critical geographies

urban nightscapes

youth cultures, pleasure spaces and corporate power

Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands

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URBAN NIGHTSCAPES

Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces and Corporate Power.

Despite unprecedented growth in the entertainment economy, in many western cities, urban nightlife is increasingly experiencing a form of 'McDonaldisation', with big brands taking over large parts of downtown areas, leaving consumers with an increasingly standardised experience and a lack of alternative, creative provision. *Urban Nightscapes* takes a new look at this rapidly changing aspect of urban life, examining the relationships between young adults, nightlife and city spaces.

The first part of the book explores three inter-related aspects of these nightscapes: *production* and the role of large-scale corporate entertainment operators, who provide branded, themed and stylised experiences; *regulation* through practices which aid capital accumulation and city 'image-building'; and *consumption,* where a night out is characterised by not only pleasure-seeking hedonism, but by a segmentation of youth identity and activity as well. *Urban Nightscapes* highlights who owns and controls the night-time economy and, in particular, the increasing amount of mergers and concentration of ownership; the pervasive use of surveillance (both technological and social); and how mainstream, commercial nightlife is squeezing out both historic and alternative/independent forms of enjoyment. The second part of the book then colourfully explores these ideas through detailed ethnographic case studies of young professionals, students, women and gay consumers, excluded youth groups and also alternative nightlife activity, such as squats and free parties.

Throughout the book the authors explore pockets of resistance to this standardised experience and suggest a number of potential future scenarios for cities at night beyond the corporate nightlife machine. *Urban Nightscapes* presents a theoretical and lively ethnographic account for understanding contemporary youth cultures, political urban change and city nightlife.

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PREFACE

This book is a truly collectively written and produced endeavour in terms of work-load and intellectual input which emerged from extended discussions and debates over many hours (and the occasional beer). It goes without saying, then, that it is the product of a longstanding set of personal and academic interests we both have held around youth cultures, nightlife and cities. As with many collaborative works, the initial idea came through a meeting of two people who were working and thinking in similar areas, theoretically, methodologically and politically. One of us, a sociologist, has been researching and teaching in the area of youth studies for many years, writing books on working-class leisure (Cantelon and Hollands, 1988), youth transitions (Hollands, 1990) and youth cultures and nightlife (Hollands, 1995, 1997, 2000). The other, a geographer whose PhD was on student cultures and their impact on cities (Chatterton, 1998), continues to teach and research around urban cultures, youth identities and political activism (Chatterton, 1999, 2000, 2002). Both of us share an outlook which combines the study of political-economic forces, and in particular a concern about the increasing power of corporate and global capital in our daily lives, with critical ethnographies sensitive to the nuances of locality, agency and political resistance.

These personal and academic biographies came together most fruitfully between 2000 and 2002 at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne, when we jointly managed a research project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) entitled 'Youth cultures, identities and the consumption of nightlife city spaces in three English cities' (award number R000238288). Much of the empirical data presented here is derived from this research project, which looked at the production, regulation and consumption of urban nightlife in several UK cities. This book, then, while partly emanating from our UK research project, also draws upon examples outside the UK and represents a significant extension of our thinking reported elsewhere (see Hollands and Chatterton, 2003; Chatterton and Hollands, 2001, 2002; Hollands, 2002). A more detailed methodological note appears in the introduction.

As the research progressed, a story of corporate power, greed, domination and marginalisation, not to mention hedonism/pleasure, dissatisfaction and resistance across city streets at night, unravelled itself. The book is driven by a concern for who loses and who wins in the constant 'merry-go-round' of urban change,

renewal and gentrification. While there are many readings of urban nightlife, and hence many different books which could have been written, this book aims to be a powerful reminder of the consequences of letting corporate power, profit and the pro-growth entrepreneurial state go unchecked. As such, it is not only an invitation to critically engage with theory and detailed empirical findings about the making of urban nightlife—it is also a call for radical thinking and praxis about possible new urban worlds.

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In terms of the production of the book, thanks to the Routledge team, including Andrew Mould, Vanessa Winch and Ann Michael, and also Gill Valentine and Tracey Skelton as enthusiastic series editors. Thanks also to all those who provided visual material for the book; in particular we appreciate the efforts of Ann Rooke, Louise Hepworth and Michael Duckett, and of Tim Wray, who provided material for the cover photo. Over the years a number of people have been our social inspiration and have been part of some great nights out, which have given us some useful reality checks for our work. Thanks here, in no particular order, to Tash, Jen and Watson, Bon, James, James, Shaun, Matt, Giles, Jim, Harriet, Paul, John, C, Aki, Haydn, Paula, Joey C-H, Carole (Wearsy) and the 'Heaton Widows', the secretaries at CURDS and all the folk from the Brighton Palais and Tyneside Action for People and Planet. Thanks also, of course, to our parents and families. Finally, *A Tale of Two Cities* (1996) by Ian Taylor and his colleagues was a book which both of us read prior to embarking on this writing project. Ian's untimely

death in 2001 was a shock to many, and we are indebted to the critical spirit of much of his thinking.

Robert and Paul
Newcastle upon Tyne, UK
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1
INTRODUCTION
Making urban nightscapes

This book is about the making and re-making of urban nightlife. While a night out is a common and widespread experience, many of us do not spend much time thinking about what exactly goes into its making, which is not surprising as most of the time we are too busy enjoying ourselves. For example, rarely do we pose questions such as: who owns and profits from the nightlife venues we socialise in? Who develops, designs and promotes nights out and for which groups? What laws and legislations govern nightlife and how it is policed? What implicit and explicit codes structure a night out, which people go to which venues and why, and what do young people actually think about their nightlife experiences? What follows in this book is an attempt to unpack these related sets of issues.

What this book is not is a celebration of the diversity and the countless experiences which a night out can offer. Such a venture is clearly another project in itself. This is also not another book solely about clubbing or rave culture, or indeed drug and Ecstasy cultures (of which there have been numerous examples: see, Malbon, 1999; Saunders, 1995; Redhead *et al.,* 1997), but more broadly 'urban nightscapes', which entails a variety of youth cultural spaces and groups, including those who are excluded from, or challenge, what's on offer downtown at night. Instead, in what follows we pursue a more political-economy perspective of a night out, which not only looks at consumer experiences and draws upon our real experiences with young people during a night out, but also explores issues of production and regulation. Hence, our work takes a critical look at the role of the entrepreneurial local state, the various effects of corporate capital, and the increasing uniformity and standardisation of many modern-day consumer practices. To give the reader some idea of what to expect in the following pages, our main concern relates to the growing dominance of large corporate operators and their nightlife brands, and what this means for the future character and liveability of urban areas.

We start this book within a context of change and transformation. Social and economic restructuring over the last three decades has resulted in the development of a new urban 'brand' which has reshaped many parts of city landscapes into corporate entertainment and leisure hubs (Gottdiener, 2001; Hannigan, 1998). While urban areas have always been sites of pleasure-seeking, a central focus of recent rebranding has been the promotion of the night-time economy, much of

Plate 1.1 Maremagnum Entertainment Complex; Port Vell, Barcelona, Spain, 2002

which is characterised by the ritual descent of young adults into city-centre bars, pubs and clubs, especially during the weekend (Hollands, 1995; Thornton, 1995; Chan, 1999; Andersson, 2002). One stark example which provides a glimpse into the widespread nature of the growth of night-time entertainment, and gives us a way into thinking about the making, remaking and unmaking of urban nightscapes, comes from Barcelona in the Catalunya region of Spain, and more specifically the Port Vell area on the city's water-front. This area has been unrecognisably transformed since the mid 1990s, from a decaying old dock area into one of the city's foremost and most fashionable party zones. The main quay is dominated by the Maremagnum complex, an entertainment and shopping area opened in 1995 containing around fifty shops, twenty-five restaurants and dozens of bars and clubs (see Plate 1.1). The 2001 *Time Out* guide to Barcelona states: 'Maremagnum gleams temptingly in the middle of the Port Vell and draws in huge crowds both night and day.'

An initial and indeed understandable response is to applaud such a development as a positive example of 'urban cultural revival' (Landry, 2000; Comedia and Demos 1997). Indeed, the night-time economy in many cities has now become an accepted part of wider urban renewal strategies and is seen as a significant source of income, employment and civic 'image-building' (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001, 2002). However, there is another largely untold story here. Port Vell, for example, the once-glistening jewel in the gentrified regeneration of Barcelona's waterfront has recently lost some of its lustre. The reality by 2002 was that the

city's wealthier population, who once danced and drank here with style, have moved on to the latest nightlife venues elsewhere. As a result, Maremagnum has become a more middle-ground 'mainstream' nightlife space for young, often under-age, tourists and the city's immigrant and working-class communities. After forty incidents involving the police at the leisure complex between 2000 and 2002, complete with security guards armed with batons, the problem finally came to a head. In January 2002, it was alleged that four door staff from Bar Caipirinha in Maremagnum beat and then threw a young Ecuadorian immigrant, Wilson Pacheco, into the sea when he became aggressive after he was denied entry to the bar. Pacheco drowned, creating a media frenzy calling for a new set of nightlife regulations, and Bar Caipirinha was closed. Subsequently, the Catalan Interior Ministry, along with the Barcelona city government and the port authority, developed a plan to restrict late-night bar and alcohol-led activity in the area and promote a greater diversity of more cultural and family-oriented activities.[1]

Although only a single example, what exactly does this 'other' story reveal about the making and remaking of urban nightscapes generally? First, it demonstrates that while there is a growing popularity and domination of large-scale, glossy corporate nightlife developments in many cities around the world, they often contain their own set of contradictions. Constant attempts to upgrade and gentrify urban waterfronts and central areas, which include nightlife facilities, invariably result in a tail-chasing game of 'cool-hunting' (Klein, 2000), as young professionals go in search of the latest cool, chic, fashionable bar or club, leaving yesterday's stylish haunt in their wake. Indeed, much of the new nightlife economy is all about being 'cool'. In their attempt to define this rather tricky term, Pountain and Robins (2000) point out that coolness, as a consumption strategy, is largely an individual identity strategy rather than a collective political response. As the authors suggest, 'no-one wants to be good any more, they want to be Cool' (*ibid.:* 10). Yet, more importantly for this book, coolness has also become a vehicle for big business, the media and advertisers to push their way further into the wallets of young consumers.

Second, while such upgrading initially appears to be enforced through pricing and various stylistic codes, it often requires more 'direct' and violent forms of regulation (i.e. bouncers, security staff; see Hobbs *et al.,* 2000) which, as the Maremagnum example shows, can quickly spiral out of control. Finally, attempts to gentrify leisure and the night-time economy in the city have resulted in various nightlife consumption groups jockeying for position and territory, leading to a socially segregated, conflictual and increasingly polarised use of space (Hollands, 2002).

The above example from Barcelona, then, reflects some of the main concerns of *Urban Nightscapes*. Our focus is 'urban'—and in particular downtown—areas, which continue to represent the most visible manifestation of these trends, especially in Europe. However, we are cognisant that our discussion reflects broader social and cultural changes rather than mere 'city-based' phenomena (see Gottdiener, 2001). In this sense, many of the processes we emphasise, including

economic concentration, corporatisation, branding and theming, segmentation of consumer markets and pandering to middle-class tastes, are occurring across central, suburban and complex polycentric city-regions (Soja, 2000) across the western world, and clearly here North America is leading the way. This is not to say that there are not important variations in nightlife cultures between countries and cities and that wider processes do not work themselves out at different rates in specific local conditions. For example, there are clear differences in nightlife infrastructures between larger global cities, established metropolitan centres and smaller cities. However, the phenomena we are studying are increasingly global, or at least western, in their orientation, and hence it is possible to generalise findings to some degree, as the night-time economies of many post-industrial countries continue to converge and follow similar trends.

Our second focus is on the term 'nightscapes', which refers specifically to young adults' varied nightlife activities in licensed premises such as bars, pubs, nightclubs and music venues, as well as the streets and spaces in-between. We recognise that other activities such as cinema, theatre, restaurants, casinos, cafés and sporting events also combine to make up these nightscapes, but these are not our concern here as they are not primarily the preserve of young people in cities. [2] Our use of the term 'nightscapes' also refers to issues raised by Zukin (1992) about the aestheticisation and commodification of urban landscapes, but also to the increased use of the city as a place of consumption, play and hedonism in the evening (Featherstone, 1991).

The framework

Studying nightscapes entails unravelling certain inherent difficulties, contradictions and dichotomies involved in the actual 'experience' of nightlife. We are acutely aware that framing it through academic discourse and theoretical concepts erodes much of the fluidity, excitement and sociability of a night out. It is quite impossible to capture what the city is about at night within the stiff pages of an academic text. In fact, any attempt to represent nightlife will automatically make certain groups and actions more visible than others. The city, especially at night, contains many contradictory elements that cannot always be resolved, understood or related. Nightlife is simultaneously conflictual and transgressive, at the same time as being segregated, commodified and sanitised. It also has emotional (enhanced through alcohol, drugs, dance, sex, encounter) and rational elements (planning, surveillance and policing), which are not always easy to understand and reconcile. Nevertheless, it is worth highlighting, to quote Thornton (1995:91), that 'the seemingly chaotic paths along which people move through the city are really remarkably routine'.

Our perspective is to stress the active making and remaking of urban nightscapes, an approach which is sensitive to processes as well as possibilities. As such, the book operates on two levels (see Table 1.1). First, we present an understanding of nightscapes through an *integrated 'circuit of culture' which*

comprise the three processes of production, regulation and consumption (Du Gay, 1997). By this we mean that, to fully understand an area of activity such as nightlife, it is imperative to simultaneously explore who and what is involved in producing nightlife spaces (i.e. designing, marketing, selling, property markets, corporate strategies, etc.), who and what is involved in regulating them (i.e. laws and legislations, surveillance, entrance requirements, codes of conduct), and who and what is involved in consuming them (i.e. lived experience, perceptions, stereotypes, etc.). Hence, while nightlife venues are clearly commercially manufactured by a range of multinational, national, regional and local operators, and regulated by various legislative frameworks and formal and informal surveillance mechanisms, it is also necessary to explore the lived consumer experience and the role young adults play in shaping such spaces.

