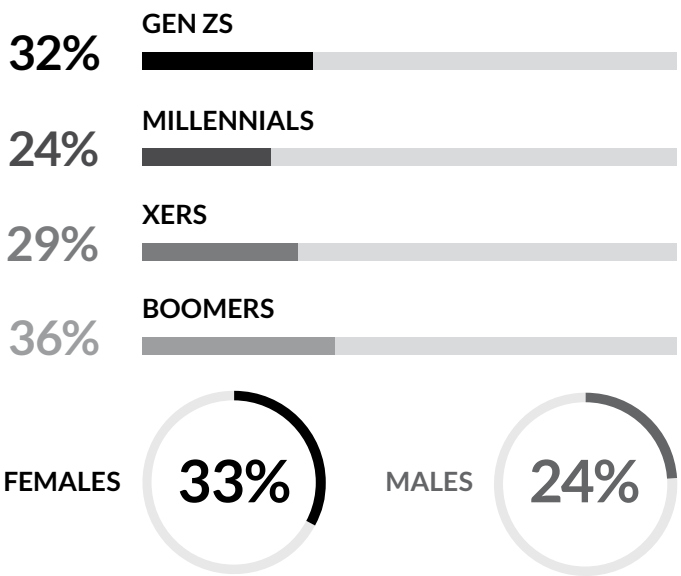
MOCKTAIL MANIA

Another safety mechanism: saying no to booze. Around 6 in 10 Prosumers and 7 in 10 Gen Zs say they don't need alcohol to have fun at a party. Moreover, a third of Gen Zs and women surveyed make it a point not to drink alcohol at social events. Sales stats and marketing trends back this up. **Mocktail bars** and **menus** are on the rise, and the alcohol-free beer segment is **booming**. On social media, **SoberTok** and the **sober curiosity** movement are all the (in moderation) rage.

I don't need to drink alcohol to have fun at a party*



I don't drink alcohol at parties



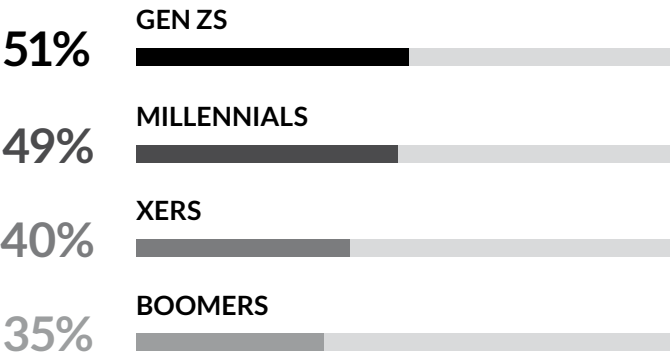
*Selected in response to a two-option question: Which comes closer to your point of view? "I don't need to drink alcohol to have fun at a party" or "Drinking alcohol is an important part of a party"



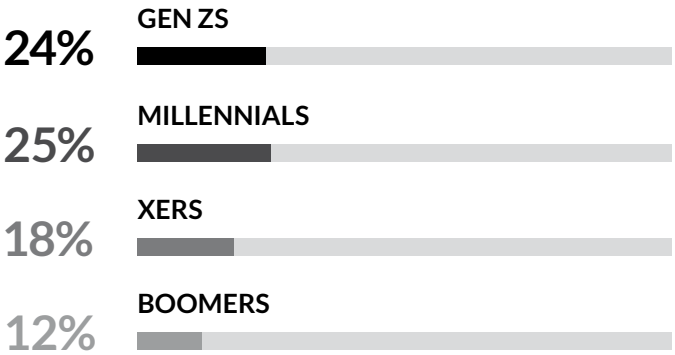
ME, MYSELF & PEOPLE LIKE ME

Beyond a preference for partying with people they know, around half of Prosumers and Gen Zs feel safer when surrounded by partygoers “like them” (e.g., same gender and sexual orientation). It’s all part of controlling one’s environment to keep unwelcome surprises at bay. For around a quarter of our youngest respondents, this extends to avoiding partying with people of different political persuasions. Who wants to leave home only to be embroiled in a debate with an ideological opponent? No one wants to have to grapple with internet trolls IRL.

