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de Bruin, S.

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UvA Dissertation

Faculty of Social and Behavioural Sciences

Simone Boogaarts-de Bruin (1976) graduated with a degree in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. She conducted the current study at the Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies, which is linked to the University of Amsterdam.

The urban population is becoming increasingly diverse and growing (ethnic) diversity is having a singular effect on nightlife in Dutch cities. By studying the motivation behind and nightlife choices of the young people who participate in ethno-party scenes, Boogaarts-de Bruin investigates how the changing urban population affects the supply side of the nightlife market using an analytical model she has developed and which she calls the model of structured choice. This approach is sensitive to the flexible use of the processes of agency and structure due to the systematic distinction that it makes between societal and personal factors. Accordingly, it is revealed that in order to analyze and adequately explain the nightlife experiences of and choices made by ethnic youngsters, an integrated model is required which centralizes the interaction between the structural strategies of the producers on the one hand and the personal preferences and agency of the consumers on the other. What is more, this book demonstrates that nightlife has changed because of the increasing ethnic diversity of the Dutch population. Finally, in the epilogue, the fieldwork results are discussed in light of the currently heated debate regarding the integration processes of ethnic minority young people (in nightlife).

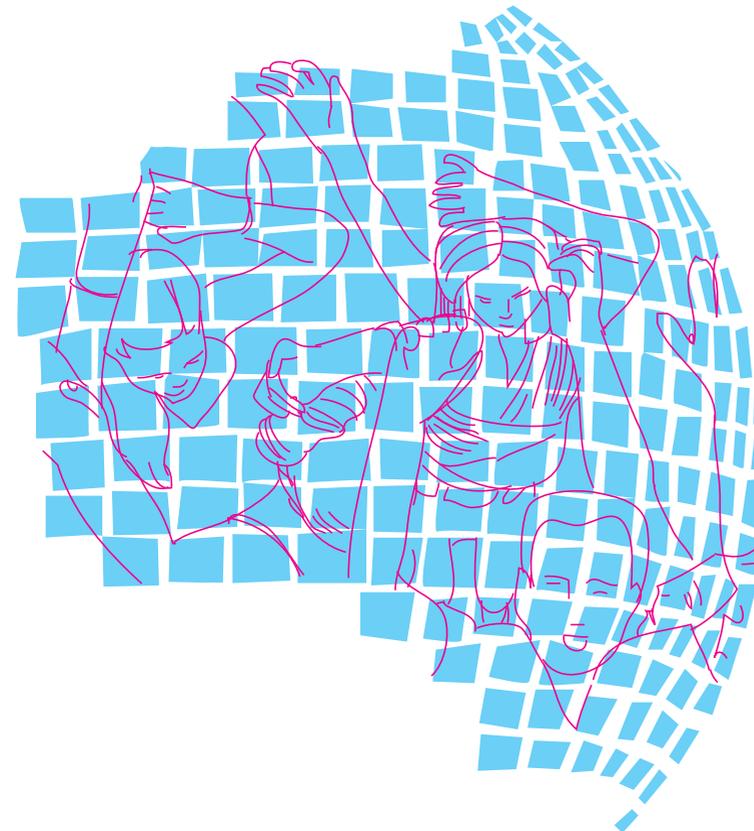


Simone Boogaarts-de Bruin
Something for Everyone?

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Changes and Choices in the Ethno-Party Scene in Urban Nightlife

Simone Boogaarts-de Bruin



UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM

Something for everyone?

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Something for Everyone?

Changes and Choices in the Ethno-Party Scene in Urban Nightlife

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor
aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus,
prof. dr D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het College voor Promoties ingestelde
commissie, in het openbaar te verdedigen in de Aula der Universiteit
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Promotiecommissie:

Promotor: prof. dr. M.J.A. Penninx
 prof. dr. J.C. Rath
overige leden: prof. dr. R.C. Kloosterman
 dr. G. Kuipers
 prof. dr. A.C.A.E. Moors
 prof. dr. S.C. Redhead
 prof. dr. E.A. van Zoonen

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Simone Boogaarts-de Bruin

Introduction

Cities are becoming increasingly diverse, which is partly due to globalization and the concomitant international mobility of people. In Dutch cities such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, the number of second generation youths aged between 15 and 25 is growing rapidly. According to Zukin (1998), migrants and ethnic minorities have had a singular effect on defining 'urban' cultures, both at work and play. As they have become more evident in public spaces, they have ensured that a variety of 'alternative' lifestyles have also become more visible, especially in the larger cities where these groups of people are concentrated. These lifestyles certainly change the urban landscape. New shops, hair salons and (take away) restaurants have opened to cater to the needs of the urban population. These ethnically diverse stores and eateries are very well integrated into cities. Indeed, many city dwellers now often take out Surinamese food, for example, and the Turkish food stores are no longer the sole preserve of the Turkish community.

The ethnic diversity of the urban population also affects its young members. This is especially noticeable in the expression of a growing diversification of lifestyles, musical preferences and dress codes. When it comes to the choice of music, the Dutch station FunX radio started broadcasting in August 2003, with the aim of filling the gap between the musical interests of large groups of urban youngsters and the music channels which were already in existence. FunX focuses on people aged between 15 and 35, and it is especially broad in its outlook, catering to the varied tastes of its ethnically diverse young urban listeners. The music that is played includes urban, Latin, reggae, oriental, Türk pop, bhangra, räi hip-hop and many other ethnic and cross-over styles. Moreover, the station's reporters are present every day at local schools, shopping malls and clubs, obtaining the opinions of its target group and enabling it to keep up with the latest trends. The station is hosted by young professionals from different ethnic backgrounds, and due to its musical programming and ability to involve its target audience, FunX radio has become the most popular station among the young (urban) generation in the Netherlands today (Spangenberg and Lampert, 2009).

As a result of the fragmentation of lifestyles and dress codes, many clothes shops and department stores have changed their merchandise and are now selling more diverse styles of clothing to cater to the varied tastes of their customers. It is clear that people actively express their identity through their lifestyle, clothes and music. At leisure, these consumption practices and identity markers, in all their forms, are being made explicit. Especially during a night out, young people carefully choose their favourite club or bar, that fits in with their musical and lifestyle tastes. Going out is an important part of the lives of many young people today, not only as a way to relax, but also as a way of meeting new people and having new experiences.

Changing nightlife

Since musical preferences and the choice of a certain bar, dance hall or club are very interrelated, it is probable that urban nightlife is also changing and becoming more ethnically mixed. A wide range of night-time activities now play a legitimate role within the urban economy. In the last ten years in particular, this night-time economy has expanded and diversified, attracting a more varied audience. As a result, the musical programming of urban nightlife in the Netherlands has undergone some interesting changes. One of these is the introduction of so-called 'broad programming', whereby varying styles of music are played in a club on different days of the week. The organization of theme nights with which to attract a 'multi-cultural' audience has also found its way into urban nightlife. At a *Mystic Grooves* party, for example, the DJ sweeps up the multicultural audience with a mix of dance tracks, Pakistani breakbeat and bhangra music. Furthermore, club owners are increasingly making use of external party agencies to come up with new and trendy concepts. Some of these organizations organize so-called 'ethno-parties', which are arranged by and for a single ethnic group. Initially, these parties took place in rented halls and other venues outside the city centre. A recent trend, however, is that popular, mainstream clubs are opening up their doors to these ethno-parties in order to not miss out on the growing number of ethnic consumers. To this end, club owners now rent their venues to ethnic party organizations on a regular basis.

These changes in inner-city nightlife confirm that clubs are now catering to a wide range of musical tastes in order to meet the cultural preferences of the ethnically diverse young urban population in the Netherlands. This change of approach also points to a more interactive relationship between the consumers and producers of nightlife. The former do not simply consume the parties that are organized for them, but also influence the types of events that are arranged. As a result, clubs organize different types and styles of parties, meaning that the young urban dweller has more to choose from when deciding where to go at night.

Unfortunately, these changes in urban nightlife do not seem to be equally beneficial to the entire young urban population. At the turn of the century, the media frequently reported on the discrimination that Turkish and Moroccan men faced at the doors of popular clubs in inner-cities (Komen and Schram 2005). A survey of the nightlife activities of Amsterdam's ethnic minority youths, aged between 16 and 26 (N= 482), revealed that more than 50% of Turkish and 70% of Moroccan men believed that they were discriminated against by bouncers and so-called 'doorbitches' (style selectors) (Geldorp 2003: 26). For a couple of years now, the door policies of the clubs in the larger cities in the Netherlands have faced heavy scrutiny and received a lot of media attention. Clubs are being encouraged to be transparent in this regard, and can even be fined or closed down by the local government if it receives too many reports of discriminatory practices. This growing attention and demand for transparency can only help to improve things, but does not necessarily mean that ethnic minority youngsters *feel* more welcome in Dutch urban nightlife.

About this book

Discussions of divisions and exclusion from nightlife usually imply that assumptions are being made about young ethnic minority clubbers and their musical tastes, attitudes and behaviour. They are sometimes perceived as victims of a discriminatory door policy, while also being blamed as trouble makers who do not know how to behave in clubs. Such generalizations frequently come up in the media, but are not substantiated by systematic, empirical research. In fact, research into the experiences and choices made by ethnic youngsters regarding their nightlife is very scarce in the

Netherlands, an exception being the marvellous, but outdated, study by Sansone (1994) of the lifestyles of young Surinamese people. Moreover, the nightlife experiences of members of the ethnic minorities have not received much scholarly attention elsewhere, although there are some exceptions here too, such as the studies by Back (1996), Bennett (1997), Alba (1997) and Huq (2006).

This research aims to fill this lacuna by investigating the complex nightlife choices that ethnic minority youngsters make when it comes to ethno-parties. More generally, I will also analyze the changes that are taking place in inner-city nightlife because of the changing urban population. This research is designed to shed light on both the dynamic interplay between the consumers and producers of nightlife and the dynamic relationship between social structures and agency in the nightlife choices of young ethnic people. More specifically, this work revolves around changes to the availability and form of contemporary nightlife that is being promoted by the increasing diversification of its patrons, the changing relationship between consumers and producers, and the nightlife experiences and choices of ethnically diverse consumers. Are cities in fact places which have something for all tastes? How do ethnic youngsters decide where to party? How are their choices affected by the availability and accessibility of nightlife? To what extent are ethnic minority young people able to make changes to urban nightlife? What is the relationship between the diversification of the urban population and urban change? These are the questions which lie at the heart of this research.

Studying nightlife

Nightlife research in the Netherlands is very rare. I certainly won't forget the reactions of many of my fellow PhD students and professors during conversations about my work. Some claimed that it sounded like 'fun' research to carry out, and that hanging around at parties is a 'relaxed' way of conducting a study. Others just raised their eyebrows and asked me: 'why? They clearly doubted the value of research into the nightlife experiences of members of ethnic minorities and the changes that are taking place therein. However, social division is an important and much appreciated concept in sociology. It is used to position young ethnic people in multi-ethnic societies, and is studied extensively in schools, neighbourhoods, or

the workplace. Yet social divisions also exist in nightlife, and there are several reasons why nightlife research into ethnic minority youngsters is relevant. I will argue that what happens at night is a reflection of what happens during the day, and it is for this reason that studying nightlife, a core activity in the lives of many young people, is so important. Furthermore, many sociologists agree that it is crucial to study the changes that are taking place in the urban landscape, not only in terms of restaurants, shops and the ethnic composition of neighbourhoods, but also when it comes to night-time experiences. This latter issue has largely been ignored by Dutch researchers. Accordingly, with this work, I will bring a new dimension to studies of the changes that are taking place in the urban landscape as a result of the growing ethnic diversity of its population.

Outline of the book

The book is in three parts, the first of which introduces the study in more detail. Chapter 1 presents an overview of nightlife research and clubbing. Here, the focus is on the theoretical concepts of the study of young people's lifestyles. A distinction is made between research into 'subcultures', which concentrates predominantly on social structures, and studies in which the agency and autonomy of the participants is the central focus. In the second chapter, I reflect on existing nightlife research. I will make a distinction between work conducted from a producer perspective and that approached from a consumer point of view. The analyses of these two theoretical chapters form the basis of my analytical framework, which I present in Chapter 3. Therein, I will draw out in detail my analytical model for the study of structured nightlife choices. The final chapter (Chapter 4) in this first section of the book describes the methodological strategies and decisions made in this study.

Part II of the book presents case-studies of three ethno-party scenes in the Netherlands: the Turkish clubbing scene in Chapter 6; the Asian party scene in Chapter 7; and the Moroccan leisure scene in Chapter 8. Before considering these arenas in detail, in Chapter 5 I will expand upon the rules and regulations which apply to urban nightlife in the Netherlands, and I will also provide a detailed description of the changes that have been taking place in the Dutch

nightlife. In these four fieldwork chapters, I will draw upon both ethnographic material and secondary sources.

Finally, part III of the book ties together the previous sections in order to answer the research questions concerning structured nightlife choices and the changes that are taking place in Dutch urban nightlife. In Chapter 9, and to answer the main research questions informing this study, I will analyze the strategies of the producers as well as the choices and preferences of the consumers of nightlife. In the Epilogue, the research data will be interpreted from an integration perspective in order to consider whether, and if so how, my research findings contribute to what is known about the integration of new groups into Dutch society.

Part I

Researching Clubbing

Chapter 1 Subculture and post-subcultural research

The history of youth culture as an object of sociological study is long and complex. Just as youth culture itself is constantly changing aesthetically and stylistically, so the analytical tools and theoretical frameworks that researchers have employed to interpret its meaning and significance have also varied over time. In this chapter I will explore the content and perspective of the existing literature that is relevant to nightlife in urban contexts. The purpose of this is to enable me to develop a conceptual and analytical framework as a basis for both the fieldwork I have carried out and the analysis thereof. I start with an exploration of the concept of subculture, which was developed in the 1970s by the Centre for Contemporary and Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham. This theory addresses the relationship between young people and their lifestyles. I will then focus on a more recent body of work, known as post-subcultural studies, which has become the dominant approach to the study of young people and their cultural lives when at leisure. During my exploration of both of these concepts, I will specifically draw attention to their usefulness (or lack of) when the nightlife activities of ethnic minority young people are the subject of the research.

1.1 The Birmingham school

In anthropology, sociology, criminology, cultural studies and education, the concept of a 'subculture' has been an important notion, which has been developed into an analytical model with which to interpret young people's social lives (Nayak 2003). The foundations of the study of youth culture were laid during the 1920s and 30s by a group of US sociologists based at the University of Chicago (Bennett 2000). By emphasizing the context of the working-class neighbourhoods, ghettos and slums, the 'Chicago School', as this group came to be known, wanted to construct a new paradigm for the study of deviant behaviour from where it arose. They argued that when studied in its cultural context, juvenile delinquency could be seen as a normal response 'determined by

cultural norms and not a symptom of psychological deficiency' (Bennett 2000: 14). Whyte's *Street Corner Society* (1981 [1943]) is a good example of such studies. From an insider's perspective, he describes the organized and hierarchical gang-life of young people. Whyte used ethnography as the basis for his research in an Italian-American slum, which he referred to as 'Cornerville'. He believed that the ethnographic method could provide an alternative to the dominant view of the slum as a social problem, enabling it to be instead seen as a world within a world, where particular rules apply and must be observed in order to survive (Bennett 2000).

From the 1920s onwards, researchers have attempted to explain why and how young people become involved in a subculture, its meaning and functions, and, in particular, its contribution to enabling young people to cope with transitions in their lives. As early as the 1920s, the notion of a 'subculture' was being recognized analytically in youth research. However, it was through the work in the 1970s of the British, Birmingham-based Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) that the term subculture really became associated with the study of young people. The CCCS's studies used ethnographic methods and Marxist analysis to describe and analyze youth culture in general, and specific subcultures in particular, in the post-war period (Besley 2003). The researchers linked the proliferation of subcultures to the struggle that young people had with class relations and associated structural changes. The notion of subculture as a response to structural changes was the centrepiece of the CCCS's work, *Resistance through Rituals* (1993). First published in 1975 as a series of working papers in the *Cultural Studies* journal, *Resistance through Rituals* embodied a first attempt to provide a systematic social theory of music and style-driven youth cultures, and it quickly became a key text both in youth research and in the teaching of youth culture as an academic subject. The names of some of these subcultures - teddy boys, mods, punks, skinheads etc. - are notable for the way in which they focus on style of dress, manners and type of music, all of which provide some of the cohesiveness for the group and evoke images of particular (rebellious) behaviour. The analyses of this specific approach to subcultures during the 1970s referred to young white, heterosexual, working class men in particular as oppressed, marginalized and resistant to the social and

economic conditions in which they found themselves within an exploitative capitalist system (Griffin 2001). It was claimed by the CCCS that the emergent, style-based youth cultures, 'while indeed indicative of newly acquired spending habits, symbolized at a deeper level that class divisions were still very much a feature of post-war British society' (Bennett 2004: 5).

Critiques of subcultural studies

The CCCS approach, and its use of subcultures as a concept, has been criticized on a number of grounds. McRobbie and Garber (1976) highlighted the failure to provide accounts of the involvement of girls in subcultures. Indeed, almost all of the research in this tradition addressed working class young men as the active constructors of subcultures, while young women, if mentioned at all, were viewed as passive followers. In her work, McRobbie demonstrates that young women were actively involved in their own subcultures, which predominantly took place in their homes and bedrooms. She labelled this: 'bedroom culture'.

A further problem identified with the CCCS's work on youth is its unqualified equation of post-war patterns of youth consumerism with ideas of working class resistance. As Muggleton (2000) notes, such a premise rests on the essentialist notion that members of subcultures were indeed predominantly, or even exclusively, working-class; other youth groups were never part of this subcultural research. Another criticism is that the CCCS primarily focused on working class young men, while other structural characteristics, such as gender and ethnicity, were neglected. However, at the same time, the findings were generalized to the broader category of British youth. Furthermore, the notion that young people may be playing their 'subcultural' roles for 'fun' was never really considered by the CCCS. Instead, they analyzed subcultures as being the result of the marginalized and oppressed circumstances of young, white, working class men.

A final point of concern is that the subcultural theory developed by the CCCS is essentially a British concept, formulated with a view to studying a specific section of British youth - white working class males - at a particular point in post-Second World War British history. As such, it is very difficult both to transpose the

group's subcultural theory to other national contexts (Bennett 2004: 8) and use its structural framework for other periods of time. The specificity of the CCCS's subcultural theory to a British context is further evidenced by youth culture research in the USA, which has remained far more sensitive to issues of race, culture and locality as factors that cut across, or at least problematize, structuralist explanations of youth (see, for example, Rose 1994, and his work on hip-hop).

1.2 Post-subcultural theory

Much of the recent work which has reacted against the CCCS outlook has been characterized 'post-subcultural' (Muggleton 2005). Introduced by Redhead (1993), and developed further by Muggleton (1997: 2000), this approach argues that the structurally grounded concept of subculture has become increasingly redundant in relation to contemporary youth culture. Underlying the move towards post-subcultural analysis is an argument that as the relationship between style, musical taste and identity has become progressively weaker and articulated with more fluidity, subcultural divisions have broken down. This alleged breakdown was first noted by Redhead in his study of the early British rave scene. According to this author, rave was 'notorious for mixing all kinds of styles on the same dance floor and attracting a range of previously opposed subcultures' (1993: 3-4). He argued that the combined effects of post-industrialization, and the increasing amount of free time available to young people, gave rise to a new 'clubbing culture', which supposedly dissolved previous structural divisions, such as class, race and gender, because the dance crowds became mixed in these respects. Instead, Redhead drew attention to the influence of the market and media, as well as the increasing buying power of young people in the construction of their lifestyles. Reviews of the literature on youth culture or lifestyle research conventionally recognize this shift as a movement from a more structural approach towards one which emphasizes both the agency of young people and the influence of the marketplace as a site for socialization (Bennett 1999; 2000; Besley 2003; Chatterton and Hollands 2002; Griffin 2001; Maira and Soep 2004; MacRae 2004; Miles 2000). This post-subcultural outlook views young people as social agents who are free to engage in consumer practices. Muggleton (1997: 173), for example, argued that subcultural style is

constituted solely through consumption, and is 'no longer articulated around the structural relations of class, gender, ethnicity or even the span of youth'. In post-subcultural studies there is, it is argued, less attention paid to social divisions or stratified youth cultures (Hollands 2002). Indeed, in direct contrast to the class-based youth cultures identified by the CCCS, contemporary youth cultures are said to be more fleeting and organized around individual lifestyle and consumption choices.

Globalization

In order to capture these elements of choice and self-determination, researchers have tried to come up with new concepts, like 'neo-tribes' (Bennett 2000), 'post-subculturalist' (Muggleton 2000), lifestyle (Miles 2000), taste culture (Thornton 1995) and club culture (Redhead 1997). For instance, in his analytical framework, Bennett (1999) draws upon Maffesoli's (1996) concept of *tribus*. In contrast to the term subculture, the phrase neo-tribes provides, according to Bennett, 'a better understanding of the series of temporal gatherings characterized by fluid boundaries and floating membership of young people' (1999: 600). He argues that the framework of neo-tribes is related to the concept of lifestyle, which he defines as: 'the sensibilities employed by the individual in choosing certain commodities and patterns of consumption and in articulating these cultural resources as modes of cultural expression' (Bennett 1999: 607). What these researchers did, however, agree upon is that the study of subcultures, as conducted at the CCCS, no longer applies to the current globalized and commercialized times. In this postmodern, global era, youngsters are regarded as consumers with specific interests, desires and buying power. Now more than ever, children and young people find their identities and values in the market place, rather than in traditional sources such as the family, church and school.

In reaction to these changes, youth culture research began to engage with theories of globalization (Maira and Soep 2004; Miles 2000; Nayak 2003) and, at the turn of the century, with the notion of global youth culture (Griffin 2001). It is the hedonistic vibe celebrated in the clubbing scene that appears to have been taken over by the researchers; clubbing is all about forgetting the problems

of the week and, instead of social structures, cultural features (dress code, dance, pose) are centralized as the dividing and hierarchy creating elements. In this approach, young people are viewed as free-floating consumers who can easily move in and out of styles according to the ‘tastes of the day’.

Critiques of post-subcultural studies

Post-subcultural studies pay little attention to the importance of social divisions and inequalities in contemporary youth culture (Shildrick and MacDonalds 2006: 125). Although subculture theorists are criticized for focusing on one social group of young people, most post-subcultural studies likewise concentrate on the nightlife activities of just a single group, namely the predominantly white middle class urban youth. Indeed, they largely ignore questions of accessibility or inequality and spatial separation among different groups of (ethnic) consumers (Hollands 2002). Shildrick and MacDonald (2006) correctly highlight the tendency of many post-subcultural researchers to ignore the cultural lives and identities of less advantaged young people, forgetting that for some, social divisions still shape their cultural identity. Most post-subcultural research focuses on nightlife and the capacity of young people to participate in different scenes by changing their style and musical preferences. However, the accessibility of this nightlife is not self-evident for all social groups of young people, as I have referred to in the Introduction to this book. Likewise, Carrington and Wilson (2004: 71) note the lack of attention paid by contemporary post-subcultural scholars to issues of ‘racial formation, ethnic identity construction and the articulation of racism in and between subcultures’.

1.3 An integrative approach

In the previous two sections I have explored the different conceptual and analytical frameworks that have been developed to study the relationships between young people, music, style and identity. All of these frameworks can be placed within the sociological debate of agency and structure. In the concept of subculture, and in relation to subcultural participation, the social structure of class in the lives of young people is centralized.

In reaction to the dominance of the structural attention paid to how young people live, scholars

developed a new model to study this group and their cultural lives. This has become known as ‘post-subcultural studies’ (Muggleton 2004). In this approach, the agency and power of young people in terms of their choice of lifestyle are prioritized over existing social structures. Both approaches have been criticized and adapted, which has resulted in a so-called ‘current debate about subculture theory and post-subcultural studies’ (Shildrick and MacDonalds 2006).

These two outlooks, which can be placed at the opposite ends of the structure-agency spectrum, do not paint a coherent picture if the aim is to study different social groups; working class children in British society might have been weighed down by the structural forces arising out of the exploitive capitalist system in the 1970s, and it might be true that for contemporary middle class kids, social structures have become less important, making it possible to switch between different scenes as a result of their increasing buying power. Focusing solely on social structures, or on the agency and autonomy of individuals, does not however reflect reality for many young people. The opposition between these outlooks sustains an artificial separation, which Giddens (1984: 292) calls the ‘*phoney war*’ between micro and macro approaches in social science.

Some authors have attempted to reconcile both approaches. Focusing on the clubbing scene, MacRae (2004: 57), for example, states that it ‘is important to contextualize and conceptualize the young people’s experiences of clubbing and their lifestyle ‘choices’ in a way that recognizes that some young people are more able than others to engage in particular styles of life, and consumer and cultural activities’. Such a combined outlook assumes that culture or subculture is neither solely a matter of class relations, nor a matter of free choice. Hollands summarizes the need for an integrated approach by stating that ‘it is clear that hybrid symbolic and lifestyle aspects of consumption are crucial for an understanding of contemporary youth cultures, it is equally obvious that existing social divisions and transitions, locality and corporate ownership are also important and provide a context for understanding consumption ‘choices’’. (2002: 158).

Ultimately, the solution that the integrative approaches tries to offer, namely that to mediate between the structural processes imposed by society as a whole on the one hand, and the opportunities for active consumers to make choices on the other, is not particularly satisfying. None of these scholars shed any light on *how* this inter-relationship between structural processes and human agency actually takes place in the lives of young people. Most admit that both social structure and agency play a role in nightlife choices and experiences, but do not suggest how this interplay works. Bennett (1999) and MacRae (2004), for example, have attempted to explain social divisions *within* the clubbing scene. However, by focusing solely on that, they largely overlook matters of accessibility to nightlife and do not shed any light on the process of choice. Furthermore, none of the scholars who are working with an integrative approach study the lifestyle participation and nightlife experiences of young members of ethnic minority groups. Accordingly, I will argue that a new model, which does justice to the processes of agency and social structures in the nightlife choices of (ethnic) young people, is necessary. Moreover, since door policies and the musical programming of nightlife and parties are important features of a successful night out, it is important to include both the producers as well as the consumers of night-time activities in the research. Consequently, before setting out my analytical model of structured nightlife choices, in the next chapter I will first elaborate on the roles of both the producers and the consumers of night-time events.

Chapter 2 Consumers and producers of nightlife

The emergence of ‘house music’ in the USA during the 1980s, the phenomenon of large scale ‘acid-house’ raves in Britain towards the end of that same decade, and the subsequent rise of a globalized club culture, have all reshaped the nightlife of many metropolitan cities (Carrington 2004: 65). Dance music is now a central aspect of the leisure lifestyles of many young people. In academic circles, dance culture has long been viewed as mass culture at its worst, and was regarded as standardized and banal, while its adherents were seen as narcotized, conformist and easily manipulated (Thornton 1995: 1). What is more, dance culture was viewed as an unimportant caprice of a temporary nature. Nowadays, however, young people, and especially their night-time practices, are receiving rather more attention from social scientists.

In this chapter, I will explore the contribution of different academic disciplines to the study of night-time activities. Just as in the previous chapter, these various kinds of nightlife research can be divided into studies which focus predominantly on social structures, as well as work which concentrates on agency. However, herein, the focus is not on studies of subculture or lifestyle, but on the divisions that exist in nightlife. Accordingly, in order to provide a coherent view of nightlife research, I have separated the way in which these divisions have been studied into two perspectives, namely that of the producer and that of the consumer. In the first type of study, researchers emphasize that social structure is the most important divisive power, while in the second type of research, agency and the autonomy of free choice on the part of the consumers are central. However, before setting out the two different outlooks of the research conducted into nightlife, I will first provide some insight into the concept of divisions in night-time activities.

2.1 Social divisions

The dance music culture has a broad appeal across different social and ethnic groups. With the wide availability of dance parties in cities like Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague, different people

are attending a variety of clubs and venues. Although they share an interest in the same sort of dance music, students, ethnic minorities, gays, the young working classes, trendy mainstream young people and those who have been labelled ‘Sharon and Tracy’ (Thornton 1995) (Sjonnie and Anita in Dutch), do not necessarily dance at the same club nights. Dance crowds tend to be relatively homogeneous in respect of style of dress, and because people do not want to stand out, almost nothing is as personal as the choice of a particular bar or dance (Oosterman 1992: 69).

There are, and there have always been, significant socio-economic cleavages within youth populations; for example, between the unemployed, university students, working class youngsters and highly trained young professionals. These divisions are taken into the nightlife space, and researchers have come up with various ways of distinguishing a dance crowd. According to Thornton (1995), the first dividing line is between gay and straight. However, by analyzing the different ‘nightlife spaces’ (Chatterton and Hollands 2002) occupied by the working classes and students, others emphasize social class as the main source of the division. Finally, some researchers focus on the ethnic divisions in urban nightlife by examining ethnic parties (Back 1996; Huq 2006; Boogaarts 2008). In these latter studies, music is often a key factor of differentiation. Hip-hop and RnB, for instance, are more ‘black’, while techno styles such as hardcore and eclectic house are more ‘white’ in terms of their principal artists, DJs and audience base (Huq 2006).

The wide availability of clubs in contemporary large cities makes it possible to divide urban nightlife into separate social spaces, e.g. gay and straight; working class and student; hip hop, RnB and trance; and white-ethnic-multicultural. Thus, depending on the location of the research and the focus of the researchers, urban nightlife can be divided somewhat differently. In this study, the attention is on the night-time activities of ethnic minority young people, and so the research deals predominantly with ethnic divisions in nightlife. Moreover, because social divisions also exist within ethnic groups, these are also taken into account.

2.2 The power of the producers of nightlife

Sansone (1992) argues that there are two contradictory aspects to leisure time. On the one hand, the entertainment arena is a place where oppressed people can express their frustrations and resist or try to achieve status, but on the other, the night-time economy can be seen as a market in which money and power are of the utmost importance. In his research into the lifestyle of young Surinamese and Antillean in Amsterdam, Sansone demonstrates how these youngsters, who were viewed in the 1980s as the frontrunners of disco, gained a great deal of strength and pride from their nightly successes on the dance floor. They 'sparkle in the shadows' (my translation of the Dutch title of Sansone's study 'schitteren in de schaduw'), thereby compensating for their marginal position during the day. At that time, club owners enthusiastically welcomed these Surinamese and Antillean youngsters into their clubs, not only because they looked hip and trendy and knew the latest dance moves, but also because they were willing to spend a great deal of money inside the venue on expensive drinks.

In a city like Amsterdam, young people can today choose between a range of nightlife activities. This diversity comes with different price tags; some nightclubs charge a high entrance fee and are more exclusive, while others charge very little, or are even free. The price of drinks also varies between the different clubs and bars. Ball et al. (2000: 6) argue that some people are more able than others to participate in the experimental commodities of youth consumption, stating that 'going clubbing, drinking, smoking, recreational drugs, fashionable clothing and other lifestyle accessories do not come cheap'.

Door policy

Another method of differentiation that is related to money takes place at the door of a club, with bouncers and style selectors being key players in the regulation of a club night (Chatterton and Hollands 2003; Hobbs et al 2003). Most club owners target the so-called cash-rich consumers, who can not only afford to pay the entrance fee, but also look like they are willing and able to spend money on drinks. The door is one of the few places where clubbers, sometimes literally, have to prove their identity, both in the simple

sense of age, but also in the more complex sense of passing themselves off as the 'right type of clubber' for that venue or party.

The image of bouncers has changed, with the emphasis being less on their criminal, intimidatory and violent approach, than on their role as arbiters of style. Door supervision in general has become more professional, and many bouncers have received specialist training. The basic role of door staff continues to be controlling the people inside a club, which means that they have to throw out aggressive (groups of) people and decide who can and who cannot set foot in a particular venue. According to Hollands and Chatterton (2003: 57), different types of nightlife spaces have their own set of entry requirements and subtle forms of discrimination at the door, based on age, appearance, social class, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Their fieldwork revealed that although mainstream nightlife has opened up, especially to young women, ethnic minorities, students and gays, it is still only accessible to the wealthier members of these groups. Furthermore, all clubs and parties have their own definition of the 'right type of clubber', which is related to dress and appearance (Goffman 1963: 25). Negotiating entry can certainly require the display of the 'correct' style, but gaining access to a club or party is not only related to whether or not an individual has the 'right' look. As well as enforcing judgments about coolness, bouncers can also apply wider societal prejudices in respect of ethnicity, gender and 'good looks'.

Discriminatory practices at the door

Chatterton and Hollands (2002, 2003), who conducted several studies in the British nightlife, all conclude in their studies that ethnic minorities and ethnic nightlife spaces are being pushed out of the popular mainstream. According to these scholars, urban nightlife is increasingly characterized by dominant regimes of mainstream production and corporate ownership, via processes of branding and theming. They stress that a market driven economy does not want diversity, instead preferring to sell the same product (nightlife) to a homogeneous group of consumers (2003: 56). Accordingly, ethnic minorities are being pushed out of inner-city nightlife and their cultural preferences are not being catered for. In the studies by these

authors, the experiences of the consumers are not taken into account. Instead, the work focuses on the hierarchical power of the producers, and either views consumers as people who have no choice other than to utilize what is being produced, or as victims who are being pushed out of the night-time activities of the inner-cities. Moreover, as Sarah Thornton noted in her study of club cultures, 'black' men in particular find themselves barred or, more usually, subjected to maximum quotas. This ongoing fact should not be forgotten in the face of the utopian 'everybody welcome' discourses in which dance clubs are intermittently enveloped' (Thornton 1995: 25).

Music programming and DJs

Another strategy which club owners can use to attract a particular audience is musical programming. As several scholars (Verhagen et al. 2000) have demonstrated, rave music was a style which appealed predominantly to the white working classes, while other music, such as RnB and hip-hop, was very popular among ethnic minority or 'black' youths, as they are described in a study by Thornton (1995). If club owners want to attract a more mixed audience, they just adjust their programming or theme appropriately.

Music in clubs and at parties is played by DJs. These days, the DJ plays a very important role in the popularity and success of an event or venue. They are viewed by their audiences as the 'masters of the scene' (Thornton 1995). Indeed, the status of contemporary, popular DJs equals that of famous pop stars. Many clubbers are willing to travel all over the country to dance at a party where their favourite DJ is on show. Different types of DJs appeal to different types of audiences. For instance, the popular ones are generally favoured by a more mainstream crowd, while those who play more experimental and innovative music are appreciated more by a smaller, trendy group. So, it's not just the type of music played that attracts a certain crowd, but the DJ line up as well.

2.3 The power of the consumers of nightlife

Another way of approaching social differences and divisions in nightlife is by focusing on the opinions and experiences of the consumers. Here, the way nightlife is structured by the producers

thereof is taken for granted. Most of the studies which focus on the experiences of the consumers do not pay much attention to door policies, music programming or nightlife offer instead focusing on the people inside the clubs (see, for example, Thornton 1995; Redhead 1995; Redhead 1997; Malbon 1999; MacRae 2004). Some researchers, like Thornton (1995) and MacRae (2004), argue that cultural knowledge (awareness of the hippest moves, the coolest clubs and the trendiest outfits) has replaced the old social structures of class and ethnicity. In these studies, the focus is on the agency and autonomy of the consumers, whereas social structures are largely overlooked. Such work is conducted in popular inner-city clubs or at raves where predominantly white middle-class young people come together. Consumers are centralized as the dividers of nightlife. Many of the scholars who focus on the consumers of night-time activities carry out ethnographic research into what motivates the clubbers' choice of venue and vision of clubbing and clubs. Feelings of belonging, identification and differentiation with the clubbing crowd, as well as tastes in music, are central in these consumer orientated studies.

The clubbing crowd

Being part of, or blending in with, a crowd is the key to a positive clubbing experience. If, for instance, you find that the majority of a dance crowd is dressed more trendily or sexily than you, you are likely to feel uncomfortable and insecure. At the same time, if your clothes are sexier or trendier than the rest of the crowd, you will probably experience the same feelings of discomfort. In other words, the sensation of belonging, which seems to be so central to clubbing, is partly constituted through the processes, practices and experiences of blending in with the crowd. As well as clothes, the average age or ethnic composition of a dance crowd can also play a part in a positive identification with it. The people inside the club matter; it's not simply a case of selecting a particular music scene and a club that plays it. Knowledge of clubbing venues and crowds, as well as an awareness of the right style of dress, the dances, and the choice of drinks or drugs, are all central to the notion of belonging, and are crucial to a sense of positive identification with a clubbing audience. According to Malbon (1999: 71), 'individual

clubbers' relationships to the clubbing crowds of which they are part are of paramount importance to the clubbers' 'enjoyment of the experience'. Accordingly, the social constitution of a crowd, but even more importantly the clubbers' understanding thereof, is important in any research into the choices that clubbers make and the experiences they have. Malbon (1999: 51) speaks in this respect of the importance of 'sociality':

'The practices that comprise sociality consist of ways of dressing, spoken and unspoken languages, traditions and customs and the sharing of styles. It requires skills, knowledge and competencies, which need to be acquired by participating within the context of the sociality concerned'.

For clubbing, this means that clubbers need to learn how to dance and behave in order to fit in with a particular dance crowd. Furthermore, individual clubbers also need to learn which dance crowds they belong to. The clubbing crowd is the foundation for the establishment of feelings of belonging and identification with the different dance scenes. Accordingly, this audience is central to any understanding of the more complex processes of social divisions.

Taste and clubbing

Scholars have different opinions about how these skills and knowledge of a clubbing crowd can be attained. Pierre Bourdieu's conception of (consumer) lifestyles has made an important contribution to research into the nightlife practices of young people. In his well-known book, *La distinction* (Bourdieu 1984), Bourdieu analyzes the ways in which various consumer goods and forms of consumption practices are used by social groups to distinguish themselves from other such groups. Influenced by Marxism, he categorizes the population into separate socio-economic classes. For Bourdieu, cultural distinctions, such as music and style of dress, are used to support class distinctions, whereby notions of taste are put forward as a central feature of class differences. Taste, according to Bourdieu, plays an important role, because it is this which perpetuates a socio-economic position. Furthermore, he also argues that social classes possess varying levels of different types of capital

(social, economic, and cultural). These are the major determinants of lifestyle and will be reflected in the choice of leisure activities (Tomlinson 2003: 97). In other words, personal taste is influenced by the position one has in society.

Building upon Bourdieu's notion of taste and cultural capital, Sarah Thornton (1995) distillates an understanding of the way in which 'hipness' (ibid: 11) is perceived in club cultures. Thornton (1995) has developed the notion of 'sub-cultural capital' to explain the hierarchies of taste and diversity of different dance styles. She draws a distinction between cultural and sub-cultural capital by stating that:

'just as cultural capital is personified in 'good' manners and urbane conversation, so is subcultural capital embodied in the form of being 'in the know', using (but not over-using) current slang and looking as if you were born to perform the latest dance styles'. (Thornton, 1995: 11-12).

It is important to realize that in Thornton's conception of subcultural capital, class plays a much smaller role than in Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital. According to Thornton (1995: 11-12), 'hipness', which she conceives as a form of subcultural capital, can be learned, and knowing how to dance, dress and act form the new hierarchies which keep structural deterrents, such as class and education, at bay.