Second, *urban nightscapes can be understood as a mixture of mainstream, residual and alternative nightlife spaces*. Mainstream spaces are the well-recognised commercially provided bars, pubs and nightclubs that exist in most large urban centres. While there are a range of venue types here, the unifying feature of the mainstream is that it is driven by commercial gain and the profit-motive, rather than the other concerns such as access, equality or creativity. The mainstream is also characterised by ownership by large national and international corporate players who are increasingly using strategies like branding and theming to target and segment certain cash-rich groups such as professionals and service sector workers (including professional women and the gentrifying gay population) and higher education students. These spaces cater for much of the hedonistic rituals and raucous behaviour one normally associates with a night out. Residual community spaces such as traditional pubs, ale-houses and saloons, as well as the purview of the street, which were a common feature of most industrial city centres have been left to decline or are disappearing altogether, due to the changing priorities of nightlife operators and consumer tastes. Finally, there is a range of independently run and alternative nightlife spaces which cater for more specific youth cultures, identities and tastes, some of which are self-organised, such as free parties, unofficial raves and squatted social centres. Clearly, spaces such as the mainstream, the residual and the alternative and resistant margins are constantly shifting entities, with rather nebulous boundaries. Today's fringe cultures become tomorrow's mainstream fashions. Hence, we have tried to avoid over-literal interpretations which regard the mainstream as mere commercial blandness while the underground is teeming with resistance and creativity. Instead, we have focused upon how different spaces and boundaries are made and remade, regulated and experienced.

The central argument of *Urban Nightscapes* is that urban nightlife is increasingly characterised by dominant regimes of: mainstream production, through the corporatisation of ownership via processes of branding and theming (Klein, 2000; Gottdiener, 2001); regulation, through practices which increasingly aid capital accumulation and urban image-building (Zukin, 1995; Harvey, 1989b) yet increase surveillance (Davis, 1992); and consumption, through new forms of

Mode of analysis	Type of nightlife space		
	Mainstream	**Residual**	**Alternative**
Production	Corporate brand	Community	Individual
	Profit-oriented	Need-oriented	Experimental
	Global/national	National/regional	Local (and global networks)
Regulation	Entrepreneurial	Stigmatised	Criminalised
	Formal (CCTV, bouncers) and informal (style, price)	Formal (police)	Informal (self- regulated)
Consumption	Profit-oriented	Community-oriented	Creative-oriented
	Divided consumer–producer relations (brand/lifestyle)	Traditional consumer–producer relations (product)	Interactive consumer–producer relations
	Gentrified/up-market	Down-market	Alternative/resistant
Spatial location	Dominant centre	Under-developed centre	Margins

Source: Chatterton and Hollands, 2002

segmented nightlife activity driven by processes of gentrification and the adoption of ‘up-market’ lifestyle identities among groups of young adults (Butler, 1997; Wynne and O’Connor, 1998; Savage and Butler, 1995). In this sense, although many city centres have achieved a ‘cool’ status through branded and upgraded nightlife, they are also increasingly becoming more exclusive, segmented and conflictual arenas (Smith, 1996; Sibley, 1995). And while we stress that new

opportunities have opened up, especially for young women (McRobbie, 2000), ethnic cultures and music (Forman, 2002) students (Chatterton, 1999), and gay nightlife in particular (Knopp, 1992), these have often been sanitised and commercially incorporated into the mainstream. Moreover, historic, residual and alternative forms of nightlife are increasingly marginalised to the geographic periphery of the urban core, over-regulated until they simply disappear, transformed by the changing corporate priorities of their owners, or are bought out under the weight of urban renewal and gentrified leisure.

Our concern, then, is how to make sense of production, regulation and consumption patterns within urban nightlife infrastructures, with a focus on young adults' experience and use of particular spaces. Our emphasis on processes and the 'making' of nightlife circumvents, we hope, some of the rather unhelpful dichotomies used in understanding youth lifestyles, such as culturalism versus structuralism, objective versus subjective and material versus symbolic constructions of society (see Miles, 2000 for a discussion of some of these approaches). As such, throughout the book we use examples of how young people actively talk about, and make sense of, their social and spatial world and that of others in the night-time economy.

In this regard, first, it is fair to say that much youth cultural analysis has been implicitly aspatial in its orientation (for an exception, see Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Massey, 1998). Therefore, we seek to locate nightlife provision and youth experiences in a spatial context, both in our use of notions like mainstream, alternative and residual spaces, and also in terms of different national and local conditions. Second, with regard to understanding the relationship between 'circuits of culture', there are many ways to unpack consumer experiences, including nightlife. 'Horizontal' readings explore the relations and meanings circulated between consumers, while Vertical' readings consider consumers as part of a commodity chain including production as well as consumption (Williams *et al.,* 2001). While we attempt to utilise both of these approaches, we give particular weight to the relationship between the production and regulation of nightlife, and its consumption by young adults. In this sense, we adopt a spatialised 'political economy' of youth cultural activity in the night-time economy, combined with a neo-gramscian perspective which stresses the interplay of dominant, residual and emergent tendencies (Williams, 1977). Political economy has been sorely neglected within the study of popular and youth culture generally (although see Fine and Leopold, 1993; Hollands, 1998), and traditionally much youth cultural analysis has focused on cultural resistance (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; Willis, 1990), postmodern hybrids (Muggleton, 1998) and the active making of lifestyles (Miles, 2000), without exploring this wider context of the changing role of the state and corporate strategies.

So, while we are sympathetic to elements of an 'agency-based' or 'experiential' approach (see Malbon, 1999), we also feel that a preoccupation solely with cultural creativity underestimates the material constraints in which consumers operate, as well as ignoring ongoing fundamental inequalities within the youth population.

Clearly, young adults are actively involved in meaning-making in the night-time economy (see Malbon, 1999); however, at the same time many nightlife premises have become, to paraphrase Le Corbusier, 'gentrified machines for drinking in'. Similarly, it is important to stress the endurance of significant consumption divides within youth populations (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997)—between, for example, unemployed young people or those dependent on unstable employment, university students and those in high-level training, and young professionals in stable, well-paid and mobile employment—as well as to understand how social divisions have become more complex today. Our approach, then, is that wider processes of capital accumulation and restructuring, especially through the globalisation and corporatisation of the cultural industries (Klein, 2000; Monbiot, 2000), enduring social inequalities, and the changing role of the state, all are extremely influential in shaping modern-day nightlife experiences. Hence, to borrow from Marx: 'Young adults make their own nightlife, but not under conditions of their own choosing.'

Key concepts in understanding change and transformation within youthful nightlife spaces

Within this book, we draw upon a number of key concepts within social science research which will help the reader understand some of the processes of change and transformation shaping urban nightscapes and the lives of young people. The three chapters which comprise Part I of the book discuss these ideas and concepts in depth and illustrate them with examples. Here, in this first chapter, we briefly introduce and outline various key terms to help the reader locate this book in some ongoing and longstanding conceptual debates.

Our first context explores some of the productive forces underlying the emergence of a new entertainment economy. Service employment, and especially activity in the 'cultural economy', has grown rapidly in many cities to offset manufacturing loss. As a result of this shift, the entertainment and nightlife economies have become a central rather than add-on part of urban economic growth and employment. This transformation has been partly explained through ideas of *post-Fordism, in which there has been a saturation of Fordist mass markets, and subsequent changes in consumer preferences towards more individualised, reflexive and globally oriented forms of consumption*. These changes can also be set within a context of *economic and cultural globalisation, and a rationalisation and concentration of the organisation of production* across many sectors of the economy (Held *et al.*, 1999). Hence, in what follows we utilise a more *neo-Fordist approach which stresses the continuance of mass markets combined with a concentration of ownership and shift in control away from national ownership towards a small number of global corporate entities*. Economies of scale, standardisation and homogeneity, then, still play a key role for many global firms in terms of ordering consumer markets.

Branding and the use of themes have also become a central element for today's global firm, with value generated not solely from price or product differentiation but also through symbolic, lifestyle or brand differentiation (Gottdiener, 2001). Along with the use of branding has come the heavy stylising and scripting of consumer spaces around certain accepted, sanitised and safe norms and codes of behaviour. Further, branding and themes are used to create not only product loyalty but also consumer identity, social status and differentiation.

These changes in production and the economic organisation of entertainment and nightlife have taken place against a backdrop of *rapid urban change and restructuring over the last three decades*. After decades of decay and neglect created through economic restructuring (Harvey, 2000; Sugrue, 1998; Hudson and Williams, 1994; Taylor *et al.,* 1996), many traditional metropolitan and industrial centres have slowly been remodelled as places to live, work and be entertained. The specific characteristics of this 'return to the centre' are a renewed emphasis on the so-called knowledge-based economy, city-centre living and the idea of the 24–hour city, a greater economic role for corporately organised leisure and retail, and consumption-based (cultural) rather than production-based activities (Zukin, 1995; Hall, 1999). Clearly, each urban area has steered its own course through this reinvention process and has borrowed differentially from both the excesses of the North American model of casinos, multiplexes and malls (Davis, 1992; Hannigan, 1998) and the continental European model associated with 'café culture' and socially inclusive city-centre living.

These various urban reinventions, although successful in terms of reanimating and transforming the physical aesthetics of city centres, have done little to address questions of equality and access. Hence, *the contemporary urban entertainment economy is marked by social and spatial inequality and segmentation of consumer markets*. While both niche and mass brands are developed within entertainment and consumer markets, the key point is that both are increasingly controlled by a small number of global players who develop a portfolio of brands to dominate markets. Within both these markets there is a general pandering towards cash-rich groups of consumers and a tendency to create safe entertainment which offers 'riskless risk' (Hannigan, 1998; Hubbard, 2002). Here, *concepts of gentrification, stylisation and sanitisation are key*—that is to say, there has been a displacement of lower-order activities and working-class communities by higher-order activities aimed at cash-rich groups. Hence, within such urban transformations, it is important to note who gains and who loses, who is guiding urban nightscapes and to what ends, and who, literally, has been invited to the 'party'.

Our second context concerns the regulation and governance of nightlife. *Nightlife has been subject to much legal, political and indeed moral regulation,* fuelled largely by a longstanding anti-urbanism and a fear of crime and disorder, especially at night. Currently, governing the night involves a number of formal and informal dimensions which include legal (laws and legislation), technical (closed-circuit television (CCTV) and radio-nets), economic (drinks and door

entry prices) and social—cultural (musical taste, youth cultural styles and dress codes) elements.

While there has been an erosion of the strict times and spaces of industrial work, where nightlife was carefully regulated to ensure that workers' leisure did not interfere with their productivity, contemporary nightlife is still subject to moral panics, regulation, rationalisation and planning. While there is a demand for a greater variety of nightlife compared to fifty years ago, *current nightlife developments point to the increased use of formal and informal surveillance and control techniques* (including CCTV, door entry policies, design, pricing) aimed at sanitising and controlling access to certain consumer groups. Hence, *urban nightlife contains a number of contradictory tendencies towards both deregulation and (re)regulation, and fun and disorder.*

Urban nightlife has also become an arena for a more complex set of negotiations between a range of groups. Traditional bodies (the judiciary and police), primarily concerned with social order and public safety, now increasingly have to negotiate with private capital and the more entrepreneurial local state with their imperatives of capital accumulation. Current nightlife developments backed by increasingly cash-strapped local urban authorities, have a tendency to benefit private capital rather than meet older notions within city planning such as civic pride, cultural diversity and universal access.

Our final context concerns the changing nature of consumption experiences, and in particular stresses that the social meaning of what it means to be young is constantly changing. *One of the fundamental shifts in the last two decades has been the extension of a youthful phase, as evidenced by terms like 'post-adolescence' and 'middle youth'* (Irwin, 1995; Goldscheider and Goldscheider, 1999; Roberts 1997), characterised by liminality and experimentation with youthful cultural activity for an extended period of time. By this we are referring to well-recognised delayed transitions into adulthood, marriage or full-time work due to staying on in education and training, increased dependency on the parental household, erosion of income benefits or student grants, and a changing labour market. The extended suspension of adult roles has meant that increasing numbers of youth are remaining at home into their twen ties and even early thirties, which also implies that many have more disposable income for consumer spending. Marketing agents such as Mintel (1998) use phrases such as 'young adults' and 'pre-family adults' to reflect this extended period. In this book, we use such extended definitions of young people, and hence ethnographic material is drawn from young people aged between their late-teens and mid-thirties.

Moreover, the so-called process of *individualisation (where there is a presumed greater level of individual choice in terms of style and identity) and a greater global reach of consumer goods and media forms has fuelled a seemingly complex array of youthful, and not so young, lifestyles and identities* (Miles, 2000; Bennett, 2000; Epstein, 1998). More specifically, as traditional social relations and sites of identity for young adults are affected by social and economic change (Wilkinson, 1994a), *consumption and leisure, especially in cities, have become more central*

elements of youth identity (Willis, 1990; White, 1999; Hollands, 1995). Re-imagined urban centres, then, have become important contexts in which young adults continue to deal with changes in their lifeworlds and forge roles and identities. Gender issues (McRobbie, 2000; Henderson, 1997; Wilkinson, 1994a), sexual orientation (Knopp, 1992; Whittle, 1994) and ethnic identities (Back, 1996) have also become more prominent within urban popular culture and nightlife.

The contemporary city at night, then, is often regarded as a 'stage' which acts as a backdrop for a diverse and varied collection of 'mix and match' youth styles, cultures and lifestyles (Redhead, 1997). Hence, many young people appear to be able to choose from a greater range of consumer goods and services and images than in the past. In this sense, *the city can be seen to offer abundant resources for experimentation and play, and opens up liminal and carnivalesque social spaces* (Featherstone and Lash, 1999; Shields, 1991). Many such postmodern readings of the urban explore the metaphors of play and hedonism rather than work and order.