I prefer to party with people like me
 (same gender, sexual orientation, etc.)
because I feel safer (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



I could not party with someone who
doesn’t share my political opinions
 (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)





Party Reinvented

People aren't just partying less; they're partying differently. Most Prosumers say that when they do go out, they party harder. This is reflected in a perceived surge in drug use during parties. There appears to be a dichotomy between "in and safe" and "out and wild."

These days, I don't party as much as I used to, but when I do, I party harder
(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



45% MAINSTREAM

I think there are more and more drugs circulating at parties nowadays
(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



62% MAINSTREAM

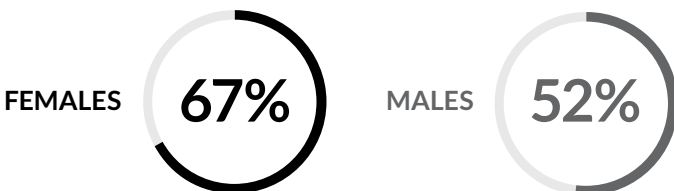
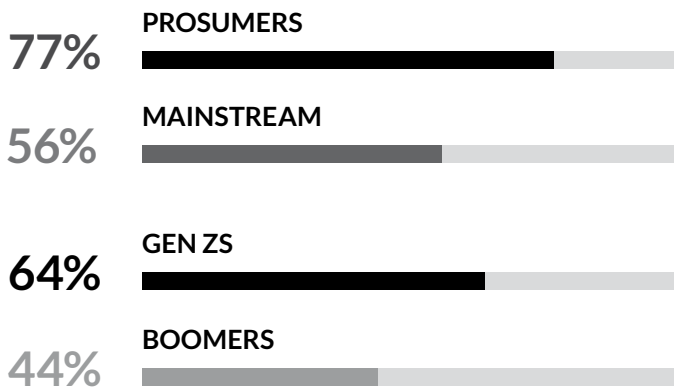


PARTY PREP IS POPPING

For most Prosumers, getting ready for a party is as much fun as the event itself. It's all about self-expression through makeup and fashion and, of course, planning the perfect menu. Among the current trends we're seeing: **food boards**, **food bars**, and **neon fare**.

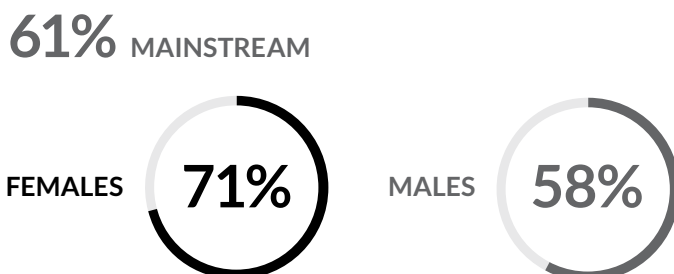
Prepping for a party is as fun as the party itself