Cultural learning

MacRae (2004) also regards cultural learning and cultural knowledge as important aspects of distinction in and between clubbing crowds. She concludes in her study of divisions within the mainstream club circuit that 'becoming a clubber' is related to both cultural taste and cultural knowledge (2004: 57). MacRae (2004: 63) uses some of the notions produced by Schutz (1970) to conceptualize how cultural groups come together, identify with one another, and set themselves apart from 'others'. In other words, by focusing on learning capacity, she emphasizes the agency and autonomy of the clubbers in the process of choosing their favourite venues. According to MacRae, clubbers gravitate towards clubbing

crowds with whom they share components of ‘stock of knowledge’ and typifications. The stock of knowledge, which is formed and developed by previous experiences and the subjective understanding of the world we live in, includes a network of typifications. When it comes to nightlife, these typifications relate to knowledge of other clubbers just by their style of dress, taste in music, or the venues they frequent. The typification of the so-called ‘Sharon and Tracy’, or a ‘skater’, or a ‘wannabe’ are examples. The concepts of stock of knowledge and typifications highlight the importance of information that is derived from earlier experiences, which implies that our subjective understanding of the social world is formed by our position within it and our experiences of it. So, according to MacRae (2004), drawing boundaries and selecting your favourite dance crowd has everything to do with looking for parties where the people are, in some ways, familiar to you. In essence, you have to recognize yourself in others, or at least think that you have something in common with them. At the same time, this process of identifying with a crowd also creates a distance from other parties and dancers:

‘As participants identify with and affiliate themselves to a particular form of clubbing, being a certain kind of clubber and having a certain style of life, they also differentiate themselves from others, others who are not like them. This appears to be done through a process of comparing and contrasting their practices, values and the attached meanings of their involvement with club culture with others’

MacRae (2004: 64)

These processes of identification and differentiation are influenced by this cultural knowledge, and play an important role in the choice of a certain club, party or crowd. Accordingly, the concept of cultural knowledge, which can be learned from previous experiences and friends, enables us to better understand the reasons why young people participate in clubs and scenes where they expect to find people ‘like themselves’. In this study, the opinions and experiences of ethnic minority young people on a night out form an important

part of this book. None of the scholars mentioned above have investigated this specific group of consumers. Consequently, the focus on these youngsters herein will add an extra dimension to the issue of the creation of divisions. I will demonstrate that in the processes of identification and differentiation with a dance crowd, ethnic identification and differentiation also play a role. Most of the scholars I have mentioned earlier did not include this dimension in their work, because the clubbing crowds they studied were predominantly white. It is likely that if the parties that ethnic minority young people attend are only visited by co-ethnics, they will draw inter-ethnic distinctions based on dress, dance and style, while if they attend a party with a more mixed crowd, they will also use their ethnic identification to draw distinctions. Accordingly, ethnic dimensions in the processes of identification and differentiation are taken into account in this study.

2.4 Music

Dance music has demonstrated that it possesses an impressive survival instinct. In my use of the term for the purposes of this book, I am not simply referring to (any) music for dancing; after all such a definition might include forms such as the hokey cokey, the chicken song, or ballroom dancing. Dance music as it is perceived in this study applies to DJ centered club-context sounds which are derived from various roots, including 1970s disco and 1980s electronica, RnB (Huq 2006) and the more ethnic dance sounds of, for example, Türk pop and Moroccan Shaabi. Another characteristic of dance music is the use of technology, such as sampling and scratching by DJs. For many people, music is an important element in their lives - it is literally the soundtrack to their everyday living. It also has a central role in the constitution of identities and communities (Frith 1988). Young people in particular use music to situate themselves and identify with others with a similar lifestyle and style of dress. I will, therefore, now address the relationship between young people, identity and music in general, and the link between ethnicity and musical tastes in particular.

Music and identity

Music can be presented as the essence of clubbing, what clubbing is about, and what clubbing crowds unite around or through. Dancing together and singing along to the lyrics of loud music in a relatively dark setting evokes powerful emotions, which unite ostensibly disparate individuals. A certain type of music attracts people with a similar lifestyle and style of dress. According to Bogt (2003), musical taste is also an important factor in group formation. People with similar tastes in music distinguish themselves from those with other musical interests. Young people are especially prone to drawing boundaries between different music scenes and their consumers. Often, friends share similar music interests, as well as concomitant lifestyles and styles of dress. In this sense, musical preferences support the social identity of the individual. For example, the hip-hop scene attracts people who not only like rap music, but can also identify with the black identity expressed in it. The forced, stereotypical representation of black culture - the hood, the posse, gangsters - makes rap popular with large sections of contemporary youth.

Behind the process of choosing a certain genre of popular music hides a complicated process of identification. According to Mutsaers (1996), choices are partly influenced by ethnic background, but even more so by the internal messages of the music and the need to feel part of a larger group. You listen to music with friends and it functions as a marker of identity. Making a statement like 'I'm a hip hop fan' not only provides information about the musical preferences of an individual, but may also tell us something about his or her way of life. Musical preferences and lifestyle are often interconnected, and clubbing crowds are commonly built around similar tastes in these areas. As a result, individual musical preferences and concomitant lifestyles divide clubbers into separate nightlife spaces. As ethnic minority youngsters form the basis of the research group in this study, I will now look further at the relationship between ethnic identity and music.

Ethnic identity and music

Research into the cultural production of ethnic minority youth focuses primarily on music (see, for example, Kaya 2002; Leonard

2005; Collyer and Baily 2006). Likewise, studies of cultural consumption by ethnic minorities also mainly deal with music (see, for example, Mutsaers 1996; Saldana 2002; Gazzah 2008). The music favoured by these groups is often viewed as a nostalgic reminder of their cultural roots and/or the time spent in their country of origin. Furthermore, ethnic music is regarded as valuable because it is supposed to bring people together. Indeed, ideas about music promoting social cohesion have been an important strand in ethno-musicological thinking (Baily and Collyer 2006). In this regard, music is valued not just for reasons of tradition or nostalgia, but as a ‘means through which to share social interactions (Leonard 2005: 516) with members of the ethnic community’. Listening to music, watching video clips on television, downloading music from the internet, and singing, dancing and rapping to your favourite songs is something you usually share with co-ethnic friends. Families and friends visit concerts or dance together to their own music at the most important times in their lives, such as weddings, birthday parties, religious events and funerals. Music is more than decorum at these celebrations; it has the power to bring to the fore feelings of togetherness, ethnic identification and memories of the homeland. Sad songs amplify pain and loss, while happy tunes and love songs bring joy and add lustre to a party. The argument which links music and identity together is often put forward to explain why immigrant groups in large multicultural cities often cling tenaciously to their so-called ‘traditional music’, i.e. it is predominantly seen as a way to maintain a ‘group identity in a multi-ethnic society’.

Musical innovation

Living in a multi-ethnic setting can lead to cultural innovation and enrichment, which can in turn help people to deal with a new life in a new place of settlement and articulate new identities. As Back (1996) notes, music can play a major role in the creation of ‘new ethnicities’. These are influenced by the living environment, and, according to Back, ethnic identity can, therefore, not be regarded as real’ or ‘essential’, but as a ‘multi-faceted phenomenon which may vary through time and space’ (Back 1993: 128). This is especially typical of second or third generation migrants, who are born and brought up in a new country. The changes that take place within the

ethnic community are made visible through music. A good example is provided by the re-invention of bhangra music in the UK. Bhangra consists of traditional Punjabi folk songs, modernized with the addition of elements derived from Western popular music (Huq 2006), and is seen as a means through which to create a new identity.

Something similar is evident with the expansion of raï music. Raï originated in the former French colony of Algeria, and became popular among a wider Western audience in France, especially in Paris, where most of the raï artists are based. It is mainly popular among the *beur* youth in France - a slang term of self-appellation, which refers to French-born youths with origins in the north Arab region of the Maghreb, comprising Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria (Huq 2006: 56). In 1992, it became particularly popular when Cheb Khaled had a worldwide hit with the track 'Didi'. The Moroccan-Dutch youth scene also picked up raï music on a large scale. The raï genre, which was not approved of by many Moroccan parents, provided these second generation youngsters with an identity that was different from their traditional parental culture, but nevertheless retained cultural and ethnic elements. Instead of being trapped 'between two cultures', these young people managed to shape their own lifestyle, which was reflected in their music production and consumption. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, many raï events were organized in party centres. However, as a result of frequent aggressive incidents and a lack of women in the crowd, these parties soon lost their appeal and eventually disappeared.

At the moment, many ethnic minority young people use hip-hop to support their cultural identity. The lyrics, often in Dutch, are all about surviving in a Dutch multicultural setting and the hardship of facing discrimination and being misunderstood. The hip-hop sound is frequently given an 'ethnic flavour', for instance by the use of traditional Moroccan or Turkish instruments and rhythms.

Music and group solidarity

As well as providing a new individual identity, music is also used to address the community as a whole as a way of establishing a 'group's identity in the eyes of others' (Baily and Collyer 2006: 18). By making their music known to a wider audience, the message is

sent out that these young people are here and are here to stay. In this sense, the music of second generation immigrants is also outwardly directed. By internet releases and public performances, society at large gains a broader and deeper understanding of these youths. For example, it was after the famous Dutch rapper of Moroccan descent, Ali B., had a hit with a song about the discriminatory practices on the doors of popular clubs, that these door policies attracted national attention.

DJs also play an important role in the distribution of ethnic music to a wider audience. Indeed, many second generation migrant DJs are known for the exotic ways in which they mix modern ethnic music,¹ such as Türk pop, Arabic sounds, shaabi and bhangra, with the latest hits. These DJs thus ensure that ethnic music becomes known to a wider audience.

Music and processes of identification and differentiation

It is also important to note that music does not necessarily lead to social cohesion among an ethnic group. Furthermore, it must also be realized that not everyone wants to be confronted with Türk pop, shaabi, bhangra etc in a public setting. Some people appreciate ethnic music in the private domain and at family celebrations, but want to blend in with a mainstream dance crowd in clubs, instead of being set apart. Others reject ethnic music as a way of opposing their parents' culture and way of life in the country where they have settled. In the context of this study, the assumption is that music plays an important role in the lives of young ethnic people (as it does in the lives of any youngsters) and that it might serve as a tool or symbol of ethnic identification. In other words, it may function

as a marker of difference, allowing young people to distinguish themselves from their native Dutch peers or other ethnic groups. At the same time, ethnic music is not conceived as the sole marker of identification and differentiation. Instead, it is viewed as a *possible* marker of distinction, in the same way that a preference for any

¹ In this study, the term ethnic music is used to refer to modern and pop music from the country of origin of second generation migrants in the Netherlands, including Türk pop, shaabi, Arabic music, Pakistani break beat etc. *Ethnic music* or, sometimes, *exotic music* are the terms used by club owners and second generation migrant DJs.

other musical form, such as dance, or hip-hop and RnB, is regarded. Just as ethnic identification can be viewed differently in different settings and against different social groups, the importance of ethnic music also differs according to different contexts and settings. Moreover, herein the focus is on how ethnic minority youngsters *themselves* mark their ethnic identification with music.

2.5 Studying differentiations in nightlife

From the moment someone first goes clubbing, through to choosing a style, identifying with a certain crowd, queuing, and getting into a venue, the clubber is engaged in processes of self-selection and self-identification. A clubber who is in a queue for a particular venue has already decided that he or she is 'right' for the club and could belong. The door becomes the time when certain facets of the identity that the clubber has constructed are used to gain access to a social situation. The clubbing crowds are constituted, even in advance of their coming together, via concerns with shared musical tastes, styles, notions of coolness and feelings of belonging and exclusion.

In this chapter I have demonstrated that nightlife researchers approach the study of divisions in nightlife differently. Some focus on the dividing strategies of the producers, while others emphasize the dividing power of the clubbers.

In this study, cultural knowledge of parties and their crowds, and the musical tastes which inform the processes of identification and differentiation of the individual clubbers, are regarded as important when it comes to learning more about the choices of nightlife that are made. This knowledge is, for the greater part, acquired from experiences of and participation in nightlife. The musical tastes of the clubbers and their friends promote cultural distinctions, such as dance (life) style and club choice. At the same time, I underline the importance of ethnic identification and the other social structures present in nightlife, such as door policies, music programming and cost, all of which influence the behaviour and opinions of both the producers and the consumers of night-time activities. In other words, in order to fully understand the choice of club or party that ethnic minority young people make, it is necessary to combine the dividing

strategies of the producers of the nightlife as well as those of the consumers thereof.

Chapter 3 Studying the nightlife of and for ethnic groups

In this chapter I will explain the research design of this study. I will begin with a presentation and explanation of the research questions that guide this work. Then, in the second section, the analytical model for the study of nightlife choice is sketched out. In the third section, I present the case studies, while in the final part the level of analyses is explained by an exploration of the concept of scenes.

3.1 Subject of research

In the first chapter, I demonstrated that some researchers have tried to integrate elements of the subcultural and the post-subcultural approach. This integrated outlook is not, however, particularly satisfactory, because although the influence of the processes of agency and structure on the lives of young people are acknowledged, the interaction between them is not made clear. Furthermore, I have argued that ‘ethnic dimensions’ in the choice of a club or party are largely overlooked by nightlife researchers, even though these are likely to have an impact. In the second chapter, I reflected on nightlife studies conducted from both the producers and the consumers’ perspectives. In doing so, it became clear that some researchers focus on the dividing power of the former, while the main interest of others is the choices that the latter makes. I argued that it is important to include the dividing strategies of both the producers and the consumers, because each set of players in the nightlife market influences the other. So, the producers, who control the supply, affect the nightlife choices of the consumers. For instance, they can limit the number of options open to certain groups of young people by their door policies and the music they play. However, just as in any market, the producers are also dependent on their consumers. If growing numbers of clients do not feel welcome at a venue, or believe that their musical tastes are not represented and, as a result, do not participate in the nightlife on offer, producers are faced with declining crowds. Indeed, this is particularly important in view of the increase in competition between clubs as a result of the growing numbers of them that are opening up in cities.

In this way, the consumers of nightlife also have an impact on the supply side thereof.

Research questions

In this study, the main focus is on the dynamic interplay between the producers and the consumers of nightlife. This is examined in two different ways. Firstly, I attempt to unravel the nightlife choices made by ethnic minority young people. By focusing on the dynamic interplay between the producers and the consumers of night-time activities, it becomes possible to analyze how the processes of agency and social structure influence each other in the decisions that ethnic youngsters make about what they want to do at night. The second way in which the dynamic interplay between producers and consumers is investigated is by learning more about the changes that take place in inner-city nightlife when the urban population becomes more ethnically diverse.

The two research questions which guide this study are:

- 1 How do ethnic minority young people choose an ethno-party?
 - a. How do the producers of nightlife affect this choice?
 - b. How do the personal preferences of the consumers affect this choice?
- 2 How do the choices of a changing urban population affect the supply side of the nightlife market?

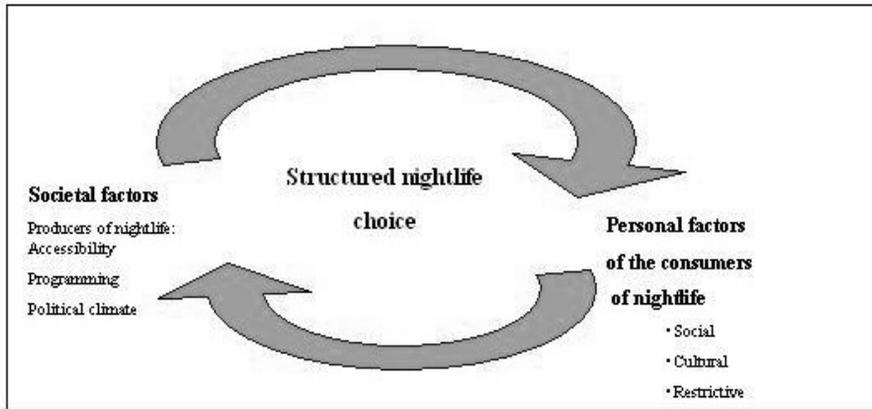
3.2 An analytical model for the study of nightlife choice

In order to conduct this study and answer the research questions posed above, what is required is an analytical model that is sensitive to the interplay between the structural factors of the availability and accessibility of nightlife, and the processes of agency related to the choices of the consumers. This model should be capable of analyzing the nightlife choices of ethnic young people, both as the cumulative result of individual decisions, and as a manifestation of a society imposing behavioural constraints on human beings. I have labelled the analytical framework designed for this study as the *model of structured choice*. It is able to transcend the macro-micro dichotomy because it is sensitive to a flexible use of the processes of agency and structure.

These concepts of agency and social structure are used differently in many studies, and I will therefore first define how both of these processes must be understood herein. The main starting point is the recognition that a social life is more than random individual acts on the one hand, but is also not merely determined by social structures on the other. In this study, I will use the concept of agency as defined by Giddens as 'the ability of a reflexive, knowledgeable person to exercise discretion in choosing to act' (1982: 29). In this sense, young people are considered to be making choices as active agents.

In this research, agency is operationalized as the personal factors divided between the social and cultural dimensions. I have also identified three types of restrictions that determine nightlife choices negatively: the regulatory role of parents, door policies and economic resources. The personal factors guide the decisions that young people make about whether or not to attend a particular club or party. Social structures are defined by Giddens (1982) as rules and resources which both enable and constrain the actions of humans in their daily lives. This broad definition highlights that human action can only be understood by taking processes in wider society into account. Social structures are being reproduced, transformed and internalized through experiences in daily life. In this study, the political climate and the nightlife that is available and accessible are determined to be the most important social structures. The nightlife choices that ethnic minority young people make occur in a dynamic interplay between the strategies of the producers of nightlife, who control availability and entry to their clubs, and the personal preferences and tastes of individual visitors. Furthermore, young people are conceived as agents whose knowledge about their day-to-day activities is intertwined with social structures, meaning that the decisions they make about their night-time activities can, therefore, be regarded as a 'structured nightlife choice'. For analytical purposes, I have divided these structured nightlife choices into personal and societal factors.

Figure 1 is an image of the analytical model of structured nightlife choice.



Societal factors

Societal factors are the social structures of nightlife, and they are comprised of the strategies used by producers to attract a certain dance crowd through their programming and the accessibility of their clubs, as well as the political climate. In this model, the political climate refers to all of the dynamics in the social environment that position young people in society.

The first strategy that producers of nightlife employ to attract a certain audience is the size of the fee to gain entry to their premises. Some clubs charge a significant sum, while others charge very little or nothing at all. In this way, the decisions made by young people of limited economic means about which club to attend are partially influenced by this fee and the price of drinks. Of course, some groups of young people have more disposable income than others, and the entry fee and the cost of drinks, therefore, has less of an impact on where they go for a night out.

The second strategy that producers of nightlife employ to attract a certain audience is the programming of music. Different types of music attract different types of crowds. A trendy and stylish program will attract a small but trendy and, in general, more cash-rich audience, while a club or party that programs predominantly mainstream music is visited by larger numbers of people. Urban and

RnB parties, for instance, are popular with a more ethnically mixed crowd, whereas trance and hardcore house events are mainly attended by white clubbers. In this way, the producers of nightlife can attract the audiences they want. Indeed, the music programming of clubs and party organizations has a clear impact on the number of options that young people can choose from. In general, youngsters with a more mainstream taste in music have more parties to choose from than those with more 'exclusive' or 'exotic' musical preferences.

The third and final strategy that producers of nightlife employ to attract a particular audience is the door policy. Different types of venues have their own set of entry requirements, and use subtle forms of discrimination at the door, based on age, appearance, social class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality. With a specific door policy in place, the producers of nightlife control the ethnic, social and cultural make-up of their consumers. As a result, some groups of young people have better access to clubs than others, and this factor also influences the number of options they can choose from.

Personal factors

The personal factors have been subdivided into a cultural and a social dimension, and into three types of restrictions. Because the ethnic background of an individual clubber can play a role in all of the different elements of the personal factors, ethnicity is not listed as a separate category. Furthermore, the way in which ethnic identity has an impact on nightlife choices and experiences can differ among individual clubbers. Some prefer to go to places where 'ethnic' music is programmed, while others favour the more mainstream Hip-hop or RnB. Another example can be found in the presence of co-ethnics in the dance crowd. Some may find this more important than others.

The social dimension refers to the so-called social mechanisms. These involve processes of identification and differentiation. As I have discussed in Chapter 2, young people gravitate towards certain dance places where they identify with the crowds and experience feelings of belonging. Thus, in this subdivision, the role of the social characteristics of the age, ethnicity and gender of the dance crowd in creating the experience of feelings

of belonging are analyzed. Furthermore, young people go out in so-called *peer*-groups and visit places and venues where they expect to meet friends and acquaintances. Questions about with whom and on what grounds they identify with friends, or differentiate themselves from others, are important if we are to learn more about their social positions and preferences. As well as the social characteristics of friends and the dance crowd, social rules also play a part in the sense of belonging to a certain scene or party. The 'rules of flirting' and interaction largely determine the atmosphere in a club. The social composition of the dance crowd and these social rules have a role to play in the choices that are made between different nightlife scenes, but this can also differ in terms of the different parties within one scene.

The second dimension of the personal factors refers to cultural elements. Here, attention is paid to how the social mechanisms mentioned above are displayed culturally. It is this cultural taste that divides young people into different cultural groups and parties. The music that is played, the way in which people are dressed and how they dance all have an important role in the identification and differentiation of the dance crowd and the dance party. In his influential book *Subculture, the meaning of style*, Hebdiges (1979) distinguishes four elements which determine the differences between subcultures e.g. shoes, clothing/jewellery, hairstyle and pose. Every scene has its own music program, with a concomitant dress code and style of dancing. Accordingly, in this dimension, the cultural elements of dress code, music and dance style are analyzed as creators of divisions between and within scenes.

The final element of the personal factors is comprised of three types of restrictions: the regulating role of parents, the door policy experienced and economic resources. These restrictions determine nightlife choices negatively. Although a night out seems to be all about having fun, it also costs a lot of money. Young people differ in terms of the amount of money they have or what they are willing to spend on going out. Clubbers not only have to pay an entrance fee, but must also have enough money to buy themselves and their friends some drinks. Another area in which economic resources are required relates to the issue of transport to a

club or party. Not everyone has access to a car or is able to pay for a taxi or even public transport. Particularly if the party is taking place in a different city, the costs of transportation can be a significant constraint.

For different kinds of reasons, parents can also play a key role in whether youngsters are admitted or denied access to particular venues in the urban nightlife scene or, indeed, to urban nightlife at all. Girls in particular are sometimes limited in their freedom to choose a certain venue. If parents do not allow their children to go out, their opportunities to do so are restricted or even extinguished. What is more, the perceived and experienced door policies of clubs and parties play a role in the nightlife choices that are made. Although it is club bouncers and owners who decide who is allowed to enter their premises, the clubbers' experiences and ideas about accessibility do have an impact on their actions and choices. If they have been refused entry to a club or party before, or if they have had negative experiences with an organization, they are more likely to go elsewhere.

3.3 Choosing the case-studies of the ethnic groups

In ethnography, case-studies are used to limit the scope of a piece of research. It is often defined as an intensive and detailed analysis of a single case, such as a single community, a single school, a single organization or a single event. Furthermore, a case also refers to the particular angle from which a social phenomenon is being studied. Hammersley and Atkinson explain the relationship between setting and case by stating that a setting is 'a named context in which phenomena occur that might be studied from any number of angles; a case is those phenomena seen from one particular angle' (1984: 41). After deciding that my research setting would be urban nightlife in the Netherlands, I also had to choose my case-studies. These are: the Turkish clubbing scene, the Asian party scene and the Moroccan leisure scene. In each case I have narrowed the scope even further by selecting a limited number of parties within each scene.

There were several reasons why the choice of these three cases was obvious. The first and most important is that the parties in these three scenes are organized in popular clubs which belong to inner-city nightlife. Other ethno-parties, such as Somali events, take place

in rented halls outside the heart of the city or in community centres. A second important reason is that the parties which take place in the three scenes occur regularly and are commercially arranged by professional (party) organizations. This is not the case with Surinamese and Antillean events, for example, which are not organized on a frequent basis. The third and final reason is that all three examples can be identified as dance scenes with a number of organizations operating therein, DJs who play at diverse parties, and an audience which travels between the different events and uses different party planners. No other ethno-parties matched these three criteria.

Comparing the three scenes

The reason why I included three scenes in this study, instead of one or two, is because the element of comparison brings added value, enabling the usefulness and importance of the analytical model of structured choice to be demonstrated. Only by making comparisons is it possible to reveal how the processes of social structure and agency interact in the nightlife choices that young ethnic people make. Moreover, comparing three ethno-scenes makes it possible to move beyond reification of their ethnic characteristics. So, instead of ascribing all of the elements of a scene, or the personal factors which influence a choice, as being ‘typically Turkish’ for example, by comparing the three scenes I am able to make distinctions between ethnic characteristics and those that can also be found in other dance arenas, such as RnB or trance house.

A second reason why it is interesting to include all three ethno-scenes relates to the fact that they are each at a different stage of popularity. The Asian party scene has already had its heyday, the Turkish clubbing scene is currently flourishing and very popular, and the Moroccan leisure scene is in the early stages of its development. These three different stages will shed light on the producer-consumer relationship and will help me to answer the second research question, namely whether and how inner-city nightlife is changing as a result of a growing ethnic population.

Research location

After conducting my preliminary fieldwork, I discovered that ethno-parties actually took place all over the Netherlands, but that the most popular and largest events were concentrated in the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Given that I lived and worked in Amsterdam at the time of the fieldwork, the obvious decision was to focus on its nightlife. The initial plan was to also include the nightlife in Rotterdam, but an unequal spread of ethno-parties there caused me to go in another direction. In order to get a good overview of the three ethno-party scenes, I decided not to limit this study with geographical boundaries, but to instead include the most popular and significant party organizations for each scene, wherever they were located. For the Turkish clubbing scene, this meant that I included two such organizations in Amsterdam and two in Rotterdam. In the case of the Moroccan leisure scene, two Amsterdam organizations and one in Waalwijk, a small city in the south of the Netherlands, were utilized. Finally, for the Asian party scene, it transpired that the most popular parties are held in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Bunnik (a small town near Utrecht). Accordingly, I included one organization from each of these places in the study.

The Turkish clubbing scene

The first Turkish party in the Netherlands took place in the early 1990s, following on from the success of similar events organized in Germany, where Turkish club venues have sprung up since that decade (Kosnick 2004: 3). These parties are generally arranged in established and popular clubs in inner-cities. At the time of my fieldwork in 2006, the Turkish clubbing scene was very popular and growing, with several party organizations operating in the Turkish nightlife market. Almost every weekend, events are organized somewhere in the Netherlands. As well as established Turkish party planners, new ones are setting up businesses on a regular basis. However, the four most popular and established organizations, which are the ones included in this study, are: *Keyifland* and *Sahmeran Entertainment* in Rotterdam and *33 Events* and *Club Mahsen* in Amsterdam. The crowds at these parties are primarily comprised of first and second generation young Turkish migrants, and Turkish music is played at all four of these events. Finally, all of

these party organizations have come up with a unique concept, consisting of music programming, ideology, dress code and image, all with the aim of targeting a specific audience.

The Asian party scene

The Asian party scene is the oldest ethno-party scene in the Netherlands, and experienced its heyday in the mid 1990s. At that time, large Asian parties, which predominantly attracted Dutch Chinese youngsters, took place all over the Netherlands on a regular basis. Nowadays, however, the number of Asian party organizations has fallen significantly. Those that are still arranging events and continue to be popular are: *Santai* in Rotterdam, *Asian Escape* in Amsterdam and *HuMan Entertainment* in Utrecht. Accordingly, these are the organizations which have been included in this research. Most Asian parties take place in popular clubs on Friday nights. Although they all promote their events as ‘Asian’, there are differences in the ethnic backgrounds of their crowds. Some organizations predominantly target young Dutch Indonesian or Dutch Taiwanese clubbers, while others have an almost exclusive Dutch Chinese crowd. The music programmed at these diverse events can best be characterized as a mix of RnB and clubhouse. This is also the type of music that can be heard in many mainstream clubs.

The Moroccan leisure scene

The Moroccan party scene is relatively new in the nightlife market. According to the organization, *Marmoucha*, the first Moroccan party was organized in 1999. The reasoning behind it was to put Moroccan music on the Dutch nightlife agenda and offer young Dutch-Moroccans a space where they could listen and dance to rai and Moroccan sounds. These parties are not arranged very often. Most of them take place in the late afternoon or early evening, and last until midnight. The main reason for this is that many Dutch-Moroccan youngsters (especially women) are not allowed to go out late at night. Another detail which makes the parties more accessible to their target audience is that no alcohol is served. In contrast to the Asian party and the Turkish clubbing scenes, most Moroccan parties take place during the daytime and are not centered on the music played by DJs, but instead feature live bands, workshops and

debates. The term leisure scene is, therefore, more appropriate. I decided to include these events in the research because they take place in mainstream clubs and are based on the example of parties in urban nightlife, with their main goal being to offer visitors the chance to dance to music produced by a DJ. The music that is played is popular Moroccan and Arabic tunes. Because the Moroccan leisure scene is relatively new, only a few agencies operate in this market. These are the organization *Marmoucha* and the youth centre *Argan*, both in Amsterdam, and the organization *SMP*, which arranges the popular party Hafla Shaabia annually in Den Bosch. These are the three Moroccan organizations which have been included in this study.

3.4 Level of analysis: places, spaces or scenes?

Chatterton and Hollands (2003) introduced the term ‘nightlife space’ to draw attention to the relationship between the consumers and producers of urban nightlife in Newcastle upon Tyne in the UK. They presented an understanding of nightlife spaces, which comprised the three processes of *production, regulation and consumption*, based on the theory of Du Gay (1997). Urban nightlife was divided into three different spaces, the *mainstream*, the *residual* and the *alternative*. In their research, Chatterton and Hollands (2003) stressed the influence of local, national and multinational operators within urban nightlife, and the role of both formal and informal regulations when it comes to explaining divisions therein. Their main focus was on how the producers of nightlife and the processes of regulation create divisions in night time activities. There was little attention paid to the dividing power of consumers. When it came to ethnic minority youngsters, Chatterton and Hollands argued that the producers are pushing these young people out of mainstream nightlife into the residual nightlife space. Their use of the term space reflects their emphasis on the spatial divisions of night-time activities. Instead of drawing a picture of a dynamic and rapidly changing nightlife, they presented Newcastle’s urban nightlife as a map upon which you could mark out the mainstream, residual and alternative nightlife spaces with different colours.

Spaces or scenes?

Because of the changing and innovative nature of both nightlife in the Netherlands and the consumers thereof, I prefer a more flexible and dynamic approach to this issue. This is because party concepts, DJs and consumers travel, even between different cities, signifying a 'subcultural space' that is not bounded or fixed spatially. Young people usually visit several different parties and clubs and do not restrict themselves to one particular venue or event, or even to one city. These days, contemporary clubbers can choose from a range of more or less similar parties which have programmed the same style of music at different venues. Even in one city, young people are able to choose between a number of clubs which play the same sort of music on a typical Friday or Saturday night. Club owners, and the party organizations which program more or less the same type of music, compete with each other to attract the right type of crowd, and there is an exchange of visitors between them. Furthermore, clubs change their programming frequently in order to remain innovative and trendy and, thus, attractive to their audiences. Likewise, the organizers also often change the locations of their parties. The Turkish company *33 events*, for example, commonly changes the clubs in which its parties are held for this reason. Accordingly, instead of referring to separate parties and clubs, and dividing nightlife into fixed, spatial 'spaces', it is better to come up with a concept which reflects the dynamic interplay between the consumers and the producers of nightlife.

Scenes

According to Straw (1991: 379), 'scenes' 'actualize a particular state of relations between various populations and social groups, as these coalesce around specific coalitions of musical style' (Straw 1991: 379). The concept of scene is used to highlight the interconnection between production and consumption within musical contexts that are both global and local. It is a term that is also extensively used in the everyday discourse of young music followers and stylists. Consequently, researchers have used this concept as a descriptor of local sites of cultural, particularly musical cultural, production and consumption (see, for example, Kruse 1993; Bennett and Peterson 2004).

I will therefore use the concept of the dance scene, which I define as:

A non spatially fixed cultural space which may be orientated as much around stylistic as face-to face contact in a venue, club or other urban setting, and which is comprised of producers and consumers involved in a similar musical orientation and similar style-based parties.

An important implication of this concept is that it is not a spatial but a stylistic and musically orientated construct. Nightlife in the larger cities in the Netherlands can be divided into separate dance scenes; e.g. RnB, Hip-hop, trance, ethno-party, Gothic etc. A division today may well be outdated tomorrow. However, because it is not the location but the players in the field e.g. the producers and consumers who are being examined, it is possible to analyze the dynamic interplay between these actors. Furthermore, because of the attention paid to the dynamic interplay between these two groups, the concept of the dance scene makes it possible to examine the changes that are taking place in urban nightlife.

Distinction between and within dance scenes

Because a dance scene is comprised of several separate parties, clubs and crowds (e.g. Turkish clubbing, RnB, trance house), it is possible to analyze the differences *within* one scene. By using the dance scene as a level of analysis, different forms of accessibility and the processes of identification and differentiation between and within scenes can be examined. This leads to a more complete understanding of the experiences and choices that individual clubbers and producers make. The producers of nightlife, like the nightclub owners or the party organizations, compete with each other to remain popular, using different strategies to distinguish themselves from other venues, parties and companies within the boundaries of the scene. Consumers, on the other hand, will draw distinctions both between and also *within* dance scenes to select their favourite party. For instance, they will not only decide between the regular and the Turkish clubbing scenes, but are also likely to have a favourite party within the latter. Processes of choice take

place on these two levels.

Chapter 4 Collecting material

Sometimes, the starting point for research is a well-developed theory, while at other times it is the absence of detailed knowledge of a phenomenon that is the driving force behind a study. My research questions were developed as a result of an unexpected discovery of a new research setting which could add important information to our current knowledge of the changes that are taking place in contemporary urban landscapes. In the period between January and May 2005, I gathered data on the urban nightlife in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. My main goal was to map this in order to divide it into separate spaces. This mapping of Amsterdam and Rotterdam was a very useful exercise when it came to learning more about these cities' diversity and variety. During this mapping process, I accidentally came across Moroccan and Turkish parties which were being organized regularly in popular clubs that belonged to the inner-city nightlife scene. This immediately caught my attention and, after some exploratory interviews, I realized that I had stumbled upon a dynamic and vibrant setting which had never been studied before.

What follows is detailed information on how I conducted my fieldwork. In the first section, I will provide insight into my ethnographic design, while in the three that follow I will explain my research methodology of participant observation (section 2), in-depth interviewing (4.3) and the collection of secondary data (4.4) in detail. Because gaining access is a very important factor in how successful and valid ethnographic research is, I will address this issue in paragraph 4.5. Finally, in the last paragraph, I will pay attention to the process of writing ethnography. This will deal with issues of data gathering during the ethnographic fieldwork, the analysis of the fieldwork and the process of writing up the study.

4.1 Ethnographic approach

In the previous chapters I have argued that most of the academic reports on nightlife lack the voices of ethnic minority young people. In most of these accounts, however, other voices, such as those of the club owners or bouncers, are well represented, while the ethnic

minorities are talked *about* instead of being actively involved in the research. A research design that gives a voice to all of the groups involved in nightlife must contain in-depth interviews and a detailed observation of the activities taking place. An ethnographic approach suits this purpose perfectly.

In recent decades, ethnography has gained popularity in branches of social research other than anthropology. In its most characteristic form, it ‘involves the ethnographer participating in people’s daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said, asking questions, in fact collecting whatever data are available to throw light on the issues that are the focus of the research’ (Hammersley and Atkinson 1983: 1). Its primary purpose is to describe what happens in a setting, how the people involved see their own actions and those of others, and place this in the context in which the action takes place (Bryman 2004). Hammersley and Atkinson describe a setting as ‘being constituted and maintained through cultural definition and social boundaries’ (1983: 3). In this study, urban nightlife in the Netherlands is the setting of the research. An important boundary thereof is its historic situatedness. Research results can only be understood when the dynamics in wider society are integrated. When it comes to the nightlife experiences of ethnic minorities, the contemporary political and economic climates are important. The responses of the participants in this study must always be analyzed within their context and cannot easily be transported into another era or place.

An important research tool in ethnography is participant observation. Indeed, the definitions of ethnography and participant observation are often used interchangeably (Bryman 2004: 293). I use the term ethnography to apply to a research method in which participant observation is one of the most important methods of data gathering. Additional tools used in this study are: in-depth interviewing, the collection of secondary data and internet research. In the following section I will now provide a more detailed account of these research methods.

4.2 Participant observation

In this study, participant observation has been conducted at several parties within the three ethno-party scenes. As a participant, I observed how the ethnic clubbers dressed, danced and interacted with each other. More specifically, I paid attention to the structural characteristics (age, ethnic background, gender) of the dance crowd and their 'nightlife behaviour' (amount and types of drinks, drug use, dance styles, group size, flirting). I also gathered information on the size of the entrance fee and the prices of drinks. Outside and in the entrance hall I observed the process of entering the party by looking at the people who queued outside, and the behaviour of the bouncers and the style selectors. Furthermore, my presence at the parties also gave me information about the atmosphere, the music and the setting. As a tall, young white woman, who was slightly older than the average clubber, I could not blend in with the crowd at every party, particularly at events which had no other white attendees. Despite my somewhat negative feelings of standing out in the crowd at some of these parties, I tried to listen to and engage in conversations with staff members, bouncers, DJs, bar personnel and individual clubbers as much as possible.

Before going into a party, I would have already spoken to one of the organizers in person. During this initial contact, I always explained the purpose of my research. Typically, an offer was then made to put me on the guest list. As these parties are generally planned well in advance, most of the organizers were very pleased to actually see me at their event. As a result, they enthusiastically introduced me to other staff members and their friends (I will address the issue of access more extensively below). This enabled me to get in touch with and make appointments to conduct interviews later in the same week with other staff members, bouncers, DJs and visitors.

In addition to these often very useful contacts, I also engaged in conversation with my fellow clubbers. After presenting myself as a researcher of nightlife, I asked them brief questions about their age, friends, if they were enjoying the party and why they came to this event etc. At the end of these five minute conversations, I asked the individual clubber (and his or her friends) to participate in my research by making an appointment for an

interview later that week. In all three scenes, people reacted differently to my invitation to take part in the study. Overall, these brief conversations inside the venues proved to be a good way of getting in touch with different social groups of clubbers.

So that I could remember all of my observations and conversations, I made field notes on the spot, which I wrote out immediately after arriving home. This method of participant observation proved to be very useful, because I not only had the opportunity to observe the scene, but it also helped me to gain the trust of the organizers and make contact with the people involved.

Periods of fieldwork

My fieldwork into the Turkish clubbing scene took place between September 2005 and March 2006, when I conducted participant observation at seven parties. These were made up of two parties from each of the four organizations mentioned in Chapter 3 section 3, save for *Keyifland*, which I only visited once because it dropped out of the scene during the fieldwork period. During my visits to the Turkish parties, I managed to have brief chats with 43 clubbers, 25 of whom agreed to meet me later that week for an interview. I also kept in touch with important key individuals such as the DJs and party organizers during the entire fieldwork period. In general, Turkish clubbers were very open and willing to participate in my research project.

The fieldwork into the Asian party scene took place between September 2006 and May 2007. From September to December, I conducted participant observation at each of three parties, while between January and May a student took over the fieldwork. In total, we visited nine parties which were equally spread over the Asian party scene. During our visits we contacted and engaged in brief conversations with over 60 clubbers. Unfortunately, however, only nine agreed to be interviewed, and the research assistant had to deploy other methods to attract respondents. The bouncers and DJs were also reluctant to talk to us. Instead, the research assistant used her own social network of Asian friends and asked them to introduce her to young Asians they knew and who went to Asian parties.

The fieldwork into the Moroccan leisure scene took place from February to June 2007. Time constraints prevented me from

extending the research period. In this time I visited five Moroccan parties, three of which were organized by *Marmoucha* and two were Urban Raï Zone events arranged by the *Argan* youth centre. Unfortunately, I did not manage to visit the annual Hafla Shaabia organized by *SMP*. However, I was able to include this party in my research because I had a good contact within the organization and was able to obtain a detailed account from a fellow researcher of Moroccan youth. During my time at the Moroccan parties I managed to speak to many of the visitors. In particular, my conversations with the women went very smoothly and some of them even approached me to talk. In total I spoke to 46 people. Despite their openness and friendliness, however, none of them agreed to meet me later that week for an interview, instead offering to continue the conversation at the party.

4.3 In-depth interviewing

As an ‘outsider looking in’, my role of observer at the parties helped me to notice emotions, bodily movements and other information which helped me to ask the right types of questions during the interviews. In each ethno-party scene I conducted several in-depth interviews with party organizers, the DJs who frequently performed in that particular scene, bouncers, and clubbers.

I composed a topic list for each group of respondents (visitors, DJs, organizers and bouncers), which I used at all three scenes. The subjects for the party planners, bouncers and DJs mainly dealt with their experiences of a particular scene, and their opinions on nightlife in general and the ethno-party scene in particular. There were also questions about their future plans. The topic list for the clubbers was more extensive and contained more detailed questions. The first set identified the participants’ general characteristics, such as level of educational attainment, age, family situation and daily activities (school or work), in order to locate each respondent with respect to age, economic status and educational achievements. The second set of questions related to their nightlife activities in general, while the final set asked specifically about their experiences within the ethno-party scene. The interviews were conducted at venues chosen by the respondents, and right at the start the participants were informed about the purpose of the research. I managed to get a

spread of clubbers based on gender, age, educational level, favourite party within a scene and clubbing experiences. The complete interviews were fully transcribed and a qualitative data program was used to manage the analysis.