However enticing such readings can be, it is important not to uncritically accept postmodern analyses of either youth consumption or urban change. Behind the seemingly fragmented and individualised patterns of consumption and underneath the 'free-floating' array of consumer goods and urban lifestyles, *differential transitions, inequalities and exclusions continue to assert their influence in both social and spatial terms on young people* (Hollands, 2002; MacDonald and Marsh, 2001). Hence, large numbers of young people remain excluded from pleasurable consumer spaces, with unemployment and poverty continuing to be a reality for many. The significant aspect for what follows in this book is that while urban nightlife is a popular pursuit for many young people, *some remain socially and economically excluded from new downtown entertainment playgrounds, while others choose to openly reject and contest it and build alternatives*.

Organisation of the book

The book explores the making of a 'night out' in two main parts. Part I develops in more detail the conceptual framework and context alluded to above for understanding urban nightscapes, and young people's involvement in them, by examining the production, regulation and consumption of different types of nightlife. Chapter 2 focuses specifically on ownership in the night-time economy, and looks at the role of corporatisation, branding and theming in creating a dominant nightlife infrastructure, while Chapter 3 examines the changing regulatory context behind nightlife activity. Chapter 4 focuses on a critical appraisal of theories of youth identities, cultures, lifestyles and transitions, and looks at how they aid an understanding of young adults' segmented nightlife consumption patterns.

Part II of the book empirically and ethnographically explores in detail how different youth groupings experience the three general spatial forms of nightlife activity—mainstream, residual and alternative—and looks at processes of

production, regulation and consumption within each sphere. Chapter 5 explores some of the variations and complexities within the dominant mainstream, while Chapters 6 and 7 look at how specific sub-groups like students, young women and gay consumers are increasingly being drawn into the commercial mainstream. Chapter 8 examines the fate of residual youth groups and the demise of traditional nightlife spaces, while Chapter 9 looks at examples of alternative and resistant forms of nightlife on the margins. Finally, in the conclusion (Chapter 10) we explore the changing relationship between these processes and spaces, and suggest a number of potential future scenarios for youth and nightlife development beyond the corporate nightlife machine—including visions based on inclusion, diversity and creativity, rather than more limited notions of exclusion, social control and commodification.

Methodological note

At the outset, it is important to note that although this book attempts to provide a general theoretical treatment and analysis of urban nightlife trends, and seeks, wherever possible, to draw on a range of international examples and cases, like all empirically grounded social science research it reflects particular contexts, places and spaces. Further, due to the rapidly evolving nature of urban nightlife, the reader needs to keep in mind that many things will have changed since this book was researched and written, such as ownership patterns, regulatory laws, consumer trends, brands and venue styles. Nevertheless, we are confident that the themes and ideas we have drawn out can be used as tools for understanding some of the more general trends concerning the past, present and future of a night out.

The material presented in this book is the outcome of a number of years of thinking, researching and writing on youth cultures and cities by the authors, and a number of specific research projects including an examination of youth culture in a post-industrial city (Hollands, 1995), a PhD looking at youth and student cultures (Chatterton, 1998) and, most recently, a two-year research project undertaken jointly by the two authors looking at youth and urban nightlife (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). This later project, funded by the UK government's Economic and Social Research Council, was based upon intensive case studies in several city centres in the UK, undertaken between 1999 and 2002 (principally Leeds, Newcastle upon Tyne and Bristol, with a smaller amount of additional material drawn from Edinburgh, Manchester and Liverpool).

Three principal cities in the UK (Leeds, Bristol, Newcastle) were chosen because they offered different backdrops against which to examine changes in youth culture and nightlife, including: diversity and reputation of cultural and nightlife infrastructure; character of urban and regional economic base; nature of past, current and future development trajectories; class and occupational structures; and local cultural traits and identity. In this sense, the former industrial city of Leeds represents a move towards a post-industrial corporate city which has been successful in attracting high-level business services and transforming its city

core into a high value-added consumption, housing and leisure zone (Haughton and Whitney, 1994). It has developed a strong creative, independent nightlife alongside a growing corporate branded sector, which is increasingly utilised by a young affluent population who have benefited from the city's economic prosperity. In contrast, Newcastle represents a city struggling with the post-industrial transition (Tomaney and Ward, 2001) in terms of capturing new investment and encouraging service employment and high-level retail and leisure activities, despite having a rash of recent arts projects and attracting accolades for its bid to become the European Capital of Culture in 2008. As a result, Newcastle's nightlife, although changing (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001), continues to be marked more by established gender roles, local embedded working-class customs and a stronger regional ownership structure. Finally, Bristol represents one of the UK's 'sunbelt' cities (Boddy *et al.,* 1986) which has not been scarred to the same extent by industrial decline. Quality of life and cultural amenity is high, with medium income 25 per cent above the national average, a varied nightlife infrastructure, albeit with a strong corporate presence in the centre, and a substantial underground and subversive nightlife scene in the periphery.

During the course of this research into youth and urban nightlife in the UK, a number of techniques were used to gather material. First, an extensive survey was conducted in our three main UK cities—Leeds, Bristol and Newcastle—to gather base-line data on nightlife venues (defined here as pubs, bars, nightclubs and music venues) in the city centre area delineated by metropolitan police boundaries. Data gathered in these three cities included number and capacities of venues (pubs, bars, clubs, music venues), number of Section 77 special hours certificates (allowing bars to open past 11 p.m.); ownership of venues (whether international, national, regional or local); and style of venues (broken down into seven types: style bar, café-bar, traditional pub, ale-house, theme pub/bar, disco bar, alternative venue). This quantitative material is drawn upon at several points in the book in the form of charts and graphs.

More intensive, in-depth fieldwork was also conducted based around a number of largely ethnographic and qualitative methods. Most central here were eighteen focus groups in which over eighty young adults participated, ranging in age from 16 to 32. Here we use broader notions of youth, where, due to extended adolescence and delayed transitions into adulthood, being young includes those from their mid teens to their mid thirties.The focus groups represented a 'purposive' (Hammersley, 1983) rather than random sample, and were chosen to reflect a number of 'commonly discussed' nightlife groups, which emerged from pilot studies, previous research, conversations with those involved in nightlife, and current labels used by nightlife operators and marketing agencies. These groups included: gay men, lesbians and their friends; higher education students; young professionals and graduates; alternative/ subcultural groups including Goths, rockers, skaters, squatters and participants in warehouse parties and raves; local working-class youths who had not attended further or higher education; and 'all-women' groups on a night out. Groups were contacted through a variety of

means in order to avoid a straightforward ‘snowballing’ or ‘known contacts’ effect (May, 1993), and these included placing adverts in local listings press and contacts through venue managers, DJs, promoters and local music journalists, as well as through workplace managers of large firms and universities. Focus groups were generally held on neutral territory—in bars, cafés and pubs—where the participants felt more at ease to share their views. Following the initial focus groups, particular individuals were subsequently contacted and accompanied on a night out to help follow up research themes in a less formal setting.

Each focus group was taped and transcribed, providing over thirty hours of material. Semi-structured and open-ended questions pursued during the sessions included biographical information; information on types of nightlife participation; views on identities and groups in the city’s nightlife; opinions on nightlife infrastructures, the role of the city council, police, venues; and areas of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Our research aims during the focus groups were overtly stated, and confidentiality was preserved by changing all names.

Further, one-to-one interviews with forty-one producers of nightlife (owners, company directors, area and regional managers, bar managers, bar staff, journalists, DJs, musicians) and thirty-two regulators (various city council personnel, magistrates, police, doormen, residents’ associations) were undertaken across the three cities. These were selected on a ‘representative’ basis—with, for example, all city-centre managers and police inspectors with responsibility for the city centre across the three locations interviewed (for comparative purposes)—and were chosen strategically to represent ‘types’ of producers (i.e. a cross-section of large corporate firms with a national and international scope, smaller independent micro-businesses and regional firms).

All this interview material, along with previous research and other written and overseas sources, was read, reread and analysed and used as the basis to formulate ideas and approaches and explore a number of nightlife groups and spaces which are set out in this book. Hence, quotations appear in the following chapters which were directly taken from the focus groups and interview transcripts. When we have used this material, names have been changed to preserve anonymity, but we have provided a small amount of biographical information for context. Hence, for quotes from the focus groups with young adults we have provided an assumed name, age and the city where the focus group took place; for the more formal one-to-one interviews we have labelled them sequentially, such as ‘Bar manager 1’, and provided the person’s job position and the city, but for venue owners we have omitted the name of the venue to ensure anonymity. We have also included a number of boxed texts to provide more in-depth case-study material. Three of these boxes (5.3, 8.2, 9.1) recount our real experiences from a selection of nights out with our focus group participants, and here we use a more informal writing style. These portraits are intended to provide more ethnographic material, and reflect the pleasures, fears and aspirations of those we shared moments with during their actual nightlives. We locate these stories in the cities in which they occurred,

but all names of people and venues and some of the details have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

While much of the empirical material and quotations in this book stem from this UK research project, we also felt it was important to provide a glimpse into how these processes we identified in the UK were working out in other parts of the western world. Hence, we use several examples of nightlife developments from cities in continental Europe and North America. Here, additional material was collected for this book through brief visits and fieldwork in North America and Spain (in Barcelona and the nearby renowned gay tourist destination of Sitges). The choice of locations largely reflected our existing research links and hence ease of access to material. In terms of Spain, the inclusion of Barcelona was part of an ongoing collaboration with the Youth Observatory of Catalunya, which provided opportunities and research material for a comparative glance at a European city much heralded as a first-class nightlife and cultural destination.

It is not the intention that this material should form the basis of in-depth comparative portraits, but it is offered so that readers in other geographical contexts can formulate their own comparisons with the situation and trends we outline in the UK. In particular, we invite students and researchers in North America, continental Europe and the Asia-Pacific region to use the material in this book to look at nightlife in their own locality and explore the similarities and differences they find compared with the UK situation to guide their own work and thoughts. We have also drawn upon our previous research and academic and journalistic writings, as well as various internet sources, to look at what was happening in other contexts. Hence, while our stories are flavoured by a particular national context and indeed specific localities, it is clear to us that some of the processes discussed in this book—such as increasing corporate control, economic mergers, and the standardisation and globalisation of much youth cultural activity—are fairly endemic to cities throughout the west.

Clearly, pursuing questions such as young people's habits, opinions and use of nightlife spaces raised a number of tensions and conflicts during our fieldwork. In particular, many research participants revealed sensitive and personal information about certain people, friends, venue owners or members of the police, judiciary and the local state during focus groups and interviews. Many personal grudges, past arguments, likes and dislikes also emerged. In places where a number of research participants clearly knew one another, we had to use and report such research findings very carefully to avoid inflaming tensions. Nevertheless, all of our findings were disseminated in our case-study cities through seminars, written reports and on the web (www.ncl.ac.uk/youthnightlife). Additionally, while researching the night may initially seem inviting and exciting, there were a number of pitfalls, not least the unpredictability of making arrangements with those directly involved in nightlife (young consumers, DJs, bar owners, etc.), gaining trust and access with groups such as the police, and issues of security for the research team.

Finally, while this is an academic project, the ideas in this book have also been developed through our own lived experiences, participation and perceptions of what makes a night out, as well as through direct experience and interaction with the many people who took part in our research (ranging from producers to regulators and consumers). We have been keen to find a balance between letting our nightlife participants speak for themselves—using, for example, direct quotes and recounting experiences from nights out—and drawing upon theory to make interpretations about what they have said. In sum, what follows in this book reveals some important questions to be addressed which relate to people's daily and nightly experiences of the city. We realise that, in translation, something of the excitement and intangibility of a night out will be lost. However, we hope that we have adequately captured something of that experience, and the urgency of the issues presented, in the many voices expressed here.

Part I

UNDERSTANDING NIGHTLIFE PROCESSES AND SPACES

Producing, regulating and consuming urban nightscapes

2
PRODUCING NIGHTLIFE
Corporatisation, branding and market segmentation in the urban entertainment economy[1]

The Ministry of Sound, which started life as a London club in the early 1990s, now has the largest global dance record label and the most popular music website in the world, and publishes the UK's fastest growing music magazine, *Ministry*. It promotes club events around the globe and broadcasts its radio show on fifty stations in thirty-two countries, thus becoming the world's most famous dance and clubbing lifestyle brand for young people. Universal Studios Japan, which opened in Osaka in 1999, combines theme park rides with media studios creating a modern-day 'symbiotic' media production and consumption entertainment destination (Davis, 1999:439). On 57th Street West Manhattan, Nike Town, Nike Corporation's flagship retail outlet, is described by Klein (2000:56) as a hallowed shrine to the heroic ideals of athleticism rather than simply a sporting goods shop, with its three-storey-high screens and famed sports memorabilia. And Mythos, a theme park based on Greek mythology which opens in 2004 to coincide with the Olympic Games in Athens, comes complete with rides, mythological figures and wandering minstrels (Emmons, 2000).

These are just a few examples typifying the world-wide spread of the entertainment and leisure industries (Gottdiener, 2001; Sorkin, 1992) and the emergence of an economy rooted in an infrastructure of themed restaurants and bars, nightclubs, casinos, sport stadia, arenas, concert hall/music venues, multiplex cinemas and various types of virtual arcades, rides and theatres (Hannigan, 1998). While it is clear that popular culture has long played an important role in cities, we would argue that the current urban entertainment economy is distinguishable by a concentration of corporate ownership, increased use of branding and theming, and conscious attempts to segment its markets, especially through the gentrification and sanitisation of leisure activities. The night-time economy, especially through the growth of up-market style and café-bars and nightclubs, has a key part to play in contemporary entertainment infrastructures.