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

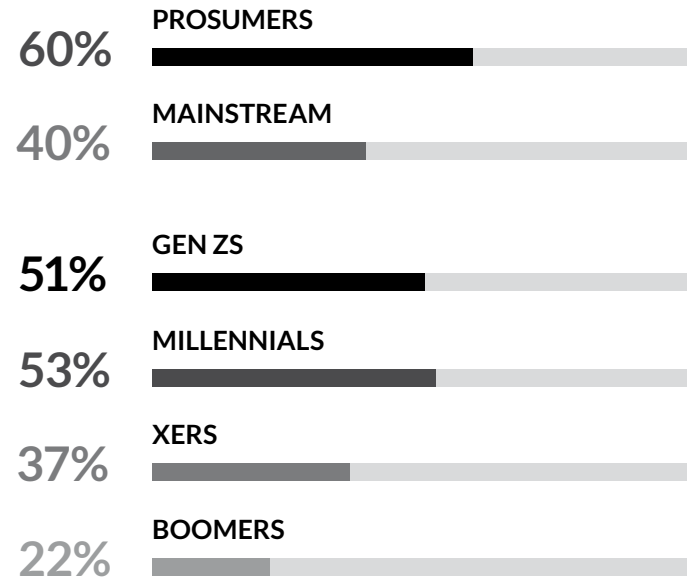


I love to get dressed up for a party

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

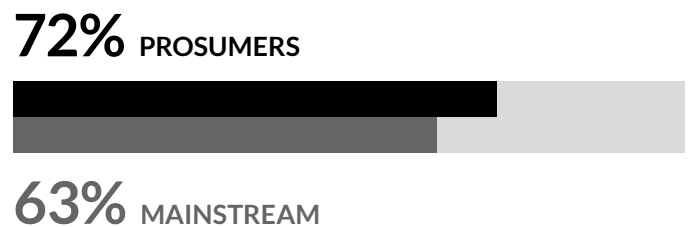


Parties are a great way to express myself through makeup (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)



There is no great party without great food

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)





NO MORE CHECKING VALUES AT THE DOOR

For most respondents, parties are not an excuse to leave one’s values behind. On the contrary, social events are seen as an occasion to take a stand. For instance, two-thirds of Prosumers believe parties should respect and preserve the environment—a conviction that holds across the generational cohorts, ranging from 50% of boomers to 60% of millennials. Say goodbye to releases of balloons and lanterns—and don’t expect to escape censure should you cross an eco-line. More than 4 in 10 Prosumers would go so far as to boycott a party that harms the environment.

I think parties should be committed to respecting and preserving the environment

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

66% PROSUMERS



55% MAINSTREAM

I boycott parties that have a negative impact on the climate

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

43% PROSUMERS



33% MAINSTREAM

There’s also a pronounced interest in inclusivity. Not of political views, mind you, but of gender identity, sexuality, and ability. So, while most people want to party with people “like them,” they reject exclusionary tactics. This suggests that the line people draw has more to do with politics and values than demographics.

I think parties should be inclusive of all genders and sexualities

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

70% PROSUMERS



57% MAINSTREAM

I think parties should be inclusive of people with disabilities

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

54% PROSUMERS



43% MAINSTREAM



PARTIES AS POLITICAL PLATFORMS: A GENERATIONAL DIVIDE

There's a clear divide on the perceived appropriateness of large social gatherings serving as venues for political activism. On balance, Prosumers, millennials, and Gen Zs favor using such gatherings to promote social causes. In contrast, only a minority of mainstream consumers and the two older generations support such actions. Boomers are especially disinclined to support parties as an opportunity for activism, with nearly two-thirds saying that such activities should be avoided.

Which comes closer to your point of view? (Choose one.)

Big gatherings are great opportunities to take a stand on social causes and justice
(e.g., freedom of speech, LGBTQIA+ rights)

⋮

Big gatherings should not be subject to activism

⋮

Prosumers

59%

41%

Mainstream

47%

53%

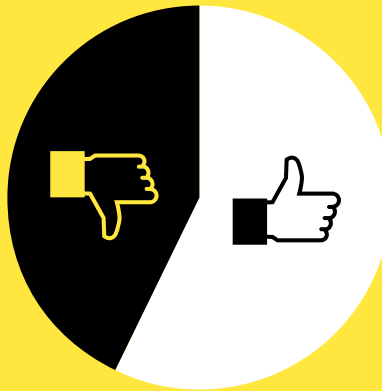


A generational divide:

**Parties as occasions
for activism**

GEN Z

Anti
43%

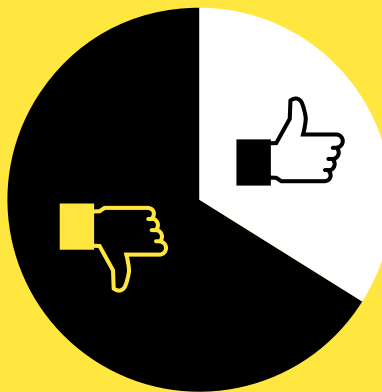


Pro
57%

VS.