In the Turkish clubbing scene I formally interviewed the head of each of the four party organizations and asked additional questions during my visits to their events. I also interviewed three Turkish DJs with whom I kept in touch during the entire fieldwork period. They introduced me to their friends and every time we met we talked extensively about Turkish music and the Turkish clubbing scene. In total, I interviewed 25 clubbers varying in age from 17 to 26 years old, three DJs and four party organizers.

A research assistant helped me to conduct the interviews in the Asian party scene, managing to question two party organizations, two DJs and 21 visitors to Asian parties. I interviewed one DJ, one party organizer and six clubbers. Organizers from all three party organizations were interviewed, as was a former organizer of Asian parties. He turned out to be a key respondent, who managed to connect us to a very popular but also very busy DJ. He also helped us to make contact with the organizers of two of the Asian parties who had been difficult to get in touch with. In total, three DJs who often performed in the Asian party scene were interviewed, as were 27 clubbers varying in age from 16 to 22. We interviewed 18 young people of Chinese descent, two with Taiwanese origins and five with an Indonesian background.

In the Moroccan leisure scene, the organizers of all three party planning companies were interviewed. All of them introduced me to their co-workers with whom I conducted additional interviews. I also questioned two Moroccan DJs, and they gave me the contact information of their colleagues and friends. Unfortunately, I did not manage to carry out any in-depth interviews with any of the clubbers I talked to at the parties. Instead, I extended my brief conversations in the clubs and spoke to 18 men and women of Moroccan descent more extensively. These interviewees varied in age between 20 and 25. Due to the helpful contacts given to me by the organizers and DJs, I was able to conduct six additional interviews with so-called 'Moroccan leisure experts'. Two worked as volunteers at the *Argan* youth centre, one had just started his career as a DJ in the Moroccan

leisure scene, and two were involved in the organization of cultural activities for Dutch-Moroccan youngsters.

4.4 The collection of secondary data

Contemporary young people spend a lot of time behind a computer surfing the net. When I went on the internet to gather information about ethno-parties, I came across sites which were used by Turkish, Moroccan and Asian youngsters to talk about up and coming events. These written accounts helped me to formulate questions for the in-depth interviews and provided me with insight into the varied and often straightforward statements and opinions about the different parties. Furthermore, most of the party organizations have their own website upon which they announce and promote their forthcoming events. On all of the sites there is a separate section described as a 'photo gallery' which contains images of clubbers at previous parties. I visited these sections frequently and compared the people depicted and their outfits at each of the parties. This provided me with information on the differences in the cultural characteristics of the crowds. I was also able to gauge which parties were very popular and visited by many clubbers and which were less busy. Finally, I also collected flyers and posters. The lay-out of the flyers and the written texts proved to be very important. In the Turkish party scene, for instance, different languages were used on the flyer. One party organization promoted its events in English, another used Turkish and the third company only used Dutch. The pictures on the flyers also revealed much about the marketing strategies of the organizations. Some were of very sexy and provocative women, while others contained more neutral pictures of the companies' logo, a live band, or the DJs. I used the pictures, flyers and posters on many occasions when making presentations about my research

4.5 Gaining access

Access to the research field is not simply a matter of physical presence, and is about far more than the granting or withholding of permission for a study to be conducted (Hammersley and Atkinson 1984: 55). A club is a semi public setting where permission to enter is in hands of the bouncer or doorman. Because I generally fit the description of a favourable visitor (white, female and clubbing age)

I do not usually have problems getting into a club. Access to the ethno-parties was mostly even easier, because I was put on the guest list by many of the organizers. I was pleasantly surprised by their openness and willingness to participate in my research. Although I persuaded some of my friends to join me, I attended most of the parties on my own, which initially led to feelings of discomfort because I was not used to such an experience. This feeling was heightened because no-one else in the clubs seemed to be alone. I, therefore, immediately scoured the venue looking for a place where I could settle for a moment to absorb the atmosphere, look at the crowd and prepare myself for my task as a researcher.

At some of the parties it took me just a few minutes to feel more comfortable, while on other occasions these feelings stayed with me for the entire night. I soon realized that the ethnic composition of the crowd played a huge role in this. If I was the only white woman, I felt out of place and stared at, and it was hard to overcome my feelings of discomfort and approach people. So, although access to the research location was fairly easy, accessing the research group was sometimes more difficult. I especially felt out of place at the Asian parties, which was mainly due to the significant physical distance between the average clubber and me. Not only was I much older than the average crowd (I was 30 at the time of the fieldwork) and from a different ethnic background, but I was also much taller than most of the Asian clubbers, which made me literally stand out. My research assistant, who was of Chinese origin, fortunately had more success in approaching the clubbers. At the Moroccan and Turkish parties there were more white women like myself, as well as many men and women close to my age, which made me feel much more comfortable.

Another issue related to access is the extent of the cooperation I received from the research group. As I mentioned earlier, the DJs and organizers in the Turkish clubbing scene were very helpful, showing me around at their parties and even introducing me to their friends. Likewise, the clubbers I made contact with were also willing to participate in my research. The conversations at the clubs as well as the more formal interviews were very open and even 'fun'.

4.6 Writing ethnography

Immediately after visiting a party I wrote out my notes in my so-called fieldwork diary. In it, I also noted ideas, questions and detailed descriptions of outfits. All of the interviews were transcribed and coded. During the coding process I initially followed the topic list, which corresponded to my theoretical framework. In the process of transcribing I added several new codes which corresponded to the topics brought up by the respondents. For instance, many of the participants talked extensively about negative media reports and the growing tension between themselves and the native Dutch residents in the Netherlands. These items were placed in the topic of 'political climate'. I used the same codes in each of the three scenes. After my analyses of the first ethno-scene, I wrote down the list of codes with a description of their content. I used the software program Kwalitan to organize, store and analyze the fieldwork diary, the transcribed interviews and the internet information, including the pictures, flyers and photos.

Describing the research group

In sociology, and especially in ethnographic studies, it is important to be aware of the power relationships between the researcher and the researched. Not only does the researcher have a major impact on how the research material is presented, but he or she is also in a powerful position when it comes to representing the respondents. During the process of writing, I had to make several conscious decisions about the use of words. These days, words which are related to migrants and migration are neither neutral nor objective categories, but are instead contested and subjected to the political climate.

Throughout this book I predominantly use the words Turkish, Moroccan and Asian young people when referring to the consumers of the specific ethno-parties. With the terms Turkish/Moroccan or Asian, I am predominantly referring to the ethnic backgrounds of their parents, which plays a role in their cultural orientation at leisure times. The majority of the respondents were born and raised in the Netherlands, or moved here during the early years of their lives. These young people are also often defined as second or one and a half generation migrants. Although the terms

Dutch-Turks, Dutch-Moroccans or Dutch-Asians better reflect their imbeddedness in Dutch society, they are also problematic. Not all of the respondents have Dutch nationality or dual citizenship in both the country of origin and residence. Instead, whenever possible, and when the context is clear, I use the terms young people or youngsters. When necessary, for instance during the comparison and concluding chapters, I use the terms Turkish, Moroccan and Asian young people.

The terms, young people and youngsters, merely point to a stage of life instead of a fixed age category. Young people are those who are still involved in education or in the first years of their career. Most of them are aged between 16 and 35 years old, are unmarried, and do not have children.

The category of Asian young people also needs clarification. During the interviews, none of the respondents from the Asian party scene referred to themselves as being Asian. Instead, they identified themselves as Chinese, Taiwanese or Indonesian. However, at the group level, when they discussed the crowds at Asian parties, they often used the term Asian. Likewise, the Asian party organizations, which advertize their events as being for 'Asians', use this geographical definition to include a wide range of ethnic young people. Accordingly, when I write about the visitors to Asian parties on the group level, I will refer to them as Asian young people, and when I discuss their individual experiences, I will take into account their ethnic backgrounds by addressing them as Chinese, Taiwanese/Indonesian youngsters.

A final remark that I would like to make is that when I use terms such as Moroccan, Turkish and Asian young people or youngsters, I am referring to a specific category, namely the young people who visit ethno-parties. I do not intend to make statements about all of the young people in these ethnic groups. Not everyone visits ethno-parties. Accordingly, the outcome of this study does not necessarily relate to young people who do not participate in these scenes.

PART II
FIELDWORK

Chapter 5 Clubbing context

In the early 1980s, dance music came to the public's attention under the term 'rave' and immediately attracted controversy due to the perceived excessive use of the drug ecstasy and the hard, grinding beat. Over the passing years, dance music has come of age and split into a number of new styles. What was once considered to be a niche market has diversified into a multitude of sub-genre specializations, such as jungle house, hardcore house, mellow house and garage. New styles of music like RnB and hip-hop have also become popular, and all of these different musical genres have found their way into nightlife.

This chapter contains a brief review of the state, scope and scale of clubbing in the first decade of the 21st century in the Netherlands. The first fieldwork data, dealing with recent developments in Dutch urban nightlife, are also presented. This data primarily addresses the recent changes in the available night-time activities in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and is drawn from interviews with owners of popular and established clubs in the inner city nightlife scene. The urban nightlife in each of these locations is representative of how it is organized in other large towns and cities in the Netherlands. By drawing attention to the variety of parties that are now being organized, the first two paragraphs contain a description of the changes that have taken place in Dutch clubs and with clubbers. In the third paragraph, an overview of the rules and regulations governing Dutch nightlife is provided. In order to paint a detailed picture of this, I will compare Dutch legislation to that in existence internationally. Finally, in the fourth paragraph, the three fieldwork chapters are introduced.

5.1 General trends of nightlife

Nightlife in the Netherlands is well developed. As well as many restaurants and local bars, every city, large or small, has its own disco. Indeed, in the larger cities in the country, urban nightlife is comprised of several clubs and discos e.g. Amsterdam has 13, Rotterdam 16, The Hague nine and Utrecht six. As well as these official clubs, every city also has several so-called dancing bars,

which are simply bars with a small dance floor. Nightlife in the Netherlands has not, however, always been this extensive. Nonetheless, unlike countries such as Italy, Spain and France, where the majority of young people meet at restaurants and bars, many of their Dutch counterparts now visit clubs. According to the Dutch branch of the organization Horeca and Catering, 45% of people between the ages of 16 and 24 and 37% of those aged between 25 and 34 visit clubs and bars on a regular basis. These numbers are comparable to the clubbing scene in the UK, where 43% of 15-24 year-olds visit a club once a month or more (Mintel 1996: 5 cited in Malbon 1999: 8).

Increasing demands of clubbers

Due to the large numbers of clubs in existence, there is keen competition for visitors. In recent years, there have been some changes in how Dutch urban nightlife is organized. During every interview with prominent club owners in Rotterdam and Amsterdam, the increased demands and preferences of contemporary clubbers were brought up. These club owners all shared the opinion that clubbers now demand much more from a night out, and are no longer content to be charged 10-15 Euros to be allowed to dance. They have come up with several reasons for the growing expectations of the contemporary clubber. According to most of these producers, international clubbing experienced on holiday, and the growing popularity of music channels such as MTV or TMF and the internet, inform and shape the latest trends, leading to today's clubbers being much more demanding.

Another reason why the contemporary clubber demands more from a night out is related to the fact that young people no longer go clubbing every week, with the economic recession being named as a major cause of this reduced participation in club nights. According to the creative director of a club in Rotterdam, the clubber today has less to spend and, therefore, saves up his or her money and selects the party of choice much more carefully.

The number of clubs in existence has also increased over the past two decades, not only in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, but also in other towns and cities in other parts of the country. As a result, young people now have a choice between more clubs and in

different places. Other cities also now offer a variety of club nights and parties, meaning that young people no longer have to travel to the nearest large city to their favourite music.

The increased critical demands of the contemporary clubber on the one hand and the growing competition between clubs on the other have led to changes in the programming of nightlife. Clubs no longer play the same sort of music every night. Instead, a diverse range of styles of music and parties are organized in a club. This so-called 'broad programming' is being put in place in order to retain popularity and attract different groups of young people with different musical preferences.

The increase in the cultural and ethnic variety of contemporary urban clubbers was also named as a reason for the need for a new sort of programming. In Amsterdam, for example, 45% of the city's inhabitants belong to the so-called ethnic minorities, with the main ethnic groups being the Surinamese, Moroccans, Turks and immigrants from the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba². According to the club owners, ethnic minority young people in general prefer different styles of music in comparison of their native Dutch peers.

There is also an increase in variety in terms of cultural and musical orientation. Gothic, hardcore house, hard rock, trance, hip-hop, RnB, and grunge are just a few of the many contemporary popular styles that are lived through clothing and music. These days, all of these styles of music are being brought into nightlife.

Broad programming

As none of the club owners want to limit their clientele to a single group, they all put on different styles of parties in their clubs. According to some of them, the previous 'urban music trend', which became popular in the early years of the 21st century, paved the way for this broad programming. Urban music bridged the gap between a white house music crowd and the predominantly 'black' audiences listening to hip-hop and RnB. As a result, both groups of young people came together and danced to the same music. This music, which is a mix of hip-hop, RnB and house, was soon picked up and commercialized into an 'urban lifestyle', with branded clothing and

² See, www.os.amsterdam.nl for more detailed information

leisure activities such as skating, street soccer and BMX-biking. The young people who adopted this lifestyle mixed urban music and clothing in with their own ethnic background. This soon also became popular with large groups of ethnic minorities as well as native Dutch youngsters, and was appreciated for its ethnic diversity. The urban lifestyle became even more widespread when FunX, the new music station I referred to in the Introduction, was launched.

Local governments and the media soon picked up on this trend, which was viewed as a positive step towards multicultural acceptance among young people. As a result, the urban lifestyle was commercialized, and ‘urban events’ with hip-hop battles, street-soccer and demonstrations of street dance were organized by commercial radio stations and cultural bodies. In the summer of 2004 in particular, urban events were being organized in Amsterdam on an almost a weekly basis. However, due to the commercialization and explosion of urban events, and the strong media attention initially paid to it, the hype surrounding urban music and lifestyles soon faded. Clubs were the first to abandon the concept of urban parties, which were regarded as ‘too commercial and too mainstream’ according to an employee of Club Paradiso in Amsterdam.

In response to the urban music trend, the notion of ethnicity as exotic and trendy was promoted in the Dutch urban nightlife. With slogans like: ‘breaking the boundaries between cultures’ and ‘stimulate intercultural understanding through music’, clubs started to advertize so-called multicultural parties on their websites. As well as club or classic dance nights, new theme parties with a focus on the exotic elements of ethnic diversity sprung up. Club Paradiso in Amsterdam, for instance, started to organize *¿Que Pasa?*, a salsa night in which diverse musical styles were mixed with Latino beats. Another example is a party called *Mystic Grooves*, which began in Utrecht in 2003 as a monthly dance night in which a musical mix of Indian banghra, Pakistani break beat and Arabic house and hip-hop was programmed. Both the music played and the promotion of these parties was aimed at a multicultural audience. During my fieldwork in 2005, I visited both of these parties several times and did indeed

come across an ethnically diverse crowd. *¿Que Pasa?* was predominantly attended by native Dutch clubbers and young people with Surinamese, Antillean, African and Latin American backgrounds, while the audience at *Mystic Grooves* consisted mainly of second generation immigrants from India and Pakistan, as well as Surinamese and native Dutch youngsters. The popularity of these parties led to a whole raft of clubs organizing parties with different styles and different forms of organization.

5.2 Nightlife adapting to diversity

The broad programming put on by clubs has changed the way they are organized these days. Instead of arranging all of the parties themselves, clubs now increasingly rent their venues out to external companies or DJ collectives. According to many club owners, such organizations and collectives add value because they have specific knowledge and the right connections and network to make a new style of party a success. An Asian party organization, for example, not only knows who are the best DJs, but also has links to a wide network of clubbers who are interested in such an event. In this section, I make clear how clubs, DJ collectives, party planners and ethnic party organizations make a contribution to the broad programming of nightlife.

Clubs

Many owners of clubs have deployed new strategies with which to incorporate new and diverse programming. In order to safeguard the profile and the popularity of their venues, club owners are carefully selecting the party organizations to which they are prepared to rent their establishments out. The creative director of a club in Rotterdam, for example, compared the broad programming in his venue to the menus of quality restaurants, where all of the dishes have separate ingredients but are nevertheless cohesive. He stated that he carefully examines whether the party concept or organization corresponds with the club's image and ideology. To illustrate what he meant, he gave me an example of how his venue works with a particular Turkish party organization. Of the three such companies that were arranging Turkish parties in Rotterdam at that time, he only rented his club out to one of them, because its audience

matched his target crowd of trendy and creative clubbers. The two other organizations attracted a more mainstream (Turkish) audience, which did not fit the profile of the club. Most of the club owners shared this vision. Another one, for example, told me that a party organization which wanted to arrange a vulgar and sexually orientated party would not get permission to rent his premises because it would harm the reputation of his club.

During the interviews with the club owners, other selection procedures were also brought up. One important criterion was that every party in a particular club should be a safe event. This meant that the organization in question must hand over a detailed party concept, including an audience profile and an estimation of the number of visitors expected. Aggressive outbursts or violence during a party harms the reputation of a club and should, therefore, be avoided at all costs. Furthermore, an organization must hand over information about previous experiences, including recent references and an up to date certificate of registration with the Chamber of Commerce. The club owners all said that they check references and contact their colleagues to ask for more information on a company.

As well as renting their venues out to external organizations, clubs also arrange their own parties. These so-called club nights are unique and recognizable to visitors, and are events which help to maintain the unique image and profile of the club.

If a party organization wants to rent a club, they also hire its personnel. For example, a club's bouncers continue to be responsible for deciding who will be allowed into a venue during the parties arranged by external organizations. Companies can appoint a so-called door bitch, who selects from the people who are queuing up those who fit the profile they are aiming for, but the venue's bouncer always has the final say on who is allowed in.

It is also important for club owners that the parties arranged by external organizations are attended by a large crowd. If the party is not a success, and the audience stays away, this not only damages the image of the club, but club owners also lose out financially; a venue not only charges rent, but also receives the money spent on drinks. Party organizations on the other hand earn their money by the selling of entrance tickets, which again means that it is crucial for all of the parties involved that the event is well-attended.

All of these measures are drawn up to safeguard the image of a club and to control the types of parties that are organized in a venue. Once a year, a club's board of directors considers all of the requests from external party organizations and, after making a careful selection, plans which events will take place over the course of the next year. By planning a year ahead, club owners control the programming in their venues and provide clubbers with a wide variety of parties to attend.

Critique of broad programming

Ted Langenbach, a prominent figure in Rotterdam's nightlife, is critical of clubs' growing tendency to rent their venues out, believing that it damages their creativity and image. Instead of encouraging sectarianism, he also argues that clubs should try to organize parties which attract clubbers with diverse musical tastes and styles, so that different groups of young people dance together. According to Langenbach, contemporary clubbers need to be challenged to mix on the dance floor and learn from each other, instead of dancing in their own safe, small environments. Club owners disagree with him, however, and are of the opinion that a party where different people with different musical styles dance together is only attractive to a very small, creative elite. Mainstream clubbers just want to dance to their favourite music with people they can identify with.

DJ collectives

Before the introduction of broad programming, most DJs were hired directly by clubs. Many venues worked with so-called resident DJs, who were committed to a single club and had to get permission to occasionally work at other places. Today, however, many DJs are no longer affiliated to a single venue. Instead, a party organization hires a DJ, and takes on the role of booking agency for those who are under contract. DJs who are not contractually bound to a club or an organization arrange their own bookings. Indeed, the popular and trendy DJs have a greater say in their own agendas and demand the privilege of being able to play at diverse parties and venues.

A DJ is no longer just a person who plays records created by others, but is seen as an artist in his or her own right, and has a huge

impact on the success, or otherwise, of a party. Many DJs not only play records, but also produce their own dance tracks. The world famous Dutch DJ, Tiësto, for example, who has won many international prizes and played at the opening ceremony of the Olympic games in Athens in 2004, has released a succession of dance records.

As well as producing dance tracks, many DJs are now also involved in organizing dance parties. As the true experts in music and clubbing trends, DJs are more than capable of arranging innovative events. The *Mystic Grooves* party that I mentioned in the previous section, for example, is arranged by a collective consisting of the resident DJs from a club in Utrecht. At these events, as well as working at their own parties, these organizers also invite different guest DJs and acts such as belly dancers and live bands to perform. These parties were a huge success, and their scope was consequently expanded in 2004, with a *Mystic Grooves* party being arranged in a club in Amsterdam. In the years that followed, the collective also began to organize *Mystic Grooves* parties at festivals and other venues and clubs all over the country.

Another example of a DJ collective organizing a party is *Sutra Funk*, an event that was first organized in 2004 in a club in Amsterdam. It is an Asian underground party which is advertised online as: ‘A night where music and culture interact. This is the sound of multicultural Europe, 2nd generation[s] expressing their own culture mix through music.’ This concept is inspired by Asian underground parties in the UK, where DJs and musicians of Indian, Bangladeshi and Pakistani descent were ‘twisting and cutting up traditional sounds from their own backgrounds and mixing it with digital dance music, sounds of tabla fused perfectly with the high bpm of drum’n’bass and break beat and Sitar, vocals with more electronic, funky, trip-hop sort of sound’.³ DJ collectives promote their events on the internet, their own websites and the websites of the clubs where the parties are being held. Just like any other party organization, the DJs rent a club out for a night.

³ See www.sutrafunk.com for more information.

Party organizations

As well as DJ collectives, which have developed and arranged vibrant ethnic parties, commercial party organizations or companies have also developed a wide range of parties which they sell to clubs all over the Netherlands. These events are not necessarily intended to attract a multicultural audience, but revolve around themes and DJ performances. Most of the time, the first party takes place in a popular club in Rotterdam or Amsterdam and, when it is a success, it is taken all over the Netherlands. For instance, the parties *Nope is Dope* and *GirlsLove DJs*⁴ started off in Amsterdam and are now organized all over the country. Famous resident DJs play at every party and ever-changing guest DJs and other acts are booked to keep the model new and trendy. Both of these party concepts have their own websites to promote their events. Indeed, a website is an important tool in the promotion of a party. It tells potential clubbers what is on the agenda and also provides the opportunity for visitors to a virtual community to communicate. In order to strengthen the identification of a clubber with a party concept, special merchandise is designed with the event's logo on t-shirts, caps and badges. Clubbers buy these items on the internet and I have certainly witnessed a couple of students wearing these shirts in classes. The photo galleries on these sites are looked at frequently by clubbers, not only to check whether they are on any of the pictures, but to also see how people are dressed and what they look like.

Ethnic party organizations

Ethnic party organizations have also sprung up and arrange so-called ethno-parties. Ethno-parties are events organized for a specific ethnic group. Previously, these parties were arranged within the ethnic community and located in community centres or rented halls outside the city centre. The broad programming of nightlife, and the new trend of hiring parties arranged by creative companies and renting a club to DJ collectives, have paved the way for the incorporation of ethnic parties into popular venues. Just like the DJ collectives, the ethnic party organizations hire a club for a night to arrange their own event. These days, Asian, Turkish, and Moroccan parties are arranged on a regular basis in clubs all over the

⁴ See www.GirlsLoveDjs.com and www.nopeisdope.eu for more information

Netherlands. Due to their incorporation in popular venues, the ethno-parties are accessible to a wider audience and have become part of mainstream nightlife. These organizations followed the example of the creative companies by setting up websites to promote their events and booking professional resident DJs as well as guest DJs and stage acts.

Due to their broad programming, clubs attract young people with different musical preferences. By renting out their venues, diverse parties are able to be organized in a single club. Another consequence is that the same party concepts take place in different clubs. As a result, clubbers select their favourite event and travel to a variety of venues in different towns and cities to dance to their favourite music played by their favourite DJs.

5.3 Regulating nightlife in clubs

By opening up to diverse styles of music and parties, clubs are catering to a wider range of consumers. However positive this may sound, it does not automatically mean that all young people have access to or feel welcome in clubs, or that all styles of music are catered for. In this section, the rules and regulations of clubbing are explained. These are drawn up at different levels, namely nationally, locally and in clubs. I will first provide an overview of the national rules of clubbing, and will then shed light on the influence of local government. Finally, I will consider how clubs are involved in the processes of access and selection.

National rules

Like in most European countries, the legal drinking age in the Netherlands is 16 for beer and wine and 18 for spirits. This automatically means that young people in the country have to be at least 18 to get into a club, since spirits are served there. Compared to the United States, where the legal drinking age is set at 21, Dutch youngsters can get involved in clubbing fairly early on in life. Most clubs are very strict about the minimum entrance age, not only because they prefer adult clubbers (who are more likely to spend money on drinks), but also because venues are fined or even forced to close down for a period of time if this rule is broken. Accordingly, many bouncers ask for identification at the door of a club.

Another national rule is that the possession of drugs is prohibited inside a club. If this rule is violated, the venues are fined or closed down by the local government for an extended period of time. The local government is also authorized by its national counterpart to close down a club when aggressive incidents, such as massive fights, or the use of weapons, repeatedly occur. Clubs cannot put the blame on the (aggressive) visitors as they are held responsible for enforcing the policy on their premises.

Local rules

Although the rules regarding opening and closing hours are not set by the national government, the local policies in many cities are similar. Most clubs open their doors at 11pm, and in general clubbers start arriving shortly after midnight. A local policy in most cities is that guests have to be in the venue before 2am, with the aim being to control all of the young people who are on the streets because all of the bars have closed at the same time. The people who visit a bar before going to a club, therefore, have to leave it before 2am and, as a result, do not dwell on the streets in large numbers.

Lately, there has been a call for the deregulation of the closing hours of clubs. Until recently, every city set its own closing times, which varied between 2 and 5am. However, because all of the clubs in a city shut at the same time, those living nearby were disturbed by large groups of clubbers flooding onto the streets. Accordingly, many club owners and local residents have called for

the abolition of closing hours, proposing instead a so-called cool down hour. During this period, which is the last hour before closing, no alcohol would be served, meaning that crowds would leave clubs in a more orderly fashion. At the time of writing (spring 2009), this request is being considered in many cities.

Catering intervention team

Lately, there has been an increase in the number of complaints about the increasing police and (local) government intervention in clubs. According to those with a grievance, the enforcement of strict rules is getting in the way of a free, creative, hedonistic and vibrant nightlife. These club owners argue that many young urban professionals, who work hard during the week, seek pleasure and excitement (on many occasions in the form of party drugs) and do not want to be restricted too much.

It is true that in the last couple of years urban nightlife has become increasingly regulated and controlled by local governments. For example, most cities have drawn up a *convent door policy*, and have also put in place so-called HIT teams (Catering Intervention Team), which ensure that the rules and regulations are being adhered to. Initially, these teams, which are part of the police department, were set up as separate units to deal with catering crime. Their main duties were the fight against drug crime and the control of illegal workers in the catering industries. In recent years, however, the units have extended their scope to clubs, controlling, for example, the licences of the club owners, party organizations and bouncers, and the work permits of employees. They also monitor opening and closing hours and intervene in clubs to control the possession of drugs. The local government and the police departments highlight the fight against illegal practices in nightlife as the main reason for the establishment of these special teams, although many club owners and party organizations point to the financial benefits for the local government as a reason for this increased control. The ethno-party market is growing so quickly that according to one of the organizers of Surinamese Good-Time Parties, ‘the tax authorities have established a new team for the ethno-party organizations. These organizations are under severe pressure because the tax authorities are aware of the amount of money that is going around in this

circuit'. During my visits to the ethno-party scene, I witnessed the intervention of these special HIT teams on several occasions. They mainly focused on the licences of the party organizations and whether the personnel were certified and in the possession of a work permit. I never saw any large-scale control of drugs, and nor did the police bring any drug dogs into the clubs, which is something they do at other large scale parties and venues.

Door policy

The second important form of government intervention concerns the door policies of clubs. In order to prevent suspicion and feelings of racial discrimination at the door, club owners in many cities have been asked to draw up transparent rules. These deal with formal regulations, such as those related to the minimum age, the possession of drugs or weapons, and opening and closing hours, as well as more informal rules about dress code, group size and the make-up of a crowd. These informal rules can change according to the theme and popularity of the party and the composition of the dance crowd already inside the venue. For instance, many clubs don't allow people in who are wearing trainers, but at a hip-hop or urban party, these are usually permitted when worn as part of an appropriate outfit. Another example is the rule that bouncers do not generally let in large groups of people as they are more difficult to control. However, at an ethno-party, the bouncers do not control group size as the presence of large numbers of friends is characteristic of this type of event.

The Panel Deurbeleid (Panel Door policy) was the first organization to actively invite club owners to take action against discrimination. This body was established by the Rotterdam Anti Discrimination Council (RADAR), with the goal of defining and standardizing the door policies of the city's clubs. Young people work with club owners, the local government, the police, justice departments and a discrimination officer to draw up transparent nightlife rules. As well as transparency, young people who think they are being discriminated against can report their suspicions. The Panel deals with individual complaints and collects all them together ready to involve the local government if a particular club is mentioned often. Many local governments have followed

Rotterdam's example and established their own local Panel Deurbeleid. Many club owners voluntarily get involved because they want to restore their damaged reputations, since they are often accused of being discriminatory towards ethnic minority young people by the media.

Regulation by clubs

Right from the very beginning, the owners of dance halls and discos have realized that controlling the people who enter their premises is an important tool when it comes to creating the desired ambiance inside a venue. Apart from the formal rules regarding, age, drugs and the number of young people allowed in, the bouncers or door staff also devise informal strategies forged through experience (Hobbs 2003). It is easier to refuse an expected trouble maker entry than to later try to control or throw someone out.

Refusing people entry on the basis of a dress code, or even discrimination, is not a new phenomenon in clubs, with it beginning almost at the same time as the first disco opened its doors. Shortly after the introduction of disco music in the 1950s, young people came together in so-called dance-halls to dance to their favourite music. At the door, these young consumers had to pay an entrance fee and get past a burly looking man who controlled the excited and dressed up crowd (Triesscheijn and Maris, 2005).

In 1961, race riots broke out in a small town called Oldenzaal. At that time, there was a great deal of tension between 'single' Italian and Spanish guest workers and the autochthonous youth. All of these groups competed with each other for women on the dance floor, which led to many small incidents. When the catholic dance establishment followed the example of other discothèques and started to refuse the young Italian and Spanish clubbers entry, massive riots broke out (Groenendijk 1990).

In the 1980s it was the hooligans, English tourists and members of stag or hen parties who were seen as undesirable visitors to the Amsterdam nightlife scene. At that time, club owners also began to reject ethnic minority young people. As they were seen as the forerunners of fashion and dance (Sansone 1992), Surinamese and Antillean youngsters were waved inside clubs enthusiastically by the door staff, but many Moroccan and Turkish

youths were refused entry.

As I have mentioned earlier in this book, many young men of Turkish and Moroccan descent still don't feel welcome in many clubs in the Netherlands. Indeed, a great number of these young men have actually been refused entry by door staff, while others only know people to whom this has happened. The alleged discrimination at the doors of clubs attracted national interest, and was even discussed at length by the national government. Even the huge attention paid to the transparency of the door policies in most large cities does not necessarily mean that ethnic minority young people are no longer discriminated against at the doors of clubs. It is very difficult to measure this, since several factors play a role in the decisions the bouncers make. However, even when discrimination at the door no longer takes place, this does not necessarily mean that ethnic minority youngsters *feel* more welcome in clubs. These feelings of being unwelcome, or even being discriminated against, have an impact on the nightlife choices that many young people from ethnic minorities make.

5.4 The ethno-party scene

Now that I have discussed the incorporation of ethno-parties into the regular club scene from the perspective of the club owners, it is time to learn more about the ethno-party scene in detail. The club owners share the opinion that the ethno-parties organized in popular venues were a first opportunity for many (female) ethnic minority youngsters to become more acquainted with the scene. Some even stated that going to ethno-parties was a very important phase, which would soon become redundant when the consumers of these events got more familiar with clubbing. Others viewed the ethno-party scene as a growing niche market in the overall nightlife that was available. In general, many viewed the incorporation of ethno-parties as a positive trend and a way to cater to the growing number of ethnic minority young people in the Netherlands. These opinions played an important role in their motivation to open up their venue to ethnic party organizations that led to the creation of the ethno-party scene in the Dutch urban nightlife.

In the following three chapters I will provide detailed information on how this scene is organized and experienced. I will

describe the Asian party scene, the Turkish clubbing scene and the Moroccan leisure scene in that order. Each chapter starts with a general description of the specific ethno scene by paying attention to the size, popularity and general characteristics thereof. From a more general perspective, I will narrow the scope down to sketch out the strategies that some of the party organizations use to attract visitors. Finally, the focus shifts to the consumers by addressing how personal factors influence the choices made in the ethno-party scene.

Chapter 6 The Asian Party Scene

Asian party, Friday night, winter 2007

At round midnight, my friend and I arrive at Club Escape in Amsterdam, where we stand in line to enter an Asian party. The atmosphere in the queue is tense. The bouncer in front of the door is horrendous and is constantly shouting that people have to show their ID to get in. If someone does not have ID, they are crudely waved away. We see many well dressed young Chinese women leaving the queue. We feel uncomfortable because we are not used to this sort of aggressive behaviour and realize that we stand out from the crowd, being the only non Asians and clearly much older than everyone else. After half an hour, we reach the door and the bouncer lets us in without giving us a hard time. He didn't ask us for ID, and he didn't shout at us; he's friendly, and even warns us that we are about to go into an Asian party.

Once inside the club, the awkward feeling of standing out from the crowd hits us again. We feel like schoolteachers chaperoning their students at a night out. Not only is the crowd much younger and smaller than us, but they are also dressed differently. Some people look in our direction as if they are wondering what these two old (native Dutch) women are doing at their party. The atmosphere inside the club is also not very relaxed; it feels like everybody is watching each other and showing off their outfits and dance moves. When we enter the dance floor and observe the crowd, we can't help thinking that lots of them are using this space as their own personal stage. Many of the people dancing in front of us give a perfect display of the dance moves of the pop icons of the day: Justin Timberlake (the guys) or Beyonce (the girls). They are not letting themselves go to the rhythm of the music, and nor are they casually chatting with friends while dancing. No, they are instead giving a demonstration of their latest well-studied and practiced dance moves. When I discuss my observations with my friend and typify the situation on the dance floor as being totally different from regular parties, she immediately puts me back in the position of being an oldie by saying:

'There is nothing extraordinary about this crowd except for us two. This is how kids nowadays dance and dress in clubs. Face it dear, we are from a whole different generation and our clubbing experience is different from theirs'.

She is right. Our first clubbing experiences were more than 10 years ago, and at that time we were dressed in second hand clothing and danced to Nirvana and Rage against the Machine. We probably looked freaky in the eyes of the older generation too. Keeping this at the back of my mind, I continue my fieldwork. I decide to change strategy and play the role that this clubbing crowd can relate to, that of the academic researcher studying a completely new field.

6.1 Introduction

The first Asian party in the Netherlands took place in the mid 1980s, but they really became popular in the early 1990s. Before then, many young people of Asian origin in the country did not participate in regular nightlife. According to DJ Irwan, one of the most popular DJs in the Asian party scene, a lot of young people were not allowed by their parents to go dancing in mainstream clubs. Instead, most of them hung out at Chinese bars and restaurants. By the early 1990s, however, many young Asians were getting involved in the Asian party scene because it was viewed as a safe place to meet other Asians (Kartosen 2004). From its first party onwards, the Asian party scene has undergone some interesting developments and changes. What follows is an overview of this and a description of what the current scene looks like, with the focus on its size, organization and popularity. In the third paragraph I will focus on the strategies employed by the Asian party organizations to attract consumers, while in the fourth paragraph the opinions and choices made by the clubbers are centralized. In the last paragraph, I will tie the strategies of the producers and the experiences of the consumers together by analyzing the choices of party *within* the Asian party scene that young Asians make.

6.2 The creation of an Asian party scene

The Asian party scene in the Netherlands was set up following the example of the Asian underground scene in the United Kingdom. These parties first received media attention in the 1980s, with reports on bhangra music, which originates from the region of Punjab in India, as a dance style. By 1997, bhangra music had been joined by a new concept, 'Asian underground' (Huq 2006: 68). This is an umbrella category which largely referred to a DJ-centered dance music scene exemplified by the alternative circuit in London, where bhangra music is alternated with indie-rock and hip-hop. This form of underground music, and the UK usage of the term 'Asian', which effectively reduces the largest continent in the world to ex-British India, principally Bangladesh, Pakistan and India, is directly linked to the country's colonial past. It is, therefore, important to bear in mind that the Dutch use of the term refers to a completely different Asian population.

Although those who originate from the entire Asian continent are included, in the Dutch party scene the term is mainly used to refer to second generation Chinese, Taiwanese and Indo-Europeans. Moreover, the great majority of audiences consist of young people with a Chinese background. Nevertheless, all of the organizers use the term Asian to promote their parties because of its global and trendy image. In contrast to the Asian underground scene in the UK, no 'Asian' music is actually played at an Asian party in the Netherlands. According to the party organizers, their crowds are too diverse to program, for instance, Chinese pop music and, they believe, the majority does not enjoy dancing to this type of music. Instead, DJs predominantly play hip-hop and RnB, which means that musically the parties resemble any other RnB event in the mainstream nightlife scene.

The ethnically diverse audience makes it difficult to classify this scene under the umbrella term of ethno-parties. In this study, the term ethno-party has been defined as an event organized by and for a single group. However, because a party is targeted at a specific group of ethnic consumers by appealing to a shared ethnic identification, such as Asians, labelling this scene as an ethno-party is justified. The Asian party scene was the first professional ethno-party scene organized in the Netherlands. One of the most popular

parties in the early 1990s was arranged in Beesd, a small city close to Utrecht, which mainly attracted young people with a Chinese background and some Vietnamese youngsters. People came from all over the Netherlands to the parties in Beesd because of its central location. Very soon, other party organizations then followed up on this success and started arranging Asian parties as well.

In these early years, two sub-scenes developed under the umbrella term of the Asian party scene. One of these predominantly attracted young people with a Chinese background and the events were labelled Asian parties, while the other was aimed at those with Indonesian ancestry and the parties were initially promoted under the term Indo. This term is an abbreviation of Indo-European, and is a nickname used to refer to the offspring of relationships between white men and native women in the East Indies during Dutch colonial times. Nowadays, the term is freely used by youngsters of mixed Indonesian and European descent.

After only a few years, the Indo parties started to lose their appeal and became less popular; a lot of their early fans started to join in with the mainstream clubbing scene as they were getting bored of seeing the same faces every time. Furthermore, many of these initial visitors had grown out of the party scene altogether and were now at a different stage of life, which didn't involve clubbing (Kartosen 2004), while many of the subsequent clubbing generation moved straight into the regular clubbing scene. In order to appeal to a larger group of consumers, some of the Indo party organizations stopped using the word Indo, while others adopted the term Asian party to expand their target group.

Size and popularity

In the heyday of the Asian party scene, which was around the year 2000, the parties were attracting more than a thousand visitors per event. Since 2004, however, there has been something of a slump, with both the numbers of people attending these events and the number of Asian party organizations falling significantly. There are several factors behind this decreasing popularity. First of all, there were too many Asian party organizations arranging the same kinds of parties. Secondly, the crowds were getting bored because the organizers of these events were not really changing their concepts.

Moreover, the new generation of young Asians is, according to some of the organizers, much more accustomed to clubbing in general and visiting mainstream parties.

At the moment, two new types of Asian party organizations can be distinguished. The first arranges parties for second generation Asians. These predominantly attract Asian youngsters of Chinese origin. The second type largely organizes parties for non-Dutch speaking Chinese. According to many, these events are for Chinese restaurant personnel who are much older (between 25 and 40) than the Asians in the other scene. What is more, most of these parties are so-called underground events and are not part of mainstream nightlife and nor do they take place in regular clubs. In order to make the scene studied herein comparable to the others I will be examining, only the first type of Asian parties is taken into account in this research.