Our approach in this book is concerned with how corporate control in the urban entertainment and nightlife economies is usurping and commercialising public space, segmenting and gentrifying markets and marginalising historic, alternative and creative local development. In this first chapter, we outline the emergence of a dominant mode of urban entertainment and night-time production, and situate it within critical discussions concerning the transformation from Fordist[2] to post-

Fordist production and the related shift from mass to more segmented and varied forms of consumption (Kumar, 1995; Amin, 1994), the move from the welfarist to the entrepreneurial state and city (Harvey, 1989b) and the growing globalisation and corporatisation of economic activity (Held *et al.,* 1999; Monbiot, 2000; Klein, 2000). Beyond the rather seductive argument surrounding 'flexibility' and post-modern consumption, we stress a more neo-Fordist interpretation of the nightlife industry, characterised by some novel features but also by a continuation and intensification of concentration and conglomeration of ownership, a lack of real consumer choice and diversity in spite of increases in designs and branding, and continued social and spatial segregation due to market segmentation. This dominant mode of production is displacing older, historic modes of nightlife based around the community bar and pub (Mass Observation, 1970) connected largely to Fordist forms of collective consumption in the working-class industrial city, and marginalising more independent modes of nightlife associated with various alternative youth and subcultures (McKay, 1998). What we highlight throughout this book are the implications of this shifting balance between different modes of nightlife production.

Understanding the urban entertainment and night-time economy

The boom in the urban entertainment economy is well documented beyond the obvious visual transformations of city landscapes. Scott (2000), for example, claims that over three million Americans work in the 'cultural economy',[3] Hannigan (1998:2) argues that jobs in the entertainment industry in California now surpass those in the aerospace industry, while it has been calculated that 'fun' services grew by over 7 per cent in the USA between 1960 and 1984 (Esping-Andersen, 1990). Davis (1999:437) meanwhile states that entertainment is one of the hottest sectors in real-estate circles, and Gottdiener *et al.* (1999:256) have referred to the spread of its ethos and architecture in the USA as 'the Las Vegasization of city downtowns'.

In the UK, the leisure sector has become an important job creator, employing nearly 1.8 million people, or 8 per cent of the workforce, a figure which has more than doubled since the 1930s (Gershuny and Fisher, 2000:50). There has also been a steady influx of Urban Entertainment Destinations (UEDs) in downtown areas in the UK bringing together cinema, retail, eating and nightlife and drawing upon anchor tenants such as Warner Brothers, TGI Fridays, Starbucks coffee shops, Hard Rock Cafés, Planet Hollywoods and Disney Stores. The most famous among them is the Trocadero in Londons Piccadilly Circus, an entertainment and retail destination comprising global brands such as UGC Cinemas, Planet Hollywood, Bar Rumba and the Rainforest Café. DLG Architects have built a new wave of urban entertainment complexes including the Light in Leeds, heralded as a 'whole new city-centre experience', the Great Northern Experience in Manchester and Broadway Plaza in Birmingham, all comprising multiplex, family entertainment

centres, health and fitness suites, bars, restaurants and residential and retail uses. In Spain, our opening discussion of Port Vell in Barcelona is one of the most well-known examples among the growing number of 'waterside leisure areas' composed of shops, bars/clubs, restaurants, hotels, IMAX theatres and marinas/aquariums, while China has seen the building of forty-one theme parks over the last decade (Hannigan, 1998:2).

While there are a host of examples and strong empirical support documenting the growth and development of these new urban 'landscapes of consumption', especially shopping malls (Wrigley and Lowe, 1996; Shields, 1992; Goss, 1993; Connell, 1999), the night-time economy has received far less attention. Despite the fact that much of the current entertainment economy is being fuelled by the growth of night-time activity, very little work has analysed the transformation of many cities into 'nightlife hotspots' (although see Chatterton and Hollands, 2001; Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). To aid us here, the current development of the entertainment and nightlife economy can be theoretically situated with reference to wider economic, political and socio-cultural changes characterised generally under the rubrics of Fordism, post-Fordism and neo-Fordism (Kumar, 1995; Amin, 1994; Harvey, 1989b; Lash and Urry, 1987). More specific discussions about flexible specialisation and accumulation (see Piore and Sabel, 1984; Harvey, 1989c), a growing literature on (anti) globalisation and corporatisation (Held *et al.,* 1999; Monbiot, 2000; Klein, 2000), the move towards a service-based, cultural and 'symbolic' economy (Lash and Urry, 1994), changes in the local/welfare state and the rise of the entrepreneurial city (Harvey, 1989b; Jessop, 1997; Burrows and Loader, 1994), and critiques of post-modern consumption (Hollands, 2002; Warde, 1994), especially in relation to market segmentation, gentrification and branding: all these are useful components of this wider debate, which we discuss below.

Fundamentally, the post-Fordist transition refers to changes in the production process, although this clearly implies broader political and cultural transformations (Kumar, 1995:37). Rooted in the development of new types of small-scale, flexible, specialised, integrated and high-tech production units clustered in industrial districts (epitomised through the 'Third Italy' phenomenon of the 1970s and 1980s; see Goodman *et al.,* 1989; also Piore and Sabel, 1984), it is viewed by some as a new stage of capitalist and political organisation (Lash and Urry, 1987). Responding to the inflexibility and saturation of national mass production markets, post-Fordism is supposedly characterised not only by more flexible production techniques, but also by organisational changes like the decentralisation and globalisation of capital, outsourcing and subcontracting, a decline in the function of national welfare states, and changes in consumer preferences towards more individualised forms of global consumption (Kumar, 1995; Urry, 1990; 1995). In effect, crisis-ridden western capitalist economies since the 1970s, faced with declining growth, dis-investment of material production and 'manufacturing flight' to lower-cost locations (Held *et al.,* 1999; Massey and Allen, 1988), have sought new avenues of wealth generation. Service employment,

especially business and financial services, and increasingly activity in the 'cultural economy' (Scott, 2000), have grown rapidly to offset manufacturing loss. In its constant search for new profit areas, then, 'capitalism itself is moving into a phase in which the cultural forms and meanings of its outputs are becoming critical if not dominating elements of productive strategies' (*ibid.*: 2).

Flexible accumulation, one particular take on the post-Fordist transition (Harvey, 1989a), is based upon the assumption of increased flexibility, not only in relation to the labour process but also with respect to types of products, services and markets. In this sense, Kumar (1995) points out that saturation of markets for mass goods, the exhaustion of groups of mass consumers and the dictates of new styles of life, along with ceaseless technological innovation, have all resulted in a rapid turnover and swift changes in production. Such flexibility suits firms, too, as they eagerly search for ways to exploit and expand new markets. Not surprisingly, there has been a shift towards investment in, and the marketing of, different types of products and services in the cultural economy. To quote Harvey (1989c: 285): 'If there are limits to the accumulation and turnover of physical goods…then it makes sense for capitalists to turn towards the provision of very ephemeral services in consumption.' Perhaps more accurately in terms of the production of entertainment, Lash and Urry (1994) point to the emergence of 'reflexive accumulation' in which the accumulation process is based around more knowledge—and service-intensive activities and a concentration on signs, symbols and lifestyles, rather than just material goods.

In general terms, under this model, production is more knowledge-intensive and involves small-batch tasks undertaken within dense networks of vertically disintegrated units. Capital flows towards the production of goods and services that are more ephemeral and spectacular (a live music concert, a casino), disposable (beer, fast food), lifestyle-based (branded venues and products, including 'premium' brands) and even 'virtual' (internet, virtual reality parks, computer games). In other words, 'fast-moving consumer goods and services', as they are known in the business world (du Chernatony and Malcolm, 1998)—epitomised by entertainment, popular culture and nightlife activity—require constant replenishment and are a particularly effective tool for speeding up capital accumulation. Moreover, while cultural and entertainment products might initially involve high start-up costs, reproduction and distribution can generate economies of scale and almost ceaseless profits (Scott, 2000). Entertainment, and especially nightlife, for example, involves a temporal expansion of capital accumulation past the typical retail 'flight', encouraging late-night activities catering for pre-family young adults, students and tourists. Finally, multifunctionality is now the cornerstone of many leisure developments (Gottdiener, 2001:101), developing synergies between retail, media, real estate, sports, nightlife, dancing, eating and other pursuits. Such multifunctionality requires new spaces for profit-making, like UEDs (see Plate 2.1), which often combine theme bars and restaurants, cinemas, arcades, internet cafés, retail outlets and licensed merchandise shops, generating

Plate 2.1 Urban Entertainment Destination at Fountain Park, on the fringe of Edinburgh's city centre; Scotland, 2002

entertainment hybrids such as edutainment, eatertainment and shopertainment (Hannigan, 1998).

While the Fordist/post-Fordist typology is a useful 'ideal type' for an analysis of the entertainment and night-time industries, there are a number of important caveats and reservations around the idea of a linear and unfettered transition. First and foremost, it might be argued that some versions of the transition have overstated the flexibility argument and have mistakenly assumed that standardised mass markets have indeed been exhausted under capitalism (Fine, 1995:136). There is clearly a degree of continuity within this restructuring, whereby post-Fordism is a reworking of earlier mass systems of Fordism (Aglietta, 1979). Hasse and Leiulfsrud (2001: 111) have recently written that 'flexible modes of production are predominately integrated into established forms of mass production', while Kumar (1995:58) notes that for the transnational globalisers, the 'global standardisation of Dallas and McDonald's can co-exist quite happily with the artificial diversity of Disneyland and the manufactured localism of the heritage industry'. Present-day consumer markets are characterised as much by the non-differentiated mass production of standardised goods by certain global producers as they are by a preference for non-mass, specialist goods, new consumer lifestyles and greater aesthetic rather than functional consumption

patterns (Urry, 1990:14; 1995:151). As such, it might be argued that elements of Fordist production remain alongside more differentiated, post-Fordist forms in many parts of the entertainment economy, including the alcohol/brewing and nightlife sectors.

In this regard, one notable trend in the current urban entertainment economy has been the continuing shift in ownership and control away from national entities and more locally grounded collections of self-made entrepreneurs towards a small number of global corporate entities (Hannigan, 1998). Clearly, this trend should not imply that monopolies did not exist historically under Fordist mass entertainment production. Although the contemporary processes of globalisation and market concentration vary across space and are tempered by national and international regulatory frameworks, their impact on everyday culture and entertainment activities is increasingly visible. Some commentators have recognised that large corporations themselves have begun to take on aspects of post-Fordism, including decentralisation and flexible specialisation, alongside standardisation and market domination (Kumar, 1995:44–5). As Held *et al.* (1999: 158) comment: 'in the post-war era every sector of the communications and cultural industries has seen the rise of larger and larger corporations, which have become increasingly multinational in terms of their sales, products and organisation'. For example, while a small number of major global entertainment entities such as Time Warner, Sony, Viacom, Disney, Bertelsmann and NewsCorp have come to play a key role in production, more importantly they now also play a central role in the distribution of cultural forms (Held *et al.,* 1999; Scott, 2000) and so dominate everything from the conception to the consumption of cultural goods and services. Ultimately, then, the goal for most global corporations is market expansion and domination, and hence global mergers, synergies and cross-promotions abound. With the erosion of anti-trust and anti-monopoly laws across the USA and Europe, such large companies increasingly have a free hand in directing and controlling entertainment across the world.

Beneath the spectacle and carnivalesque atmosphere of entertainment and the production of individualised niche markets, then, lurks an increased concentration and conglomeration of ownership by a small number of large corporate firms. As Klein (2000:130) suggests, 'despite the embrace of the polyethnic imagery, market-driven globalisation doesn't want diversity; quite the opposite. Its enemies are national habits, local brands and distinctive regional tastes.' The globalisation of the entertainment industries and products is a reminder that the logic of capital is still based at least partly on economies of scale, standardisation and homogeneity (Kumar, 1995:188–9; Ritzer, 1993). De-nationalisation and de-localisation of entertainment, in conjunction with concentration of ownership, is thus a central feature of this transformation. While global players seek to create the impression that they are sensitive to local and national contexts with their language of 'global localities', the overall effect, however, is often one of 'serial' monotony or reproduction (Harvey, 1989b), with the majority of cities and regions around the

world adopting a familiar approach in their creation of an entertainment economy infrastructure.

One of the most obvious features of the current entertainment and nightlife economies, then, is that they have become highly branded, theme-centric and stylised (Hannigan, 1998; Gottdiener, 2001; Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). To brand' originally meant 'to burn', or to mark a product in some way to distinguish it from other similar items (Stobart, 1994:1; Murphy, 1998:1), while 'theming' refers to entertainment venues being rolled out across the globe accorded to a scripted idea, such as the all-pervasive Irish pub or the Las Vegas-style casino. While branding is not a new phenomenon—Bass beer is often considered to be one of the first product brands, created in 1876 (Stobart, 1994:3)—it has developed over the last hundred or so years into a 'business process' which is designed to exemplify a company's core essence. There have been crucial changes in the nature of branding over the past fifty years which are important for our later discussion of nightlife. For example, with the move from a manufacturing to a service economy, there has been a corresponding shift towards the branding of services and images, and not just products. In this sense, the physical elements of commodities have increasingly given way to 'intangible' or 'product-surround' qualities—i.e. aesthetic and emotional elements (Hart, 1998).

Branding has also become an international phenomenon, with numerous successful 'power brands' (Murphy, 1998) emerging across the world aided by the impact of global marketing and advertising. A whole host of corporate strategies are used to manage the ever-increasing global portfolio of consumer brands. Globally recognised brands are bought and sold daily on international stock markets, often signalling significant modifications to, or the end of, well-known brands, but at other times equating to few changes. What is clear is that the world's largest branders have busily been divesting from material production and shifting it overseas to cheap-cost locations to concentrate on high-value added activities such as marketing, advertising and branding rather than making products. Brand value, not necessarily the financial stability of a company, is increasingly important in today's climate of corporate mergers and takeovers, as evidenced by Interbrew's recent purchase of Beck's Beer for £1 billion because it was seen as a 'good brand' (Clark, 2001). In late capitalist economies awash with consumer goods, then, surplus value is generated not from price or product differentiation, but rather through symbolic or brand differentiation (Gottdiener, 2001).

