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Something for everyone? Changes and choices in the ethno-party scene in urban nightlife

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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.