Asian party organizations in the Netherlands

In this study, I have included the three biggest and most popular Asian party organizations operating in this scene at the time of my research, namely: *AJIN/Asian Escape*, *HuMan Entertainment* and *Santai*. As mentioned above, many other Asian party planners dropped out of this circuit, meaning that the Asian party scene in the Netherlands is now largely comprised of the three companies mentioned above.

AJIN/Asian Escape began to organize parties for the Chinese party scene in the 1990s. It is located in Amsterdam and arranged its first events in a club called 'Roxy'. This extremely popular venue burned down in 1999, after which *AJIN/Asian Escape* changed the location of their parties to another popular club in Amsterdam, *Escape*. *Asian Escape* always organizes its parties on the Tuesdays of the school holidays and, according to an employee, on average they attract between 600-700 people.

HuMan Entertainment was set up in 2000 with the aim of organizing 'something' for young people from the Asian community. The main purpose of this was to create a space where second and third generation young Asians could come together, make new friends, or meet future partners. These parties are organized on the first Friday of the month in a club in Bunnik, a

small but central town in the Netherlands. Every *HuMan Entertainment* event attracts more than a thousand people. The venue in Bunnik (named Brothers) is a very large club with several separate rooms. As well as the main hall, where the majority of the crowd dances to urban music, there is also a smaller room where another DJ predominantly plays trance (house). Although karaoke is regarded as a typical Asian activity, *HuMan Entertainment* is the only organization that has included it in its party concept.

Santai, the third and final Asian party business considered herein, is located in Rotterdam, and began life as an Indo-party organization. The organizers, a group of five close friends, were students when they started. As well as the cultural motivation of providing young Indos with a space where they could party together, the group also had an economic goal. As one of the organizers said, ‘organizing an Indo party seemed a nice way to make money at that time’. In its heyday as an Indo party organization, the company attracted more than a thousand young Indos to its events. A *Santai* party was seen as being very hip and cool, largely due to the trend setting image of its clients. After a few years, however, the number of people attending these parties dropped significantly. In order to combat this slump, *Santai* changed its strategy and started to promote the parties as Asian events. Nowadays, the majority of visitors are of Asian descent, with Chinese youngsters predominating. *Santai* organizes a party every two months and now attracts about 600-700 people per event.

6.3 Targeting the Asian audience: strategies of the producers

The Asian party scene has past its heyday. In the year 2000, when it was flourishing, there were many more Asian party organizations in existence. Some of these disappeared, while others changed their concepts in order to remain popular. Indeed, all three of the organizations included in this research have made such changes and implemented new strategies to attract consumers. There is a sense of competition between the three companies since their target group has become smaller and younger than was the case a couple of years ago.

Promoting your party as Asian

To a great extent, the background of the organizers, and the ways in which a party is advertised, determines its audience. *Santai* was set up in 2001, when the organizers were still students. Their goal was to arrange parties for Asians. As most of them were of Indo-European descent, their adherents were predominantly those with the same background. Furthermore, the name of the organization, *Santai*, means relaxed in Indonesian, which in itself provides a clue as to its target group. In Rotterdam in particular, this organization was very popular, and required little effort to promote an event as its popularity was passed on by word of mouth.

When many young Indos stopped going to Asian or Indo parties, *Santai* had to come up with a new plan. According to one of the organizers, they started to advertise more intensively in 2006. Not only did they use the internet more frequently, but they also started to hand out flyers in the streets and bars where many young Asian people gathered. Furthermore, several theme parties were aimed at attracting other Asian groups. In 2006, for example, *Santai* added the theme Vietnam to its events in order to draw more Vietnamese visitors. Although it still attracts Indo-Europeans, *Santai* now has a very mixed audience, though young people of Chinese origin predominate. Recently, the company has altered its course. Instead of promoting its parties as Asian, the English translation of the organization's name appears on its website. The emphasis is on a 'relaxed' party and distancing itself from other companies in the Asian party scene.

Ajin/Asian Escape was also established by a couple of students. The organizers were all of Chinese origin and, as a result, so were most of their audiences. The goal, when the company was set up in 2003, was to arrange parties for young Chinese clubbers. After a few years, however, the organization decided that it wanted more diverse crowds and expanded its target audience to include Asians. According to one of the organizers, the most important change was promoting their parties as Asian instead of Chinese on the flyers. As a consequence, the crowds at *Ajin/Asian Escape* are now more mixed, although Chinese visitors still predominate.

HuMan Entertainment began to arrange parties for an Asian audience in 2000. In contrast to the other Asian party organizations,

those behind *HuMan Entertainment* were not students but businessmen, who saw an opening in a fast growing market. Due to its professionalism, and the promotion and central location of its parties, *HuMan Entertainment's* events were a tremendous success right from the start. According to the organizers, they have not experienced any drop in numbers over the past couple of years. Certainly, the decreasing popularity of the Asian party scene did not seem to affect this organization. As a result, it has not changed anything in either its strategy or its business plan. One of the organizers attributes this popularity to its central location and its young, predominantly Chinese, audience. Young people still want to go to Asian parties because they see them as a safe environment in which they can familiarize themselves with the nightlife scene.

Advertising a party

All three of the party organizations use the internet to promote their events, and they all have their own website upon which forthcoming parties are announced. Another important section on these sites is the photo gallery, where pictures of visitors to previous parties can be found. These images play an important role when it comes to advertising a party because viewers can see online what kinds of people attend these events. Indeed, you are certainly able to get a clear idea of the likely crowds by studying these photos and checking out the styles of clothing and the ethnic make-up of the people in the images. As well as the photo gallery, the websites also contain a brief description of the organizations' history, goals and image. All of these elements provide online viewers with an idea about who the parties are being organized for and whether they would fit in with the target audience.

All three of the organizations also promote their events on several Asian websites. In particular, the youth organization, ASN, is an important promotion tool⁵. On its online agenda, ASN lists all of the events organized for young Asians, such as parties, festivals and workshops. This website is visited by many of the party companies' target group, and is therefore very important when it comes to promoting what they do. These events are also highlighted

⁵ See the website <http://www.asn-online.nl> for more information

on other forums and internet communities such as Hyves⁶, Hi5⁷ and MSN⁸.

As well as the online advertisements that are predominantly focused on the target audience of Asians, the distribution of flyers is also aimed at this group. All of the party organizations distribute their flyers at locations where many young Asians come together, such as restaurants, bars and clothing stores.

Location

The location of a party is an important factor in whether or not it is a success. All three of the organizations had different motives for their choice of club. *Santai*'s parties always take place in Rotterdam, with the organizers, as well as a large section of their audiences, being based in the city. *Santai* tries to change the venue in Rotterdam every year as it does not want its fans to get bored with the club. Accordingly, in discussion with its audience, a venue is carefully chosen. Occasionally, an internet poll on the company's website is used to ask for visitors' opinions about the music and premises. Furthermore, the organization works with a number of 'public agents' who constantly report back on the opinions of the consumers on the location and other aspects of the parties.

Ajin/Asian Escape parties take place in the popular club, *Escape*, in Amsterdam. For its organizers, the image of the venue is very important in their choice. Due to its central location, *Escape* is easily accessible by public transport and, as a result, attracts a lot of visitors from within the city. Since finding a parking space in Amsterdam is a horrendous experience, very few people come by car, unlike the clients of the other two organizations.

For *HuMan Entertainment*, its central location in the Netherlands is one of the key aspects of its success. Furthermore, the club it uses is next to a highway and has a large car-park. As a result, it attracts people from all over the Netherlands, who sometimes drive for more than an hour and a half to dance at this event.

⁶ See the website <http://www.hyves.nl> for more information

⁷ See the website <http://www.hi5.com> for more information

⁸ See the website <http://www.MSN.com> for more information

Door policy

In general, an Asian party starts at 11pm and gets busy round midnight, just like any other event in the mainstream clubbing scene. *HuMan Entertainment*, however, found a formula with which to attract a crowd right from the start, namely letting young women in for free between 11 and 11.30pm. According to one of the organizers, approximately 200 girls come into the club in this first half hour. A ticket normally costs 15 Euros, which makes turning up at the party early especially attractive for the younger crowd.

The bouncers who control the door are employed by the club. According to all three organizations, they can inform the bouncers about their preferred audience, but it is ultimately the doormen who decide who is allowed to enter and who is not.

As became clear at the beginning of this chapter, the bouncers at Club *Escape* are strict when it comes to the age of the clubbers and, therefore, ask for ID. At *Santai* and *HuMan Entertainment*, the ID checks are less frequent. *Santai* generally attracts students who are older than 18. *HuMan Entertainment*, on the other hand, attracts a much younger audience. According to its organizers, the majority of their crowds are over 18, although on the basis of my own observations and the opinions of the respondents in this research, the event is attended by many 16 year olds or those who are even younger.

At all three of the organizations' parties, those with a non-Asian background are allowed entry. However, all of the organizers said that they want to preserve the Asian character of the events. In general, they do not have a problem with non-Asian visitors as long as Asians predominate. According to one of the organizers of *Ajin*, many Asian people have native Dutch friends, who they occasionally bring to an Asian party. Non-Asians without Asian friends are allowed in, but are warned by the bouncers about the nature of the event they are about to attend.

Making it Asian?

Apart from the ethnic make-up of the dance crowd, most of the Asian parties do not differ from regular RnB events. For example, the party organizers rarely make any changes to the décor of the clubs to give them an Asian feel, apparently because it does not add

any value since the audience is not sensitive to any additional Asian elements. Indeed, according to the organizers of *Ajin/Asian Escape*, the only thing the crowd is interested in is good (urban) music and a nice location where they can get together and dance.

Santai is the only organization which occasionally does something to give a party an Asian flavour, sometimes handing out Asian snacks and small Asian gadgets like fans, which correspond to the theme of an event. It also works with visual media and occasionally displays Asian images on big screens in the club. One of the key respondents herein claimed to have stopped organizing Asian parties as he no longer wanted to be associated with what he sees as the shallow image of this scene. According to him, most organizers are just in it for the money and do not arrange proper cultural parties where young Asians can learn more about their roots. The other organizers, however, are all of the opinion that the dance crowd is not interested in any Asian elements; they just want to hang out together and dance to their favourite music.

Music

In general, (western) urban eclectic, which is a mix of RnB, hip-hop and other popular/commercial songs of the time, is the main style of music played at Asian parties. According to one of the organizers of *Ajin/Asian Escape*, they have tried to play Asian music at their events but the audience did not respond well to this. This opinion is shared by the other companies, which all agreed that their crowds are very focused on popular music and are not easy to satisfy because of their different opinions and musical interests:

‘The Asian crowd is a very difficult crowd. A large element do not want any changes, they just want a space where they can meet and mingle with their (Asian) friends, while the others complain that Asian parties always stay the same and do not follow innovative party trends.’

Many of the DJs involved in the Asian party scene have an Asian background. Moreover, almost all of the organizers of Asian parties have a huge network of Asian friends. This network is necessary to attract the appropriate audience. Most of the organizers are also

friends with DJs (some of whom are more professional than others), which makes the decision to hire an Asian DJ more straightforward. Some of the DJs I spoke to began their careers in the Asian party scene. As they improved their skills, many of them developed the desire to work at mainstream club nights. DJ Skilaz and DJ Mikey, for instance, said they got bored with the small Asian party scene and had moved into regular clubbing. Likewise, DJ Irwan, the resident DJ at *Santai*, is now a very popular RnB DJ outside the Asian party circuit. In contrast to the other two DJs mentioned, Irwan always makes time to play at a *Santai* party, even though he has a very busy schedule and is booked to perform at popular events both in and outside the Netherlands.

6.4 Choosing the Asian party scene

After setting out in detail the strategies that the three Asian party organizations use to attract consumers, it is now time to learn more about how young Asians make choices about which parties to attend. In this third section I will, therefore, shed light on the personal factors that played a role in these decisions. In paragraph 6.4.1 I will examine the social mechanisms of the processes of identification and differentiation, with the focus being on the importance of friends, feelings of belonging and social rules. The second aspect of personal factors, which are the cultural elements, is then analyzed in paragraph 6.4.2. Finally, in paragraph 6.4.3, the personal restrictions which determine choices negatively are unravelled.

6.4.1 The social dimension

During the interviews, most respondents said that they do not go to clubbing very often, with the majority claiming to go once a month or even less. Other favoured activities during the weekend were visiting bars or restaurants, or hanging out at home with friends. They claimed to be too busy with work and school to go clubbing more often.

Friends

Most of the respondents liked to visit Asian parties to catch up with friends. A small minority could be defined as frequent clubbers who

go clubbing almost every week. This group not only visited Asian parties, but were also regular attendees at mainstream club nights. A difference was that the young people who do go clubbing occasionally only do so with their Asian friends. On the other hand, the respondents who claimed to go out more often said that they have several groups of friends who they hang out with at different times; they went to Asian parties with their Asian friends and to regular club nights in a so-called mixed group.

For all of the respondents, going to Asian parties was seen as a way to catch up with friends, as one of the participants explains:

‘Asian Parties are actually for Asians and other parties are for other friends as well’.

Most of the respondents with a mixed group of friends said they never bring non-Asian acquaintances to an Asian party because it is ‘more of an Asian thing’ or ‘not for non-Asians because they do not know anybody’. As one respondent clearly explains:

‘I would never go to an Asian party if I was not Asian myself and I did not know many people there. Therefore, I do not bring my non-Asian friends with me to an Asian party; it is not fun at all’.

Feelings of belonging

According to Captain (2003: 268), Indos have created their own language, which contains a mix of Dutch and Indonesian words, to communicate with each other in person and on the internet. The creation of a specific language was also mentioned by the respondents herein. Likewise, the young people with a Chinese background named their mixed language as an important factor in their contact with their friends. Some said that ‘we understand each other better’, or that they ‘feel more connected’ through their specific choice of words. As they have all been born and raised in the Netherlands, the respondents can speak Dutch. In fact, for most of them, Dutch is their mother tongue and their ethnic language is their secondary form of communication. In the case of many Indos, most of them only spoke and understood some Indonesian words.

However, this shared language connected them as having Indo-European roots and was used to differentiate themselves from their native Dutch peers.

As well as language, many of the Asian respondents also *felt* different to their native Dutch counterparts. Some said that they shared a sort of lifestyle which differs from that of the native Dutch, as one of the male respondents explained:

‘I think it is just nicer to have Asian friends. You do the same things, watch the same Chinese soap series, you eat the same food and your family situation is comparable. It is just a feeling of being the same’.

When I asked for an explanation of this feeling, most of the respondents stated that they come from different families where ‘people respect their parents and the elderly’ and ‘family members are very close.’ They also mentioned that in their family ‘everybody is always welcome’ and ‘everybody is very hospitable’. They characterized their family as warm, respectful and close, which they contrasted to Dutch family units.

Furthermore, as well as these so-called ‘we’ feelings, the respondents also mentioned negative encounters with ‘others’ as a reason to go to an Asian party. Almost all of the subjects said that it was nice and comfortable to party with other Asians. Moreover, they also felt more comfortable meeting their friends at an Asian event. One of the main factors mentioned was that they would not attract attention at an Asian party since they were just ‘like the others [there]’ because they looked the same and did not differ ‘from the rest’. The respondents predominantly experienced these feelings when they wanted to go out in large groups. As a young female clubber explains:

‘I would never go to a Dutch bar with my large group of Chinese friends, because people will stare at us’.

The young women in particular cited the frequent remarks from a Dutch crowd as a reason to feel more comfortable at Asian parties:

‘Remarks like ‘you are so small’ or people saying ‘nihao’ to me irritates me. I mean what do they think, that we Asians all speak the same language? Or that we all look the same? I find that very rude!’

Several young (Chinese) women complained about these kinds of rude comments made by (predominantly) young Dutch men. These experiences affected their nightlife choices.

Many of the male respondents, however, named safety as an important reason for going to Asian parties. According to them, the atmosphere is less aggressive. As one of the male respondents said:

‘It is nice because at an Asian party you will never see fights, while other parties are far more aggressive. That’s why I prefer Asian parties over other RnB parties, you know’.

He continues his argument by saying that the Chinese are shorter than their native Dutch counterparts, so if there is a fight at an Asian party he can defend himself better than during a fight at a regular event. He, therefore, feels safer at an Asian party.

Social rules and flirting

Being well dressed and in a good and relaxed mood are all perfect ingredients for flirting.

Although almost no-one explicitly admitted that they went to Asian parties to find a date, or to meet attractive new people, by the atmosphere in the clubs it was obvious that everyone was eyeing up the others there and doing their best to show themselves off.

During the interviews, it was difficult to get the respondents to talk about their flirting experiences or ideas about finding someone special at an Asian party. Almost all of them told me that they predominantly went out to catch up with friends, and that meeting new and interesting people was not on their mind during a night out.

As one young Chinese woman told me:

‘I don’t see my friends very often; everybody is busy or lives far away. When we come together at an Asian party we stay together, to talk and have fun’.

Others replied in similar ways by emphasizing the importance of catching up and partying with their friends. The young women in particular were very determined to deny any flirting. Some of the men, however, told me that they mainly went to Asian parties to try to meet Asian girls. They said they were attracted to the women and saw the parties as places to meet them. These outspoken statements were, however, directly followed by the comment that it was very hard to approach interesting young women at an Asian party:

‘It is difficult you know, to approach a good looking girl when she is surrounded by six or ten friends. I mean I cannot talk to her, because everybody will look at me. You have to find a way to talk to her alone’.

Isolating a girl from her friends was not an easy thing to do, and when I asked him about his tactics, he told me he would try to dance closer to the girl and attract her attention by catching her eye, hoping that at some point she would move away from her friends. These tactics were mentioned by several of the men I spoke to. None of the male respondents said that they approach young women directly at an Asian party. In fact, many of them told me that they wait until the women make the first move. However, none of the young women who were interviewed confirmed this flirting technique. Nevertheless, it is likely that they did not want to share this information with either me or my colleague.

During the interviews, we also explicitly asked whether family members or friends prevented interactions with interesting others. The young women explained that although they went to a party with a brother or other male family member, they never felt like they were being watched. As they explained: ‘everybody minds his own business’ or ‘we have different groups of friends we hang out with’. Furthermore, many of the young women told me

that although people constantly look at each other, the actual contact mostly takes place at home, in front of the computer, when they look one another up on one of the many internet community sites, such as Hi5, MSN, or Hyves.

6.4.2 The cultural dimension

The majority of the Asian respondents said they preferred RnB and hip-hop, the music that is predominantly played at Asian parties. Furthermore, they shared the opinion that at most mainstream club nights, trance and house music dominate. Almost all of them said that they do not like this type of music, preferring what is played at Asian events. It is true that in the diverse programming of urban nightlife in the Netherlands, the parties where trance and house music is played predominate, but other styles of club nights can also be found. Hip-hop and RnB events are organized frequently, for example. Apparently, most of the Asian respondents are, therefore, not well informed about programming, do not like the hip-hop & RnB played at regular club nights, or use the musical style at Asian parties as a justification of the choices they make. During the interviews, why the respondents (incorrectly) claimed that RnB music was not played at normal club nights was never made clear. Musical taste, style of dress, and dance are very closely related in contemporary nightlife. Accordingly, it is in this cultural dimension that the way in which these factors are played out in the Asian party scene is explained.

Music

It was evident that most of the respondents were not really involved in musical programming, with the majority not talking passionately or enthusiastically about the music played at Asian parties. What almost all of them agreed upon was that unfamiliar or trance music, which does not have many lyrics, was difficult to dance to. Most of the respondents named Justin Timberlake and Beyonce, the pop icons of 2006, as their favourite artists. More specifically, they liked how these performers sang, danced and looked. Only a small minority claimed to prefer Asian music at an Asian party.

As a female visitor explains:

‘I would like it (if they play Asian music); I mean I sometimes listen to Japanese or Korean music. Last Santai party they played Indonesian music and I recognized it and that is funny, they should do that more often’.

Or, as another female visitor said:

‘Actually when you organize an Asian party, you should play Asian music but they don’t do that (...) why do they call it an Asian party where only Asian people come but no Asian music is played?’

During the interviews, it was predominantly the Indo youngsters who complained about the lack of Asian (or Indonesian) music. On the other hand, most of the Chinese respondents did not express any need to listen and dance to Asian or Chinese music.

Dance

Different types of music require different styles of dancing, and the ways in which pop artists dance in video clips are often copied. The dancing styles of young Asians do not, therefore, differ from those of the crowds at RnB parties, where the sexy dance moves of the RnB artists are often imitated on the dance floor.

As I have discussed in the previous sections, most Asians go to parties in large groups. Accordingly, on the dance floors of these events, you will see several groups of young people dancing together and forming a sort of circle so that they do not have their back to their friends. As well as dancing, people also like to talk and joke on the dance floor. So, instead of totally throwing themselves into the music and letting themselves go, much of the crowd at these parties interacts with each other and dances at the same time.

Dress Code

The majority of those who go to Asian parties follow the current trend of young people who go out wearing expensive, branded clothes. Most of the young women wore a tight top with a skirt or tight jeans. Most of the men wore baggy trousers with a T-shirt or shirt and trainers. Both the men and women wore eye-catching accessories. What was very popular were leather bracelets and silver coloured chains draped around the clubbers' pants/jeans. What was somewhat different was the hair of many of the Asian men. Some of the respondents used the term *Dragon Ball Z* to characterize these hairstyles. *Dragon Ball Z* is a Japanese cartoon action figure who has so-called spiky hair. According to many of the participants, a lot of young men in Hong Kong and Japan wear their hair like that.

Of course, there are as many styles of dress as there are people. The majority of the respondents did not display any specific interest in clothes, other than being aware of the need to dress trendily or casually. Some of the participants, however, were very involved in dressing up and showing themselves off. Neither the dress code nor the music played and the style of dancing were a reason to choose the Asian party scene. Those who participated in both mainstream and Asian club nights said they dressed the same at each type of event. The young Asians who only took part in the Asian party scene thought that the way they were dressed did not differ much to the crowds in regular clubs.

6.4.3 Restrictions

Social factors did play an important part in the respondents' identification with the Asian party scene and its crowds. The audiences seek out environments where they feel comfortable and where the social rules coincide with their desires and expectations. The opportunity to find a party that suits your tastes is, therefore, limited by the restrictions experienced. Some young people have limited access to money to pay the entry fee, do not have access to transportation, have had negative experiences with the door policy, or might not even be allowed by their parents to go out. These issues of accessibility have an impact on both their choice of nightlife, as well as on their nightlife experiences.

Door policy

The strategies that the producers employ when it comes to door policies affect the choices that consumers make. All of the respondents agreed that they did not have any difficulties in getting into a mainstream club night. None of them felt discriminated against and nor did they expect that any Asian would ever be refused entry at the door of a club. Indeed, the respondents only expected to have problems getting into a regular venue if they were in large groups. Accordingly, the door policies of ordinary clubs were not a reason to choose to engage with the Asian party scene.

The regulatory role of parents

According to the organizers of Asian parties, in the 1990s many young Asian women were not allowed by their parents to go mainstream club nights. At that time, a lot of Asian families were unfamiliar with clubbing. Many parents had a negative image of Dutch nightlife and did not want their daughters to come into contact with intoxicated (native-Dutch) young men. Accordingly, they only allowed their children to go to Asian parties, which were regarded as a safe and familiar alternative. These days, however, many parents have a less negative attitude towards Dutch nightlife.

One of the reasons for the reduction in the popularity of the Asian party is that, according to the organizers, most young women are now allowed by their parents to attend mainstream club nights. These days, most young Asian women start their clubbing in the Asian party scene and leave it within a year or two. A lot of them liked the presence of friends and their familiarity with the Asian party scene in the beginning, but got bored with the never changing concept as they got more experienced at going out.

Economic resources

In considering this book's first type of party, I have divided the issue of economic resources into the location and the costs thereof. The Asian parties all take place in ordinary clubs. Accordingly, particularly for the young Asians living in or near Amsterdam, Rotterdam, or Utrecht, the location of the venues where these events are held does not play a role in their choice of nightlife. Some of the Asian youngsters I spoke to at a *HuMan Entertainment* party

revealed that they drive all the way from the south of the Netherlands to attend. When I spoke to them during the event, all of them explained that they did not get involved very often in the Asian party scene because of the large distances they are required to travel. Most of them went clubbing in their own city more frequently, and only occasionally went to Asian parties. For these visitors, the lack of Asian club nights in their own area prevented them from participating in these events more often.

Asian party organizations charge an entry fee of approximately 15 Euros. This corresponds to the cost of getting into mainstream parties. Accordingly, the size of this fee has no impact on the choice between the Asian and the other party scenes.

6.5 Distinctions within the scene: the importance of social characteristics

Most of the respondents who participated in the Asian party scene displayed a preference for a specific party. Consequently, in this section I will focus on the choices young people make *within* this Asian party circuit. During the interviews, the young Asians I spoke to were very keen to draw distinctions between the social characteristics of the crowds at the various Asian events. Age and ethnic background were considered to be particularly important, and location was also regarded as a major contributory factor in the choice of event within the Asian party scene.

Age

Almost all of the respondents were aware of the age differences in the dance crowds at the diverse Asian parties. What they all agreed on was that at the *HuMan Entertainment* events, the dance crowd was very young. Those who did not go to these parties said that the female crowd was especially youthful, with many girls only being about 16. Particularly for the respondents who were older than 20, the age of the audience was a factor in which parties to attend.

As one male respondent explained:

‘You really do not want to go there. It looks more like a children’s party, full of young girls who giggle and try too hard to look cool or sexy’.

Or, as one more experienced female clubber very clearly put it:

‘How much fun is it to dance at a party where the majority isn’t even allowed to drink alcohol? These children should be playing with their dolls at home instead of trying too hard to look old and mature’

According to many of the respondents, these young girls ruin the atmosphere for the older clubbers. Those who were clearly annoyed by the young age of the dance crowd at the *HuMan Entertainment* parties preferred the Asian events organized by *Santai* or *Ajin/Asian Escape*. The young respondents, as well as those who did actually dance at *HuMan Entertainment* parties, also agreed on how young the dance crowd was, but they obviously did not complain about this.

According to the respondents, the difference in the door policy was the reason for the young age of the visitors to *HuMan Entertainment* events. The door-men didn’t ask for identification and, as a result, the venue attracted many young girls and boys. The bouncers at *Santai* only occasionally asked questions about the age of the clubbers, but never asked to see an ID card. However, the bouncers at *Escape*, who were in charge of the door policy at the *Asian Escape* parties, always asked for ID. Accordingly, for the young clubbers in particular (under the age of 18), the strictness of the age checks played a role in the choice of which party to attend.

Ethnicity

Although the audiences at Asian parties are labelled Asians, none of the respondents identified with that category. They all referred to themselves as being Chinese, Indo and Korean etc. Only a small

minority came to an Asian party with an ethnically mixed group of Asian friends; the majority predominantly parties with co-ethnics.

Almost all of the respondents pointed to the dominance of Chinese youngsters in the Asian party scene. Many of them did not want to talk about this in detail, stating that they didn't care about the ethnic background of the other clubbers because they hung out with their own circle of friends.

Only the Indos claimed to experience feelings of not belonging to the scene anymore. They felt as if 'their party was being taken over by young Chinese people' and, as a result, they did not enjoy it as much. Despite this, they still came to the parties organized by *Santai* because they were acquainted with members of the organization. All of the young men and women were very aware and proud of their Indo background. As well as visiting *Santai* parties, they all used the term Indo lifestyle to describe themselves. All of them were very active, either as participants or as organizers in other Indo (internet) organizations or communities. It is important to bear in mind that these young men and women are in a minority compared to other Indos, most of whom do not visit Asian or Indo parties and did not take part in this research. This corresponds with the findings of de Vries (1999), who conducted an extensive study of three generations of Indos in the Netherlands. She confirmed that the participation of third generation migrants in the (classic) organized and institutionalized Indo life is very low.

6.6 Summary

The Asian party scene experienced its heyday at the turn of the century. Now, almost a decade later, Asian parties are still popular, although with a smaller group of consumers. Even though this scene is described as *Asian*, implying that all young people of Asian descent are included in it, the vast majority of parties are filled with Chinese youngsters. The Indo respondents in particular felt like they were being pushed out of this scene, as if 'their' parties had been taken over by young Chinese clubbers.

The number of consumers of this scene has dropped drastically. Instead, many young Asians now participate in mainstream nightlife. In general, the dance crowd is relatively young. At one organization, a large part of the audience consisted of

young women aged between 15 and 18. As well as the young age of the visitors, another striking characteristic of this scene is that the majority of its attendees do not participate in it for long. Even after only a year or two, many of the respondents leave the Asian party scene and either stop clubbing altogether or move into the mainstream clubbing environment.

What is striking is that other than the name and promotion of the party and the ethnic make up of its visitors, the events in this scene resemble the RnB parties that can be found in regular Dutch nightlife. Cultural factors related to music, dance and dress did not play a role in the decision to choose between a regular and an Asian party; people dance to the same music, and dress like anyone else who goes to an RnB event. The majority of the visitors did not experience any restrictions when making their choice between the Asian party and the other dance scenes in mainstream nightlife.

Alternatively, the factors which make up the social dimension proved to be very important in the choice of the Asian party scene. The presence of (co-ethnic) friends and co-ethnics was frequently named as a strong, motivating factor. Many of the respondents identified strongly with their co-ethnic group of friends, and went to an Asian party to catch up with the people they know from all over the country. This strong identification made them aware of the ethnic background of 'other' clubbers and the differences in the ethnic make-up of the crowds at the different events within the Asian party circuit. As well as the issue of ethnic background, the age of a crowd was also regarded as a marker of distinction within the scene.

Chapter 7 The Turkish Clubbing Scene

Turkish party, Saturday night, winter 2006

It is already past midnight when I enter Club Paradiso in Amsterdam. It took me quite some time to get in, as the queue was long. Most of my fellow clubbers were excited and already in the party mood, as they had previously attended the concert by Sezen Aksu, a very popular female Turkish singer. This Turkish party, the Sezen Aksu after party, was organized by 33 Events.

When I enter onto the main floor, DJ Silence is spinning the wheels and stirs up the dancing crowd with a smooth mix of Türk pop and RnB music. I wave at him when he looks in my direction. When I walk towards the bar, I bump into another familiar and famous Turkish DJ. After the usual chitchat, he offers to show me around and introduce me to his friends. An hour and a half later, I have shaken hands with at least 35 of his friends. I direct him towards the bar and offer to buy him a drink. My brain is working overtime because as well as all of the information provided by his friends, I have also picked up on bits of the music, and the way that people dance and dress. I am truly dazzled. Soon we go our own separate ways, which gives me the opportunity to sit in the corner and write down all of these impressions. Many field notes later I order another drink at the bar and then wade into the crowd again. The Turkish music dominates the dance floor. People are dancing everywhere; on the dance floor, at the bar, and on the balcony. They move their hips and shoulders fanatically to the rhythm of the music and their colourful and sexy clothes accentuate their movements. Instead of feeling out of place on the dance floor, I decide to hang around the bar and watch people for a little longer. Soon my feelings of discomfort disappear. Within no time I am engaged in small talk with my friendly, fellow clubbers.

By 4.am I am exhausted and head towards the exit. I count myself lucky that I can get home by bike. The cold winter breeze helps me to cool off and calm down after an exciting and very successful first night of fieldwork in the Turkish clubbing scene.

7.1 Introduction

A few years after the families of Turkish workers settled in large numbers in the Netherlands, parties were organized to celebrate family events such as weddings and birthdays. These still take place, and at these parties family and friends come together to eat, dance and catch up on all their news. Indeed, many of the respondents frequently mentioned such visits taking place at the weekends. Until the mid 1990s, these family events were the only opportunity for Turkish youngsters to dance with their peers to Turkish music. From that time on, however, people started to organize Turkish parties for young people in the Netherlands commercially. These initially took place in community halls outside the city centre. The organizers were inspired by the success of the Turkish parties taking place in Germany, where Turkish club venues had sprung up since the 1990s (Kosnick 2004: 3). At that time, many Dutch-Turks crossed the border to dance with co-ethnics to Turkish music. The first person to take the initiative to organize a Turkish party in the Netherlands was a student who heard his friends and colleagues talk about the need to come together and dance to Turkish music. He, therefore, started to organize Turkish parties, and although the location and sound quality could not compete with that of clubs, these first events were a tremendous success. Soon, other people picked up on this new and successful trend and also started to arrange similar events. As a result, Turkish party organizations sprung up all over the Netherlands.

What follows is a detailed description of the Turkish clubbing scene in the Netherlands. I will first provide an impression of its development, as well as its general characteristics, size and popularity. I will then describe in more detail the characteristics of each of the four party organizations that have been included in this study. In the third paragraph I will highlight the strategies that these organizations have employed to create their own niche within the Turkish clubbing scene. In the fourth paragraph, the focus shifts to the consumers of Turkish parties, and focuses on why and how young Turkish people choose a Turkish event to attend. In the final paragraph, I will dig deeper into the decisions the consumers make by drawing attention to the choices of a specific party within the Turkish clubbing scene.

7.2 The creation of a Turkish clubbing scene

Turkish party organizations began to arrange Turkish parties in popular clubs from the year 2000 onwards. The incorporation of such events in these clubs fuelled a shift towards professionalism, since the organizers had to meet the demands and customs of these venues. Furthermore, the organizers also had to follow the rules and regulations regarding opening hours, age, and drink and drugs.

There are various opinions about the origins of commercial Turkish parties for young people in the Netherlands. Most of the DJs and ethnic party organizers agreed that the need for these events was initiated by Turkish youngsters, who wanted a place where they could dance and listen to Turkish music without being under the supervision of their parents. Turkish music is not played on typical club nights, and Turkish parties thus attend to the musical interests of these consumers. Some of the DJs and organizers, however, share the opinion that these events appeared as a reaction against the discriminatory door policies of many clubs. Another frequently heard reason was that women in particular did not get permission to participate in mainstream nightlife. With the advent of Turkish parties, many parents allowed their daughters to go to such events under supervision of an older sister, aunt or brother.

All of these different reasons played a role in the success and popularity of the Turkish clubbing scene. For the entrepreneurs, however, it is of course profitable to set up a business in the night-time economy.

General characteristics

The crowds at Turkish parties are mainly comprised of young people with a Turkish background. Based on the interviews and participant observation, I would estimate that at least 90% of attendees are of Turkish descent. Those who are not are predominantly friends of these clubbers, who very occasionally join their Turkish acquaintances to experience a Turkish party, or are young Dutch people who come with a Turkish boy or girlfriend.

The reasons for the almost exclusive Turkish audience include the music that is programmed; at most of these parties, the (Turkish) DJs primarily play Türk pop. Often, this type of music is combined with the more global sounds of contemporary trance or

RnB, but in general a Turkish sound is played throughout the evening. Although more and more native Dutch people are becoming familiar with Turkish music due to their holiday experiences, this does not mean that they like to listen and dance to it for an entire night.

The audiences at Turkish parties are aged between 18 and 30, with a majority of being between 22 and 26 years old. There is an equal balance of male and female attendees. All of the professional and experienced party organizations have a so-called *Damsiz girilmez* rule, which means that men are only allowed in when they come with a female date. According to the party organizers, this rule, which is written on every flyer, is important to keep the numbers of male and female clubbers equal. Moreover, in the words of one of the organizers, it keeps out the men who: ‘lock up their own sisters, daughters and wives at home and come here to harass the women’.

Size and popularity

Although the idea of organizing a Turkish party was copied from Germany, there are some key differences between these events in the two countries. In Germany, parties for young Turkish people are arranged in separate Turkish club venues owned by the organizers, while those in the Netherlands take place in popular clubs which are hired for the night. Another difference is that each Turkish party organization in the Netherlands throws approximately eight to ten parties per year, while the German Turkish clubs are open every week. As a result, German Turks can dance at their own venue, which is exclusively for Turkish parties, on a weekly basis, while Dutch Turks go to a club that is part of the inner-city nightlife. Furthermore, Turkish parties are not equally spread out over the year. As a result, in some weeks, young people can choose between a few different Turkish events, while at other times there are no parties available to attend.

Turkish party organizations in the Netherlands

During the fieldwork in the winter of 2006, several Turkish organizations were operating in the night-time economy in the Netherlands. In total, I counted six, spread throughout the country,

which were arranging professional Turkish parties on a frequent basis: one in Arnhem, one in Hengelo, two in Rotterdam, and two in Amsterdam. As well as these six established companies, numerous new organizations began to arrange Turkish parties at that time. In Rotterdam and Amsterdam in particular, such companies appeared frequently, trying their luck. At the time of writing, in the winter of 2008, none of these new organizations had managed to really establish themselves within the Turkish clubbing scene and had stopped arranging parties. Moreover, there had also been some changes within the established companies. The organizations in Arnhem and Hengelo, for example, are taking a temporary break, one in Rotterdam has stopped operating and one in Amsterdam has started organizing parties under a new name and with a partially new management team. Now, instead of aiming at a Turkish audience, this company organizes so-called oriental, eclectic parties in which Turkish, Arabic and contemporary trance is played, attracting a more multicultural crowd. The organization in Rotterdam attracted fewer clubbers in 2007, and, according to the organizers, they were doing little to engage new people, because they were no longer enjoying the business. 'We grew out of nightlife and moved into another stage of life', as one of them explained.

Turkish party organizations in Rotterdam and Amsterdam

During the fieldwork in 2006, the Turkish clubbing scene was flourishing. I, therefore, chose to focus on the four established and most popular Turkish party organizations in the Netherlands, since people from all over the country were travelling to one of their Turkish parties in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. These organizations are: *Keyifland* and *Sahmeran* in Rotterdam and *33 Events* and *Club Mahsen* in Amsterdam.

Sahmeran arranged its first Turkish party in 1996. At that time, the organizer was a student who had picked up on the desire of his Turkish colleagues to party together. *Sahmeran*, therefore, was set up and began to organize events for this group. In these early years, the company's owner occasionally rented a venue outside the city centre. These parties were a huge success and along the way the business became more professional. So, since 2001, the man behind *Sahmeran* started to organize parties on a monthly basis in the

famous dance hall Club Tropicana in Rotterdam. On a busy night the party is attended by between 600 and 800 young Turkish clubbers, aged between 18 and 30 years old.

Keyifland entered the Turkish clubbing scene in 2002 and, according to its website, the key to its success was: ‘That we started the *Keyifland* concept out of general discontent with Turkish parties. We couldn’t find any good parties to go clubbin’ to so we decided to throw the party ourselves’⁹. By arranging parties in the famous clubs Now & Wow and Night-town in Rotterdam, and by its specific music programming, the company targeted a trendy and hip audience. In the heyday of this organization, it was attracting 800-1000 visitors per party, in the age range 18 to 25 years. The average age of the visitors to *Keyifland* events was, therefore, younger than at *Sahmeran*, where the majority of the clubbers were older students, graduates or young professionals.

Club Mahsen in Amsterdam started out in 2001, and purposely organized small and intimate parties in a diminutive dance-hall in the city, with a capacity of 200-250. The goal was to generate an informal and relaxed atmosphere, with the company wanting to recreate the same relaxed ambiance found in local bars in Kuşadası, Turkey. The majority of the crowd was comprised of clubbers aged between 25 and 35 years old.

33 Events is the youngest organization of the four, and first began to arrange Turkish parties in 2003. Within a few years, it had become the most popular and trendy Turkish party organization in the Netherlands. Before the company entered the Turkish clubbing scene, it had been arranging open air parties in Istanbul. When the organization moved to Amsterdam, it was, according to one of its owners: ‘struck by the old-fashioned way Turkish parties were organized in the Netherlands’. In Istanbul, the DJs did not play Türk pop at all, instead mixing Arabic and Turkish sounds with trance, while in the Netherlands, Türk pop dominated. *33 Events* began by organizing parties in diverse, but always famous, clubs in Amsterdam, and in 2006 expanded into Rotterdam. The company attracts a young and trendy party crowd in the age range 18 to 25. Most of their events are sold out and bring together approximately 1200 people per party.

⁹ Communication found on the website www.keyifland.nl in September 2005

7.3 Processes of competition and distinction

There is a sense of competition between the four party organizations. Each throws approximately eight to ten parties a year and the target group, young Turkish people aged between 18 and 30, is relatively small in the Netherlands. Moreover, not all of these youngsters go clubbing or want to go to Turkish parties. Like their native Dutch peers, a lot of young Turkish people no longer go out every week, instead saving their energy and money for a special event or party (Bellen 2004). This, of course, reduces the size of the group of potential consumers even more. To retain their popularity and ensure a steady number of clients, all of these party organizations have created their own niche within the Turkish clubbing scene, distinguishing themselves from their competitors with a unique concept consisting of musical programming, publicity, location and door policies.