Branded entertainment spaces draw heavily upon design and stylisation. As Julier (2000) points out, a 'culture of design' pervades not just leisure and retail spaces but the fabric and image of whole localities. Design involves a complex mesh of symbolic, material and textual factors, with symbolic aspects taking on a particularly important role in today's ephemeral culture (Lash and Urry, 1994). Designers now play a key role in the development of branded, stylised spaces with design geared increasingly towards attracting desirable consumers, repelling undesirable ones and maximising consumer spending. Mainstream commercial

spaces are designed environments which connect with widely held social and ideological values and the desire of particular social groups to distinguish themselves through not only material but symbolic or positional goods (Veblen 1994; Bourdieu 1984). Branding, then, is designed to create not only product loyalty but consumer identity, social status and differentiation (Klein, 2000), especially in relationship to other style groups (Julier, 2000:98). In this sense, there are variations in the form of design within the mainstream, correlating to different taste groups within the city which cluster around particular environments, each with their own ambience, design and social codes.

The current entertainment economy has also flourished due to political processes and regulatory responses by the national (Burrows and Loader, 1994) and local state to changes in the global economy and shifts in production (Harvey, 1989b). The 'return to the urban centre' or 'downtown' (O'Connor and Wynne, 1995; Harvey, 2000) is underpinned by a belief that the revitalisation of core areas of old industrial cities is crucial for economic renewal. This has resulted in a fundamental rethink of the role of the local state, in particular, chronicling a shift in its historic managerial and welfarist functions towards aiding urban regeneration via property development, deregulation and encouraging corporate inward investment (Jessop, 1997). Along with a renaissance of city-centre employment and housing markets, cultural or creative industries have been used in the economic and symbolic rejuvenation of local economies throughout the west in the wake of manufacturing decline (Williams, 1997; Hall, 1999; Pratt, 1997; Scott, 2000).

Entertainment and nightlife activities have become central components of this economic restructuring process and have provided many localities assumed escape routes to offset decline in the local economy (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). While the city at night has historically been regarded as the shadowy 'other' of the working day as a place for marginal, crime-ridden and liminal pleasures (Lovatt, 1995), since the 1980s nightlife and a host of popular cultural activities, often promoted through the idea of the '24-hour city', have become an accepted part of urban growth (Lovatt, 1995; Bianchini, 1995; Heath and Stickland, 1997). As a result, a raft of public subsidies, public-private partnerships and regulatory changes (see Chapter 3) have emerged, not only to help kick-start the urban housing and office markets, but also to develop cultural, night-time and entertainment facilities (Harvey, 2000). Numerous commentators have noted that such developments, as well as having had a tendency to aid private capital, are stylistically partial to catering for cash-rich groups at the expense of more locally grounded economic development and the needs of the urban poor (Smith, 1996; Harvey, 1989b).

The rise of the entertainment economy also parallels changes in traditional sites of identity formation such as the home, work and the church and the rise of new consumer identities in the mall, stadium, nightclub and bar (Sennett, 1998; Lash and Urry, 1994; Rojek, 1995). Young adults have a particular role to play here, as they are often identified most strongly with the changing relationship between

work and leisure, and the growing demand for specialised lifestyle goods and services (Miles, 2000; Roberts, 1997). Part of this relates to changes in the economy which have resulted in extended youth transitions—exemplified by higher rates of unemployment and terms like 'post-adolescence' and 'middle youth'—and involvement in nightlife and entertainment for much longer periods of time (Hollands, 1995).

Additionally, elements of the post-Fordism paradigm have drawn attention to the move away from mass to more individualised forms of consumption (Hall and Jacques, 1989; Urry, 1990), as well as the rise of new social identities in relation to gender, sexuality, ethnicity and more specific youth cultural and hybrid forms (Muggleton, 1997). However, in this regard it is also important not to overstate the flexibility thesis in cultural terms (i.e. the 'cultural turn'), and simply read off a particular set of more differentiated postmodern consumption practices from a supposed more flexible mode of production (see Warde, 1994, for example). As we argue in Chapter 4 (also see Hollands, 2002), there remain significant cleavages in the youth population between highly paid young professionals, those in lower-level service and manual work, and a section either permanently unemployed or in unstable employment (Ball *et al.,* 2000), not to mention significant gender, sexual (see Chapter 7) and ethnic divisions (see Chapter 8), which continue to contour nightlife destinations and spaces. In fact, despite an apparent opening up of markets to new groups of consumers (women, students, gay and ethnic groups) it is increasingly the cash-rich, middle-class factions of these populations that are the industry's favoured consumers of entertainment and nightlife facilities (Hannigan, 1998; Wynne and O'Connor, 1998; Chatterton and Hollands, 2002).

This brings us to our final feature of the contemporary urban entertainment economy—the social and spatial segmentation of consumer markets. As Christopherson (1994:409) suggests:

> The signal qualities of the contemporary urban landscape are not playfulness but control, not spontaneity but manipulation, not interaction but separation. The need to manage urban space and particularly to separate different kinds of people in space is a pre-eminent consideration in contemporary urban design.

Market segmentation (both socially and spatially) exists in tandem with the emergence of standardised globally branded products and services, exploiting economies of scale as well as scope (Kumar, 1995:190). The development and co-existence of niche and mass brands is particularly important for understanding tendencies towards segregation in the entertainment economy. Urry's (1990) discussion of the travel industry is a good initial model here. For example, he outlines how differences in historic ownership patterns in the industry—between, for example, smallholders and the landed classes—have determined the social tone of consumption destinations, differentiating mass/cheap from elite/niche travel destinations. Urry (1990) further elaborates on these different consumer

markets through the duality of the 'collective gaze' of the sociable working classes and the 'romantic gaze' of the more detached middle classes. Hiding major social divisions beneath trendy lifestyle categories, the entertainment sector, then, is in reality carved up between mainstream and premium lifestyle provision, with a general pandering towards middle-class taste, 'riskless risk' (Hannigan, 1998), and conscious attempts to sanitise and exclude the poor and disenfranchised (Toon, 2000; Ruddick, 1998; MacDonald, 1997; Sibley, 1995).

City-centre gentrification (see Smith 1996; Ley, 1996), traditionally conceived through changes in the housing market, has become increasingly concerned with the production and consumption of urban social and spatial differentiation.[4] Smith (1996:114) argues: 'Gentrification is a redifferentiation of the cultural, social and economic landscape, and to that extent one can see in the very patterns of consumption clear attempts at social differentiation.' In his terms, it is the 'class remake of the central urban landscape' (Smith, 1996:39). Gentrification is also tied up with economic, social and cultural restructuring, broadening its focus to include the cultural and aesthetic infrastructure necessary to support different lifestyles and identities in the new urban economy (Zukin, 1988).

Hence, the rise of incomes among wealthy city-livers and the urban service professional class (Ley, 1996; Savage and Butler, 1995; Butler, 1997) has stimulated demand for gentrified and 'safe' entertainment, on top of mainstream and commercially oriented provision for those in more routine and lower-order service jobs seeking weekend escapism and 'hedonism in hard times' (Redhead, 1993). Additionally, when many previously marginalised groups such as women, gay and ethnic populations are brought into the arena of entertainment consumption, they are either absorbed into mainstream or gentrified sectors (see Chapter 7; also Whittle, 1994; Chasin, 2001) or simultaneously separated into entertainment ghettos such as gay villages, ethnic entertainment zones, women-only nights, etc. In contrast, unemployed, low-income and welfare-dependent groups literally have no space here. Gentrified spaces, then, not only reaffirm existing structures in the labour market (Smith, 1996), they also hide the 'dirty' back regions of entertainment production by constructing the illusion of a wealthy urban oasis (Zukin, 1995).

These branded and segmented entertainment markets have spatially encroached into the everyday urban public realm of 'the street' (Klein, 2000). One of the most significant markers here is the transformation of abandoned, ageing architecture into leisure and consumption destinations, a notable recent trend being the conversion of banks, churches, schools and hospitals into restaurants or large chain bars (see Figure Plate 5.4). Industrial buildings once rooted in the fabric of working-class and community life have become the infrastructure for a new class of high-income pleasure-seekers and city-livers (Zukin, 1992). Increasingly, the shapers of these new urban spaces are multinational media and entertainment conglomerates who have shifted their emphasis to making 'places' as much as making products (Davis, 1999)—so much so that some commentators have begun to talk about the creation of urban 'brandscapes' rather than community landscapes

(Hart, 1998), subsequently involving the squeezing out of what one might refer to as 'unmarketed cultural spaces' and dispossessed groups in cities (Klein, 2000: 45; Sibley, 1995). The dominance of this urban entertainment economy, and how it specifically relates to the nightlife industries, is the focus of the next section.

Corporatisation, branding and market segmentation in the nightlife industries

In the first section of this chapter, we have sought to generally theorise the emergence of the entertainment and night-time economy and reveal some of its general features, including transformations in its mode of production, increased concentration of ownership, and use of branding/theming and market segmentation. The following section empirically examines the emergence of this dominant pattern with specific reference to urban nightlife in various contexts, and examines some of the implications for older historic and newer alternative forms of production.

Nightlife restructuring and corporate concentration

One of the most striking features of the current mode of nightlife production is the shift towards the concentration of corporate activity across a number of areas such as alcohol manufacturing, venue ownership and product distribution. Despite being a global trend, concentration and restructuring takes on varied forms in different locations (see Held *et al.,* 1999). Of particular importance here are national regimes of production and regulation which have historically shaped economic sectors such as brewing and the ownership of nightlife venues.

In terms of brewing, the trend towards global concentration continues at a rapid pace. World-wide, around thirty big brewery companies currently account for two-thirds of the beer produced (European Commission, 2001:1). Moreover, trade in hops has become concentrated in the hands of two major groups over the last four years, accounting for 40 per cent and 30 per cent respectively of the total world market in hops (*ibid.:* 3). A number of large firms have grown from their home markets to dominate large geographical regions. These include Anhäuser—Busch (A—B) the world's largest brewer, Adolph Coors Co. and Miller Brewing Co. (owned by Philip Morris) in the USA, AmBev in South America, Kirin/Lion Nathan in the Asia-Pacific, South African Breweries in Africa, and Scottish & Newcastle (S&N), Heineken, Carlsberg and Interbrew in Europe (see Table 2.1).

Interbrew, the second-largest brewer in the world after a spate of acquisitions, is particularly intent on market domination and has an unashamed goal of beating America's Anhäuser—Busch to be the world's largest brewer. Interbrew's products are sold in 110 countries, and in the highly competitive UK market it is already the market leader. Over the 1990s, Interbrew entered a phase of rapid expansion, and completed thirty acquisitions and strategic joint ventures, the largest of which were Labatts (Canada), Oriental Breweries (South Korea), SUN

Table 2.1 World's biggest brewers: by sales volume, 1999

Rank	*Company (country HQ)*	*Million hecto litres*
1	Anhäuser–Busch (USA)	154.7
2	Interbrew (Belgium)	79.6
3	Heineken (Netherlands)	74.0
4	Ambev (Brazil)	59.0
5	South African Breweries (South Africa)	55.2
6	Miller (USA)	51.8
7	Kirin/Lion Nathan (Japan/New Zealand)	39.7
8	Carlsberg (Denmark)	37.0
9	S & N/Kronenburg (UK/France)	33.0
10	Coors (USA)	30.0

Source: Bilefsky, 2000

Interbrew (Russia) and Bass Brewers and Whitbread Beer Company (UK). Interbrew's recent acquisition of the German family-owned Becks company for £1.1 billion signals its ongoing commitment to gaining a foothold and expanding in the world's most prosperous alcohol markets. The company motto, 'the world's local brewer', demonstrates its desire to be both global and local and its commitment to the rather awkward goal of the 'glocalisation' of its markets. Although the beer sector is increasingly concentrated, what is also evident are highly intricate webs of interrelationships, cross-investments, collaboration and competition which have been woven by the leading international beer companies in their fight for geographical domination (Bellas, 2001). Recent mergers between, for example, Antarctica and Brahma in South America and Interbrew, Bass and Whitbread in Europe are evidence of this.

In terms of both brewing and the ownership of venues, levels of concentration vary considerably between countries. In the USA, the production of beer is highly concentrated, with A—B, Miller and Coors accounting for 80 per cent of the industry's shipments in 1997. A progressive tax is in place in the USA which has helped to create a microbrewing industry with a $ 1 billion turnover, and 'brew pubs' are a distinctive part of the North American mode of nightlife production

(see Box 2.1). However, the 1,610 microbreweries, brew pubs and regional speciality brewers (known together as 'craft brewers') hold only 3.0 per cent of the market share in the USA and face intense competition from large national brewers (Institute for Brewing Studies, 2001). In particular, the US Department of Justice has looked into allegations that A—B is engaging in unfair sales and distributions practices, when three California micro-breweries allegedly filed a class action suit against the company for using its large market share to coerce independent wholesalers into dropping smaller brands (All About Beer, 1997). A—B is also engaged in micro-brewing in order to gain a share in the growing independent market.