BOOMERS

Anti
66%



Pro
34%



A Place for Brands

Our respondents made clear that brands are more than welcome in this space—as hosts and organizers. This likely comes back to the issue of safety and planning. A brand-organized event suggests some level of security, financial investment, and preparation. Modern partygoers seem to feel safer when there’s a “grownup” in charge, some entity that’s accountable for participants’ well-being and invested in ensuring everyone has a good time.



I'd be willing to go to a party hosted by a brand

(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

80% PROSUMERS



56% MAINSTREAM

I love when brands host parties because they have the means and money to make them unforgettable (% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

74% PROSUMERS



48% MAINSTREAM

There's also a widely held expectation that brands will go big, producing unforgettable events. To get Gen Zs off their couches, the event had better be worth bragging about. Extra points for memorabilia to take home and show off on one's social channels.

Invitations to Scandinavian brand Rains' Fashion Week **runway show** in Paris were distributed via TikTok and Instagram. The warehouse-based party featured models in nothing but raincoats, and, in keeping with the theme, the **invitations** could only be read when wet.

In Los Angeles, the Hulu streaming media channel celebrated Halloween with **Huluween: Now Screaming**, an immersive experience featuring costumed actors and characters from several popular shows, including *American Horror Story*, *Goosebumps*, and *The Boogeyman*. The free event featured a "possessed" contortionist, plenty of opportunities for jump-scare photo moments, and a chance to score branded merchandise, including hoodies and slappy masks.

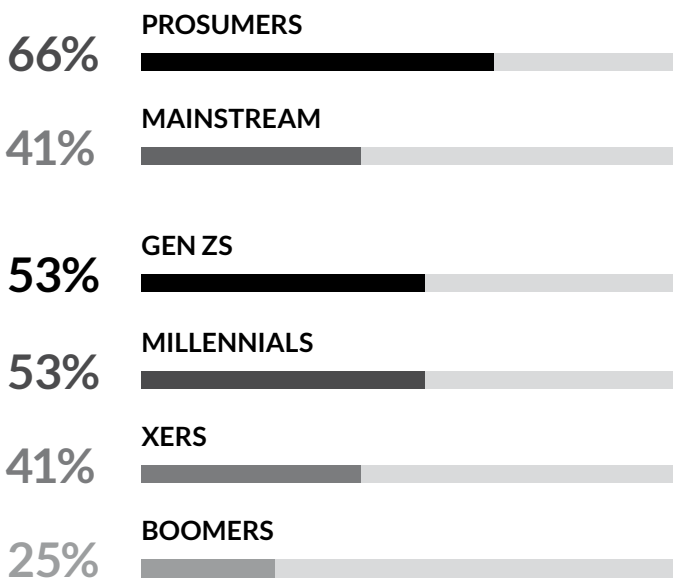


Parties, Not Ads

Among Prosumers and younger respondents, there's a strong preference for brands that go the extra mile to create engaging experiences. Two-thirds of Prosumers and more than half of Gen Zs and millennials (versus just a quarter of boomers) prefer to buy from brands that sponsor big events such as concerts. And around the same percentages would prefer to see marketing budgets spent on organizing events rather than advertising.