Locality and functionality

According to both the party organizations and the clubbers, many young Turks prefer to travel by car. As a result, most parties were organized in clubs with large car-parks. This is also convenient for visitors from outside the city. The organizers also emphasize the importance of throwing a party in clubs which correspond to their image. Some venues have a trendy and cool reputation, while others are more cozy and intimate, and others still are more luxurious. Consequently, all four organizations put a lot of effort into hiring a particular club.

Sahmeran chooses to throw its parties in club Tropicana. This venue is predominantly rented out to external party organizations, companies and for career events. It is a popular venue because it has a stylish interior, its own car-park and a magnificent view of the boulevard of the Maas.

Keyifland, on the other hand, deliberately chooses popular clubs in Rotterdam's mainstream nightlife, moving from Club Now & Wow, which was owned by Ted Langenbach, a key trendsetter in Dutch nightlife, to another popular venue, Night-town.

33 Events has different club venues in Amsterdam for the different themed parties it organizes. Due to the tremendous popularity of its parties, these are hosted in large clubs which are

carefully selected to reflect the company's hip and trendy image. *Club Mahsen* arranges its parties in a small venue named Aknathon in Amsterdam, which is outside the city's mainstream nightlife. It purposely organizes small events for between 200-250 people, in order to create an informal and relaxed atmosphere. In 2006, it moved into a small club in the city centre.

Music programming: negotiations between Germany and Turkey

Music programming is a key factor in the organization of a party. The ignorant observer might expect to hear the same Turkish music at every event, but this is certainly not the case in the Turkish clubbing scene. Most of the organizers had particular ideas about how their parties should sound and were inspired by similar events they had seen elsewhere. The parties by *Sahmeran* in Rotterdam were copied from Turkish parties in Germany, where many large events are organized in clubs with multiple rooms, with different types of (Turkish) music in each of them. Likewise, at a *Sahmeran* party, different types of music are programmed in the two rooms available for the event. In the main area, a DJ stirs up the crowd with a mix of Türk pop and world music. One of the DJs, who performed at most of the parties, was flown in from Germany for this purpose. In the room on the second floor, a live performance of traditional Turkish music was alternated with Türk pop.

Keyifland, the other organization in Rotterdam, did not have any live music at all. The DJs, however, were famous for their trendy ways of mixing music, creating new sounds by blending Turkish music with eclectic house. According to the organizers, the goal was to go beyond the old fashioned notion of playing Türk pop in a club. However, most of the DJs were instructed to retain the Turkish rhythm and beat in whatever they produced.

33 Events in Amsterdam puts a lot of effort into creating a complete concept of hip and trendy music, stage acts, and popular DJs and VJs. According to its website, the company's goal was to introduce 'trend setting, cultural and art loaded initiatives, a different kind of entertainment with Turkish influences¹⁰'. In its musical programming, the organization follows the trends of the ultra hip nightlife in Istanbul. During the interviews, one of the

¹⁰ Communication found on www.33events.com at December 2006

organizers told me that they program a maximum of two hours of Türk pop at their parties because ‘in a popular club in Istanbul you will not hear Turkish music [at all]’. Occasionally, they book DJs, artists or performers from Istanbul to underscore their connection to the vibrant and exiting nightlife in the Turkish party capital.

Club Mahsen in Amsterdam, on the other hand, drew inspiration from the small and intimate bars in Istanbul and Kuşadası, where Türk pop, Turkish folk music and gypsy music is played, with the company wanting to copy the warmth and hospitality of these venues. As a result, theme parties, which were based on ideas such as gypsies or folk music, were organized.

Door policy

As I have described in Chapter 5, despite the different steps which have been taken to increase the transparency of door policies, a lot of men from ethnic minorities believe that they are not welcome in many clubs. However, those who think that organizing Turkish parties resolves problems at the door will be quickly disappointed. Turkish parties also have a very strict door policy, with the one rule that all four of the organizations examined herein have in common is that men are only allowed in when they bring a female date. Furthermore, the presence of a dress code is also widespread in the Turkish clubbing scene. The right mix of people is usually chosen at the door, with a view to maintaining the particular profile that the organization is aiming for. Each of the four party organizations had their own dress codes.

The popular company, *33 Events* in Amsterdam, was notorious for its door policy.

A dress code was seen as essential in order to ensure that the wrong crowd was not targeted, as one of the organizers revealed:

‘We have a very strict dress code, we don’t want these backward machos at our door who come here with their gold necklaces and Gucci pants and harass the girls while locking up their own sister at home’.

According to one of the owners of *33 Events*, the goal was to offer Turkish youngsters cool and stylish parties, not only for their

amusement but to also get them more acquainted with trendy nightlife. This ‘educative’ mission was expressed in very strong terms. By putting on trendy parties, he explained, the organization wanted to change the so-called backward mentality of many of the young Turkish people living in the Netherlands. Apparently, the company not only sees itself as party-planners, but also as cultural brokers who are trying to diminish the gap between backward and trendy westernized youngsters. This sounds very noble. However, the critical observer may raise doubts about whether these so-called ‘backward Turks’ want to go to such parties and, if they did, whether they would be allowed in by the bouncers. Moreover, due to its popularity, *33 Events* found itself in the luxurious position of being able to select its clients critically on dress code, since every party was sold out in no time.

Sahmeran in Rotterdam started as a party organization for students and aimed to attract the more educated consumers. This was borne out by its door policy. The *Damsiz girilmez* rule was in play, but an exception is made for men who are in the possession of a student card. Furthermore, the organization used to have a strict dress code, which demanded neat and trendy outfits and prohibited the wearing of jeans. Due to the growing popularity of jeans, however, it had to abandon this rule, although it still claims to only welcome people who dress well. At the entrance, impressive looking bouncers check the potential crowd out at the door and inside the club several security guards maintain order.

Club Mahsen, on the other hand, had a friendlier door policy. It claimed to look more at the individual guests at the entrance to the venue and promised a customer-friendly policy in which all of those in attendance feel welcome and comfortable. This is possible because with 200-300 visitors, these parties are relatively small. Moreover, this approach is also feasible because these events attract a regular group of clubbers, with whom most of the organizers of *Club Mahsen* are acquainted.

Like *33 Events*, *Keyifland* in Rotterdam claimed to target the more hip and trendy clubbers. It used to select strictly on dress code, but due to declining numbers, these rules were completely abandoned.

Advertising and promoting a party

The choice of location, the rules regarding the door policy, and the music programming are all part of a concept around which to create and organize a certain type of party. This concept reflects the notion of how a Turkish party and the visitors to it should look. This is seen in the promotion of the event on both the internet and on flyers. Both *33 Events* in Amsterdam and *Keyifland* in Rotterdam, which are the two organizations which put a lot of effort into creating a cool and trendy party, promote their events in English on their flyers as well as on their websites. Furthermore, they often use very sexy pictures of women on the former. Likewise, as an indicator of what their crowds look like, in the picture sections on their websites, both companies only display photos of beautiful and sexily dressed young men and women, which were taken at previous parties. *Sahmeran* in Rotterdam, however, predominantly promotes its parties in Dutch, both on its website as well as on its flyers. As well as Dutch, much of the information on the company's website is written in Turkish. Its flyers also look different and do not contain photos of sexy women, instead having written text and a picture of the live artists who will be performing or have performed at its events. The flyers for *Club Mahsen* in Amsterdam are very colourful and promote the feeling of a beach holiday. On both its website and its flyers, the audience is addressed in Dutch.

By promoting their parties in English and using sexy pictures, the two largest Turkish party organizations follow the advertising and communication trends of mainstream nightlife. Especially in the larger cities in the Netherlands, the entire communication and promotion of nightlife is in English to give it a more international image. For the two other companies, the use of the Dutch or Turkish language was a conscious decision to attract a particular group of consumers. *Club Mahsen* in Amsterdam, for instance, targets an older audience with a preference for the intimate ambiance of Turkish bars and Turkish folk music. *Sahmeran*, however, wants to attract a more professional and educated crowd, which is reflected in its door policy, with the requirement to show a student card, and its dress code. Furthermore, with its programming of live music in a second room, the company not only attracts young people who are better educated, but also the more conservative

consumers who prefer traditional Turkish music.

Just as in the Asian party scene, the flyers and posters are distributed in places where the target group congregates, namely Turkish restaurants, bars and markets. On the internet, the majority of the companies' advertisements can be found on Turkish websites as well as on community sites that are visited by a young Turkish audience¹¹.

7.4 Choosing the Turkish clubbing scene

In this paragraph, I will shed light on the personal factors that play a role in the decision to choose to participate in the Turkish clubbing scene. In section 7.4.1, I will highlight the social mechanisms of the processes of identification and differentiation. In this respect, the role of the social characteristics of age, ethnicity and the educational attainment of dance crowds and their friends are analyzed in terms of their experiences of feelings of belonging. The (hidden) social rules within a scene are also addressed, because they largely determine the atmosphere in a club and thus have an impact on feelings of belonging. The second aspect, personal factors, concerns cultural elements. In section 7.4.2, attention is paid to how the social mechanisms referred to above are displayed culturally. The music that is programmed, and the ways people are dressed and dance, play an important role in the identification and differentiation within a dance crowd and dance party. Finally, in section 7.4.3, the restrictions imposed by economic resources and the regulatory role of parents, which can determine choices negatively, are unravelled.

7.4.1 The social dimension

Most of the Turkish clubbers had extensive networks and used the Turkish parties to catch up with their friends. At every Turkish party I attended, I saw lots of people greeting each other, sometimes with a hug, or other enthusiastic responses. Clubbing was a way of shaking off the 'difficulties of the week', a way of escaping from the rigours and stress that these young people experienced in their daily lives. Being together, dancing and joking were key factors in confirming and reaffirming relationships. Many respondents

¹¹ For example, www.hababam.nl, www.turksagenda.nl, www.turksuitgaan.startpagina.nl and www.lokum.nl.

reported that they go to a Turkish party with their friends to catch up and to also meet and make new friends. The intense form of socialising gives an intimate dimension to the friendship among peers.

Friends

The female respondents in particular often said that they go out to have fun with their (female) friends. They claimed to know many of the other people at a Turkish party, but preferred to hang out with their close circle of friends. In fact, for the more experienced and slightly older female clubbers, the presence of many acquaintances was a reason not to go to a Turkish party often, as one female respondent explained:

‘You don’t want to go there [to a Turkish party] every week, because you always see the same faces, and before you know [it] they are becoming too close, you know, it is good to go there once in a while, to catch up but not to get too much into it’.

The male respondents, on the other hand, emphasized the opportunity to catch up with friends and acquaintances as a reason to go a Turkish party. Many of the men went to a party in a small group and, as soon as they got inside, the socializing with their friends and acquaintances began. A lot of the men also explained that they had become friends with other men they had met at such an event. Another striking difference between the male and female respondents was that almost all of the latter were introduced to the Turkish clubbing scene by their cousins or older sisters, who were often also their closest friends, while most of the men visited the parties with friends from their neighbourhood or school.

Almost all of the respondents claimed that they go to Turkish parties with friends of the same ethnic background. The men and women all agreed that the composition of their group of friends was an important factor in their nightlife choices. It appeared that young people who claimed to have a more mixed group of friends were more likely to participate in different nightlife scenes and venues, varying from a Turkish, to a Salsa, to an RnB party. In particular,

the students or recent graduates (male and female) had an ethnically mixed group of friends with whom they visited different types of parties, both within and without the Turkish clubbing scene. Young people with predominantly Turkish friends, however, generally only went to Turkish parties. This shared Turkish background seemed to push them automatically into the Turkish clubbing scene. The phrase: ‘because my friends go there’ or ‘usually my friends call me to join them’ was often used as an explanation of their nightlife choices.

Feelings of belonging

During the interviews, many young people said they felt *comfortable* or *at home* at a Turkish party. These feelings were due to the presence of many friends and acquaintances, but also because the respondents felt that being part of the dance crowd was not something they always experienced in mainstream nightlife. Many emphasized that Turkish people understand each other because they share the same culture. As one young male respondent explained:

‘You know, when you go to a Turkish party you meet all these people that are like yourself, who understand you because we are the same. They are not asking me questions about my religion or about drinking alcohol, while others do.’

Apparently, this clubber feels like he is being watched and questioned at mainstream club nights, something he does not experience in the Turkish clubbing scene. It was striking how often the respondents mentioned these feelings of being misunderstood when they participate in regular night-time activities.

Social rules and flirting

Checking out the crowd, flirting, dancing in a sexy way, or flirting by eye-contact is part of the deal when you go out. Accordingly, social interaction plays a key role during a night on the town. In every scene, this takes place along established lines and there are hidden rules and codes. Some of these relate to courtship and flirting. Unlike in pubs, conversation in nightclubs is generally kept

at a superficial level, and consists mainly of short stories, small talk, gossip and joking.

During the interviews, both the men and women confirmed that they look around and check out members of the opposite sex, although all of them were of the opinion that potential life partners were not likely to be found during a night out. Some of the females said they didn't pay any attention at all to men when they are out, fearing that they would meet the 'wrong type of guy'. These 'wrong' types, the young women explained, were described as being machos, with a backward and old-fashioned mentality and no respect for women:

'You cannot tell by the way they look. But some men, you know, they still think that women who go out are the so-called 'fallen-women', you know sluts and whores'.

Or, as a 26 year old female clubber told me:

'There are guys, who lock up their own wives and or sisters, go to a Turkish party, drink too much, chase everything in a skirt and watch every step you make so that they can talk bad about you the next day'.

In the eyes of these men, women who go out are not respectable and are, therefore, treated accordingly. The expectant attitude of the women also has an impact on the behaviour of the men. Some men explained that it was very hard to approach a woman who interested them at a party without a proper introduction by a mutual acquaintance. Others accused the women of being snobbish and unapproachable.

Furthermore, flirting or kissing in public is definitely not the done thing in the Turkish clubbing scene.

One respondent found this out to his cost:

‘I was drunk and she was a very nice girl and then I kissed her, but I shouldn’t have done that because the next day several friends called me. At the party nobody would say that you should not do that or warn [you] in any way, but everybody will condemn it. It damages your reputation. Even a few weeks later at the next party my friends who weren’t even there called me to account’

Social control

Social control is another unspoken, yet very important, aspect of the Turkish clubbing scene. Almost all of the respondents had very strong opinions about how social control affects their behaviour and the atmosphere at a Turkish party. The way you dress, dance or act, the people you talk to and the amount of alcohol you drink can all give rise to gossip and ruin your reputation. The women in particular complained about perceived social control, and for some it was even a reason not to go to Turkish parties anymore, or to only go occasionally. Within small clubbing scenes it is common for people to know and, as a result, keep a close eye on each other and gossip. After all, nightlife is all about seeing and being seen. Interestingly, the social control at Turkish parties goes beyond the borders of nightlife and is fed back into the wider Turkish community. If, for instance, a young woman dresses too provocatively, or has too many daring interactions with men (according to others), her family will be told about her behaviour. Some of the female participants explained that their first few parties were fantastic and exciting, but after a while they became less enthusiastic because of this social control. Other women did not experience it so negatively, and said they had found a way of dealing with it and took it for granted. They simply stated that it was part of their culture and that it also makes the parties safer, because most of the men keep their distance and treat the women respectfully. Men experience social control as well, but they have more latitude. Their nightlife actions are not reported back to their family.

7.4.2 The cultural dimension

Long before people enter a club, the preparations for the night begin, with the right outfits, hair and make-up being carefully considered. Young people predominantly communicate their identity through their taste in music and by the way they look. This is even more important during a night out.

Music

Many clubbers described a sensation that they experienced while clubbing of being in a state or place that is in some way removed from the ‘normal times’, spaces and social relationships of their everyday lives; in other words, being in a realm of fantasy, fun and freedom. These feelings can be traced back to the ways in which the clubbers listen to and understand the music in the clubbing experience. As well as the movement of the body, the music, the rhythm and the dance also involve a massive stimulation of the senses and emotions. Music was prioritized, being cited as the most important reason why participants went to a particular party. One of the respondents said:

‘When I hear Turkish music, my blood starts to warm up and I cannot sit still anymore. This occurs as soon as I enter the club and hear the Turkish melodies. Then I have to dance’.

Apparently, this respondent feels emotionally connected to Turkish music, which makes her choice of the Turkish nightlife scene very obvious. Most of the participants said that they listen to Turkish music at home almost all of the time, watching Turkish MTV and downloading Türk pop from the internet to keep up with the latest hits. Statements about music ‘being in my blood’, or ‘being a part of who I am’ were used often by the respondents to express their relationship with Turkish music. Türk pop or other Turkish sounds are not played at mainstream club nights, however, and this is thus an important reason to choose to go to a Turkish party.

The young people I interviewed said often that they loved to listen to Turkish music, and especially modern Türk pop or dance, because it connected them to their Turkish background. For some, it was principally a nostalgic reminder of the holidays they used to

spend with their family in Turkey. One female respondent claimed not only to have a close relationship with Turkish music, but said that the togetherness at these parties made her feel good:

‘This music also brings along some sort of nostalgia. Last week at a party of 33 Events I stood on the balcony and looked down thinking: Wow, look at all these people, how great that we Turks all can go crazy on this music and that we can create such a positive vibe’.

Being at a Turkish party and listening and dancing to Turkish music gave her a feeling of connection with the dancing crowd and with her Turkish ancestry. She identified with the clubbers on the basis of their shared Turkish background.

Most of the respondents viewed the use of Turkish instruments and the more dramatic melodies in this music as important. Often, they contrasted Türk pop with American chart and dance music. The opportunity to listen and dance to their favourite sounds was, therefore, an important reason for the respondents to choose the Turkish clubbing scene.

Dancing

Türk pop has a very different tone and rhythm to popular western music, and thus requires another style of dancing. Both men and women shake their hips and shoulders frequently to the rhythm of the beat. The majority of the time, the women dance in small groups with each other, occasionally holding hands while they do so. At some parties, in a separate room away from the main stage, live music is played. In this area, the crowd dances the *halay* (oriental

circle dance), which is predominantly performed at weddings and other family orientated parties.

Music and dance cannot be separated from each other, and the respondents also used them interchangeably as important reasons to participate in the Turkish clubbing scene. Many of the young clubbers connected music and dance with feelings of nostalgia for their country of origin, or saw it as a pleasant reminder of the holidays they had spent in Turkey.

A lot of the women said that they spent almost all of their time dancing at a party to evoke those happy feelings. As one woman explained:

‘At home I always listen to Turkish music; it has more emotion and when I go out I also want to listen and dance to Turkish music. It makes me happy and it gives me a bit [of] a sensation as if I am back in Turkey. I go to these parties to dance and the music and dancing just gives me a good feeling, a certain state of mind you know’.

Dress code

Seeing and being seen, and putting on an act, dressing to impress, and any other form of impression management are central features in nightlife. For both the male and female respondents, shoes, clothing (make-up), and hairstyle are the most important aspects of presentation. The transformation of the self often begins several hours before going out. When I was present at these parties, it became clear to me that most of the men and women were carefully dressed according to the latest fashions, and had spent a lot of time and effort in putting together the right outfit, with shoes and jewelry, topped off with a stylish hair do. During the interviews, the dress code and the look of the male and female clubbers was often contrasted with that of their native Dutch peers.

As one woman explained:

‘We [youngsters of Turkish descent] like to dress up before we go out. You want to show yourself off, and by putting a lot of time into dressing up, you make the occasion special. It makes you feel special. We don’t go out that much, if we do, we dress for the occasion, while Dutch youngsters go out more often. Therefore it is not special for them anymore’.

By contrasting the clubbers at regular club nights with those participating in the Turkish clubbing scene, and by pointing to the similarities between herself and this Turkish nightlife, this woman is justifying her choice.

From my observations, and during the conversations I had with these young Turkish clubbers, I noticed a variety in the extent

to which they exposed or covered up their bodies. Some women were dressed extremely sexily, in cropped tops and short skirts combined with high heels, while others were more covered up, wearing trousers or long skirts. Overall, though, the women were dressed according to the latest fashions, which they combined with an oriental touch. They had bought their outfits in popular and commercial stores like Hennes & Mauritz or Zara, where they picked out the more colourful clothing and topped it off with large necklaces, bracelets and earrings, which gave them a more exotic look compared to the clothing style of native Dutch clubbers. The men at the Turkish parties were also carefully dressed and styled. A frequently heard term used to describe them was 'metro men'. According to glossy magazines, the styling of the hair, the purchase of trendy outfits and applying moisturizers are now part of the daily routines of these men. Many of the female respondents also pointed to the presence of another type of man, namely the *machos*. This is a term that is not used in a positive sense, and is applied to men who are full of themselves, and who wear gold necklaces, ill-fitting suits, or Armani trousers, and shirts in garish colours with prominent logos.

Masters of the scene: DJs & heroes

In the choice of consumption items, such as a particular style of dress, music, and leisure time activities, a lot of young people are inspired by the behaviour and look of pop stars, actors or other famous people. Many of the respondents said that they watch Turkish music channels to keep up to date with the latest trends and sounds.

As one male respondent explained:

‘ I really like to watch these Turkish music channels, they keep me informed about the latest releases of my favourite artists, but I also watch the video clips to look at haircuts, dance moves and stuff.’

The internet was also frequently mentioned as a source of inspiration for outfits and haircuts.

Striking in this scene was the popularity of the DJs who played at the parties. Many of the respondents said they looked at the DJ line-up before deciding where to go to. They viewed the DJ as the ‘person in the know’ when it came to what was a good party, and during the interviews they often talked of them as true artists or pop icons. If the respondents were not familiar with a specific party organization, the DJ line-up was an important factor in deciding whether that particular event was worth checking out. They shared the opinion that famous DJs, such as DJ Silence, DJ Ercan or DJ Hakan C, would not play at lousy parties.

7.4.3 Restrictions

A decision about which party or club to attend is not only informed by personal preferences and a circle of friends, but also by the options that young people have available to them. The number of these options varies according to the different levels of accessibility of nightlife for an individual clubber. Some have limited access to money to pay the entrance fee, do not have access to transportation, have negative experiences with the door policies of clubs, or might not even be allowed by their parents to go out. These restrictions determine choices and options negatively.

Door policy

I have previously addressed the door policy issue from the perspectives of club owners in mainstream Dutch nightlife and the Turkish party organizations. However, those who are genuinely affected by door policies are the consumers. When asked questions about this in terms of mainstream nightlife, almost all of the respondents said that they were familiar with discrimination at the doors of popular clubs. They have all *heard* stories from their friends about the rude behaviour of bouncers, although very few had actually *experienced* being refused entry to these mainstream clubs themselves. In fact, none of the female respondents had ever been refused entry at the door of regular club venues by bouncers. Although only a few men had actually not been allowed into a popular club, almost all of them feared a confrontation with the bouncers when they were standing in line. For some, these feelings of insecurity certainly played a role in their decision to participate in

the Turkish clubbing scene. As one male clubber explained:

‘I do not want to try, you know, it is so denigrating if the bouncers refuse you entry. I do not even want to try; the idea of getting refused makes me very agitated’

One Turkish party organization even stated that Turkish parties: ‘offer a good alternative for regular nightlife where they [Turks] are being refused at the door’. The choice of the Turkish clubbing scene is, for some men, influenced by their negative feelings or experiences towards the door policies at mainstream venues. For the women, this issue played no role in their choice between the Turkish and the regular clubbing scenes.

As I have mentioned before, Turkish parties also have rules of entry. The *Damsiz girilmez* rule makes this scene inaccessible for men without female company. In fact, you will always find a group of young men hanging around near the entrance of a club where a Turkish party is taking place. They approach small groups of women and ask them to accompany them so that they can get into the venue. These young men generally offer to pay (drinks or the entrance fee) for the women, most of whom told me that they would never accept these invitations. As one female clubber explained:

‘If a man cannot get a female date, it means that he is not friends with women and that in his family women are not allowed to go out. You do not want these old-fashioned types at the party.....It is usually the machos who harass the women or drink too much or smoke hashish who stand outside the door.’

The regulatory role of parents

As well as a restrictive door policy, parents usually also play a role in the nightlife activities of their children. Some do not give their sons and daughters permission to go out at all, while others impose restrictions in terms of time, location and who they are allowed to go with. Young Turkish women in particular were more restricted in their nightlife choices. Most of the female respondents explained

that they got permission to go out when they reached the age of 20,¹² but only to a Turkish party and accompanied by an older sister or cousin. Only after a while did they get more freedom in their nightlife choices, with their parents letting them make their own decisions about where to go to and with whom. Accordingly, for most young Turkish women, their nightlife activities are initially restricted to the Turkish clubbing scene.

Of course, not all women experience these restrictions, with some claiming to have an open relationship with their parents, who let them make their own decisions, while others said that they never would get permission to go out, so they did so secretly. The male respondents, on the other hand, said they didn't talk at all to their parents about going out; it simply wasn't an issue. They just went out on a Saturday night.

Economic resources

Both consumers and organizers agreed that due to the wide availability of Turkish parties in Rotterdam and Amsterdam these days, most Dutch Turkish youngsters prefer to party in their own city or the one closest to home. Predominantly, the older and more experienced clubbers explained that a few years ago they had to travel all over the Netherlands to find a Turkish party. Some even crossed the border to attend such events in Germany. Now, however, Turkish parties are much more accessible. Turkish party organizations charge an entrance fee of between 12 and 15 Euros, which corresponds to what it costs to get into a mainstream club event. Most of the respondents complained that after the introduction of the Euro, nightlife in particular had become much more expensive, with entrance fees and the price of drinks rising enormously. This applies to both the Turkish clubbing scene and nightlife in general. Most of the young Turkish Dutch clubbers I spoke to claimed that they go out less, often due to the price-rises, but this factor has no impact on the choices they make between the Turkish and the regular clubbing scenes.

¹² This is rather late compared to native Dutch youngsters, who mostly get permission to go out at the age of 16

7.5 Politics of distinction among the consumers of the Turkish clubbing scene

All of the respondents were very keen to draw distinctions between the four Turkish party organizations studied herein and their audiences. In the previous section, the focus was on the choices Turkish youngsters made between the Turkish and the mainstream clubbing scenes, while here I will now address the decisions that young people make *within* the Turkish clubbing arena. Their previous experiences and so-called cultural knowledge are used to select their favourite Turkish parties and create divisions within the Turkish clubbing scene.

Music

According to Bennett (2000, 181-182), the meaning of music is ‘a *product of its reception and approbation by audiences*’. Furthermore, he also argues that music can be viewed as a process through which groups negotiate their identity with others. But here, the question of who the other is can be raised. Are ‘the others’ people with a different ethnic background who, nevertheless, share an interest in Turkish music, or are they Turkish young people who prefer another type of Turkish sounds. The answer to this question varied between the respondents. During the interviews, the Turkish youngsters not only pointed to the differences between themselves and their native Dutch peers, but also to differences in the groups of consumers of Turkish parties. It was striking that this process of differentiation on the more individual level almost always arose from a negative attitude. These clubbers justified their preference for one organization over another by pointing to the musical programming of the other companies as being too traditional, or too trendy, or there was too much Turkish music, or there was not enough. Striking was the often referred to inter-relationship between musical programming and the crowds. All of the young people emphasized the differences between the music played at the diverse Turkish parties. Some of them explained that they did not go to *Sahmeran*, for instance, because they did not like live music.

As one respondent said:

‘Live music doesn’t belong in a club, if I want to hear live music I’ll go to a concert’.

While, for another respondent, the presence of live music was an important reason to choose a *Sahmeran* party.

Identifying with the dance crowd

The young people who went to parties in both Rotterdam and Amsterdam emphasized that the dance crowds at these events were the same. According to these respondents, the same faces can be seen everywhere, because the group of young people who go to Turkish parties is very small. However, the youngsters who only visited parties arranged by their favourite organization had strong opinions about the differences between the crowds at these events. The variations between the responses of the male and female clubbers regarding clothing style and appearances were striking. When the men described the male audience in general, they often pointed to the resemblance with themselves, frequently using the sentences: ‘trendy and looked just like myself’ or ‘I always dress casual and relaxed just like the others’ to describe the outfits of the male crowd. Almost none of the male respondents made distinctions between the clothing styles of the women at a party. They often used words like sexy, good looking and trendy to describe them in more general terms.

The female respondents, on the other hand, described themselves in opposite terms to their female peers. They used the words relaxed, well and carefully dressed, but not too overdone, to describe themselves, while claiming that many of the other female clubbers were vulgar, overdressed and sluttish. Another recurring feature relating to the outfits of ‘other women’ was the wearing of headscarves. At one Turkish party I visited (which was organized as an after-party following a concert by the very famous ‘Queen of Turkish pop’, Sezen Aksu) there were some women present who wore headscarves. Weeks, and even months, later, some of the young Turkish women I spoke to criticized both the women with the headscarves as well as the organization which allowed them entry.

As one female clubber clearly explained:

‘If you decide that you are ready to wear a headscarf, good for you! But it is not a fashion item; it demands a certain lifestyle, one that does not coincide with clubbing, with dancing at a place late at night, with men, where alcohol is being served.’

In the current public debates in the Netherlands, the issue of veiling is seen as a sign of gender inequality (Duits and van Zoonen, 2006), but also as a signal of difference. The veil forcibly reconstructs the ‘otherness’ of Islam. These processes of difference related to the wearing of a veil are also a topic of heated debate in Turkey. Apparently, in the Netherlands, Turkish parties are, in the eyes of the young Turkish clubbers, the domain of a more westernized lifestyle and, therefore, automatically not the right place for veiled women.

Local differences in the dance crowd

As well as contrasting their own outfits with those of their fellow clubbers, many young people also drew distinctions between the dance crowds at parties in Rotterdam and Amsterdam. Those who only attended events in Amsterdam stated that the people at *Keyifland* and *Sahmeran’s* parties in Rotterdam were more traditional, or tried to dress trendily and look cool without paying attention to beauty and personal style, resulting in a sluttish and vulgar look. The Amsterdam clubbers, however, described the crowd at the parties in Rotterdam in terms like: backwards, old-fashioned machos and peasants for the male visitors, and words like trashy and wannabes to describe the women in stereotypical terms. This was contrasted to their own crowd, which they said was generally hip and trendy. They claimed to be dressed according to the latest fashions, in combination with Turkish elements, to create a personal style. It is unsurprising that the Rotterdam Turks also had a strong opinion of the dress code of those who attended Turkish parties in Amsterdam, accusing these peers of being snobbish and pompous, while describing themselves as ‘down to earth party people’.

They pointed to the outfits of the Amsterdam Turks as ‘too pretentious’ and ‘too Western’.

Most of the youngsters viewed the variations in the crowds as local differences. They replicated the general stereotypes that the native inhabitants of Rotterdam are hard workers, while the people of Amsterdam are sophisticated and culturally minded. As one Rotterdam Turk explained:

‘We live in Rotterdam, the city where everybody is honest and works hard; you know down to earth kind of people. But in Amsterdam, the people think they are all that, but the only thing [that] they are is arrogant’.

A young man living in Amsterdam had his own version of these local differences:

‘There are differences you know. Rotterdam consists of predominantly working class people. Nothing wrong with that, but they do not look outside their own community. They might look trendy on the outside, but inside they stick to their traditional values, while I think that in Amsterdam, we are more open and free’.

When I asked whether these variations were mainly caused by differences in educational background, almost all of the respondents waved this notion away. They explained that it was mainly differences in the *attitudes* or *mentality* of the crowds at the four types of Turkish parties; it had nothing to do with educational attainment. According to the Amsterdam Turks, this attitude could be best characterized as a difference in outlook between urban and rural youngsters. While some of them were from rural areas themselves, they emphasized that they had adopted an *urban mentality*. This mentality, as opposed to a rural outlook, is characterized as modern and Western, instead of traditional and old-fashioned. They all agreed that it is not educational standards which have an impact on your mentality or attitude, but that your family and upbringing is influential. Most of the young Amsterdam clubbers were very determined in their opinions and gave me

examples of university students they knew who were very traditional in their ideas, or they told me about poorly educated friends who were very modern. The Rotterdam Turks also denied the importance of educational attainment. Their stereotyping of themselves and their Amsterdam peers was very different. They described themselves as ‘down to earth’ and ‘true to their cultural heritage’, while they accused the Turks in Amsterdam of being ‘snobbish’ and ‘denying their ethnic roots’.

The denial of the importance of educational background in favour of the hedonistic or style based discourse of attitude or mentality is often repeated by field researchers. However, I cannot ignore the overlap between the educational attainment of the respondents and their self-descriptions and descriptions of others. In general, the more highly educated youngsters portrayed themselves as modern and urban and the ‘others’ as rural, backwards and traditional, while the less well educated respondents claimed that the others were ‘snobbish’, but they viewed themselves as down to earth.

Turkish organizations

When I asked the Turkish clubbers about the differences between the four party organizations, all of them gave me a description of the differences in the music and the dance crowds referred to in the sections above. Only a few pointed to the characteristics of the party organizations themselves. Those who did were the young people who had close relationships with one of the owners of these companies. Youngsters who did not have any personal affiliation to any of the organizations did not address them at all, being more orientated towards the characteristics of the party, such as the music, door policy and the dance crowd.

7.6 Summary

At the time of writing, in the winter of 2008, young Turkish people can go almost every week to dance to their favourite Turkish music at specially organized Turkish parties. To beat the competition and attract Turkish consumers, the four organizations that are included in this study create their own version of a Turkish party. By their concepts, door policy and musical programming, each of these

companies attracts a specific group of consumers. They also keep a close eye on each other and keep themselves informed about what their rivals are doing.

For the Turkish audience, the cultural elements of a Turkish party were considered to be very important. Dancing to Turkish music in a well dressed crowd was viewed as an important reason to choose to participate in the Turkish clubbing scene.

So far as the social factors are concerned, the young Turkish men and women I spoke to differed in their nightlife experiences and the motivations behind their nightlife choices. In general, the young men stated that the presence of friends and acquaintances was important, while most of the women claimed that they keep close to the friends they attended the party with. Both the men and women mentioned social control as a negative factor of Turkish parties. The women in particular did not feel free to talk to men they didn't know. They did not trust them and were afraid of being treated badly or gossiped about. This attitude also had an impact on the men. All of them explained that it is not possible to approach a woman without a proper introduction by a mutual friend.

Men and women also had different experiences regarding the restrictions they faced. Overall, most men did not have to deal with many limitations imposed by their parents, while the majority of the women did at some point have such problems. Moreover, when it comes to the door policies of mainstream nightlife, the men and women again had different opinions and experiences. Many Turkish men shared the feeling that they were not welcome at regular clubs. It was striking that almost all of the male respondents were of the opinion that it was more difficult to get into a Turkish party than to a mainstream event, as a result of both the rule which states that all men have to bring a female date to a Turkish party, and the strong emphasis on style of dress. The female respondents, on the other hand, did not mention any restrictions regarding door policy. Moreover, the young women who occasionally attended parties in the mainstream clubbing scene said that they had never been refused entry.

In general, the men and women experienced the Turkish clubbing scene differently. For most of the former, the social factors were very important reasons to choose a Turkish party, while for the

majority of the women cultural factors played a more important role in their choice of this scene.

Due to the large number of party organizations which operate in this market, most young people also have to make choices *within* the Turkish clubbing scene. The choice of a specific party within the Turkish club circuit was strongly influenced by the different styles of music played (global vs. Turkish, pop music vs. traditional music), the expected crowd (hip vs. sophisticated, trendy vs. old-fashioned), the image of the Turkish party organizations (trendy vs. traditional) as well as the location (Rotterdam vs. Amsterdam, popular clubs vs. party centres).

Apart from the differences in organization and musical programming, it was striking that the respondents mentioned local variations in the party crowds. Many of the Amsterdam Turks distinguished themselves from their Turkish peers in Rotterdam and vice versa. Only the young people who visited parties in both cities emphasized similarities. It can thus be concluded that the wide availability of Turkish parties, as well as the strategies used by the party organizations to create their own type of event, has an impact on the choices that young Turkish people make for a specific party within the Turkish clubbing scene.

Chapter 8 The Moroccan Leisure Scene

Moroccan party, Sunday Afternoon, spring 2007

On a Sunday afternoon, women who are all dressed up stand in line waiting impatiently for the doors of Club Paradiso to open. Some groups talk loudly and excitedly about the event to come, while others complain about the long queue. Only a few hours ago, on the Saturday night, more young people were queuing to get into Club Paradiso as well. They were also dressed up and chatting excitedly in small groups. On this Sunday, however, the composition of the queue is completely different; it is a unisex group of women of all ages, all of Moroccan descent. They have come together for the women's only party, Hafla Anissa.

As soon as I get inside, I walk around the entire venue to see what is where and what is going on. Down the hall, I see small groups of colourfully dressed women talking to each other excitedly. After ordering a drink at the bar, which only sold non-alcoholic beverages, Moroccan music reaches my ears as I open the door to the main hall. I am surprised by these unfamiliar tones and sounds in such a familiar place as Club Paradiso. I feign a relaxed attitude. While listening to the music and watching the dancing crowd, I am grabbed by the atmosphere, not as a participant but as an observer. I see young women dancing happily, moving their hips and shoulders intensely to the rhythm of the beat. Sweat is pouring from their faces, and they have their eyes closed or are staring in total ecstasy at an unknown point in the room. To me, the silent observer, it seems as if they have emotionally drifted away to a party in the hot and damp climate of Morocco.

After these intense observations, I walk back into the entrance hall and see a group of young girls with big bags heading towards the ladies room. Inside there, the air is filled with excited voices and the smell of hairspray and make-up, which is being touched up. Within minutes they have prepared themselves for the party by changing outfits. They entered the ladies room as schoolgirls and came out as party girls. The transformation is evident; they look much more exuberant. I am happy to discover that the way I am

dressed this afternoon does not set me apart from the dance crowd. My carefully selected shirt with long sleeves fits in with the dress code at this party. I feel comfortable enough to go back out there and drink in the music, the people and the atmosphere.

8.1 Introduction

The Moroccan leisure scene is a relatively new player in the ethno-party market. According to the organization, *Marmoucha*, one of the first commercial Moroccan parties was organized in the mid 1990s, with the aim of putting Moroccan music on the Dutch nightlife agenda and offering young Moroccans a space where they could listen and dance to these sounds. In the early days, it was predominantly raï-parties where people could dance to Algerian and Moroccan music. By the end of the 1990s, however, the emphasis had shifted to Moroccan sounds and beats (predominantly Shaabi, which is popular Moroccan folk music) and other fashionable genres such as Arabic pop, RnB and hip-hop. These parties are now organized by a small group of established cultural organizations (commercial and non-profit), with *Marmoucha* and *Success Media and Publishing (SMP)* being the most well known in the Netherlands.

What follows is a detailed account of the development of the Moroccan leisure scene in the Netherlands. After a general description of its characteristics, size and popularity, I will set out in more detail the features of the three party organizations which have been part of this research. In the third paragraph, the strategies used by these producers to gain and retain a trustworthy reputation are centralized. In the fourth paragraph, the opinions and behaviour of the consumers of this scene are examined. Here, the reasons and motivations behind the choice of the Moroccan leisure circuit will be analyzed. Finally, the last paragraph revolves around the decisions that young people make when it comes to attending a particular party *within* the Moroccan leisure scene.

8.2 The creation of the Moroccan leisure scene

The Moroccan party scene is very different to mainstream nightlife or indeed other ethno-party circuits. Moroccan parties usually take place on Sundays in the late afternoon, or early on Saturday

evenings, ending before the regular clubbing events begin. This is because a lot of young Moroccans (especially females) are not allowed to go out late at night. Another change to make the parties more accessible to their target audience is that no alcohol is served. Many young Moroccans do not drink alcohol (in public) and prefer to not go to places where it is served. Another difference to the regular party scene is the popularity of *Hafla Anissa*, which are parties exclusively for women. *Hafla Anissa* events take place on Sunday afternoons and consist of workshops and fashion shows, alternated with a clubbing party in which a female DJ lures the crowd onto the dance floor.

With its early opening hours and no-alcohol policy, the Moroccan leisure scene has adjusted to the specific cultural needs of its audience. A further reason for organizing Moroccan parties is the lack of Moroccan music in mainstream nightlife. Moreover, many young Moroccan men don't feel welcome in that scene, having experienced discrimination at the doors of popular clubs or the feeling that they are being closely watched by the security men inside the venues. According to the diverse Moroccan party organizations, all of these factors have contributed to the creation of the Moroccan leisure scene.