BOX 2.1
: NORTH AMERICAN NIGHTLIFE OWNERSHIP PATTERNS

The ownership of nightlife venues in North America differs somewhat from the UK situation where, historically, brewers controlled the majority of pubs, either through direct ownership or through a 'tied' system whereby the tenant leased the premises and had to stock a certain percentage of beers and ales made by their brewery landlord (see Mason and McNally, 1997, and the subsequent discussion below), In contrast, control of liquor licensing in the USA and Canada rests with individual states and provinces, and various examples here suggest that regulations generally prohibit drinks manufacturers from gaining access to a licence to sell to the public, with some exceptions (i.e. brewpubs), Indeed, in New York state, the Alcohol Beverage Control Law says that 'no brewer shall sell any beer, wine or liquor at retail',[5] while the Liquor License Act of Qntario states that a licence to sell liquor shall not be issued to a manufacturer, or any person likely to promote the sale of liquor or to sell the liquor of a manufacturer exclusive of any other manufacturer.[6] As such, nightlife ownership in the USA is more diffuse and is characterised by a mix of; corporate chain 'bar-restaurants' in which a number of activities such as seated drinking, food and entertainment are mixed (see Gottdiener, 2001; Hannigan, 1998); independent operators who have promotional deals with the major breweries; and brew pubs, which combine making and selling their own beer but also offer a full range of commercial beers as well. All three types invariably offer food as well as drink. Despite this mix, the general pattern of dominance by large chain bar—restaurants, like Hard Rock Café, Planet Hollywood, ESPN Zone, Hooters and Dave & Buster's, in many cities around North America (and the activities of the Firkin Group of Pubs and Prime Restaurants in Canada) is comparable to some of the branding and theming patterns which we note in the UK. Similarly, as we outline in Chapter 5, parts of North America are also currently experiencing a growth in themed English

and Irish pubs in both the independent and corporate chain sector of the industry. (see also Box 5.2)

Germany, the world's third largest beer market and a country internationally renowned for its beer and drinking cultures, still has a diffuse pattern of ownership and an unconsolidated beer market. This is underpinned by dynastic family control of beer production and a system of 'progressive beer taxation' which enables small companies to survive alongside larger ones. As a result of this tax, Germany is home to 1,270 breweries, accounting for three-quarters of all the beer production sites in the European Union. However, the centuries-old traditions associated with small-scale family brewing are being eroded by the imperatives of the global market. In 2001, the family-dominated board of the Becks company decided that the company was too small to compete internationally. The subsequent sale of Becks to Interbrew for £1 billion signals the beginning of the end of Germany's position as the last bastion of independent local brewers (Clark, 2001). Similarly, in Belgium the number of breweries has fallen from 3,223 at the start of the twentieth century to 115 by 2000. These fewer remaining companies, rather than focusing upon the domestic market, are focusing on export. For example, in 1960 Belgian breweries exported 2 per cent of their beer production, whereas by 2000 Belgian brewers exported 37.5 per cent, nearly five and a half million hecto litres (The Confederation of Belgian Breweries, 2001).

The British story is interesting due to the considerable ongoing consolidation of ownership in both the brewing sector and the ownership of nightlife venues. The watershed event was the 1989 Monopolies and Mergers Commission Report, which concluded that a complex monopoly existed in the brewing industry largely as a result of high levels of vertical integration, in which brewers owned everything from production to the point of sale (Mason and McNally, 1997). At this time, 88 per cent of public houses were either managed or tied as tenanted houses to a small number of large breweries. This report led to the Supply of Beer Orders Act, which aimed to break the monopoly ownership of the national brewers by restricting the 'tied house' system so that no brewer could own, lease or have any other interest in more than 2,000 pubs; in addition, at least one guest beer should be sold, and loan tying should be abolished (Mason and McNally, 1997:412). As a result of this legislation, most large national brewers sold off large stocks of public houses to come within these limits or divested from brewing altogether to get around the limits on pub ownership imposed upon them. However, the Act was never fully implemented, as breweries only had to release ties on half the pubs held over the 2,000 limit, and the loan ties were never completely abolished *(ibid.)*. Since then, the brewing and pub-owning sectors have grown increasingly functionally separated, and there has been an acceleration of mergers, concentration and rationalisation within both. In terms of brewing, while in 1930 there were 559 brewery companies in Britain, by 1998 there were only 59 (BLRA, 1999). By 2000, Scottish-Courage remained the only national-level brewer with annual beer

sales in excess of £2 billion (Ritchie, 1999) and alongside Interbrew, Carlsberg—Tetley and Guinness, these four super-brewers continue to control 81 per cent of beer sales in the UK.

More significant has been the restructuring of the ownership of nightlife venues in the UK. Traditional operators, such as local or regional brewers or independent entrepreneurs, declined in importance over the twentieth century as they were acquired by and merged with a small number of large national brewers. Over the last decade of the twentieth century the monopoly of these national brewers was broken up by the Beer Orders Act, and the ownership and production of nightlife spaces now represents a complex hierarchy between a number of types of operators. First, many well-established historic brewers, such as Scottish & Newcastle, Bass (now Six Continents) and Whitbread, have grown into large national and multinational entertainment conglomerates. Their retail wings continue to own large pub estates and have the resources to manage a wide portfolio of venues, including premium-branded bar venues and unbranded tenanted pubs. However, many of them are increasingly divesting their unbranded, smaller and older stock, which includes traditional community pubs, and are concentrating on branded mixed-use lifestyle venues, restaurants, health centres and hotels (Leisure and Hospitality Business, 2000).

Second, an emerging breed of highly profitable 'pubcos' also play a dominate role in the high-street nightlife market, which is a rapidly growing sector worth an estimated £2.5 billion (*The Publican,* 5 February 2001:17). These companies are highly acquisitive, are usually backed by international corporate financial houses, and are profiting greatly as former brewers continue to sell off pub estates. For example, 70 per cent of the Punch Group is owned by the US investment firm Texas Pacific Group, Pubmaster is backed by WestLB, one of the largest German banks, and Morgan Grenfell Investment Company has acquired much of Whitbread's pub estate. Venture capitalists such as Alchemy and 3i are also getting in on the act and are buying up nightlife venues (Leisure and Hospitality Business, 2000). Over the last decade, such 'pubcos' have expanded, with around seventy such companies existing across the UK owning nightlife estates of thirty or more venues. Most of these companies are undergoing internal restructuring in preparation for floating on the stock market. While the number of pubs has stayed roughly static at about 62,000, the number owned by national brewers has fallen from 32,000 to 3,300 over the last ten years (now accounting for 5.3 per cent of the pub market). In contrast, 'pubcos', who owned 16,000 outlets in 1989, owned around 48,000 in 2000 (accounting for nearly 80 per cent of the market). In particular, the growth of multi-site 'pubcos' has been dramatic, accounting for nearly 50 per cent of all pubs in the UK in the same year (Table 2.2). Many of these 'pubcos' have shown remarkable levels of growth: for example, Nomura Principal Investment Group has prospered by buying up premises from brewers or former brewers (see Box 2.2). Similarly, the JD Wetherspoon pub chain, which started from a single premises in London, was touted as the fastest growing company in the UK and the ninth in Europe in early 2002 (JD Wetherspoon, 2002).

Table 2.2 Change in pub ownership in the UK, 1989–2000

	1989	*2000 January*	*2000 July*
National brewers			
Tenanted	22,000	2,724	1,000
Managed	10,000	7,336	2,300
Sub-total	32,000	10,060[a]	3,300[b]
Regional brewers			
Tenanted	9,000	5,939	5,939
Managed	3,000	3,498	3,498
Sub-total	12,000	9,437	9,437
Non-brewer operators			
Single/independent	16,000	18,098	18,098
Multi-site pubcos	·	24,196	30,956
Sub-total	16,000	42,294	49,054
Total	60,000	61,791	61,791

Source: The Publican newspaper, 2000

[a] *Bass, Scottish & Newcastle, Whitbread*

[b] *Scottish & Newcastle only*

BOX 2.2
: NOMURA: A GLOBAL—LOCAL LANDLORD

One of the UK's biggest pub landlords, Nomura is also the largest securities firm in Japan, playing a significant role in many key markets around the world through its banking, investment and venture capital divisions. The firm has operations in some thirty countries around the world, 12,310 employees and total assets of some ¥20,529,135 in 2001. While its main business is providing individual and corporate trading services in its home market, it has also sought to revive its fortunes with a range of mergers and acquisitions outside Japan, Under the direction of the former managing director of its Principal Finance Group, Guy Hands, reportedly said to personally earn in the region of £40 million a year, Nomura embarked on a £10 billion buying spree, acquiring some of the UK's best-known brand names, The Nomura portfolio includes betting chains, off-licences, international hotel chain Le Meridien, the Ministry of Defence married quarters, and joint ownership of Boxclever (an amalgamation of Granada and Radio Rentals). It also paid £700 million for one third of British Rail's rolling stock, and won the bidding contest to redevelop the Millennium Dome after attempts to buy it failed. Nomura is well known for buying companies, turning them around and selling them at a profit. Nomura's recent acquisition of nearly a thousand pubs from Bass plc and 1,800) from GrandMet vaulted it to number one among pub owners in the UK, with around 5,500) pubs. Through such mergers

it aims to move away from a centrally managed estate to 'tenanted' outlets, leased to local entrepreneurs who pay rent. Nomura continues to get even more dominant as market leader, as it bids for more pubs recently put on the market.

By 2000, the ten largest pub operators owned nearly 50 per cent of all pubs and bars in the UK; only three still have a connection with brewing. The biggest included Nomura, the Punch Group, Whitbread, Six Continents Leisure, and Scottish & Newcastle Retail, who each owned over four thousand venues (*The Publican,* 2000). Smaller, independent pub companies owning only a handful of venues do still exist and have introduced innovative new nightlife venue concepts, and there are also a number of regional brewers with sizeable pub estates, such as Greene King, Wolverhampton and Dudley and Young & Co. However, both independent operators and regional brewers have been extremely susceptible to buy-outs from larger predatory operators, eager to buy successful bar brands to expand and be able to float on the stock exchange. As one independent bar owner from the UK commented:

> If you look around in cities you will find a handful of people involved in setting up bars and the rest of it is just the corporates. But then the corporates come straight in afterwards and if you're setting up a bar and struggling to make a living and somebody comes along and says, well, we'll give you half a million, you take it and run.
>
> (Bar manager 1, Leeds)

This ongoing restructuring has significant implications for the ways in which pubs and bars are operated in the UK, with a shifting balance between managed or tenanted/leased outlets. Up until the massive changes in pub ownership in the 1990s, most traditional pubs owned by the brewers were operated as tenancies. However, the number of tenanted premises fell dramatically from nearly 45,000 to just under 10,000 between 1967 and 1998, while the number run as managed houses dramatically increased (BLRA, 1999). The recent growth of super-pubs, style bars and branded restaurants has shifted ownership in favour of managed rather than tenanted outlets, which is indicative of a resurgence of more 'Fordist' centre-branch plant management structures (see Piore and Sabel, 1984).

There are some signs that tenanted outlets were enjoying a limited renaissance by 2000, as they offered stable rental income and reduced overhead costs for pub operators, with less need for area managers, head-office staff, personnel and marketing departments. Moreover, these operators are aware that tenancies can offer a differentiated product, in contrast to the large glut of branded pubs and bars which continue to fill Britain's high streets. This counter-trend is more indicative of post-Fordist notions of subcontracting and outsourcing (Kumar, 1995:60–1). However, there are limits to diversity even here: companies like

Nomura tie their tenants into particular buying agreements which inevitably lead to a standardisation of product availability—arrangements which resonate with the idea of 'flexible mass production' (Piore and Sabel, 1984). Nomura has even set up a website for its tenants, listing potential suppliers to buy from. The Nomura-owned 'Inntrepreneur pubco' is currently facing a number of legal challenges from tenants for illegally 'tying' them into above-market-price buying arrangements with suppliers, a practice which was outlawed under the Beer Orders Act (Clark, 2001).

Clearly, such dramatic restructuring has implications for older (residual), independent and alternative modes of nightlife production. Many small independent operators were pessimistic about the encroaching influence of large corporate operators. As one independent owner commented:

> With corporate enterprise taking over more and more, they have a game plan that they will follow, which is domination of city-centre sites…but I think the long-term view is that corporate rape and pillage will continue. You know they're all gobbling each other up because they've got to grow.
>
> (Bar owner 1, Newcastle)

Large, corporately backed 'pubcos' are able to put up large sums of money to transform high-value listed city-centre buildings in prime locations into new premises, spatially squeezing out independent entrepreneurs and dominating the urban landscape. Urban nightlife, then, has become a competitive arena with only the strongest, or wealthiest, able to survive (Zukin, 1995).

As Figure 2.1 shows, across a number of older industrial cities in the UK by 2000 ownership of bars and pubs is concentrated in the hands of a small number of national/multinational operators, notably S&N and Bass, plus a number of growing 'pubcos'. While there are also a number of regional brewers, recent indications suggest they are likely either to divest from brewing or to sell off their successful bar brands to expanding 'pubcos'. The revocation of the Beer Orders Act in 2001 however, has opened up opportunities for companies, especially former brewers, to make bulk purchases of nightlife venues. The prospect of such acquisitions could lead to a re-integration of the industry. Market concentration is likely to increase further as many traditional operators also slowly divest from alcohol-oriented nightlife into higher-profit areas such as pub-restaurants, fitness centres and hotels, due to perceived shifts in demographic and consumption patterns.