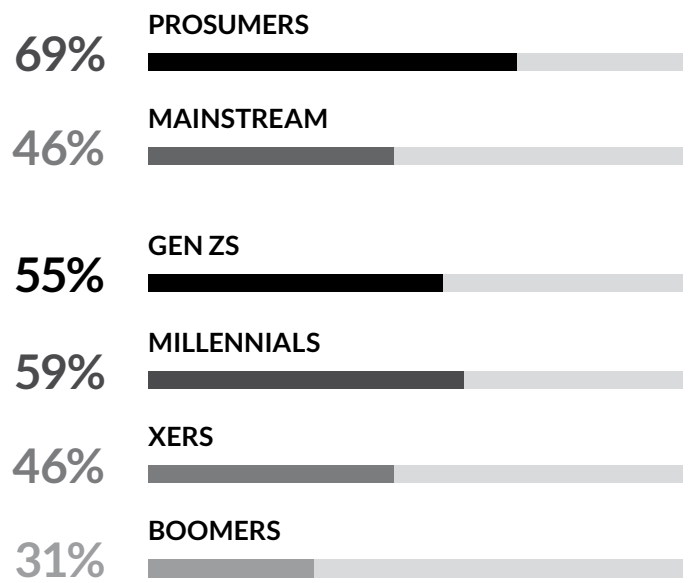


I'd prefer to buy a product from a brand that is an active sponsor of the big events I like to attend (e.g., concerts)



(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

I'd like to see my favorite brands spend more on organizing events/parties rather than doing advertising



(% agreeing strongly/somewhat)

American Express's **Outside the Court** activation at this year's NBA All-Star Weekend in Salt Lake City, Utah, featured an outdoor block party; a shop where fans could customize jerseys, sweatshirts, and other merchandise; meet-and-greets with NBA players and legends; outdoor firepits and ice sculpture carving; musical performances by Wiz Khalifa and Chloe Bailey; fan competitions and interactive games; and a speakeasy-style Dirty Soda Shoppe serving Utah's iconic beverage.

From **Paris** and **Tokyo** to **Orlando**, Disney hosts major bashes to celebrate milestone anniversaries at each park. They include spectacular nighttime shows, special-edition merchandise, and curated menus. People travel from around the world to take part in the events.

IN A NUTSHELL

1. Hyperfestivity killed the party: Now that parties can happen anyplace, at any time, and for any reason, they have lost their magic. For the most part, parties are no longer something to look forward to and talk about for weeks afterward; they're just part of the fabric of life.

2. *Homo comfortus*: With all manner of entertainment options and conveniences at their fingertips, younger generations, in particular, need a compelling reason to get off the couch and go out. And when they do go to the effort, they expect their hosts—whether a friend or a brand—to make it worth their while.

3. Control freaks, unite!: Post-COVID society has become obsessed with control and is having difficulty letting go when partying. This means fewer interactions with strangers (especially those outside their sociopolitical bubbles), less flirting, fewer surprises, and less alcohol.

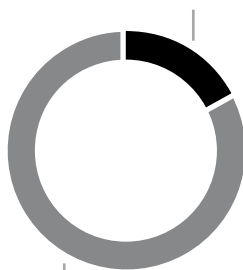
4. New models of celebration: There is no longer one set expectation of parties, and the best aspect may well be the hours leading up to social events, with people scouring TikTok for ideas and sharing their prep stages with the world.

5. Brands + parties = a virtuous synergy: Brands are sought-after party hosts, bringing added value to events and ensuring people can unwind and celebrate in a safe environment.

About the Study

In the first quarter of 2023, Havas partnered with Market Probe International to survey 12,929 people ages 18+ in 30 markets: Africa bundle (Ivory Coast, Kenya, Nigeria), Argentina, Australia, Austria, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Colombia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, India, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Spain, Ukraine, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The survey sample was made up of **17%** leading-edge **Prosumers**



and **83%** mainstream consumers.

Who Are Prosumers?

Prosumers are today's leading influencers and market drivers. They have been a focus of Havas studies for two decades. Beyond their own economic impact, Prosumers are important because they influence the brand choices and consumption behaviors of others. What Prosumers are doing today, mainstream consumers will likely be doing 6 to 18 months from now.

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