Size and popularity

The availability of Moroccan parties is very diverse. There are concerts by various Moroccan artists, festivals with Moroccan music, lounge-events in which Moroccan music is combined with RnB, fashion-shows displaying the latest in bridal fashion, workshops (literature, poetry henna etc), debates, prom-nights and *Hafla Anissa* parties. Most of the cultural organizations focus predominantly on debates and workshops, and arrange a dance or a prom night once a year. Tans (Towards a New Start) is one such organization. As well as lectures, debates and workshops, it puts on an annual prom night which attracts 1500-2000 well educated young Moroccans.

The crowds at Moroccan parties are extremely diverse, and their constitution largely depends on the type of event that is being organized. Women in every age category visit concerts and unisex parties. Dance parties, on the other hand, are mainly attended by

young people aged between 18 and 30 years old.

Moroccan party organizations in the Netherlands

In order to make a comparison between the three ethno-party scenes possible, I have chosen to include only those activities which resemble clubbing. The main criterion was that dancing to music produced by DJs was the key purpose of the event. Accordingly, Shaabi nights, lounge/dance parties and *Hafla Anissa* parties were included, while debates and workshops were not. These dance parties are put on by three different Moroccan organizations: *Marmoucha* and the *Argan Youth Centre* in Amsterdam and *Success Media and Publishing* in Den Bosch.

Marmoucha organized its first event in 1998. Its goal was to create a space for Moroccan music within existing clubbing venues. Furthermore, it wanted to make music from the Maghreb accessible and known to both Moroccans and their native Dutch peers. *Marmoucha* is funded by the local government and works closely with Club Paradiso in Amsterdam. Since 1998, the organization has expanded its program and now arranges about 60 events a year, both in and outside Amsterdam. This program is very diverse, and includes concerts, workshops and dance events. Two of these dance parties, *Marmoucha Maghreb Dance* and *Hafla Anissa*, are organized every two or three months in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht.

Marmoucha Maghreb Dance is a musical spectacle involving two of the most important music genres in the Maghreb, Shaabi and Raï, and artists from Morocco, Algiers and the Netherlands take the stage during this event. DJs and VJs are also used to stir up the crowd. This party takes place on Saturday afternoons between five and 11pm in the popular mainstream venue, Club Paradiso, in Amsterdam. The audience is mainly comprised of young people of Moroccan descent in the age range 18 to 30.

Hafla Anissa is a party exclusively for women. It also takes place in Club Paradiso in Amsterdam, this time on a Sunday afternoon. It usually starts at 2pm and ends at seven. Due to the variety of the program and the separate rooms in Club Paradiso, women of varying ages, such as groups of friends, nieces, aunts, and mothers with their (young) children, come to this dance event

together.

Urban Rai Zone by the *Argan Youth Centre* was started in 2004 by a group of Moroccan boys who wanted to create a space where young Moroccans could hang out in their free time. Argan is a youth centre in the heart of Amsterdam, where all sorts of activities such as sports (boxing, fitness, and aerobics), music-lessons, debates, workshops and dance nights are organized. Every month, on a Friday afternoon between five and 10pm, the *Urban Rai Zone*, which is a dance party for young Moroccans aged between 15 and 25, takes place. *Argan* started organizing these parties three years ago in an effort to create a space for youngsters who could not afford the high entrance fees of mainstream nightlife and were not allowed to go out late at night.

Hafla Chaabia by *Success Media and Publishing* is a large event, organized once a year. *Hafla Chaabia* can be best translated as a popular (folk) party. With his organization, *Success Media & Publishing*, the director wanted to arrange cultural activities with which to get Dutch-Moroccans in touch with their background and introduce Moroccan culture to the native Dutch population. By attracting very famous and popular Moroccan artists, the company tried to pique the interest of the Moroccan community in cultural activities. At first, only concerts with a single famous artist were arranged, but when the organization became more popular and had built up a solid reputation, the concerts were extended and became events. These events include performances by a variety of artists from both Morocco and elsewhere, and the venues are decorated with food stands and merchandise. The crowd at *Hafla Chaabia* is very diverse, varying from families with young children, to groups of older men, to peer groups aged between 18 and 30. This last group makes up the majority of the attendees. *Hafla Chaabia* is organized once a year and takes place in the event hall in Den Bosch, starting at 4pm and continuing until 10.30.

8.3 Keeping it safe: strategies of the producers

The Moroccan cultural and leisure organizations have to deploy diverse strategies to make their events attractive to a Moroccan audience. Moreover, in this Moroccan leisure scene, these strategies do not arise from competition between the organizations, but are

related to the unfamiliarity of the members of the Moroccan community with commercially arranged events. Most of the social activities of Moroccan families take place at weddings or other family festivities. Indeed, concerts (popular and classical), festivals, and bars and clubs are rarely visited by first generation Moroccans. Even at so-called multicultural festivals, such as the Dunja festival in Rotterdam which is organized to stimulate exchanges between cultures, very few first generation Moroccan migrants are in attendance. Participation by second generation Moroccans is a bit higher, but is still low compared to other ethnic groups. Accordingly, Moroccan party organizations not only have to take into account the unfamiliarity of its target group with formally arranged events, but they also have to put a lot of effort into gaining the trust of their visitors and making their activities appealing and accessible. What follows is a description of the strategies the three organizations referred to above deploy to make their events attractive to their clients.

Promoting the party: creating a safe and reliable reputation

During an interview, the organizer of *Hafla Chaabia* emphasized that he deliberately avoids using the word party in the announcements of his activities. Instead, he uses the word event, because in his opinion the term party has a negative connotation of alcohol and dark, immoral activities, while event connotes the more cultural aspects of what is actually taking place. During the interview, the director frequently pointed to the importance of building a reputation as a safe Moroccan cultural organization. Indeed, according to all three of the organizations, many Dutch-Moroccans have had negative experiences with Moroccan companies which did not arrange their events properly. Sometimes the artists they had booked did not show up, and instead of refunding the ticket or making an announcement, the audience was simply confronted with a different act. On other occasions, a Moroccan party or concert had ended in a massive fight, which led to feelings of insecurity in the crowd.

All of the organizations pay a great deal of attention to security and service. The latter principally entails clean and adequate numbers of toilets, proper food and drink, no long queues for food

and a secure cloakroom. They all stressed that good organization prevents irritation and agitation, which can easily degenerate into a disturbance or a fight. One of the organizers underlined this by giving the following example:

‘You have to make sure that the cloakroom is carefully secured and that people do not have to stand in line too long. For example, if you do not have a guarded cloakroom it is possible that at the end when people collect their jackets and coats they can’t find their own coat. They do not go to the police because they want their jacket back instantly. This is even more important when they went to the party with their brother’s coat. So, the guy whose jacket is missing goes looking for it straight away. He might get into a fight with the person who has his jacket. It starts small, but because everybody knows a lot of other people, before you know it the whole crowd is fighting. Good organization can prevent this’.

An important aspect of keeping an event or party safe is related to the number of bouncers and security men present. If there are enough people and someone starts a fight, it can be resolved quickly before it gets out of hand. If an event or party ends in a massive fight, or when smaller fracas occur frequently, the organizations will become less popular. Moreover, they can even be fined or closed down by the local authorities if things go badly wrong. Furthermore, club owners, concert halls or pop venues will not cooperate with organizations whose events end up in fights or conflict with the local police. Not serving alcohol also helps to create a safer event because people who are drunk are more likely to start a fight than those who are sober.

Advertising the party

Just as in the Asian party and the Turkish clubbing scenes, flyers and posters are distributed in places where the target group comes together. Accordingly, they can be found in Moroccan restaurants, bars and at local community centres which are visited by many Moroccan youngsters. On the internet, the majority of

advertisements are to be found on the Moroccan websites and community sites which are visited by a young Moroccan audience¹³. Because it is affiliated with club Paradiso, *Marmoucha* also advertises its parties on the club's website.

In general, all of the communications about the parties arranged by the three organizations are in a mixture of Moroccan and Dutch. These two languages also appear next to each other on the companies' websites, although the majority of the text is in Dutch. This is done to make the website accessible to a wider audience, but is also due to the different languages spoken in Morocco.

Door policy

Another way to protect the atmosphere at a party or event is the execution of a very strict door policy. The audience is not screened by outfit, outward appearance or age. However, because most activities take place during the day and no alcohol is served, there are no formal age restrictions. Accordingly, children are allowed to enter the premises as well when accompanied by adults. Women with or without headscarves can also attend. Men are allowed to wear trainers but have to take off their caps. According to the bouncers, it is much easier to hide an aggressive expression behind a cap, which is why this rule applies.

In general, people who turn up to events who are clearly under the influence of alcohol or drugs are refused entry. Likewise, when people arrive with a so-called 'aggressive attitude', they are also not allowed in by the bouncers. This does not happen very often, because most of the visitors know the rules and are aware of how strictly they are applied. As one of the men at a Moroccan party told me:

'You really do not want to mess with these bouncers. They are not afraid to literally kick you out of the club if you cause trouble.'

The high numbers of security men, and their resolute performance in combination with a good service, minimize the chances of any

¹³ For example, www.maroc.nl, www.marokko.nl

violence. All three organizations named these strategies as being very important if their events are to remain popular.

Music

By programming diverse Moroccan music at an event, the organizations attract young people from different regions of Morocco. The target group of young Moroccans is relatively small and the companies, therefore, do not want to limit themselves to, for instance, the Berber population or the Arabs. Accordingly, you will hear the music from the different regions at all of the parties. According to the organizations, these parties and events have created a space where formally separated groups of Moroccans come together, party and meet. Gazzah, who studied the music and identify formation of Dutch Moroccan young people even claims that ‘when Dutch-Moroccan youths come together in these musical contexts, internal differences seem to temporarily disappear’ and that a ‘coherent Dutch-Moroccan community’ is created during a Moroccan party (2005: 6).

Costs

Another strategy to keep the Moroccan party accessible to its audience is to keep the price of the entrance tickets as low as possible. According to the organizers of *Marmoucha* and the *Urban Rai Zone*, many Moroccans are unwilling or unable to spend much money on cultural activities. *Urban Rai Zone*, for instance, was purposely set up as a low cost dance party. Similarly, *Marmoucha* tries to keep the cost of entry to its events as low as possible. This organization is funded by the local government and uses this to keep ticket prices affordable, with the average cost being 15 Euros. This is comparable to the entrance fees of parties held in the mainstream club circuit. The difference is that for the same money, visitors can also enjoy small concerts and live performances.

The man behind *Hafla Chaabia*, on the other hand, also cited the importance of keeping costs as low as possible, but was very much against any governmental funding. He was of the opinion that it created false competition and the funded organizations were not free when it came to the programming of their activities. He told me that he keeps prices as low as possible by organizing an event

commercially and driving hard bargains with artists.

8.4 Choosing the Moroccan leisure scene

In this third section I will shed light on the personal factors which played a role in the choices made about participating in the Moroccan leisure scene. As in the previous two chapters, in section 8.4.1 I will highlight the social mechanisms of the processes of identification and differentiation. The experiencing of feelings of belonging and social rules are also centralized. The second dimension of personal factors concerns cultural elements, and these are analyzed in section 8.4.2. In particular, the cultural features of music, dress, dance and cultural rules play an important role in the processes of identification and differentiation within both a dance crowd and a party. Finally, in section 8.4.3, the restrictions which determine these choices negatively are unravelled.

8.4.1 The social dimension

Friends

Along with your friends, you either decide where to go out or you just follow them in terms of their nightlife choices. Many of the young Moroccan women I met at the Moroccan parties claimed to predominantly have friends with a Moroccan background like themselves. They said that they hang out with ‘other’ people at school but spent their free time with co-ethnics. Furthermore, the respondents often named family members as their closest friends. Similarities in lifestyle are, according to many young women, an important factor in their friendships, as one young woman explained:

‘I also have Dutch friends at school, but outside school I only hang out with my Moroccan friends. Our friendship is much closer and we have known each other since we were kids. It is so much easier with them you know, we have the same lifestyle. I do not always have to explain, we understand...for example why I do not go out on Saturday night, or why I cannot come to her [native Dutch friend] birthday party’.

Many young Moroccan men, on the other hand, told me that although their closest friends are of Moroccan descent, they preferred to go out in a mixed group. These men alternated between visiting mainstream club nights with a mix of friends and participating in the Moroccan party scene with their Moroccan acquaintances. One man preferred this variety:

‘Most of the time I go out in a mixed group of friends; we visit all different clubs and bars, we do not have a favourite club or anything. Every now and then I go out with my Moroccan friends to a concert or a Marmoucha party. It is nice to see so many young Moroccans and to dance with my friends to Moroccan music. I really enjoy both very much’.

Only a few of the men I talked to said that they only have Moroccan friends, but all of them also liked to visit other places, such as bars and cinemas. Moroccan parties do not take place every week and because these events end early, many young men visit other venues afterwards.

Young people influence each other in terms of their taste in music, clothing styles, or lifestyle in general. For instance, one DJ, who mainly works in the south of the Netherlands, told me that he had changed his repertoire from western RnB to Moroccan music because of some new friends he had made and a holiday spent in the country. He does not understand Arabic or Berber, but likes the rhythm and tone, and feels that he ‘needs to learn more about his roots’ by listening to and studying Moroccan music.

Feelings of belonging

Going out to clubs is not as commonplace for many young Moroccans as it might be for other groups. Most of the women I met during the Moroccan events told me that they do not visit ordinary parties or cafés. Indeed, the majority of the women said that they stay at home on Saturday nights or visit family and friends with their parents. Only a few young Moroccan women told me that they are not allowed to go out at all by their parents, but the majority claimed to not be interested in doing so anyway, because they expected to be treated badly by (drunken) men if they went clubbing. Some feared

men in general, while others expected to be harassed by Moroccan men because they would be seen as ‘fallen women’. Nightlife’s bad reputation within the Moroccan community, the service of alcohol, and the late opening hours of clubs contributes to feelings of not belonging for many young Moroccan women.

Most of the men agreed with the women about the negative image of mainstream nightlife. As one young man told me:

‘I do not have a problem with going out, I go out a lot, but many others, especially the older generation, associate nightlife with drugs, alcohol and sex. They think of it as places you should avoid, women especially should not go there. They think that only bad and sleazy women go there’.

As well as these internal judgments within the Moroccan community about mainstream nightlife, many young Moroccans also told me that they don’t feel welcome in that scene. According to them, the current political climate is widening the gap between the native Dutch population and Moroccans, and the media was often accused of creating a negative image of the Moroccan people in the Netherlands.

Social rules and flirting

Almost all of the men and women I met at a Moroccan party told me that they weren’t interested in the opposite sex at these events. Most of the women explained that they prefer a *Hafla Annisa* (women’s only) party, because at mixed events they feel like they are being watched by the men. These parties, in which elements of Moroccan culture are mixed with Dutch clubbing culture, are a huge success and attract large numbers of consumers who do not want, or are not allowed, to dance at a party in the presence of men. These women’s only events do not exist in Morocco, or indeed in any other European country; the women there simply have to make a choice between participating in mixed parties or staying at home.

Social control

When it comes to flirting, both the men and the women I spoke to said that the presence of family and friends prevented them from ‘*making a move*’. They explained that they use the internet to get in touch with that one particular nice guy instead. Internet dating or sites like maroc.nl, matchmaker.nl or yasmina.nl are popular with many young Moroccans because they can talk to each other or set up a date without anybody else watching them. According to my key informants and some internet research, a lot of young Moroccans also use the internet and chat rooms to get information about going out in both mainstream nightlife and in the Moroccan leisure scene. Sometimes, the discussions are about which party to visit, and occasionally there is a heated debate about how bad nightlife is for (predominantly) young women and men.

Most of the men I talked to said that they disagree with the lack of participation of women in nightlife, and they all disapproved of the social control that women faced. As one said:

‘Just as it is for men, for women [it should be] possible to go out and to have fun while respecting your Islamic lifestyle. It is all about your behaviour, how you act. But our women are not allowed to go out and if they do go out they run the risk of ruining their reputation and being gossiped about as being haram’.

It is difficult to generalize the attitudes of Moroccans towards nightlife and going out. They are ambivalent about it themselves, and prejudices and stereotyping exist not only between men and women but also within the sexes. This makes it especially difficult for women to navigate between the images and ideas about nightlife in general on the one hand, and attending Moroccan parties and listening to music on the other. Many young women use the internet and chat rooms for advice about going out and Moroccan parties.

8.4.2 The cultural dimension

Dancing is the most visible response to music, and is perhaps the most overt bodily practice in clubbing. It is an encounter between body and mind, and is often looked upon as an embodied statement

by the clubber of liberation from the hardship or pressure of everyday life; in other words it is a way to 'shake off the difficulties during the week' (Malbon 1998). Cultural practices like music, dancing and the atmosphere in clubs are strongly related, and are important factors in the choice of a particular venue or party.

Music

There are many different musical genres that are popular among young Moroccans. Most of those I met at Moroccan parties liked traditional Moroccan and Arabic pop, as well as so-called urban music and hip-hop. In mainstream nightlife, however, Arabic pop or Moroccan musical genres such as Shaabi are rarely played. Many of these young Moroccans told me that they go to Moroccan parties in order to listen and dance to their favourite Moroccan artists. As one young man explained:

'It is different you know, of course I do not always want to listen to my own music, but it is part of who I am. I am raised with Shaabi; we dance to it during all kinds of celebrations like weddings and so on. Besides I always watch this kind of music on television. Moroccan music is part of who I am'.

Shaabi, which means, popular is a form of Moroccan folk music. It is a category consisting of different genres from different regions including, for instance, *Reggada* music from Oujda and *Rewaffa* music from the Rif (Gazzah 2005: 6). It was originally performed in markets, but is now played at any kind of meeting and celebration. Many young Moroccans listen to Shaabi music at home, during holidays in Morocco, or at family celebrations, and it appeals to their Moroccan background and the culture of their parents. By playing Shaabi at a Moroccan party, it helps young people to incorporate elements of their parents' traditions into their own youth culture.

Many young Moroccans who attend Moroccan parties explained that they prefer Moroccan music to other more western styles because of the use of specific instruments and its rhythm. Not only does this music demand another dancing style, but it also has a

religious aspect. There is uncertainty among many young Moroccans about whether or not you are allowed to listen to music according to the rules of the Islam. There are those who claim that music made with certain (Moroccan) instruments is allowed, while others say that all types of music that serve no religious purpose are forbidden, because it distracts you from a strict religious lifestyle. This ambivalence and uncertainty about whether listening to music is allowed or forbidden was expressed by many of the respondents during my interviews. What most of them agreed on, however, was that contemporary western music, with its lyrics about sex, drugs, crime and violence, is not approved of by their parents.

Dance

Observing the crowd at a Moroccan party was a thrilling experience; both the men and the women danced in such a way that the whole room was filled with energy and tension. The women danced with each other and made spectacular hip and shoulder movements to the Shaabi music. The scarves they wrapped around their hips accentuated the movements of the lower parts of their body. Sometimes, these scarves were decorated with little bells that rang gently to the rhythm of the hip swings. Most of these dancing women completely lost themselves in the beat of the music.

It was not only the body that was in motion. When I observed the dancing crowd, I could see a certain type of ecstasy on their faces, as if the music was taking over their body and mind. This was also evident in the replies of many women, who said that they experience a sense of total happiness when they dance. Sentences like: 'I completely forget everything, and I just dance' or 'It is as if you float outside this room right into Morocco' demonstrate how they experienced dancing to Moroccan music. This is what Goffman (1963: 69) has called 'inward emigration', a state of body and mind that temporarily makes you forget the concerns of your daily life.

The men also danced with each other in a circle, often raising their arms to the beat of the music. It was also obvious that the men were very accomplished dancers. Many of them, however, had a kind of 'cool' attitude while dancing, and did not let themselves go as much as the women.

It is not customary for single men and women to dance together in Morocco. Likewise, at Moroccan weddings or birthday parties, you will also see women and men dancing separately. This is sometimes even in different rooms, but most of the time they just dance separately in small groups in the same room. Young Moroccans in the Netherlands have taken over this cultural aspect of dancing, and at most Moroccan parties you will see the men and women dancing in their own male or female groups. Most of the women I spoke to at a *Hafla Annisa* party claimed to feel much freer in the absence of men.

Some women also stated that the presence of men was an important reason why they do not participate in mainstream nightlife. For both men and women, dancing to Moroccan music and the cultural customs thereof were an important reason for choosing the Moroccan party scene.

Dress code

It is always difficult to describe the dress code of a dancing crowd. Not only because people dress differently, but also because it is difficult to put a certain style into words. What was, however, striking were the different styles of outfit present at a single event. I observed veiled women who covered their body carefully with clothing, such as long skirts under long-sleeved shirts. At the same party, I also saw sexily dressed young women with short skirts and tight tops. Others still wore *jabbadors* (traditional Moroccan outfit consisting of a blouse and matching pair of trousers). What they all had in common, however, was that none of them showed much cleavage or wore crop tops, which differs from the clothing styles of young Turkish and Asian women.

Questions about their own outfits and those of others were not answered extensively. Most of the women told me that they wore what they liked best and that they did not have a particular style. The words normal, nice and decent were often used to describe their clothes. When I asked them about the dress codes of ‘others’, most of them did not want to give me any specifics. The most common reply was that everyone is free to wear whatever he or she feels like and they did not have an opinion about it. It is difficult to tell whether this was the result of the briefness of the

conversation and the location (during the party), or whether they were all really very tolerant of other people's dress codes.

The men on the other hand did have more to say about their own dress codes and those of the women. Most of them mentioned a strong desire for expensive clothing brands such as Gucci and Armani. Some wore those outfits themselves and were very proud of this fact, while others stereotyped the owners of expensive brands by calling them 'typical low skilled Moroccan' outfits. They themselves preferred the stylish clothing of more diverse brands and stores as long as the labels were not obviously visible.

When I asked them about how the women dressed, they all pointed to their diverse clothing styles. They did not give me details about what these styles looked like, instead describing them in terms of traditional, modern, or revealing and daring outfits. The dress code of women is dictated, according to most of the men, by cultural and religious rules which prescribe that they should not cause offence with their appearance. The men I talked to had different opinions about this. Some said that they completely agreed with it and that woman who wear sexy and revealing clothes are not proper Moroccan girls. Others, however, explained that they did not agree with the rule, but that it would be best for the young women to subordinate to it. Some of them stated that women in Morocco have more freedom to choose their own style of clothing.

For some of the women in particular, their clothing style was a reason to choose to participate in the Moroccan leisure scene. At a mainstream party they could not wear a headscarf or a *jabbador* without being stared at. Moreover, many of the young women were of the opinion that their native Dutch counterparts show too much skin and dress too sexily. Some explained that they would feel uncomfortable being in the presence of these 'half naked women'.

Cultural rules & the role of Islam

The organization of Moroccan parties, with their early opening and closing hours, no alcohol policy, and women only events, creates a distance between the Moroccan and the mainstream clubbing scenes. The clubbing habits of native Dutch young people do not match the time schedules of the Moroccan party scene, which starts (and ends) early on a Saturday evening or a Sunday afternoon. The majority of

the Moroccans I talked to during the parties told me that they would really appreciate it if more native Dutch youngsters came to Moroccan parties as well. They all preferred a more mixed audience instead of just partying with fellow Moroccans. As one woman explained:

‘We have so much to offer, look at this party, isn’t it great? Dutch people should come and see for themselves that we know how to party. We have a very a vivid and exciting dance culture’

One of the organizers of *Marmoucha* also explained:

‘It would be good if more native Dutch came to Moroccan parties. Then they would see for themselves that we have something to add and that we are not all criminals or religious freaks. We also like to party only at a different time and with different music’.

8.4.3 Restrictions

Selecting your favourite party not only entails processes of taste, but is also influenced by accessibility. Availability, costs, location, bouncers, as well as parents, can all limit the amount of choice that young people have.

Door policy

Every now and then, the headlines in the Dutch newspapers are about young Dutch-Moroccans who have been being refused entry to mainstream clubs. In 2005, the Dutch Minister of Integration, Rita Verdonk, even went out with a group of Moroccan young men to learn more about the discriminatory practices of bouncers in popular nightlife areas. However, the media attention paid to this subject disappeared just as spontaneously as it had arisen.

It is very difficult to prove discrimination because a bouncer judges a visitor on appearance, which is comprised of a combination of factors, such as clothing style, age, number of people in a group, ethnic background, as well as attitude and the interaction between bouncer and visitor. All parties (bouncers, club owners, young people and the government) agreed, however, that young Moroccan

men have the most difficulty in getting into a club because of the discriminatory practices of bouncers and club owners. Although it is impossible to give precise numbers of those who have been discriminated against, the *feeling* or *fear* of being rejected plays an important role in the decisions made about where to go to.

I have spoken to several young Moroccan men about the door policies of mainstream clubs. Some of them told me that they do not have any problems getting into a regular party. They believed that the young (Moroccan) guys who are discriminated against at the door have a bad attitude and cause trouble. They agreed that bouncers were very capable of making distinctions between genuine party people and troublemakers. However, other young men told me that although they had generally not had any problems getting into a party, they nevertheless knew of 'others' who were refused entry regularly. As one man told me:

'You should join my cousin during a night out. He is a fine young man, but he is discriminated [against] at every club at Leidseplein. [It's] only because he looks like a young Moroccan. I do not have any problems with gaining access but that is because many bouncers think I am Italian, something like that. I do not look like a 'real' Moroccan'.

Finally, there was a group of young men who told me that they were almost always refused entry to mainstream club nights. Bouncers used excuses such as 'members only' or 'we are full' to reject them. Despite all of these negative experiences, only a small minority claimed that they go to Moroccan parties due to the door policies elsewhere. The choices of this small group of men are not made voluntarily, but out of fear and a lack of other options.

The regulatory role of parents

As well as a restrictive door policy, parents can also play an important role in the nightlife activities undertaken by their children. Some parents do not give them permission to go out at all, while others impose restrictions regarding time, location and who their sons and daughters are allowed to go out with. Young Moroccan women in particular are more restricted in their nightlife choices.

Most of the female respondents explained that they did not talk to their parents about going out because they knew they would never get permission to do so if they did. The word respect was often used to explain why they did not confront their parents with questions about going out. Many young women understood and respected the attitudes of their parents towards nightlife. Even talking to your parents about these issues is viewed as being disrespectful.

Some young women did, however, actually go out without the permission of their parents. They either sneaked out of the house or made up an excuse about staying at a friend's house in order to participate in mainstream night-time activities. This was a very risky venture for these young women, as they ran the risk of bumping into people who knew them or their family. Most of the women explained that they do not have problems with these restrictions, because many of them are allowed to have dinner with friends, go to the movies, or to a public debate on Saturday nights. Moreover, many cultural organizations arrange workshops and debates on topics of interest for young Moroccans. Accordingly, instead of sitting at home on Saturday nights, these young men and women enjoy other types of activity.

Economic resources

Most Moroccan parties take place in Amsterdam. Marmoucha is expanding its scope by occasionally organizing women's only parties in other cities such as Nijmegen, Rotterdam, The Hague and Utrecht, but not on a regular basis. Accordingly, young people who live outside Amsterdam and want to go to Moroccan parties have to travel. Many of those that I interviewed, who live outside Amsterdam, complained about the lack of Moroccan activities in their area. As one 17 year old guy explained:

‘It is difficult you know to go to Amsterdam. I cannot go by car and the train is very expensive. I can only go to Amsterdam if my older brother offers me a ride’.

As I mentioned in the second section, most organizers try to keep the price of entrance tickets as low as possible. Still, most Moroccan party organizations charge between 12 and 15 Euros because they

have booked live artists. Only the *Urban Rai Zone* party is much cheaper, meaning that it is accessible to a very young audience. A commonly heard response when asking about the costs of a night out was that many of the men and women saved money for a particular event. However, as the cost of entry to mainstream club nights is comparable to those of Moroccan parties, the issue of price has no impact on the choices made between regular nightlife and the Moroccan party scene.

8.5 Choosing your favourite party: negotiations between taste and accessibility

Although there are very few players in the Moroccan leisure scene, young Moroccans can still make a choice between the parties arranged by the various organizations. Most of the young people I talked to did not experience any differences between the crowds at these diverse events. People only drew distinctions between the audiences at the *Urban Rai Zone*, because its visitors are very young. Indeed, during my visits to the *Urban Rai Zone*, it was evident that the majority of the audience was aged between 15 and 18. Many of the older visitors to, for example, *Lounge M* or *Hafla Anissa*, which are organized by *Marmoucha*, told me that the *Urban Rai Zone* is more of a kids party, and the people there who are older than 18 are working as volunteers.

None of the visitors I talked to mentioned differences other than age about the crowds at *Urban Rai Zone*. Unfortunately, I did not manage to gather any detailed information about these audiences. As I mentioned earlier, it was very difficult to persuade the consumers of the Moroccan leisure scene to agree to an extensive interview. Although the brief conversations during the parties were very helpful and rich in data, they did not provide me with detailed information on subtle differences or typifications of the crowds.

8.6 Summary

The Moroccan leisure scene is relatively new. People started to organize parties to create a space for young Moroccans to come together and dance to their favourite music. Not many young Moroccan women participate in mainstream nightlife. Most of them

are not allowed to do so by their parents, or they share the opinion that clubbing late at night does not fit in with their lifestyle. The Moroccan organizations operating in this field had to deploy diverse strategies to make their activities attractive to their target audience. These strategies did not arise out of competition between the organizations, but were drawn up to reassure and gain the trust of the Moroccan audience which, in general, is not familiar with commercially organized events. Moreover, many of the respondents claimed to have had negative experiences with badly organized Moroccan parties in the past. Accordingly, all of the organizations carefully arrange their events and also try to avoid aggressive outbursts or problems in the crowd. Clean toilets, enough personnel to avoid long queues, only selling alcohol free beverages and a strict door policy were named as strategies with which to satisfy and attract an audience. Likewise, in their musical programming and the booking of artists, the organizers were careful to make appropriate choices. In order to appeal to the Moroccan community in general, they made sure that the music and artists on offer were from all of the regions of Morocco.

Many of the consumers of Moroccan parties were not satisfied by what was available in mainstream nightlife. Many missed the programming of Moroccan music and/or felt that these regular parties did not correspond to their lifestyle. Consequently, cultural factors, as well as restrictions, played an important role in the decision to choose the Moroccan leisure scene. In fact, for most of the Moroccan women, these specially organized parties were the only opportunity for them to go clubbing. Many of the men, on the other hand, were not constrained in their nightlife choices by their parents, but did not feel welcome in the mainstream nightlife circuit. Many said that they had had negative experiences in trying to get into a club. None of them viewed Moroccan parties as a good alternative for a night out, but enjoyed the ability to dance to Moroccan music with their friends.

PART III
REFLECTIONS

Chapter 9 Analyses and conclusions

There seems to be a theoretical and empirical divide within youth and popular cultural studies, whereby the consumption and production of culture are examined from more or less opposite perspectives. Within the body of work on clubbing and nightlife choices, the researchers who focus on the producers emphasize social structures as important mechanisms of division and variation, while those who study the decisions about nightlife and the experiences of consumers, predominantly focus on their agency and free choice. I have argued that in order to get a complete understanding of the variations in the nightlife choices that are made, and before any changes are studied, it is necessary to include the strategies of the producers, as well as the choices, preferences and behaviour of the consumers of nightlife, because the social structures and agency of each of them interact and influence the other.

In this analytical chapter, the strategies and choices of both the producers and the consumers are analyzed. I will start by examining the strategies of the former in order to demonstrate and explain the changes that have taken place in Dutch nightlife. Then, in the second section of this chapter, the choices and preferences of the consumers will be considered. By assessing the approaches of the producers, and the decisions and preferences of the consumers, I will be able to reach conclusions and answer the research questions which were formulated in the first part of this book: how do ethnic minority young people choose an ethno-party? And how do the choices of a changing urban population affect the supply side of the nightlife market? This will be done in the third and final section.

9.1 Changes in the producers of nightlife

Ever since the turn of the century, nightlife in the Netherlands has undergone some interesting changes, both expanding and diversifying. Contemporary consumers now have more choices in terms of which bar, dance-hall, movie theatre or club they want to visit. Likewise, the number of festivals, cultural activities and clubs has increased enormously. This expansion has led to growing

competition both between and within the diverse nightlife sectors. Many young people these days do not go clubbing every week, but alternate this with other events and make use of the various activities that contemporary urban nightlife has to offer. A night out is now a completely different experience to 20 years ago, with many different opportunities being available. The changes which have taken place can best be analyzed by painting a picture of how clubbing was organized and experienced before the turn of the century.

9.1.1 Clubbing in the early 1990s

Before the turn of the century, the most extensive and vibrant nightlife in the Netherlands was to be found in the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, and club owners in other (smaller) locales set their venues up by using these popular clubs as examples. There was genuine competition between the two cities to become the nightlife capital of the Netherlands. At that time, Amsterdam was part of the *Cool Capital Triangle*, along with Barcelona and Vienna. This title was used by the local governments of these three cities to promote themselves in the United States as the coolest places in Europe. *Paradiso*, *club Roxy* and *De Melkweg* in particular had a leading and trend-setting role in Amsterdam, while in Rotterdam, the huge and hip club, *Night-town*, also attracted many visitors. Outside these two cities, the number of available clubs was limited, meaning that a trip to either Amsterdam or Rotterdam to go clubbing was very popular.

In the early 1990s, in almost every club and dance bar, the DJs played the same type of music, namely house. This electronic dance sound split into a number of different streams at that time, such as *garage*, *hardcore house* and *mellow house*. From that point onwards, clubs started to use the term dance music for this type of sound, and this is now a phrase which can be heard in almost every club in the country.

In that period, the formal dress code with which to gain access to clubs was more or less the same in every venue. Young people with trainers, soccer shirts, or baseball caps were not allowed in¹⁴. During the 1990s, however, and based upon the image of the

¹⁴ Many clubs kept to this dress code, while the wearing of trainers and baseball caps became more and more popular among the young people who visited the

club, the style of dress of the dance crowds began to diverge between the different venues. Young people who danced in *de Melkweg* or *Paradiso*, for example, wore so-called ‘alternative’¹⁵ clothing, while the dance crowds in the *Roxy* sparkled in trendy and extravagant outfits. Bouncers granted access to the people standing in line whose clothes and style corresponded with the profile and image of the club.

Young people who went out regularly had a favourite club. This preference was not based solely on music, but also on the image of the venue and the likely crowd. In those days, the clubbing crowd at *Club Escape*, for instance, was totally different to that at *Paradiso* in Amsterdam. Clubs were more than a location where young people came together to dance, and many youngsters identified strongly with one specific venue. In the early 1990s, the clubs which young people visited often revealed a great deal about their cultural style and social status.

9.1.2 The changing nature of clubs

Since the mid 1990s, nightlife in the Netherlands has expanded enormously. More clubs have opened their doors, not only in the cities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, but also in (smaller) towns in other parts of the country. Furthermore, the information about clubs and their programming has also changed, with club owners since the mid nineties starting to promote their events on the internet. The availability of the internet has made it relatively easy for clubbers to compare programs and seek out the party which best suits their expectations and demands in terms of the music that is played, the DJs and the style of event. Along with the growing number of clubs, the available information on the internet also increased the competition between venues. Moreover, the increasing diversity of tastes in music among the urban population shaped changes in what clubs programmed. Large sections of the populace no longer appreciated the dominance of dance or house music, particularly because other types of sounds, such as hip-hop, RnB and alternative

(hardcore) house parties that were predominantly organized in large halls and venues.

¹⁵ A style of dress inspired by artists playing grunge music, such as Nirvana and Pearl Jam

rock, were becoming more popular. Club owners anticipated these new popular music streams by changing the music that they played. Along with the rise of new forms of dance sounds, the growing number of clubs, the increasing popularity of hip-hop and RnB, and the damaged image of clubbing all led to changes in the clubbing experience. The image of a vibrant, exciting and innovative night out, where you can ‘shake off the difficulties of the week’, is very important. This image became blurred due to the growing media attention on the issue of discrimination against ethnic minority young men at the doors of clubs and the increased regulation of door policies by local governments.

Many clubs started to program different parties on different days of the week. This so-called broad programming widened the diversity of the styles of music played within a venue. Moreover, the door policies changed along with the programming, since every type of party prescribed its own preferred dance crowd, with concomitant dress codes. Instead of attracting one type of consumer, clubs started to appeal to more diverse audiences, with varied musical tastes and styles of dress. Many club owners did not, however, arrange all of these different types of parties themselves, but instead began to hire their venues out to external party organizations or DJ collectives.

New agents

The organizations which came up with new ideas for parties can be divided into two types: group-based and music-based agents. The former create new party concepts to attract a certain dance crowd, using music as a tool to make an event attractive to a particular audience. The multicultural party concept of *Mystic Grooves* is a good example. Likewise, the ethno-party organizations which arrange ethno-parties can also be seen as group based agents. Most of these companies, or DJ collectives, created party concepts either with the idea of bringing (ethnically diverse) young people together on the dance floor, or as a way of catering to a neglected group of (ethnic) youngsters. The club owners opened their premises up to these external party organizations in order to attract a specific group of consumers, and both these companies and the DJ collectives have

the knowledge, networks and connections to make their events a success.

Music-based agents created new party concepts around the performances of DJs and their specific musical style. The themes of *Nope is Dope* and *Girls love DJs* are just two examples of events which are created around DJ performances and the music played. The DJ line-up is essential to this model, and these parties are branded into popular concepts, with their own websites where matching merchandise such as T-shirts, caps and badges are sold. On these websites you can find photos of the dance crowds at previous events. These images leave those looking at them in no doubt about what the prescribed dress code and style is. Many popular clubs have now opened their doors to these successful party concepts and, as a result, these events are now organized in different venues and cities.

9.1.3 The ethno-scene as a specific new form of clubbing

The broad programming and growing tendency of clubs to hire their venues out to external companies have created new opportunities for ethnic party organizations. Instead of arranging their events in a community centre or a rented hall outside the urban nightlife scene, as they used to, these companies were given the opportunity to organize their events in inner-city nightlife. In all of the three ethno-party scenes described in this book, organizations first began to arrange events on a smaller scale outside the urban nightlife arena. For instance, the Turkish company *Sahmeran* and the Asian business *Santai* began life as student organizations. These companies were inspired and driven to expand their horizons when their first (ethnic) student party turned out to be a huge success. After a few experiences in local community centres or rented-halls, these organizations contacted clubs in the inner-city nightlife scene with a view to arranging their parties there. In the mid 1990s, the Asian party organizations were the first ethnic bodies to arrange ethno-parties in popular clubs. Most club owners did not object to an Asian party being put on in their venue, as they did not expect any trouble or aggressive outbursts with an Asian dance crowd. These pioneers paved the way for other Asian party organizations and, before the turn of the century, several other similar Asian companies

were also arranging events in popular clubs on a regular basis. Accordingly, the first ethno-party scene was created.

In contrast to the Asian party organizations, their Turkish counterparts had more problems gaining a foothold in popular clubs. Many club owners viewed the notion of a Turkish party as a hazardous enterprise, fearing the aggressive image of young Turkish clubbers. However, after five years of experience in organizing professional and successful parties in rented halls, in 2001 the Turkish company *Sahmeran* was granted permission to arrange a Turkish party in a club in Rotterdam. These events turned out to be both a huge success, as well as profitable for both the organization and the club owners. This company thus functioned as a cultural broker by demonstrating the success and popularity of such events to other clubs, and by doing so it paved the way for other Turkish organizations to be established. The success of this first Turkish party company inspired many other ethnic entrepreneurs to arrange Turkish parties in popular venues. Indeed, within two years, the three other Turkish organizations which took part in this study had been formed, and went on to arrange events in popular clubs in both Rotterdam and Amsterdam.

It is important to understand that the pioneers of the Asian party and the Turkish clubbing scenes paved the way for other ethnic organizations. Not only did they inspire other companies, but they also created room and opened nightlife up to a wider audience by setting a positive example. Along with the club owners, these organizations can be regarded as cultural brokers, or agents of change, who successfully introduced the incorporation of ethno-parties into the programming of inner-city nightlife.