Nightclubs are currently experiencing similar levels of market concentration, although overall less so than bars and pubs. In the UK, for example, the nightclub industry had sales of over £2 billion in 1997, and admitted around 185 million people through their doors (Mintel, 1998:15). However, many nightclub operators are facing new challenges due to falling audiences and the blurring of divisions between pubs and clubs, which has made the nightclub sector particularly difficult

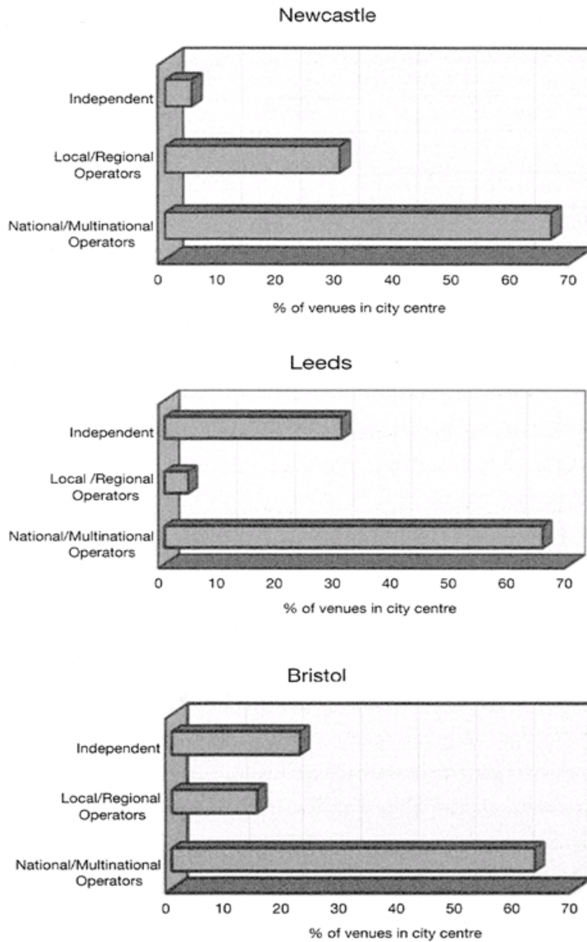

Figure 2.1 Ownership in the night-time economy—Newcastle, Leeds and Bristol, UK, 2000

Source: Chatterton and Hollands, 2001

for small operators. These tight margins opened the way for large operators in the UK, such as the Po Na Na Group and Luminar Leisure. Luminar, for example, grew through the £360 million acquisition of Northern Leisure and Rank Leisure, to become one of the most established entertainment operators in the UK. Luminar runs 250 late-night venues, including brands such as Chicago Rock Café, Jumpin Jacks and Life Café Bars, and by 2002 had established itself as the largest nightclub operator in the UK, owning 15 per cent of all nightclubs. British dance clubs, in particular, are eager to play on their reputation as the birthplace of dance culture to expand their global reach. As a result, established and world-recognised dance clubs such as Cream and Ministry of Sound have been able to expand their

operations by staging huge festivals which have commodified some of the original elements of rave culture. Such a winning formula has been extended across the globe from India to South Africa.

In sum, the nighlife sector is a highly volatile and unstable, with a significant proportion of the country's pubs up for sale, and takeovers, mergers and divestments continue apace in both the club and bar sectors. In particular, the British pub and bar sector has virtually been severed from its historical association with national and place-based brewers and pub retailers and, more recently, its monopolisation by the big breweries since the 1950s. However, deregulation has not produced a post-Fordist panacea of small companies emerging to drive forward nightlife production. Rather, there has simply been a carving up of the different wings of the industry, with the overwhelming proportion of urban nightlife venues now owned by a handful of corporate operators. Many of these are backed by global equity and finance houses, while the UK beer market is dominated by two multinationals, Interbrew and Scottish—Courage. Brewers and former brewers staying in the pub business are increasingly concentrating company efforts on their branded premises, while competing with 'pubcos' and corporately financed companies who are pursuing both branding and theming strategies, with both busy developing more 'premium' markets. It is to this aspect that we now turn.

Branding and market segmentation in the production of urban nightlife

While branding is far from a new phenomenon in urban nightlife, it has grown from its origins in alcoholic products (Tennant, 1994) to apply to whole/multiple retail outlets and has become a central part of the expansion strategies of many pub and bar-restaurant operators. Well-known global brands such as Hard Rock Café (fortyone outlets world-wide) and Planet Hollywood (sixty-eight outlets world-wide) combine drinking with eating, while in the USA many of the branded bars and clubs are combined with restaurants or other entertainment packages such as sport, virtual arcades, the sex industry or live music, and include ESPN Zone, Dave & Buster's, Hooters, Spearmint Rhino and Billboard Live (for a more detailed discussion of some of these examples, see Box 5.2). So, while the branding and theming of nightlife destinations is a global phenomenon, it has become particularly strong in the UK over the last decade. Eight per cent of all pubs in the UK are now branded using one of 206 brands, with the top five pub operators controlling 63 per cent of branded pubs (*The Publican,* 2000). In city centres the branding process is much higher, with about 30 per cent of premises branded. In particular, out of its 3,300 outlets, Scottish & Newcastle Retail claim that '50 per cent of the estate is currently branded. This will rise to 70 per cent by April 2002' (Scottish & Newcastle, 2001). All nation-wide operators are now organised around branded divisions rather than geographical areas.

Branding has also become a key driver for the nightclub sector, especially with the growth of 'super-clubs' such as Gatecrasher, Ministry of Sound and Cream.

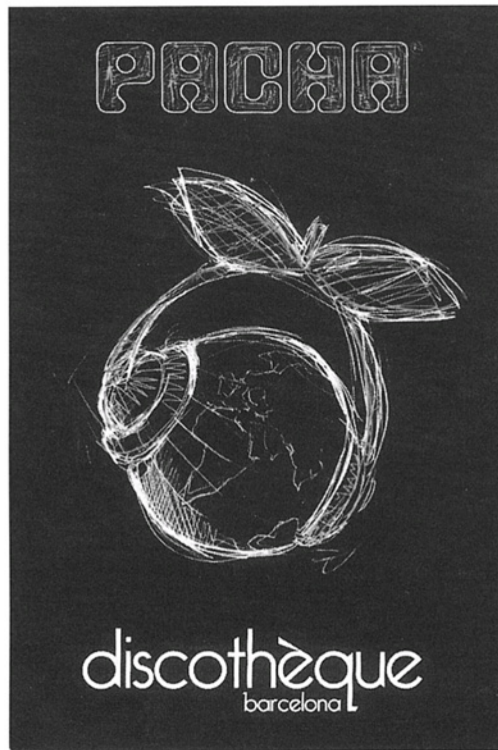

Plate 2.2 The Pacha brand goes global. Flier for Pacha nightclub; Barcelona, Spain, 2002

Source: Carlos Aparicio

Pacha, with a 34–year history and over eighty venues world-wide marked by the distinctive two-cherries logo, is the biggest global nightclubbing brand. First opened by Ricardo Urgell in Sitges, near Barcelona, in 1966, and then on the party island of Ibiza in 1973, the brand has expanded through franchises across the world in places such as Buenos Aires, Munich and Budapest. Nineteen more opened in 2002 with the prospect of Pacha restaurant franchises, and the brand has developed out of nightclubs and into the music sector through Pacha Records, launched in 2000. Meanwhile, www.pacha.com offers live TV and radio link-ups to nightclubs, and an on-line 'storePacha' sells clubbing accessories from bikinis and t-shirts to wallets and jewellery. Pacha opened its first UK venue in London in 2001; as the manager Bill Reilly explained, the venue isn't driven by the DJs or the music, but by the Pacha brand (*Night Magazine,* February 2002:19). (See Plate 2.2.)

The branding and theming of nightlife venues has numerous benefits for large corporate operators. Its attractiveness as a strategy stems from its ability to increase rational production techniques, and hence reduce costs and overheads,

and tap into sacred consumer principles such as consumer choice, quality through reputation, safety, convenience and reliability (du Chernatony and Malcolm, 1998; Ritzer, 2001; Gottdiener, 2001). Branding has become an imperative for most large entertainment conglomerates as a way of minimising risk, maximising profits for shareholders and gaining the trust of stock-market investors. As a representative from a large nightlife operator in the UK claimed:

> As far as the City [London Stock Exchange] is concerned, half a dozen pubs in one town means nothing to them. Whether they make, you know, good money or not, it is not something. I mean the City loves brands, they love things that you can roll out and you can have 20/30/40.
>
> (Regional manager for a multinational leisure operator 1, Newcastle)

Additionally, hiding the reality of corporate ownership behind lifestyle brands is also a way for operators to detract attention away from their market domination and to encourage consumers to believe that they are making a discerning nightlife choice. As Nick Tamblyn, the managing director of the Chorion Group, owner of the Tiger Tiger brand in the UK, has said: ‘There has to be a bigger difference between each Tiger Tiger club than between Burger King and McDonald’s’ (Doward, 1999:1). And despite being an obvious franchised chain in Canada, the Firkin Group of Pubs logo is ‘Everyone’s a little different. One’s just right for you’ (www.firkinpubs.com). Moreover, developing a portfolio of brands allows companies to develop a number of distinct identities, target several audiences and operate at several venues in one location without competing with themselves for customers.

Whitbread Beer Company in the UK, for example, has broken down drinkers into seven categories, which include: the Breezer, defined as ‘the most common style’, where ‘drinking is just part of a good night out’; the Steamer, ‘the rowdy type, aims to drink as much as possible and quite possibly raise a little hell’; the Poser, for whom ‘drinking is a fashion statement’; and the Adapter, who has ‘just turned 18, has a little money but no confidence and no experience. Just goes with the flow.’ Similarly, a study completed by the Carat Media Group (Carat Insight, 2001) analysed 15–34 year olds and categorised them in terms of how they respond to consumer goods and advertising: L Plate Lads, Disillusioned Young Mums, Cross Roaders, Progressive Leaders, City Boys, Survivors, New Traditionalists and Confident Introverts. This process of deconstructing the market and reconstructing it around branded identities, while often involving young adults through market research, is also based upon the work of company directors and marketers intent on formulating brands and dominating markets rather than responding to consumer tastes.

The current mode of nightlife production based upon brand development is a purposeful attempt to shape new consumer identities in the night-time economy, and can be understood as part of the wider restructuring of entertainment production. On the one hand, niche branding can be seen as evidence of the

industry moving away from the declining Fordist model associated with a mass consumption experience in the largely male-working-class-dominated traditional pub (Gofton, 1983; Harring, 1983; Harrison, 1971) towards a more differentiated yet segmented set of markets. Typically, stereotypical profiles of social groups are conflated into lifestyle categories, which then form the basis for a number of supposed niche markets (Goss, 1993). As a result, in the UK, Firkin and It's A Scream brands are associated with students, All Bar One and Quo Vadis target professional office workers, Bar 38 is allegedly 'women—and gay-friendly', while Bar Oz, Walkabout, OutBack Bar and Spring Bok target sports fans. Similarly, in the USA, Spearmint Rhino (a lap-dancing chain) courts corporate business groups, while ESPN Zone and Dave & Buster's target sports and virtual arcade fans respectively.

At the same time, even niche branding can be viewed as an extension of Fordist principles in that it can represent simply a more 'flexible' type of mass production (Piore and Sabel, 1984). Despite the fact that some of these new pub and bar concepts have promoted themselves as developing new types of licensing arrangements and different attitudes to dress codes and gender relations, and encouraging a diversity of uses generally mixing eating, drinking and entertainment, many brands are still recognised as 'much the same' or serially reproduced. For example, theming has come under heavy criticism from consumer groups and publicans alike for its damaging effects on the identity of the traditional British pub and its clientele (Everitt and Bowler, 1996), not to mention the fact that some consumers recognise that, rather than being unique, such premises are often both artificial and homogenous (see Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Some newer 'pubcos' have even gone as far as branding their premises as a 'traditional' nightlife experience, with Wetherspoons' 'just a pub' philosophy being one example.

Nightlife production around branded lifestyle niches is a highly reflexive process which requires continual adjustment. Many first-generation brands are now tired and unprofitable, and new brand 'roll-outs' are constantly required to reinvigorate consumer demand. Larger national chains have taken the branding concept a step further. Nightlife venues are increasingly disconnected from their placed-based and brewing legacies and refer instead to a wider lifestyle experience. Freed from the chains of the mundane production of beer, corporate pub companies now have the time and extra financial resources to develop brand images (Klein, 2000), and attempt to draw on wider synergies and lifestyle experiences linking food, fashion and sport, and based around certain dress codes and social mores. The alcoholic drinks themselves have become more brand than product. Hence, 'Can I have a beer?' has been replaced by 'Can I have a Becks?' Further, top brands draw upon 'aspirational advertising', which sells not merely alcoholic products but a series of packaged consumer experiences based around emotive feelings, such as success, glamour, sex, risk, youth and social status.

A central trend is towards branding up-market premises, which target cash-rich, high-disposable-income groups, or those perceived to be older and less rowdy.

Smarter up-market exclusive style and café-bars have emerged in order for certain social classes to redistinguish themselves from the mass nightlife market (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Business tourism and corporate hospitality are also significant influences in the creation of segmented nightlife markets (Doward, 2001). There are numerous examples of the gentrification of nightlife to draw on here, and we explore a number of case studies in Chapter 5. As housing, office, leisure and nightlife markets are recast through successive waves of property redevelopments, attached to them is a strong narrative of the 'public' who should (young professional service workers, trendy urbanites) and should not (younger teens, the homeless) inhabit these city spaces. At the same time, many corporate nightlife operators continue to provide more standardised and mass mainstream brands for those consumers in more routine, lower-order service jobs seeking weekend escapism and 'hedonism in hard times'. These themed and chain mainstream spaces offer predictable environments and familiar pathways through consumption choices for the mass-market nightlife consumer (Gottdiener, 2001: 148) and exist alongside a developing trend towards more premium premises.

Drawing on the situation in the UK, this process of upgrading nightlife spaces is readily apparent. In particular, the growth of style, themed and branded venues has been dramatic and to the detriment of traditional, alternative and residual older pubs. Cities such as Bristol and Leeds, for example, have witnessed significant high-level service-sector growth and repopulation in central areas which has fuelled upgraded, branded nightlife expansion over the 1990s. As Figure 2.2 shows, style and café-bars account for about 40 per cent of all venues in these cities. Conversely, alternative pubs and ale-houses account for a small and rapidly falling amount (around 10 per cent), and while traditional pubs still account for around one third of venues, this is likely to fall over the coming years as city-centre operators shift their focus to branded operations.

What is evident, then, is that older/historic and independent/alternative modes of nightlife are being quickly displaced by a post-industrial mode of corporately driven nightlife production in the consumption-led city. In the shadows exists the 'residue' of near-forgotten groups, community spaces and traditional drinking establishments marginalised by new city brandscapes. These residual spaces and people of the industrial city are now no longer required in the newly emerging and redeveloping corporate landscape. And while many aspects of nightlife remain seedbeds of resistance, often located on the margins, they find fewer opportunities to exist in the corporate city.