In the Moroccan leisure scene, the assimilation of parties into urban nightlife worked slightly differently. First of all, there is only one organization which arranges parties in popular clubs. This company, *Marmoucha*, which worked closely with *Paradiso* in Amsterdam right from the start, is funded by the local government. Its initial goal was to make Moroccan music accessible and known to a wider audience. The organization focused primarily on cultural acceptance and recognition, and only at a later stage began to arrange parties for a young audience. Along with a cultural goal, the social aim of integrating young Moroccan people into clubs came

into being. The two other Moroccan organizations, however, primarily focus on arranging cultural activities for their attendees.

The creation of the ethno-party scene

The programming and marketing of the ethno-party organizations are crucial for the creation of a separate ethno-party scene in the clubbing arena. Most of the companies in this research promote their events as ethnic parties. Although they claim to be hospitable and accessible to members of other ethnic groups, their marketing and promotion is aimed at those belonging to their specific target audience. In the Asian and Turkish scenes for example, the flyers are only distributed in places where Asians or Turkish young people come together. Furthermore, by describing their event as Turkish, Moroccan or Asian, the organizations are appealing to a certain ethnic audience. As a consequence, these parties would not attract young people with other ethnic backgrounds who have no connection to those who go to ethno-parties. Furthermore, the music played at most of the events in the Turkish and Moroccan party scenes precludes the attendance of many young people from other ethnic groups.

Within an ethno-party scene, organizations compete with each other to remain popular and attract visitors. Because the parties only appeal to a certain ethnic category, the number of potential attendees is, therefore, limited. In the Asian party scene, the decreasing popularity of the events available, in combination with enormous competition between the organizations, has led to a reduction in the number of companies operating in this sector. In the Turkish clubbing scene, for instance, during the fieldwork period there was some sort of balance between the four organizations being studied and the people they appealed to. However, two years later, two of these companies have become more popular at the expense of the others; one of the organizations has dropped out of the scene altogether, while the other is making a new start under a new name and with a more 'Mediterranean' marketing concept. Accordingly, instead of defining its parties as Turkish, this company now uses the term Mediterranean on its flyers. It is only in the Moroccan circuit that the organizations are not yet in competition with each other. Instead, they complement each other and together try to create a

space where young Moroccan people can dance and listen to their favourite music.

Breaking out of the ethno-party scene

It is interesting that some of the ethnic party planners are trying to break out of their particular ethno-party scene. Indeed, two of the Turkish organizations and one of the Asian companies examined herein were increasingly promoting their events outside the ethno-party circuit. One important change in their concepts was the reduction of ethnic specificity. So, as I mentioned earlier, one of the Turkish companies is now promoting its parties as Mediterranean, while the other advertizes its events as having a 'slight Turkish flavour'. Moreover, when it comes to the programming of music, these organizations are taking aim at a wider audience, outside the ethno-scene, by playing a variety of both ethnic and popular music. Indeed, the Asian company which is trying to break out of its particular ethnic party scene has completely erased all references to it; nowadays, it uses the English translation of *Santai*, which means 'relax', to attract the attention of the visitors to its website.

The developments in clubbing demonstrate how new opportunities have opened up for ethno-party organizations. Moreover, in a short period of time, these companies have become more professional in order to meet the demands of the clubs. They now hire professional DJs, are registered as professional organizations at the Chamber of Commerce, and work with professionally trained bouncers. As a result, they have become a part of the program of events in popular clubs. Due to the popularity and success of these ethno-parties, the number of companies has grown, and together they have carved out a new niche in the clubbing environment. As development never stops, for some organizations this ethno-party scene has already become too small. Indeed, some ethnic party planners are trying to break out of this sector altogether by making changes to their advertizing and musical programming.

9.1.4 Ethno-scenes and changing rules in clubbing

Although many parties in contemporary popular clubs are arranged by external party organizations or DJ collectives, the venues retain

responsibility for safety and security, whatever the activity. Consequently, club owners carefully control the party concepts and the door policy. These door policies, and the social and cultural rules of the ethno-party circuit, differ in some respects to other dance scenes or parties. Because ethno-parties have become part of the broad programming of popular venues, the rules in clubbing have also changed. Club owners and ethno-party organizations are now involved in processes of negotiations to find a balance between the preservation of the profile and image of a club and the implementation of the special requirements and rules of the ethno-party.

Gate keeping

A consequence of the incorporation of ethno-parties into popular clubs was that the companies organizing them had to specify their entrance policies. Since the resident bouncers are in charge of who gets into the venues, they have had to be instructed carefully about the target audiences. Most party organizations hire an extra (ethnic) bouncer to help the resident door-men to make the right decisions. What, however, came to the fore during the fieldwork is that two types of rules of entry can be distinguished. The first are set up per ethno-scene and are created to maintain the specific characteristics thereof. These are formal rules which are written on flyers and websites. Regulations of the second type are drawn up to create a specific sphere *within* each ethno-scene, with the aim of attracting a particular group of visitors within the particular ethnic group.

The formal rules of entry differ in every ethno-scene. In the Turkish clubbing circuit for example, all of the party organizations have put in place the so-called *Damsiz girilmez* rule in order to keep male and female numbers at their events balanced. Women can get into the parties in groups, but men have to be accompanied by a female to gain access. At most of the events in the Asian party scene, the selection taking place at the door is on the basis of the ethnic background of those in the queue. As most of the Asian party organizations want to create a social space for Asian young people to come together, the doormen are instructed to grant access to this group, as well as to other ethnic youngsters with Asian friends. Those who do not fit this profile are told that the party they are

about to enter is for Asians. The bouncers will not refuse to let these people in, but will try to discourage them by making them aware that they do not fit the profile of the party. In the Moroccan leisure scene, the door policy differs per event. Because no alcohol is served, and the parties take place during the day and evening, people of diverse ages are allowed in. Having a Moroccan background is not used as a selection criterion, as most of the organizations have the goal of making Moroccan music known to a wider population. The only rule of entry that all of the companies communicate explicitly is that people with an aggressive attitude, or those who are obviously intoxicated, whether due to alcohol or drugs, are not going to get in.

As well as these rules, which are set up per scene, some of the individual party organizations implement informal policies to create specificity within the ethno-scene and attract a certain type of dance crowd. In the Turkish clubbing circuit for example, all four organizations have different criteria related to style of dress. One prefers neat and tidy outfits, while another prescribes trendy clothing. Similar differences in dress codes can also be found at other club nights outside the ethno-party circuit. In the Asian and the Moroccan scenes, however, there are no differences in dress code between the individual organizations. Indeed, the only difference within the Asian scene is that some companies do not check the ID of their visitors, meaning that they attract a younger audience than the organizations which are strict about ensuring that potential clubbers are at least 18.

The differentiations in the door policies within the Turkish and Asian scenes highlight the awareness of competition and the need for companies to distinguish themselves from their rivals. By having different rules, they create a specific space for a specific crowd and, thereby, safeguard their position within the ethno-scene. The rules of entry that are drawn up to attract a specific section of the particular ethnic group highlight the uniqueness and exclusivity of a party. The same mechanisms of creating (an image of) exclusivity are also visible at other events outside the ethno-party scene.

9.1.5 Branding and selection

In the previous sections, I mentioned on several occasions how ethno-parties differ from those in other scenes, but how, at the same time, many of the ethnic organizations that are involved in arranging them have to deal with the same types of processes of distinction and innovation to beat the competition and maintain an image of putting on popular and exclusive events. Both within and without the ethno-party scene, party organizations and club owners are constantly making changes in the branding of their concept or club in order to keep up with the latest trends. However, there are some differences in how club owners and companies brand their venues or concepts these days.

Branding and selection within the ethno-party scene

In a way, all ethno-party organizations tell their visitors that their parties offer something ‘different’, and in some cases have ‘special’ social and/or cultural rules compared to events outside the particular ethno-scene. This specific form of branding is aimed at attracting a certain ethnic dance crowd and securing a company’s position in the constantly changing, competitive field of clubbing.

In the Moroccan leisure scene, the branding thereof as ‘special’ plays an important role in appealing to potential visitors. In Moroccan circles, the image of Dutch nightlife and clubbing is often very negative. So, in order to make a Moroccan party attractive, the organizations had to come up with a concept which offered Moroccan people a place to come together to dance and listen to Moroccan music without the negative connotations and image of mainstream parties. Moroccan party companies have made important changes in the organization of their events to match the demands of their clients. They have changed their opening and closing hours, for example, and do not sell alcohol. Likewise, special women’s only parties are put on to create a space for those who do not feel comfortable or are not allowed to dance in the presence of men. These ‘special’ organizational adjustments correspond to the branded ideology which states that Moroccan parties offer a safe place for Moroccans to come together and dance and listen to their favourite music.

In the Turkish and Asian ethno-scenes, the emphasis is not so

much on being special in comparison to other dance nights, but on differentiation. In the Turkish clubbing scene in particular, the organizers strongly convey the message that they offer something 'different'. This 'difference', which is worked out through the music that is programmed and the DJ line ups, is put forward as being innovative and trendy, and something which cannot be found at events outside the Turkish clubbing arena. Most of the Turkish organizations have branded their parties as exotic or Mediterranean to give them a more global image. By doing this, most of these companies are trying to move away from the backwards and old fashion image that the Turkish community has in the Netherlands.

In the Asian party circuit, differentiation in relation to other dance scenes concerns the ethnic background of the dance crowd. All of the Asian party organizations explicitly carry the message that they want to create a social space for young Asian people to come together. An Asian party is, therefore, branded as an event for young people with Asian ancestry. The company which wants to break out of this ethnic scene, accordingly, no longer promotes its parties as Asian, instead emphasizing the English translation of its original Indonesian name *Santai*, namely 'relax'.

Branding and selection of clubs

Before the introduction of broad programming, most clubs had a certain profile which attracted a specific dance crowd. In particular, the popular clubs in the larger cities in the Netherlands were so-called branded institutions, with a specific image. Now that many clubs offer a range of different types of parties, with their own unique and branded concepts, the image of the club as an institution has changed, and the original profile of many venues has become blurred by the diversification of their programming. After all, it is not only the programming that has become more varied, but the door policies have similarly been affected. Different styles of parties have their own sets of entry requirements regarding dress code and the preferred social and ethnic make-up of the crowd. This means that different types of young people, with different musical tastes, ethnic backgrounds and styles of dress, now visit the same clubs, but on different days and at different times.

A consequence is that many clubbers no longer identify with

one venue. Instead, a great number of them relate to a style of music, party concept, or DJ, and visit different clubs and cities in order to dance at their favourite events to music played by their favourite artists. Clubs are losing their image of being branded institutions which attracted a certain type of crowd. Instead, many venues now actively convey the message that they have become a place for different types of consumers and now offer a range of cool and trendy parties on different days of the week.

Critiques of broad programming

Some people criticize the growing tendency of club owners to rent their venues out to external organizations, highlighting the increasing commercialization of nightlife, with the same successful party concepts being arranged by these companies in several clubs and cities. Club owners, on the other hand, defend their new way of programming by arguing that it has opened nightlife up to more diverse audiences. Furthermore, many club owners claim that they are preserving the profile of their venue by critically assessing the organizations they hire their premises out to and by putting on their own club nights.

Another point of criticism related to broad programming concerns the increase in the number of different styles of parties. As young people now have more parties to choose from, the audience per event has become more homogeneous. According to some critics, nightlife in the Netherlands is heading towards *party apartheid*, where events are arranged for every age and social and ethnic group of young people separately. These critics clearly prefer parties where different types of young people come together, and in doing so learn about other cultures.

9.1.6 Conclusions

One of the aims of this chapter was to analyze how the choices made by the changing urban population affect the supply side of the nightlife market. In order to do this, in this first section I have focused on the changes that have been taking place in Dutch nightlife, and how the producers and, more specifically, the ethnic party organizations have pushed forward new developments in clubbing. What has become clear is that diversity is structurally anchored in clubbing these days.

This is evident in the broad programming put on by clubs and the number of different branded styles of parties that are organized. In order to deal with increased competition, exclusiveness and innovation have become key terms in the advertisement of the individual party concepts. The need for differentiation to secure a position in a highly competitive field can also be seen in the ethno-party circuits. The ethno-party organizations have created special and separate arenas by setting themselves apart from other dance scenes, and by emphasizing that their parties in the particular ethno-scene are ‘special’ or ‘different’. At the same time, these ethno-party organizations may each draw distinctions *within* a specific ethno-scene in order to secure their own position.

An important consequence of the new ways in which clubbing is organized in the Netherlands is that ‘clubbing’ as a night time activity now takes many different forms. Visitors to different clubbing scenes do not share the same ‘clubbing culture’. Indeed, all of these separate scenes have different hierarchies of coolness, different social and cultural rules, different door policies and different musical programming. As a result, clubbing has become fragmented, with a variety of meanings, experiences and habits in all of the varying scenes. The term ‘party apartheid’ has been used to criticize this diversification and refers to the diminishing tolerance among clubbers for the presence of ‘others’ at a party. It is argued that young, contemporary party people are increasingly looking for places and clubs where the clubbing crowd is homogeneous in respect of age, sexuality, style and ethnicity, and that club owners are encouraging this tendency by organizing parties for every age and social and ethnic group of youngsters. Clubbing as a night time activity has become fragmented, and clubs have become places for all sorts of clubbing events and clubbers, but at different times and on different days of the week.

9.2 Choosing your party: consumer analysis

Now that we know more about the changes that have taken place in Dutch nightlife, it is time to learn more about how ethnic minority young people choose to participate in the ethno-party scene, and how the structural and personal factors interact in this kind of ‘structured nightlife choice’.

In this study, these personal factors have been divided into two dimensions, the social and the cultural. In addition, I identified a third key factor which determines choices negatively. Accordingly, herein, the regulatory role of parents, door policies and economic resources have all been identified as restrictions which limit the choices available to consumers. During the fieldwork in the three ethno-party scenes, economic resources did not seem to play much of a role in the nightlife choices of the majority of the respondents, and only the women were restricted in where they could go by their parents, while the men faced limitations as a result of the door policies of clubs. Consequently, the restrictions can be reduced to gender specific boundaries in terms of the accessibility of clubs and parties. The social dimension refers to the factors which are related to the processes of identification and differentiation. The social characteristics of groups of friends, the social rules of a scene, and feelings of belonging have all been identified as the most important factors influencing these processes. The factors in the cultural dimension refer to how these social mechanisms are displayed culturally. This concerns the cultural tastes and customs of a scene and its audiences, such as musical programming, ways of dancing and styles of dress. The role of each of these dimensions proved to be quite different in the three scenes.

In this second paragraph, I will first draw attention to what makes the ethno-party scene attractive to its consumers, and I will also highlight how the features of age and gender influenced the choices that they made in all of the three scenes. I will then compare the choices and preferences of the crowds at the events in the three ethno-scenes to each other, since in the nightlife choices they made, the respondents attached different weight to the three dimensions referred to above. Finally, in the third section, I will analyze how differences between the three dimensions may also lead to diversity in the ethno-parties *within* a scene.

9.2.1 The attraction of ethno-party scenes

In all three scenes, the respondents pointed to familiarity with a dance crowd and a party, or even party organizations, as important reasons for participating in the particular ethno-party scene. This familiarity comprises feelings of belonging to a certain (ethnic)

group or dance crowd, and knowledge and acceptance of the social rules related to interaction and flirting.

The fierce media attention on the negative behaviour of ethnic minority young people created a growing sense of ‘otherness’ and heightened feelings of belonging to their own ethnic group. Most of the time, the respondents spoke in general terms about ‘we’, when referring to co-ethnics in the ethno-party scene, and ‘them’, when talking about their native Dutch peers in other dance scenes. For most Asians, it was essentially a *feeling* of being different, of having a different ancestry and background, which they translated into jokes and specific choices of words. For the Moroccan and Turkish respondents, the sharing of a specific lifestyle set them apart from the native Dutch population. Not having to explain why they drink (or, do not drink) alcohol, or why they were not allowed to attend a party late at night was seen as an important asset in their relationships with co-ethnics.

Informal rules of clubbing and self regulation

Parties and clubs have their own sets of informal social and cultural rules. The social rules of a scene relate to the norms and moral codes concerning what is appropriate behaviour, while the cultural rules are taste related and prescribe what the right styles of music, dancing and dress in a specific scene, or at a specific party, are. These final types of rules create what Thornton (1995) called ‘hierarchies of hipness’. Knowledge of both these social and cultural mores is essential if clubbers are to become part of a specific crowd and scene, as commented upon earlier (MacRae 2004). This knowledge and acceptance of the implicit rules of a scene play a role in identifying with it *and* in the differentiation of it from others.

In all three ethno-party scenes, the implicit social rules regarding flirting and kissing in public differed to other dance arenas. In the Moroccan and Turkish scenes, the respondents explicitly told me that flirting and kissing in public at a party is not appropriate. In fact, they all agreed that social interaction at an event with unfamiliar members of the opposite sex, or without a proper introduction by a mutual friend, will damage your reputation. The young men and women who met interesting members of the opposite sex have to resort to other ways of making contact, such as

secretly and discretely making eye contact and trying to find out a name, age and address. This information may then be used later to connect via one of the many internet communication sites. The same way of dealing with members of the opposite sex and flirting was also noticeable in the Asian scene, although the respondents did not want to talk about it. These social rules towards flirting and interaction create a different atmosphere from the one at other mainstream dance parties, where, in the Netherlands, men and women are relatively free to speak to whoever they want. Indeed, flirting and even kissing at a party is not a rarity and is certainly not seen as shameful behaviour.

The cultural rules relating to dancing and style of dress in the Asian party scene match those of other RnB dance arenas. The clothing style of the visitors to the Moroccan and Turkish circuits was, however, different. In the Moroccan scene in particular, many of the women wore long and concealing clothing. Moreover, the music that is played dictates a certain way of dancing. As the music in these two scenes differed to that programmed elsewhere, this also had an effect on how people danced. Indeed, the style of dress and the dancing of the crowds in both the Turkish and Moroccan scenes give a party a totally different feel, and make it difficult for those outside these two ethnic groups to learn about them and, therefore, become a part of what is going on at these events.

Age, gender and ethnic background

It was interesting that in all three groups, the respondents who endorsed the importance of familiarity were the ones who mainly had co-ethnic friends and only participated in the ethno-party scene. Those who had ethnically diverse friends, however, also attended parties outside the ethno-party circuit, and they did not regard issues of familiarity and safety as important. In fact, most of these men and women did not appreciate this familiarity, viewing those who attended the ethno-scene as petty, bourgeois and old-fashioned; they only participated in it to be with their friends or to dance to ethnic music. Overall, it was mainly the older and more experienced women in the Asian and Turkish scenes, and the men in all three, who were critical of the social and cultural rules. On the other hand, the Moroccan women in general, and the young women in the Asian

and Turkish scenes, had fewer 'other' friends with whom they went out. During the interviews, these women also said that they attended fewer parties outside the ethno-party scene than the men, and they appreciated the social and cultural rules of the events they attended. Such differences within groups corresponded closely to the perceived restrictions and the number of parties the respondents had visited in the ethno-party scene.

Limitations in choice

In general, the women also experienced different restrictions to the men. For example, none of the women said that they had, or expected to have, difficulties with the door policies of mainstream clubs. They had all experienced, or thought, that the bouncers working at these venues were very friendly and hospitable. Instead, many of these women were restricted in their choice of nightlife by their parents. Almost all of those in the Moroccan and many of those in the Turkish scenes were only allowed to attend events in the ethno-party circuit. In the Asian scene, it was only the very young women who did not have permission to go to mainstream club nights. However, many of the female respondents revealed that they did not feel comfortable at regular dance parties because they had been the victims of demeaning remarks made by young native Dutch men. These young women only participated in the Asian party scene.

Alternatively, the men in all three groups were not restricted in their choice of nightlife by their parents. Instead, many of them did not feel welcome or accepted in the mainstream clubbing circuit. The men who took part in the Asian scene said that they felt that they were being looked at when they went clubbing at a conventional RnB party with a large group of Asian friends. This created feelings of insecurity. Some of the men who participated in the Moroccan and Turkish scenes also said that they do not feel comfortable or welcome at mainstream club nights, but most of them also complained about being refused entry to many such clubs. The Moroccan men in particular frequently mentioned discriminatory practices at the door of regular events as a reason for participating in the ethno-party scene.

In general, the characteristics of the individual clubbers played an

important role in the choices they made. Age and ethnic background influenced the selections of both the men and the women, but in different ways. Furthermore, the extent of this influence, and whether it created limitations in the nightlife choices made, was different for the three ethnic groups.

9.2.2 Comparing visitors to the three ethno-scenes

Asian party scene

The majority of the respondents in the Asian party scene only identified social factors as important. Partying with friends and co-ethnics was given as a reason to go to an Asian party. They used these events as a social space where they could meet their friends from all over the country. Because most of them partied in large groups, they preferred an Asian party over a regular one because they feel comfortable and less like they are being looked at. Although not many talked about this openly, many young Asians also used Asian parties to meet new people. The social rules referred to above created feelings of safety for many (female) visitors, because of which they preferred these parties. Most of those who go to Asian parties do not, however, continue to do so for long; even after a year or two, the majority of the women are no longer involved. Some move on to other scenes and others stop clubbing completely. Maturing in the scene means growing out of it for many, since it does not provide any special or additional elements. The presence of friends and acquaintances, and the moral codes concerning interaction and flirting, create feelings of belonging in relatively new clubbers, but at the same time evoke feelings of restriction and childishness in those who are more experienced. The women noticed these dynamics more often than the men.

Turkish clubbing scene

In the Turkish clubbing scene, the cultural elements of a party were identified as being very important by most of the respondents, and the programming of Turkish music played an essential role in their choices. According to the majority, the music, way of dancing and style of clothing created a complete experience and an ecstatic sensation.

Most of the subjects identified strongly with the cultural rules of this clubbing scene. In fact, they dissociated themselves from the cultural norms of the style of dress and dancing of their native Dutch peers. As well as the cultural dimensions of a Turkish party, which were the main attraction for many, social factors and restrictions also played a role in the decisions to participate therein.

The social aspects of being together and partying with co-ethnics was named as a factor as well. There was, however, also some ambivalence among the Turkish respondents about their acceptance of and identification with the social rules of this scene. Just as in the Asian party circuit, the more experienced (female) clubbers complained more about the limiting effect of the social norms, while these led to feelings of safety for the new and younger (female) clubbers. In general, the men in this scene said that they were not limited by the social rules, and shared the opinion that they had a greater impact on the women. Because the Turkish clubbing scene also has specific cultural features, many respondents remained in it. Moreover, for some of them, the restrictions they faced had a similar effect.

As I mentioned in the previous paragraph, some of the women were only allowed to attend Turkish parties, while others claimed that they had attended different nightlife events. None of the men were restricted in their nightlife choices by their parents, but some preferred the ethno-party scene because they did not feel welcome at mainstream club nights. Some complained about the discriminatory practices of the doormen, while others felt unwelcome and unsafe. However, the cultural dimensions of the Turkish clubbing scene were, for the majority, the most important reason for taking part in it.

Moroccan leisure scene

In the Moroccan leisure scene, similar dynamics to the Turkish party circuit were visible in the motivations behind participation therein. Firstly, the cultural features of Moroccan parties were identified as being their most important asset. In particular, the opportunity to dance to Moroccan music was seen as being especially vital. For some of the women, the dress code, which included the option of wearing a headscarf, was another reason to participate in this scene.

The cultural aspects, with the early opening and closing times, the prohibition of alcohol and the ‘women’s only’ parties were another important reason to attend a Moroccan party, especially for the women. None of the women I spoke to participated in other dance scenes. Most of them were not allowed by their parents to go out late at night and visit clubs. Others explained that the organization of mainstream nightlife, with its late opening hours and the serving of alcohol, did not match their Islamic lifestyle. Just as in the Turkish clubbing scene, the men in this one did not experience any limitations imposed by their parents in terms of their choice of nightlife, but many of them had difficulties when it came to getting into mainstream parties. Perceived discriminatory practices at the door of clubs, and a general feeling of not being welcome, prevented many of the Moroccan men from joining in with the regular dance scenes. Only a small minority of them said that they did not have any negative feelings towards conventional parties. These men attended events in both the Moroccan and the mainstream nightlife sectors.

The social aspect of being together and partying with co-ethnics was also named as a factor in their choice of nightlife by both men and women. The explicit social rules regarding social interaction and flirting were unlike those accepted by all of the respondents in the other two scenes. Although not all of them agreed with these rules, they all accepted them as being part of the norm and the moral codes relating to what is appropriate behaviour. So, for many respondents, all of these factors played a part in their choice of the Moroccan leisure scene, but the cultural elements and the restrictions were identified as being the most important.

9.2.3 Diversity within the scene

On several occasions I have previously addressed the intentions and techniques of the ethno-party organizations when it comes to distinguishing themselves from each other. These companies promote the idea that they offer something unique, or even exclusive, to their crowds, which is necessary to survive in a highly competitive field. The visitors to an ethno-party have particular demands and preferences regarding the events they attend, and the organizations make changes to their programming and door policies

to cater to and reflect these requirements. Indeed, in all of the three scenes, different combinations between the two dimensions and the restrictions experienced led to changes in the parties taking place within them.

Within the Turkish clubbing scene, the social aspects of the ethnic group and their cultural preferences regarding music and dress code were combined in such a way that the four Turkish party organizations arranged different types of events. Visitors to these had different ideas about the so-called 'hierarchies of hipness' (Thornton 1995). Many of those who went to the Turkish parties organized by *33 Events*, for example, saw themselves as trendy with an urban mentality, while they described the visitors to *Sahmeran* parties as backwards and traditional. They not only referred to the clothing style of the crowds, but also to their attitudes and behaviour. These prejudices and different ideas about hipness also existed the other way around. Visitors to *Sahmeran* accused the consumers of *33 Events*' parties of being 'too pretentious' and 'too Western', while they often described themselves as 'down to earth party people'. In particular, those who had a clear preference for one party organization had strong opinions about those who attended other Turkish parties. During the interviews, these respondents also constantly pointed to the differences within the Turkish population, with the local differences between the 'Amsterdam Turks' and the 'Rotterdam Turks' being particularly emphasized. These differences were not related to educational attainment, but more to attitude and mentality. The respondents who went to several different Turkish parties, however, did not make such strong remarks about differentiation within the Turkish population and between the attendees at the various Turkish parties. Instead, they referred in more general terms to differences which can be found in any population and the fact that the same faces can be seen at all of the four companies' Turkish events.

In the Moroccan leisure scene, differences are promoted by a strong relationship between the social and restrictive factors experienced by those in attendance. Because many of the young women were not allowed to dance in the presence of men, some organizations arranged so-called women's only parties. Going out late at night was also problematic for many women and, therefore,

almost all of the companies scheduled their parties during the day or in the early evenings. This also made it possible for many women to attend a Moroccan party without asking permission from their parents. These differences in the Moroccan events were principally aimed at making them accessible to women. Some of these changes led to age differences in the make-up of the crowds. The ‘women’s only’ parties for example, were attended by women from all age groups, while those organized by the *Argan Youth Centre* attracted a very young audience, and the *Marmoucha Maghreb* dances were visited by young people aged between 20 and 30 years old.

In the Asian party scene, differences in the social characteristics of the target audience created diversity within it. One of the party organizations had a reputation for only attracting people with a Chinese background, while the other two companies had a more ethnically mixed audience. Another difference mentioned by the respondents was the young age of the crowd at one of the parties compared to the other two. The respondents did not, however, point to any other social or dress code differences, and nor did they mention any differences in musical programming.

9.2.4 Conclusions

The choices made by ethnic minority young people to participate in the ethno-party scene are based on a complex consideration of the personal factors and preferences of the consumers on the one hand, and the opportunities and constraints created by the producers of nightlife on the other. An analysis of a cross-section of the three scenes demonstrated how the gender and age of the individual clubbers had an impact on their nightlife choices. When I compared the motivations of the consumers of the three ethno-party scenes, differences related to social and cultural interests and perceived restrictions came to the fore. What has become clear is that not all of the young people in the three groups have equal opportunities in terms of the events available for them to choose from. In other words, some groups of ethnic young people are more restricted in their nightlife choices than others.

In general, young Asians faced the fewest restrictions. None of these respondents felt unwelcome or discriminated against by the bouncers operating in mainstream nightlife, and nor did the majority

of women have restrictions imposed on them by their parents about where they could go at night. Furthermore, the young Asian respondents did not experience a cultural misfit in terms of music and dance. Consequently, the nightlife choices of the majority of the Asian respondents were not structured, and nor were they limited by the availability of parties in the mainstream nightlife sector.

Of all of the three groups, the Moroccan youngsters reported the most restrictions in their nightlife choices. However, dancing to Moroccan and Arabic music played an important role in their decisions to choose the ethno-party scene. As Moroccan music is not played at mainstream club nights, those who prefer to dance to it automatically have to participate in the Moroccan leisure scene. As this is relatively new and very small, these young people do not have many parties to choose from. Moreover, the nightlife choices made by many of the young men were related to the limited access they had to the regular clubbing scene, while reported restrictions from their parents and the perceived mismatch between their lifestyle and the nature of conventional parties restricted the choices made by the women. Accordingly, the decisions about where to go made by many of the men and women in the Moroccan leisure scene are necessarily limited in scope, and the majority cannot easily attend parties in different scenes.

In the Turkish clubbing scene, the restrictions and options which determine the decisions about whether to choose the mainstream or the ethno-party sectors varied greatly among the respondents. Some of the men and women participated in both scenes. In general, they attended parties in the Turkish clubbing scene when they went out with co-ethnics and wanted to dance to Turkish music, and they went to mainstream parties with an ethnically mixed group of friends. These young people did not report any restrictions imposed upon them by their parents, and nor were they affected by the door policies at mainstream club nights. These young people have many options to choose from; there are large numbers of Turkish and mainstream parties available to them. Another group of Turkish respondents only participated in the Turkish clubbing scene. The women in this second group were either not allowed by their parents to go to parties elsewhere, or they

were not interested in doing so as they preferred to dance to Turkish music. Moreover, some of the men said that they only go to Turkish parties because of a preference for the Turkish sounds that are played there. Others, who only participated in the Turkish clubbing scene, did not have access to mainstream nightlife, either because they were refused entry to these parties, or they *feared* discriminatory practices at the door and did not feel welcome. For these young men, their choice of nightlife is structured by the producers thereof.

9.3 Social structure and agency in nightlife choices

Not only has nightlife become more varied, due to the incorporation of ethno-parties into mainstream clubs, but the ethno-party scenes have also diversified. This diversification is stimulated by both the consumers and the producers of ethno-parties. The former are so varied in terms of their social make-up, cultural tastes and the restrictions imposed upon them that differentiations within each scene have appeared. These are created by the organizers, who have made changes to their programming and companies which correspond to the diverse needs of the consumers. They are able to do this because they maintain a close relationship with their clients. By taking such an approach, each organization caters to the needs and preferences of a specific section of the ethnic group, and distinguishes itself from its rivals, thus maintaining an advantage in an increasingly competitive field. Accordingly, the specific organization of the ethno-parties within each of the three ethno-scenes is the result of a close link between the producers and the consumers of nightlife. They influence each other, and together they shape, form and reform the ethno-party scene.

9.3.1 Producers, clients and brokers

The ethnic party organizations were the first to organize (successful) events in popular clubs, thereby making the establishment of ethno-party scenes in popular venues possible. In the Asian party and Turkish clubbing scenes, the notion of organizing an ethno-party was developed by a couple of students, who responded to the need of many of their colleagues to dance together to their favourite music and be among their own ethnic group.

At first, these parties were arranged in rented halls or community centres. However, after the initial success of these events, the students began to organize themselves more professionally and contacted club owners with a view to hiring their premises for their parties. This was an important step forwards in the creation of a professionally organized ethno-party scene. According to the party companies, almost all of the attendees preferred a popular club to be the venue for 'their' party because it made the party experience more real. This was also an important step forwards in terms of their career for the DJs playing at these events.

Both the ethnic party organizations and the club owners who opened their doors to these initiatives paved the way for other such companies and other club owners. They can, therefore, be viewed as 'agents of change' or cultural brokers, who set in train the creation of the ethno-party scene as an integrated but separate part of the programming of the clubs operating in city nightlife. An important reason why the ethno-party scene is still a separate element of the events programmed by clubs is related to the cultural and social needs and demands of the consumers. In the Asian scene, the attendees strongly expressed the desire to keep their parties for their own group of people. In fact, for the majority of these respondents, the presence of many co-ethnics played an important part in their decision to choose particular parties within the Asian scene. In terms of the dynamics of what the participants defined as Asian, we have seen that the Indo clubbers, who were there from the very beginning, felt like they were being pushed out, because the majority of those in attendance at Asian parties today are young people of Chinese descent. In the Turkish clubbing and the Moroccan leisure scenes, both the social and cultural codes and rules from within the ethnic groups played a role in how their parties were organized. The social rules concerning interaction and flirting, and the cultural rules and customs related to music, dance and dress, set these two scenes apart. This is even more noticeable in the Moroccan scene, where restrictions and cultural codes from within the Moroccan community led to the events being organized in such a way that they are accessible to Moroccan women.

In all three ethno-party scenes, the ethnic specificities in the organization of the parties set them apart from other dance

scenes. In fact, I would argue that the ethno-party scene is a separate 'niche' area of clubbing, with its own crowds, organizations, social and cultural rules and customs. For many of their clients, the party organizations and DJs in this ethnic party niche create a safe clubbing environment. At the same time, this niche becomes too small after a period of time for many participants, particularly those (males and older women in general) who have alternative types of clubbing available to them. Some organizations and DJs also try to break out of this ethnic niche by changing their marketing strategies or music, leading to their clients simply ceasing to attend and eventually moving on to other scenes.

So, with the incorporation of ethno-parties into the programming of popular clubs, most of the ethno-party organizations (especially in the Asian and Turkish scenes) follow the trends and customs in mainstream nightlife. However, the specific social and cultural needs and demands from inside the ethnic groups set this scene apart, and make it a rather closed and limited ethnic 'niche' area of clubbing.

9.3.2 Theoretical implications of the study

The creation of the ethno-party scenes was due, on the one hand, to a need for cultural expression and social interaction with co-ethnics, and on the other, to a lack of cultural representation and perceived discrimination in mainstream nightlife. In my theoretical discussion of the study of nightlife, I pointed to the tendency of many nightlife researchers to focus predominantly on either the producers or the consumers thereof. Those who concentrated on the experiences of the latter produced frameworks, such as 'neo-tribes' (Bennett 2000), 'post-subculturalist' (Muggleton 2000), life-style (Miles 2000), taste culture (Thornton 1995) and club culture (Redhead 1997), to capture and analyze the fluid boundaries and floating memberships of young people (Bennett 1999: 600). In such approaches, which have been grouped together under the name of post-subcultural theory, the structural elements of youth culture are more or less ignored. This can be partly explained by the critical stance taken against the earlier, influential class-based subculture theory expounded upon by the Birmingham School. However, this study clearly demonstrates that a sole focus on the experiences and behaviour of the people

already inside a club produces incomplete results. This is because such an approach ignores the structural elements of night life. At the same time, a sole focus on the strategies that the producers of nightlife use to divide young people into separate scenes does not do justice to the agency and autonomy of the consumers, who are able to make active nightlife choices. From both the producers and the consumers' perspectives, ethnicity, age and gender do influence the nightlife options available and choices that are made.

In the theoretical exploration of this book, I pointed to the lack of academic attention paid to the nightlife activities of ethnic minority young people, since most nightlife studies addressed the so-called 'white middle class urban youth'. I argued that ethnic minority youngsters make different choices and have different opportunities during a night out. This study has clearly demonstrated that ethnicity and gender do play a part in the nightlife choices made and the options available to many of the ethnic minority young people who attend ethno-parties in the Netherlands. I have also demonstrated that many ethnic minority youngsters cannot just move in and out of different types of parties and scenes. Restrictions from within the group, as well as perceived discrimination at the doors of mainstream club nights, limit the opportunities open to those who want to attend parties in other scenes.

9.3.3 Conclusion

Within my framework of structured nightlife choice, both personal factors as well as social structures have been included. An in-depth analysis of the three ethno-party scenes and their consumers has clearly demonstrated the importance of including the motivations and preferences of consumers and the strategies of the producers of nightlife in any examination of the nightlife choices made by ethnic minority young people. This study fills an empirical gap in contemporary nightlife research, in which studies of the 'white middle class urban youth' are over represented. My work clearly reveals that the post-subcultural approach, with its emphasis on free consumption practices and choices, and which is currently dominant in studies of youth culture and lifestyles, does not adequately explain the actual practices of choice and participation by many ethnic minority young people.

Factors which restrict participation, as well as structures which shape opportunities to express a cultural identity, certainly influence the choices made and the options available

Epilogue

After keeping up with the latest in urban nightlife in the Netherlands for four years, and conducting in-depth research into the ethno-party scene, one might expect me to be an expert on the coolest parties and the latest nightlife trends. However, after more than a year of writing behind my desk, a quick internet search revealed that some of the organizations included in my study have left the scene, while some have altered their course, and other new companies have been established. Furthermore, many of the party concepts I used as examples of broad programming have been replaced by other new and cooler versions. Does this reflect the limited preservability of a study of nightlife? Has my detailed ethnographic fieldwork already become outdated? I do not think so. In fact, these changes perfectly support one of the conclusions of this study, namely that contemporary nightlife is always on the move and constantly developing. Moreover, I believe that my findings still represent a valid and accurate analysis of the types of processes that characterize today's urban nightlife.

Nightlife and the process of integration

A related issue upon which opinions and policies are subject to constant change and innovation is the integration of immigrant groups into Dutch society. This study of the nightlife activities of and the choices made by ethnic minority young people was not put in place to make a contribution to the growing amount of literature on integration, or to take part in any 'integration debate'. However, many respondents spontaneously brought up issues related to assimilation, acceptance, and how they saw themselves as second generation youths in relation to 'their integration' into Dutch society. Going out and clubbing is important in the lives of many young people, and negative experiences during a night out have an impact on how these youngsters act and make choices during the day. Consequently, it is interesting to interpret these research findings from an integration perspective, and to analyze whether what I discovered contributes to our knowledge of the integration of new groups into Dutch society, and, if this occurs, how. In this epilogue, I want to explore what nightlife and the choices and

opportunities that ethnic minority youngsters make and have therein reveal about the nature of the integration process in that domain.

In order to be able to interpret the research data from an integration perspective, I will use the heuristic definition thereof: ‘the process of becoming an accepted part of society’, as defined by Penninx (2007: 4). In this heuristic outlook, Penninx distinguishes three dimensions of becoming an accepted part of society, namely the legal/political, the socio-economic and the cultural/religious (2007: 4). All three dimensions contribute to obtaining a complete picture of the process of integration of immigrant groups. Related to the topic of my study, however, I will interpret my research findings within the latter dimension. This element pertains to the domain of the cultural and religious rights of immigrants, and revolves around questions of do they: ‘have (equal) rights to organize and manifest themselves as cultural, ethnic or religious groups? And whether they are recognized, accepted and treated like other comparable groups and enjoy the same or comparable facilities?’ (Penninx 2007: 5). In addition, this definition of integration, and specifically this cultural/religious dimension, makes it possible to also interpret the integration process from the perspective of the immigrant groups. This can be achieved by asking questions about whether *they feel and experience* that they have become an accepted part of society and whether *they feel and experience* that they have equal rights to organize and manifest themselves as cultural, ethnic or religious groups etc. Interpreting the integration process from the perspective of immigrant groups perfectly fits this study, in which the experiences of and choices made by ethnic minority young people are centralized.

Firstly, I will focus on the cultural/religious dimension of the integration process by interpreting what ‘becoming an accepted part of society’ means for ethnic minority young people so far as their nightlife choices and options are concerned. Based upon their remarks during the interviews, the focus will be on how these youngsters view their own nightlife choices and opportunities. Then, I will explore the opportunities available in the structure of contemporary nightlife through which immigrants and the ethno-party scene can ‘become an accepted part of society’. Here, the focus will be on both the strategies of the producers and organizers

of the ethno-party scene in terms of their programming, and whether they treat ethno-parties as an accepted part of nightlife (society). Interpreting the integration process from the perspective of both the consumers and the producers will provide us with an understanding of whether and how ethnic minority young people and the ethno-party scene have become an accepted part of society in this domain.

The integration process of ethnic minority young people in nightlife

Although I cannot make any representative statements about entire immigrant populations, it has become very clear that in every group which took part in this study, the aspiration to participate in or become a part of mainstream nightlife was certainly present. Most of the respondents said that the incorporation of ethno-parties into popular clubs was a genuinely positive development, since it not only improved the quality of the parties, but also made their party experiences 'more real'. For many, dancing to their favourite (ethnic) music in a popular venue gave them a feeling of belonging and acceptance by the club owners. The Turkish and Moroccan respondents in particular often made clear that they preferred dancing in a popular venue. They appreciate the opportunity to show that they have something good to offer and that their parties are vibrant and vivid. Most of these respondents also said that they would enjoy the participation of more native Dutch clubbers in their events. However, almost none of them said that they take their native Dutch friends to an ethno-party, because they assume that they would not enjoy it. As I have mentioned in the previous chapter, the Asian respondents, on the other hand, did not express the desire to either share their parties with their native Dutch peers or demonstrate their unique and vibrant clubbing scene to anyone else. They just liked to dance with their friends and ethnic peers in a popular club.

This aspiration of becoming a part of the regular nightlife scene and opening the ethno-party circuit up to 'others' is difficult for several reasons, the first of which concerns the social and cultural preferences of the consumers of ethno-parties. In the Asian party arena, for example, the social preference of the crowds to party with co-ethnics prevents the organizers from advertizing their events

to those outside the Asian party scene. Then, in the Turkish and Moroccan scenes, the cultural set up of the parties reduces the likelihood that many young people from other ethnic groups would participate; the music played, the dress code and the style of dancing arising from the cultural codes of the ethnic groups are difficult for outsiders to master.

The restrictions or cultural codes drawn up inside the immigrant groups also hinder any exchange of members in the ethno-party scenes. For instance, the opening and closing times and no-alcohol policy in the Moroccan leisure scene are accepted by its Moroccan audience, but prevent it from really becoming a part of mainstream nightlife. The specific social rules in all three scenes make it difficult for members of other ethnic groups to become part of other dance crowds because they are unfamiliar with the social rules and codes.

Changing ideas

The incorporation of ethno-parties into regular clubs stimulates changes in the ideas and experiences concerning nightlife on the part of the participants in it. Instead of partying with their friends in a rented hall or a community centre, they are now able to dance in popular club venues. An effect of this is that these young people become more acquainted with mainstream nightlife. Particularly for the women in the Asian and Turkish scenes, the rise of ethno-parties has provided them with greater and new opportunities and choices. In the 1980s, many Asian women were not allowed by their parents to go to a club. Nowadays, for many of these young women, going out is just as self-evident as it is for their native peers. The same tendency can be seen in the crowds at Turkish parties. These days, more women are given permission to attend events outside the Turkish clubbing scene. Indeed, according to most of the experienced female clubbers, going out and visiting clubs is now increasingly accepted by many Turkish families. This does not mean that all Asian or Turkish women are allowed to participate in mainstream nightlife, but it does point to the development of ideas and thoughts about it. Perhaps the rise of the Moroccan leisure scene will also function as a stepping stone for young Moroccan women in the future, but only a follow-up study will tell us more.

The integration process of ethno-parties in the structure of nightlife

In the previous chapter, it was concluded that diversity today is structurally anchored in clubbing, and that different styles of parties and different dance scenes are created to cater to the needs and desires of different groups of clubbers. The creation and incorporation into mainstream nightlife of the ethno-party scene can be viewed as an example of just one of the many different dance scenes included in the broad programming of clubs. Accordingly, it is arguable that this incorporation of the ethno-party scene into the programs of popular clubs means that nightlife has become more accessible to many ethnic minority young people, and that ethno-parties have in turn become an accepted part of nightlife. However, the specific social and cultural arrangement of these events, which corresponds to the needs and preferences of those inside these ethnic groups, leads to a specific party culture and organization, making participation by other groups difficult. As a result, the ethno-party scene tends to become a separate 'niche' market in clubbing.

Some of the respondents complained about discriminatory practices and feelings of being unwelcome in mainstream nightlife. The young Moroccan and Turkish men in particular expressed negative ideas and revealed negative experiences related to the door policies of regular club nights. For some of these men, the ethno-party scene is the only opportunity to dance in a popular club venue. The ethnic niche market of clubbing is, for these young men, a rather closed arena, and does not encourage their integration into the wider nightlife scene. It is possible that the creation of the separate ethnic niche market of clubbing, which corresponds to the needs formulated by those from within the groups, does not encourage club owners to either organize other parties which will attract ethnic minority young people, or lead to them accepting the presence of more ethnic minority young men in their venues. However, the incorporation of ethno-parties into mainstream clubs also leads to changes in the ideas and experiences of the owners and bouncers of these venues. They become more acquainted with an ethnically diverse crowd, and positive experiences with ethno-parties and their audiences are likely to have a positive effect on the door policies for mainstream club nights. This was also commented upon by some of the Moroccan and Turkish respondents, who pointed to positive

changes in the attitudes and behaviour of those working the doors. According to these men, growing numbers of bouncers are now making more well-considered decisions about who they will allow into their venues.

To conclude, the incorporation of ethno-parties in their current form into regular clubs contributes to the aspirations of the majority of those in attendance to participate in mainstream nightlife and, thus, become an accepted part thereof. However, the specific social and cultural organization of the ethno-parties leads to a specific party culture, which makes participation on the part of members of the ethnic groups easier and more enjoyable. However, this is less straightforward for other ethnic clubbers. At this point in time, restrictions from inside the groups create boundaries and prevent the ethno-party scene from becoming completely integrated into Dutch mainstream nightlife. This is because it limits the inclusion of other groups of people, which is something that the young Moroccan and Turkish clubbers particularly aspire to. When it comes to the constant changes and interactions between the ideas and needs of both the producers and the consumers of nightlife, the process of integration will continue. The incorporation of the ethno-party scene into the programming of popular clubs is an important step in the integration process for many ethnic minority young people in inner-city nightlife. What is more, it is also a solid foundation upon which further positive integration developments can be based.

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Summary (English)

Globalization, commercialization and the growing influence of the media all contribute to the rapid growth of youth styles and cultures and concomitant tastes in music. Moreover, increasing (ethnic) diversity also has a singular effect on nightlife in Dutch cities, with so-called ethno-parties being an example of the regular events organized in popular clubs these days. These parties are arranged by and for a single ethnic group, and in this study I focus on both how growing ethnic diversity influences the organization and programming thereof and how and why young people choose the Turkish, Moroccan or Asian party scenes.

1 Nightlife research

Nightlife research is closely connected to the scientific interest in youth culture, music and the leisure industry. In the 1970s, researchers from the Centre for Contemporary and Cultural Studies (CCCS) in Birmingham linked the proliferation of youth culture to both structural changes to society in industrial Britain and associated class relationships. Sub-cultural practices were analyzed as ‘rituals of resistance’, which were utilized by young, working class youngsters in response to the breakdown of traditions and the increasingly capitalist system.

However, primarily due to its almost sole focus on (white male) working class youngsters, and its strong emphasis on structural factors, the research by the CCCS was criticized for a number of reasons. Critics particularly highlighted the existence of separate youth cultures for young women and ethnic youngsters and the importance of buying power when it came to the emergence of youth lifestyles.

As a consequence, in other youth culture studies this criticism was reflected in a shift from a more structural approach to one which emphasized both the agency and the autonomy of young people. This latter approach, which paid attention to consumption choices, has been characterized as ‘post-subcultural’. Such work centralizes the notion that young people’s consumption choices and attendant participation in youth cultures are influenced by their

personal taste, not their class, gender or education. Young people are thus viewed as free agents who make individual consumption choices. Moreover, post sub-cultural researchers focus on the flexibility of young people by emphasizing their capacity to move in and out of different cultural and musical styles. Indeed, in order to capture the fluidity and individuality of the theoretical approach, researchers have actually abandoned the term sub-culture. Instead, new phrases such as neo-tribe, lifestyle, taste-culture and club culture were introduced. These concepts recognized that cultural features such as music, clothing and dancing were the basis for the proliferation and diversity of separate youth scenes.

Yet the post-sub-cultural approach has also been criticized, with a particular concern being that post-subcultural studies pay little attention to social and economic inequalities between groups of young people. Indeed, much post-subcultural research focuses on the nightlife activities and choices of white, middle-class urban youths, meaning that the cultural activities of other social groups (including ethnic youngsters) continue to be underexposed.

Some authors have attempted to reconcile the two methods in a so-called 'integrative approach', in which it is recognized that some young people are more able than others to participate in nightlife. In this approach, analyses of nightlife choices and cultural expression consider both structural factors, such as economic position and ethnicity, and personal factors, such as taste and preferences.

Ultimately, however, the solution that the integrative approach tries to achieve is not particularly satisfying, since none of these scholars shed any light on how this inter-relationship between structural processes and human agency actually takes place. Indeed, much of this work focuses solely on the nightlife activities and behaviour of young people within a scene or club, and by adopting such an approach these scholars largely ignore matters of accessibility to and the programming of nightlife. While it is very likely that the nightlife activities and choices of young people are influenced by door-policies and musical programming, this programming and these door policies are likewise influenced by the nightlife choices and activities of young people. This means that the dynamic interplay between the strategies of the producers of

nightlife and the choices and activities of the consumers thereof are being ignored. What is more, the ethnic component is also overlooked.

2 Studying nightlife

To analyze and adequately explain the nightlife experiences of and choices made by ethnic young people, an integrative approach which centralizes the interaction between the structural strategies of the producers and the personal preferences and agency of the consumers is required. To achieve this, I have developed an analytical model, which I have labelled as the model of structured choice. This model is sensitive to the flexible use of the processes of agency and structure because of the systematic distinction that is made between societal and personal factors.

Societal factors are the social structures of nightlife and are comprised of the strategies used by producers to attract a specific dance crowd through their programming and the accessibility of their clubs. More general societal factors, such as political climate and the regulating role of local governments, are also taken into account.

The personal factors, meanwhile, have been sub-divided into a cultural and a social dimension and two types of restrictions. The social dimension refers to so-called social mechanisms which involve processes of identification and differentiation. It also covers the specific processes of the composition of groups of friends, the social rules of a scene and the social composition of a dance crowd. The cultural dimension, meanwhile, refers to taste in music, dress codes and styles of dance of a particular crowd. Finally, personal factors also relate to three types of restrictions: the regulating role of parents, experiences of door policies, and economic resources, all of which determine nightlife choices negatively. Since the ethnic background of an individual clubber can play a role in all of the different elements of the personal factors set out above, ethnicity is not listed as a separate category.

Use of this analytical model enables the following research questions to be answered:

- 1 How do ethnic minority young people choose which ethno-party to attend?
 - a. How do the producers of nightlife affect this choice?
 - b. How do the personal preferences of the consumers affect this choice?
- 2 How do the choices of a changing urban population affect the supply side of the nightlife market?

3 The results

Ever since the turn of the century, nightlife in the Netherlands has undergone some interesting, expanding and diversifying changes, and contemporary consumers now have much more choice in terms of which bar, dance-hall, movie theatre or club to attend. This expansion has increased competition both between and within the diverse nightlife sectors.

To remain popular and attract consumers, clubs have had to make changes to their programming and organization. One such change is the introduction of what I have called ‘broad programming’. Clubs no longer focus on one particular style of music, but instead feature different styles on different days of the week, for instance ‘urban’ on Thursdays, ‘soul’ on Fridays and ‘clubhouse’ on Saturdays. Moreover, theme parties are also organized regularly by external party organizations which hire a club for a night for their event. These parties have a trendy and recognizable party concept which is promoted by the use of logos, flyers, party merchandise and specific, popular DJs, all of which is advertised on their own websites.

The broad programming and growing tendency of clubs to hire their venues out to external companies have created new opportunities for ethnic event organizations to arrange their so-called ethno-parties in popular clubs. Essential in this process of incorporation is the fact that party organizations have special party concepts which, due to specific music choices, the DJs hired, and other characteristics, attract a particular group of ethnic consumers. These ethnic-party organizations thus create a separate ethno-party scene.

Since every type of party prescribes its own preferred dance crowd, the door policies of clubs have changed along with the programming. Many venues and party organizations have separate dress codes for each type of event, while differences in the social and cultural rules of the parties can also be prominent. Indeed, the social and cultural rules of the regular dance and the ethno-party scenes differ greatly.

An important consequence of the introduction of broad programming is that the image of clubs as institutions has changed, with their original profile becoming blurred and unclear. Different groups of young people with different musical tastes now visit the same clubs. As a result, youngsters no longer identify with a particular venue, instead aligning themselves to party organizations, a specific style of music or popular DJs. Indeed, they now often visit different clubs in different cities to dance at their favourite events.

The ethno-party scenes

The Asian party scene is the oldest ethno-party circuit in the Netherlands, with its heyday being in the mid 1990s. At that time, Asian parties were organized on a regular and frequent basis, took place all over the country, and were generally attended by Dutch-Chinese youngsters.

In the mid-1990s, however, another sub-scene developed under the umbrella term of Asian parties. This was the ‘Indo party scene’, and predominately attracted second and third generation young Indo-Europeans. At the time of the fieldwork, however, these Indo-parties were no longer taking place, while the other Asian parties were also decreasing in popularity. Indeed, in 2006, there were only three organizations left which were arranging Asian parties on a regular basis in popular clubs, and at all of these events the music was a mix of RnB and clubhouse.

In contrast, the Turkish club scene was growing in popularity at the time of the fieldwork. Of the large number of party companies in existence at that time, the four most popular were Turkish party organizations in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. These groups arranged Turkish parties on a regular basis in popular clubs, with the music being predominantly Türk pop, while the audiences were mainly comprised of those of Turkish descent.

The Moroccan leisure scene is the newest player in the nightlife market. Although Moroccan concerts have been taking place since 1999, parties for young people are a relatively recent addition to the nightlife circuit. Most of these parties begin in the late afternoon or early evening and end before midnight. All of them have a no alcohol policy. The purpose of these rules is to make the parties more accessible to young women of Moroccan ancestry. In addition, special 'women's only' parties are also commonly arranged. The audience at all of these Moroccan events is predominantly comprised of young people of Moroccan descent and the music played is a mix of popular Moroccan and Arabic sounds.

In all three scenes, identification with the audience and the organization is crucial. To a significant extent this is achieved by knowledge and acceptance of the social rules regarding flirting and interaction, which differ from the social rules in the regular clubbing circuit. In the Turkish and Moroccan scenes in particular, talking to unfamiliar people of the opposite sex is inappropriate and even harmful to the good reputation of the female clubbers. Moreover, the respondents from the Asian party scene were also very cautious in their responses to questions about flirting and interaction at Asian parties. However, there was an admission that young people who are interested in someone look an individual up on one of the many Internet community sites after a party.

Identification with the cultural rules regarding musical programming, dress code and dance style also played an important part in the ethno-party scene chosen. Indeed, in the Turkish and Moroccan scenes in particular, many young people gave this as their reason for attending Turkish or Moroccan events. In the Asian party scene, however, the music played and styles of clothing worn are very similar to that of regular club nights, with the result being that cultural elements did not play a role in the choices made between these two scenes.

Identification with an ethnic group and ethno-party scene seemed to be strengthened by the ongoing negative media attention paid to ethnic minority youths. Many young people used the terms 'we' versus 'them' when they compared the crowd in their own ethno-scene with that in the more regular clubs. The young people in the Asian party scene predominantly experienced a sense of being

different, which was reflected in their language and choice of words. Meanwhile, for the young people going to Turkish and Moroccan parties, their lifestyle played an important part in their preference for their own ethno-party scene. An interesting result is that in all three groups the respondents who identified strongly with the crowd and the organization of ethno-parties only participated in their own ethnic party scene. These respondents also claimed that their friends come from within their own ethnic group. Respondents with a more ethnically mixed group of friends, however, said that they also went to regular club parties and resented the 'patronizing' social rules in the ethno-party scenes. These particular respondents were predominantly the men from all three scenes and the more experienced women in the Turkish clubbing circuit.

The final factors which play a role in the choice of a particular ethno-party scene are the restrictions imposed on respondents. In general, the women experienced different restrictions to the men. None of the former said that they had had, or expected to have, problems with the door policies of mainstream clubs. Instead, many of these women were restricted in their nightlife choices by their parents. Almost all of those in the Moroccan and many of those in the Turkish scene were only allowed to attend events in the ethno-party circuit. In contrast, the men in all three groups were not restricted in their choices of nightlife by their parents. Instead, many of them did not feel welcome or accepted in the mainstream clubbing circuit. Some of the men in all three scenes also said that they do not feel safe at regular club events, with the reactions of the crowd to their ethnic background being responsible for these feelings. Difficulties with the door policies in the regular club scene were a particular problem for many of the young Moroccan men and some of the young Turkish males. Many of the former said that they were often refused entry to the regular club scene, while many of their Turkish counterparts also experienced the feeling of not being welcome at regular parties. As a result, some of these Turkish men chose to attend the Turkish party scene exclusively.

The details set out above reveal that age, gender and ethnic background are particular influences on the options and choices made by ethnic young people. Furthermore, the extent of this

influence, and whether it created limitations in the nightlife choices made, was different for the three ethnic groups.

4 Conclusions

One of this study's research questions required an analysis of how the choices made by the changing urban population in the Netherlands affect the supply of nightlife. As a consequence, this research concerns the changes that have taken place in Dutch nightlife and how the producers and, more specifically, ethnic party organizations, have promoted new developments in clubbing. What has become clear is that diversity is structurally anchored in clubbing these days. This is evident in the broad programming put on by clubs and the number of different branded styles of parties that are organized. In order to deal with increased competition, exclusivity and innovation have become key terms in the marketing of individual party concepts. Moreover, the need for differentiation to secure a position in a highly competitive field can also be seen in the ethno-party circuits. An important consequence of the new ways in which clubbing is organized in the Netherlands is that 'clubbing' as a night time activity now takes many different forms. Visitors to different clubbing scenes do not share the same 'clubbing culture'. Indeed, all of these separate scenes have different hierarchies of coolness, different social and cultural rules, different door policies and different musical programming. As a result, clubbing has become fragmented, with a variety of meanings, experiences and habits in all of the varying scenes. Moreover, clubs have become places for all sorts of clubbing events and clubbers, but at different times and on different days of the week.

The second of this study's research questions concerns how young people choose which ethno-party to attend. It has become clear that the choices made by ethnic minority youngsters to participate in the ethno-party scene are based on a complex consideration of the personal factors and preferences of the consumers on the one hand, and the opportunities and constraints created by the producers of nightlife on the other. In general, young Asians faced the fewest restrictions in their choice between the ethno-party and the regular club scenes. Accordingly, social factors,

such as partying with friends and acquaintances, determined the decisions they made about participation in the Asian party scene. The young people who chose the Moroccan leisure scene, however, faced many restrictions in their nightlife choices. Indeed, their cultural preferences in terms of music and dance style limited their choices to this scene. This group's nightlife decisions were, however, even more limited by restrictions: for the women these were imposed by their parents, while the men faced restrictions in the form of the limited access they had to regular parties. Meanwhile, in the Turkish clubbing scene, the restrictions and options which determined the decisions made about whether to choose the mainstream or the ethno-party sectors varied greatly among the respondents. Some of the men and women participated in both scenes. In general, however, they attended parties in the Turkish clubbing circuit when they went out with co-ethnics and wanted to dance to Turkish music, while they went to mainstream parties with an ethnically mixed group of friends. Another group of Turkish respondents only participated in the Turkish clubbing scene. Different factors played a different role for each of the individual respondents, such as musical preferences, dress code, dance style, the regulating role of parents (for the women) and the door policies experienced in regular nightlife (for the men).

An in-depth analysis of the three ethno-party scenes and their consumers has clearly demonstrated the importance of including the motivations and preferences of consumers and the strategies of the producers of nightlife in any examination of the nightlife choices made by ethnic minority young people. My work clearly reveals that the post-subcultural approach, with its emphasis on free consumption practices and choices, and which is currently dominant in studies of youth culture and lifestyles, does not adequately explain the actual practices of choice and participation in nightlife by many ethnic minority youngsters. Factors which restrict participation, as well as structures which shape opportunities to express a cultural identity do, however, certainly influence the choices made and the options available.

Samenvatting (Nederlands)

Globalisering, commercialisering en de toenemende invloed van de media dragen bij aan een sterke groei van jeugdstijlen en jeugdculturen met bijbehorende muziekmaken. De groeiende (etnische) diversiteit heeft gevolgen voor het nachtleven in de Nederlandse steden. Zo worden er tegenwoordig met grote regelmaat zogenoemde etno-parties georganiseerd in populaire clubs. Deze feesten worden speciaal georganiseerd voor en door een specifiek etnische groep. In deze studie richt ik me op de manier waarop de groeiende etnische diversiteit de organisatie en programmering van clubs beïnvloedt. Tevens richt ik me op de manier waarop en de redenen waarom jongeren kiezen voor Turkse, Marokkaanse of Asian party scenes.

1 Nachtelijk onderzoek

Studies van het stedelijk nachtleven zijn nauw verbonden met de wetenschappelijke interesse in jeugdcultuur, muziek en de vrijetijdsindustrie. In de jaren zeventig van de vorige eeuw verbonden de onderzoekers van het CCCS (Centre for Contemporary and Cultural Studies) in Birmingham het ontstaan van jeugdcultuur met structurele veranderingen in de Britse industriële samenleving en de daarmee samenhangende klassenverhoudingen. Subculturele gebruiken werden geanalyseerd als 'weerstandsrutuelen' (rituals of resistance) die jongeren uit de arbeidersklasse gebruikten in reactie op de afbraak van tradities en de opkomende consumptiemaatschappij. Met name door de eenzijdige aandacht voor de (mannelijke, blanke) arbeidersklasse en de wel heel grote nadruk op structurele factoren kwam er een golf van kritiek op het CCCS onderzoek naar subculturen. Critici wezen op het bestaan van aparte meisjesjeugdculturen, etnische jeugdculturen en op de consumptieve kracht voor het ontstaan van jeugdculturen. In jeugdcultuurstudies kwam deze kritiek tot uiting in een verschuiving van een benadering die structurele determinanten centraal stelt naar een benadering die de agency en autonomie van deelnemers belangrijk acht. Deze laatste benadering, met zijn specifieke aandacht voor consumptiepatronen werd binnen de

sociale wetenschap bekend als post-subcultureel onderzoek. In deze benadering wordt gesteld dat mensen zich in hun consumptiegedrag en dus ook in de participatie in jeugdculturen, meer laten leiden door hun persoonlijke smaak dan door hun klasse, sekse of opleiding. Jongeren worden hierbij beschouwd als vrije handelende individuen die hun culturele identiteit zelf samenstellen. Tevens benadrukken wetenschapsbeoefenaren werkend vanuit de post-subculturele benadering dat jongeren flexibel zijn en kunnen wisselen van de ene culturele uitingsvorm en muzieksmaak naar de andere. Om de veranderlijkheid en individualiteit te vangen binnen deze theoretische benadering, werd afstand gedaan van de term subcultuur. Daarvoor in de plaats kwamen termen als neo-tribe, lifestyle, smaakcultuur en club cultuur. Daarbij werden culturele kenmerken zoals muziek, kleding en dansen gezien als basis voor zowel het ontstaan als de diversiteit van aparte scenes. Ook de post-subculturele benadering is bekritiseerd. De kritiek betreft de beperkte aandacht voor de sociale en economische ongelijkheid tussen groepen jongeren. Veel post-subcultureel onderzoek richtte zich op de nachtelijke keuzen en activiteiten van blanke middenklasse jongeren waardoor de culturele uitdrukkingsvormen van andere sociale groepen (waaronder etnische jongeren) onderbelicht raakten.

Een aantal onderzoekers heeft geprobeerd om beide benaderingen te combineren in de zogenaamde 'integratieve benadering'. Zij erkennen dat sommige jongeren meer mogelijkheden hebben tot deelname aan het nachtleven dan anderen. In deze benadering worden structurele factoren als de economische positie en etniciteit enerzijds en persoonlijke factoren als smaak en voorkeur anderzijds, betrokken in de analyse van het uitgaansgedrag en culturele expressie. De wijze waarop onderzoekers de integratieve benadering vorm hebben gegeven is niet volledig bevredigend. Met name de vraag hoe structurele factoren en agency daadwerkelijk invloed uitoefenen en hoe structuur en agency zich tot elkaar verhouden en elkaar beïnvloeden, blijft onduidelijk. Zo richtten veel van deze onderzoekers zich uitsluitend op het gedrag van jongeren binnen een scene of club, zonder de toegang tot en de programmering van het nachtleven adequate aandacht te geven. Het is zeer aannemelijk dat het uitgaansgedrag van jongeren mede wordt bepaald door het deurbelied en de programmering, terwijl het

andersom ook aannemelijk is dat het deurbeleid en de programmering worden beïnvloed door het uitgaansgedrag van diezelfde jongeren. De dynamische wisselwerking tussen de strategieën van producenten en het uitgaansgedrag van consumenten wordt hierbij genegeerd. De etnische dimensie hiervan krijgt evenmin aandacht.

2 De bestudering van het stedelijk nachtleven

Om de ervaringen en keuzen van etnische jongeren adequaat te analyseren is een integratieve benadering nodig die de interactie tussen de structurerende strategieën van de producenten en de persoonlijke voorkeuren en agency van de consumenten centraal stelt. Hiervoor heb ik een analytisch model -- genaamd model van de gestructureerde nachtelijke keuze -- ontwikkeld. Dit analytisch model maakt een systematisch onderscheid tussen omgevingsfactoren en persoonlijke factoren. De omgevingsfactoren zijn de sociale structuren van het nachtleven. Deze factoren omvatten de strategieën die de producenten van het nachtleven aanwenden om een bepaald publiek aan te trekken zoals toegankelijkheid en programmering van het nachtleven. Ook zijn er meer algemene omgevingsfactoren opgenomen zoals de regulerende rol van stedelijke overheden en het politiek klimaat. De persoonlijke factoren omvatten een sociale en een culturele dimensie en drie type persoonsgebonden restricties. De sociale dimensie bevat de zogenoemde sociale mechanismen van identificatie en differentiatie. Hierin zijn de specifieke processen van vorming van vriendengroepen, sociale regels binnen de scene en de sociale compositie van het uitgaanspubliek opgenomen. De culturele dimensie verwijst naar muziekvoorkeur, kledingstijl en dansstijl van het uitgaanspubliek. Tenslotte de persoonsgebonden restricties. Deze restricties beïnvloeden de uitgaanskeuze van jongeren negatief en bestaan uit de regulerende rol van ouders, ervaringen met betrekking tot het deurbeleid en koopkrachtrestricties. Aangezien de etnische achtergrond van de individuele jongeren een rol kan spelen in al de verschillende elementen van de persoonlijke factoren, is etniciteit niet als separate categorie opgenomen.

Met dit analytisch model kunnen de volgende onderzoeksvragen mogelijk worden beantwoord:

- 1 Op welke wijze kiezen jongeren voor een etno-party?
 - a. Op welke wijze beïnvloeden de producenten van het nachtleven deze keuze?
 - b. Op welke wijze beïnvloeden de persoonlijke voorkeuren van de consumenten deze keuze?
- 2 Op welke wijze beïnvloeden de keuzen van de veranderde stedelijke bevolking de aanbodkant van het stedelijk nachtleven?

Om deze onderzoeksvragen te kunnen beantwoorden heb ik etnografisch onderzoek gedaan onder consumenten en producenten van drie etno-partyscenes: de Turkse clubscene, de Asian partyscene en de Marokkaanse vrijetijdsscene. Naast participerende observatie in elk van de drie scenes, zijn er diepte interviews gehouden met producenten en consumenten. Ook zijn de DJs die op deze parties draaien, geïnterviewd. Om inzicht te krijgen in de wijze waarop de groeiende etnische diversiteit van het uitgaanspubliek van invloed is op nachtleven en meer specifiek op het clubcircuit zijn clubeigenaren geïnterviewd en is er een uitgebreid internet onderzoek verricht naar de aard en omvang van het hedendaagse clubcircuit.

3 De resultaten

De afgelopen decennia is het stedelijk nachtleven fors veranderd. In de eerste plaats is het sterk uitgebreid: consumenten hebben tegenwoordig meer keuze met betrekking tot welke bioscoop, bar of club ze willen bezoeken. Deze uitbreiding van het nachtleven heeft geleid tot toegenomen competitie tussen en binnen de verschillende sectoren van het nachtleven. Om bezoekers te blijven aantrekken hebben clubs verscheidene wijzigingen in hun organisatie doorgevoerd. Eén van deze wijzigingen betreft de invoering van wat ik de ‘brede programmering’ noem. Clubs richten zich niet langer op één muziekstroming of type muziek, maar programmeren uiteenlopende muziekstijlen op de verschillende dagen van de week, bijvoorbeeld ‘urban’ op donderdag, ‘soul’ op vrijdag en ‘clubhouse’ op zaterdag.

Daarnaast worden er met grote regelmaat themaparties georganiseerd door externe party-organisaties die plaatsvinden in verschillende clubs, verspreid over het hele land. Deze bieden een geheel eigen en herkenbare party door het inzetten van bepaalde DJs en het gebruik van logo's, flyers en promotie op het internet door middel van een eigen internetpagina. Deze ontwikkeling in het clubcircuit heeft de deuren opengezet voor etnische party-organisaties om hun zogenaamde etno-party in een populaire club te organiseren. Essentieel in dit proces van incorporatie van etno-parties in het clubcircuit is dat party-organisaties een partyconcept uitwerken dat door zijn specifieke keuze van muziek, DJs en andere kenmerken een bepaalde etnische groep aantrekt en actief rekruteert waardoor een aparte etno-partyscene ontstaat.

Omdat elk type stijlparty een ander publiek voorschrijft c.q. veronderstelt, is ook het deurbeleid van clubs veranderd. Veel clubs en party-organisaties hanteren voor elk aparte party andere kledingvoorschriften in hun toelatingsbeleid. Daarnaast zijn er verschillen te constateren tussen de culturele en sociale regels van de verschillende parties die in de clubs plaatsvinden. Vooral tussen de etno-partyscene en het reguliere clubcircuit zijn deze verschillen zichtbaar.

Een belangrijk gevolg van de invoering van de brede programmering is dat het beeld van clubs als instituut veranderd is en dat hun oorspronkelijk imago door de diversificatie van de programmering onduidelijk is geworden. Verschillende groepen jongeren met verschillende muziekmaken bezoeken dezelfde clubs. Jongeren identificeren zich niet langer meer met een club maar met een party-organisatie, muziekstroming of DJ. Tevens bezoeken zij verschillende clubs om te dansen op hun favoriete party.

De etno-partyscenes

De Asian partyscene is de oudste etno-partyscene in Nederland en beleefde zijn hoogtepunt halverwege de jaren negentig. In die tijd werden regelmatig Asian parties door heel Nederland georganiseerd die druk bezocht werden door voornamelijk Nederlands-Chinese jongeren. Ook werden er aparte feesten georganiseerd voor tweede en derde generatie Indische Nederlanders, de zogenaamde Indo-parties.

Ten tijde van het onderzoek bestaan de Indo parties niet meer en zijn de Asian parties minder populair bij de doelgroep. Er zijn nog drie organisaties over die op regelmatige basis Asian parties organiseren in populaire clubs. Op al deze parties wordt een mix van RnB en clubhouse gedraaid. In tegenstelling tot de Asian partyscene is de Turkse clubscene ten tijde van het onderzoek groeiende in populariteit. Uit het grote aanbod zijn de vier meest populaire Turkse organisaties in Rotterdam en Amsterdam bij het onderzoek betrokken. Zij organiseren regelmatig Turkse parties in populaire clubs. Op deze parties wordt voornamelijk Türktoppedraaid en het publiek is overwegend van Turkse afkomst. De Marokkaanse vrijetijdsscene is de nieuwste speler in het nachtleven. Hoewel er al sinds 1999 met regelmaat concerten worden georganiseerd voor een Marokkaans publiek, worden er pas sinds enkele jaren af en toe aparte parties voor jongeren in populaire clubs georganiseerd. De meeste Marokkaanse feesten vinden plaats in de namiddag of in de vroege avond en eindigen voor middernacht. Daarbij wordt er op deze parties geen alcohol geserveerd. Een en ander gebeurt om de parties toegankelijker te maken voor vrouwen. Ook worden er speciale parties voor vrouwen georganiseerd. Het publiek is overwegend van Marokkaanse komaf en de muziekprogrammering bestaat voornamelijk uit populaire Marokkaanse en Arabische muziek.

In alle drie de scenes speelt identificatie met het publiek en de organisatie van de parties een belangrijke rol in de keuze voor de etno-partyscene. Voor een belangrijk deel wordt dit gevoel van identificatie tot stand gebracht door kennis en acceptatie van de sociale regels met betrekking tot interactie en flirten. Deze sociale regels verschillen met de regels in het reguliere clubcircuit. Vooral in de Turkse en Marokkaanse scene is praten met onbekenden van het andere geslacht niet gepast en is voor vrouwen zelfs schadelijk voor hun goede reputatie. De respondenten in de Asian partyscene bleken erg terughoudend met betrekking tot het beantwoorden van vragen over omgang tussen beide seksen en flirten tijdens Asian parties. Wel gaven zij aan dat jongeren die elkaar leuk vinden niet tijdens de parties contact met elkaar maken maar dit de volgende dag doen via een van de vele community sites op Internet.

Identificatie met de culturele regels met betrekking tot dans

en kledingstijl spelen ook een belangrijke rol in de keuze voor de etno-partyscene. Met name in de Turkse en Marokkaanse scene gaven veel jongeren dit als reden om Turkse of Marokkaanse parties te bezoeken. In de Asian partyscene komt de muziekprogrammering en kledingstijl van de jongeren overeen met parties in het reguliere clubcircuit en speelden dan ook geen rol in keuze tussen de Asian partyscene en het reguliere clubcircuit.

Identificatie met de etnische groep en de etno-partyscene bleek ook te worden versterkt door de aanhoudende negatieve media aandacht voor etnische jongeren. Veel jongeren gebruikten de termen ‘wij’ en ‘zij’ wanneer zij het publiek in hun eigen etno-partyscene vergeleken met het publiek in het reguliere clubcircuit. De jongeren in de Asian partyscene ervoeren vooral een gevoel van anders-zijn door hun achtergrond wat tot uiting kwam in hun taalgebruik. Voor de jongeren in de Marokkaanse vrijetijdsscene en de Turkse clubscene speelde het verschil in leefstijl een belangrijke rol in hun keuze voor een etno-party. Een interessante uitkomst is dat in alle drie de groepen, de respondenten die de identificatie met het publiek en de organisatie van etno-parties belangrijk vonden, alleen participeerden in hun eigen etno-partyscene. Ook hadden zij voornamelijk vrienden binnen de eigen etnische groep. Respondenten met een meer gemengde vriendengroep gaven aan ook parties in het reguliere clubcircuit te bezoeken en zich te storen aan de betuttelende sociale regels in de etno-partyscene. Dit waren voornamelijk de mannen in alle drie de scenes en de meer ervaren vrouwen in de Asian partyscene en de Turkse clubscene.

Tenslotte speelden restricties in toegang tot het reguliere clubcircuit een rol in de keuze voor de etno-party scene. In het algemeen ervoeren vrouwen andere restricties dan mannen. De vrouwen in het onderzoek ondervonden geen problemen met het deurbeleid in het reguliere clubcircuit, maar werden vooral beperkt door hun ouders in hun uitgaanskeuzen. Alle Marokkaanse vrouwen die deelnamen aan het onderzoek en veel van de Turkse vrouwen mochten van hun ouders niet naar een party in het reguliere clubcircuit. Mannen in de drie scenes daarentegen werden niet in hun keuzevrijheid beperkt door hun ouders, maar voelden zich in sommige gevallen niet welkom in het reguliere clubcircuit. Een aantal van de mannen in alle drie de scenes gaf aan zich niet veilig te

voelen op parties in het reguliere clubcircuit. Vooral reacties vanuit het uitgaanspubliek over hun etnische achtergrond werden hierbij genoemd. Daarnaast speelde het deurbeleid in het reguliere clubcircuit voor een aantal Turkse mannen maar vooral voor Marokkaanse mannen een rol. Veel van de Marokkaanse mannen gaven aan dat hen regelmatig de toegang tot populaire clubs geweigerd werd. De Turkse mannen echter, ervoeren voornamelijk een *gevoel* van het niet welkom zijn op reguliere parties waardoor een aantal van hen uitsluitend koos voor Turkse parties.

Uit het voorgaande blijkt dat vooral leeftijd, gender en etnische achtergrond de keuzen en keuzemogelijkheden beïnvloeden, maar de mate waarin en de wijze waarop dit beperkingen creëert is verschillend voor de drie groepen jongeren.

4 De conclusie

Eén van de kernvragen van deze studie betreft de wijze waarop het uitgaansgedrag van de veranderde stedelijke bevolking de aanbodkant van het stedelijk nachtleven beïnvloedt. Om deze vraag te kunnen beantwoorden is onderzoek gedaan naar de veranderingen die hebben plaatsgevonden in het stedelijk nachtleven. Tevens is onderzocht hoe producenten en meer specifiek etnische party-organisatoren bijgedragen hebben aan nieuwe ontwikkelingen in het clubwezen. Hieruit is naar voren gekomen dat diversiteit tegenwoordig structureel verankerd is in het clubcircuit. De brede programmering van clubs met daarin de aandacht voor verschillende partystijlen laten dit zien. De diversiteit van de programmering van clubs komt tegemoet aan de toegenomen culturele eisen en wensen van het meer divers wordende uitgaanspubliek. Deze differentiatie is ook zichtbaar binnen het etno-partycircuit. Een belangrijke consequentie van de nieuwe wijze waarop het clubwezen georganiseerd wordt zijn de vele verschillende vormen die clubbing tegenwoordig aanneemt. Bezoekers van clubs delen niet meer dezelfde clubcultuur. Tussen de verschillende clubscenes bestaan verschillen in muziekprogrammering, sociale en culturele regels en deurbeleid. Hierdoor is clubbing als culturele activiteit gefragmenteerd geraakt en zijn clubs plekken geworden voor verschillende type parties met een divers publiek maar op verschillende tijden en dagen van de week.

De andere onderzoeksvraag van deze studie gaat over de wijze waarop jongeren voor een etno-party kiezen. Hieruit is gebleken dat de keuzen van etnische jongeren voortvloeien uit enerzijds hun persoonlijke voorkeuren en anderzijds bepaald worden door de mogelijkheden en beperkingen opgelegd door de producenten van het nachtleven. De jongeren die participeren in de Asian partyscene ervaren de minste restricties in hun keuze tussen de etno-partyscene en het reguliere clubcircuit. Sociale factoren zoals het onder elkaar willen zijn, vrienden en bekenden te ontmoeten bepalen hoofdzakelijk hun keuze voor de Asian partyscene. De jongeren die kiezen voor de Marokkaanse vrijetijdsscene daarentegen ervaren veel restricties in hun uitgaanskeuzen. Vooral de voorkeur voor culturele factoren zoals de muziekprogrammering met bijbehorende dans- en kledingstijl beperkten hun keuze tot deelname aan de etno-partyscene. De keuzevrijheid is voor veel bezoekers verder beperkt door restricties: voor vrouwen komen die restricties van huis uit; mannen ervaren restricties vooral aangaande de toegang tot het reguliere clubcircuit. Binnen de Turkse clubscene bestaat er een grote diversiteit tussen de ervaren restricties en keuzemogelijkheden met betrekking tot hun uitgaanskeuze. Sommige mannen en vrouwen participeren in zowel de etno-partyscene als de reguliere clubscene. Zij maken hun keuzen afhankelijk van de samenstelling van hun vriendengroep en muziekvoorkeur van die avond. Anderen jongeren daarentegen nemen uitsluitend deel aan de Turkse clubscene. Hierbij kunnen de muziekvoorkeur, kleding en dansstijl, de regulerende rol van ouders (bij de vrouwen) en het ervaren deurbelid in het reguliere clubcircuit (bij de mannen) een rol spelen.

Uit deze studie blijkt dat een benadering die de nadruk legt op de vrije consumptie en keuzemogelijkheden, zoals de eerder genoemde post-subculturele benadering, slechts één kant van het gedrag en keuzemogelijkheden van etnische jongeren belicht. Deze studie laat eveneens zien dat het belangrijk is bij de analyse van het uitgaansgedrag van etnische jongeren zowel de strategieën van de producenten als de voorkeuren van de consumenten te betrekken.