The interaction between these different modes of nightlife production varies between localities. In many places, older or resistant modes of production are still evident and sit uncomfortably alongside newer, stylish nightlife, and there is some evidence of resistance to branding and also brand failure. Many peripheral industrial cities, struggling to reinvent themselves into post-industrial consumption destinations, have a remaining legacy of strong local nightlife cultures based around local companies and brewers, often run by individual, family and self-made business entrepreneurs. They also have stronger and tight-

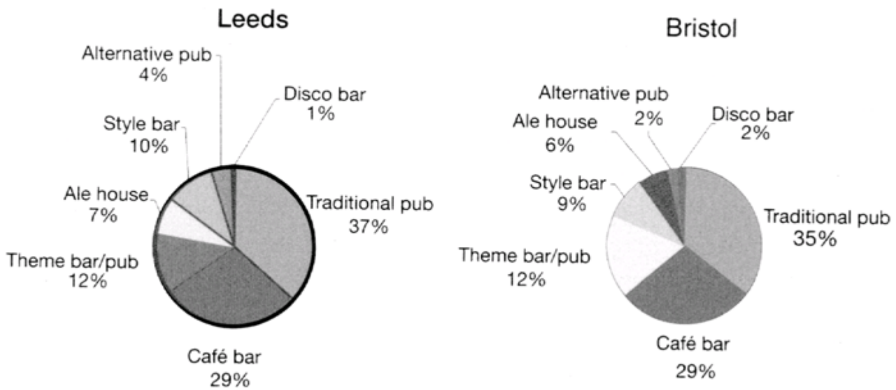

Figure 2.2 Venue styles in city-centre nightlife; Leeds and Bristol, UK, 2000

Source: Chatterton and Hollands, 2001

knit regional identities, masculine working cultures and a kind of hedonism in hard times through a desire for escapism for many young locals in the face of continuing economic constraints. In such a context, many global operators have found it difficult to enter local markets and brand penetration has been lower. However, even such transitional cities are entering into the global corporate fray, and the encroachment of nightlife brands and the creation of new stylish downtown identities continues to unfold (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001).

Many independent operators remain pessimistic about the encroaching influence of large corporately backed 'pubcos' and their chains, who are able to put up large sums of money to transform high-value buildings in prime locations into new premises. Moreover, large operators are able to gain cost advantages through rational techniques of production such as bulk buying arrangements and 'synergies' between products (Ritzer, 2001), and exploit their greater influence over the cash-strapped local state (Monbiot, 2000), whereas smaller operators suffer from a lack of access to start-up capital, business and marketing skills and a lack of affordable property, and face complex and expensive licensing laws. Left to the market, many smaller-scale, locally based nightlife producers continue to be closed down, pushed to the margins or simply bought out. These competing modes of nightlife are explored in greater detail in Part II of the book. In the next chapter, however, we turn to the regulation of the night-time economy.

3 REGULATING NIGHTLIFE

Profit, fun and (dis)order[1]

In February 2000, the doors opened to the exclusive Rock Club on London's Victoria Embankment. The venue was owned by Piers Adams, longstanding entrepreneur behind London nightlife chains K Bar and Po Na Na and long-term friend of Guy Ritchie and Madonna, and a glut of paparazzi and stars including Kate Moss, Robbie Williams, All Saints, George Clooney and Jude Law graced its opening night. Advertising itself as a members-only table club 'offering an intimate atmosphere with an emphasis on exemplary standards of service which has helped make Rock a magnet for the UK's smartest people' and 'London's Beautiful It Girls and It Boys', Rock is not for the average reveller. Corporate VIP Privilege Cards start at £1,000, with bottles of spirits served at your table for £140 (Rock Nightclub, 2001).

In the same year, Fred Braugthon, chair of the Police Federation in the UK, commented that there was a 'sense of disorder and anarchy' in many city centres due to the drunken, yobbish and often violent behaviour of many weekend revellers. Calls were made for new legislation to shut down 'thug pubs' and introduce 'on-the-spot' fines for drunken behaviour. These laws have been rushed through the UK parliament under the Criminal Justice and Police Act (2001). In May of the following year, 160 police in full riot gear raided the Gatecrasher nightclub in Sheffield due to concerns over drug dealing. The club was closed for over a month and is now in negotiations with the police to increase club security (*Night Magazine,* July 2001:13). The super-club Home, in London's Leicester Square, was also recently closed and its licence revoked by Westminster City Council using emergency procedures under the Public Entertainment Licence (Misuse of Drugs) Act 1997, after an undercover police operation led to several arrests of alleged drugs suppliers. Owners of the club, the Big Beat Group, went into liquidation.

How are we to make sense of these seemingly contradictory tendencies in which the night-time economy is associated with both the good times of stylish, exclusive activity and the bad times of violence, disorder and criminality? To unravel these contradictions, it is useful to think about how the night-time economy is governed. In a general sense, Miller *et al.* (2000) have outlined a shift from 'government' towards a wider process of 'governance' involving a range of actors from the business world, the voluntary sector and citizen groups. However, shifts to a more

governance-style approach can also be seen to reflect a wider restructuring of state, capital and consumer practices. In particular, some commentators have suggested that there is a decline of public accountability among local institutions and an intrusion of a business-led quangocracy into the local—regional economic development process (Imrie *et al.*, 1995; Geddes, 2000; Jessop *et al.,* 1999).

Viewed in this context, significant changes have occurred within nightlife over the last few decades. In the industrial era, traditional regulators such as the police and the licensing judiciary largely focused upon rigid ordering, control and restraint so as not to allow entertainment and leisure to interfere with the world of work (Harring, 1983; Cunningham, 1980). Aspects of this more Fordist mode of regulation continue, albeit in different forms, via various licensing controls and laws, not to mention through surveillance and policing (Hobbs *et al.,* 2000). Yet more recently, governing the night appears to have become a more fluid, differentiated and complex yet pervasive process. As many cities seek to rebuild themselves around a post-industrial, service-based economy, nightlife has become an important economic entity in its own right. New coalitions of interest groups—including realestate companies, property developers and entertainment conglomerates keen to profit from the new boom in the cultural economy, in conjunction with increasingly entrepreneurial and cash-strapped city councils and local governments—have formed, and have been effective in building a 'new consensus' for how the night-time economy should develop (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001).

Urban nightlife within this framework is largely based around profit generation and selling the city through developing up-market, exclusive leisure spaces, while marginalising local, independent and alternative nightlife and sanitising historic residual groups and spaces (Harvey, 2000). Despite the considerable success of this new consensus, problems and contradictions remain, including the stifling of local economic creativity in nightlife, a lack of consultation with the consumers and workers in the industry, and continuing problems of disorder, crime and noise. The night-time economy, then, continues to be framed through a number of—often contradictory—discourses such as law and order, economic development, creativity and inclusion.

As we explore in Part II of the book, regulatory changes appear to largely favour the development of urban spaces aimed at the needs of highly mobile, cash-rich youth groups such as business professionals, tourists, service workers and particular sections of the student, gay and female markets, while working against alternative/ oppositional and older, community-based forms of nightlife. In the conclusion to the book, we return to some of the questions raised here, and in particular the possibilities for regaining ground for more liberatory, locally grounded and creative nightlife practices.

Regulating urban nightlife: history and context

The regulation of nightlife is far from straightforward. As such, it is necessary to appreciate that it has a number of different dimensions—legal (laws and legislation), technical (CCTV and radio-nets), economic (drinks and door entry prices) and social—cultural (musical taste, youth cultural styles and dress codes). In this sense, regulation entails both formal strategies and mechanisms such as policing, CCTV and door prices, alongside more subtle and informal elements like norms, habits, dress, language, style and demeanour. Yet attempts to control open spaces such as pubs, bars and nightclubs are always partial and contested. Nightlife is an example of an ambivalent space: 'a space in which there is a desire both to accommodate a pluralistic public and to control it through rational strategies of surveillance and discipline' (Lees, 1999:245). Nightlife, then, represents a constant renegotiation and subversion of codes, styles and rules.

In spite of this fluidity, nightlife has been subject to much legal, political and indeed moral regulation (Dorn, 1983), fuelled by a longstanding anti-urbanism and a fear of crime and disorder, especially at night. While the control of licensed premises such as ale-houses, saloons and taverns dates back several centuries, the industrial city, through its connotations of immorality, vice and overcrowding, represented the heyday for the formalised control of entertainment and nightlife (Harring, 1983; Evans, 2002). In particular, there were strong, often contradictory, beliefs from the bourgeois classes that recreation time both demoralised and radicalised the working classes (Harring, 1983). While orchestras, theatre companies, professional associations and opera emerged for high-brow tastes, and variety halls, pleasure gardens, picture palaces, popular theatres and vaudeville catered for the increasingly educated, more middle-brow consumers (DiMaggio, 1991; Hannigan, 1998; Evans, 2002), the bawdy dance and music halls, burlesque houses, variety theatres, saloons and gin palaces of the industrial working classes were looked down upon, policed and heavily surveyed (Harring, 1983; Harrison, 1971).

Over the course of the twentieth century, leisure and entertainment has been subject to pervasive regulation and has been increasingly rationalised and planned through greater state involvement, censorship, licensing, planning guidelines and more formalised policing. The modern police force, which emerged out of the crisis of urban administration in the industrial city (Cohen, 1997:113; Harring, 1983), played a key role in this regulation, especially in city centres where social classes, elsewhere residentially segregated, congregated in large numbers (*ibid.,* 129). The last hundred years have witnessed the criminalisation of numerous traditional street pastimes and working-class pursuits (Pearson, 1983). Regulation, then, was often mainly targeted at working-class entertainment, as they were seen to be the main source of social vice and moral decline (Cunningham, 1980).

The heyday of organised industrial society, epitomised through the system of Fordist production, formalised and extended the rational social control of leisure (Sherman, 1986). This entailed a regimentation of the times and places of work

along the strict lines of scientific Taylorism, which was mirrored in the non-work sphere through the emergence of a distinct leisure time (Rojek, 1995; Thompson, 1967). The notion of instrumental rationality and the creation of the rational person (Weber, 1976; Marcuse, 1964; Sennett, 1977) is central in understanding the creation and regulation of mass consumption patterns. For instance, under Fordist work patterns, the night-time drinking economy was carefully regulated through the curtailment of entertainment and opening hours to ensure that workers' leisure did not interfere with their productivity (Harrison, 1971; Dorn, 1983; Gofton, 1990).

Neat links between consumption and production were never so clear-cut, even under a Fordist regime, especially in the rather messy and unstructured times and places of a night out. However, in the contemporary period, the connection here has become more blurred, complex and multifaceted (Lash and Urry, 1987). With the decline of the predominantly industrial/productionist society and the rise of a more service-based, consumption-oriented society (Zukin, 1991), many urban areas have sought new avenues for wealth creation in the entertainment, night-time and pleasure industries. In this context, the ideal of the '24-hour cultural economy' is part of a move away from the older industrial city, with its emphasis on manufacturing production and its visible temporal and spatial ordering. Pleasure-seeking and a broad range of nightlife activities now have a legitimate stage within the urban economy, which has created the need for more complicated and differential forms of governance.

Urban nightlife, then, contains a number of contradictory tendencies towards both deregulation and (re)regulation, and fun and disorder (Bannister and Fyfe, 2001). On the one hand, during weekend evenings city streets host tens of thousands of young revellers intent on fun, spending, drug-taking, dancing, encountering and subversion. It is now well accepted that this 'economy of pleasure' (Lovatt, 1995) and the '24-hour city' (Bianchini, 1995; Heath and Stickland, 1997) are vehicles for economic growth, profit generation and entrepreneurialism. The financial success of this after-dark economy has stimulated demand for its further deregulation. The other side of the coin is that, as Lovatt (1995) observes, regulation of the night-time economy has been slow to change, due to its perceived peripheral status to the daytime economy and a historical suspicion of it as a site of excess, vice and crime. In many ways, then, the night continues to be heavily influenced by Fordist concerns for tighter regulation, social control and zoning, due to lingering moral panics about lawlessness and disorder.

Young people, in particular, have a long history of being the focus for night-time moral panics and social control (Pearson, 1983), and the image of 'youth as trouble' continues to the present day (Wyn and White, 1997; Griffin, 1993; Males, 1996). Historically they provided various 'folk devils' (Cohen, 1980) for respectable society, be it in the guise of street hooligans, mods, rockers, teds, football fans, lager louts, ravers or joy-riders (Hollands, 2000; White, 1999). More recently, in the UK there is growing concern over drink-fuelled violence and

vandalism among young adults (Hobbs *et al.,* 2000; Lister *et al.,* 2000). Similar moral panics have arisen in the USA in relation to street gangs and hip-hop culture (Giroux, 1996), and there is also concern in Australia about excessive drinking, often based around youth, tourist and surf cultures (Homel and Clark, 1994). Such representations of youth continue to fuel a whole raft of restrictive regulations ranging from CCTV surveillance (Toon, 2000) to curfews (Collins and Kearns, 2001) and attempts to curb under-age drinking. So, in spite of efforts to create a profit-making 24-hour night-time culture, substantial obstacles remain, especially in relation to what is seen as an 'exclusionary' youth-dominated pub and club culture (Thomas and Bromley, 2000). Curiously, calls to speed up economic development and deregulate the night-time economy in the UK are made alongside new legislation to crack down on violence and crime on nights out.

As a result of these contradictions and various conflicts of interest, urban nightlife has become an arena for a more complex set of negotiations between a range of groups. As Table 3.1 highlights, there are a number of groups involved in the governance and regulation of nightlife, each of which has a different set of concerns and parameters. The rest of this chapter explores some of these tensions within and between these groups and, in particular, charts the clear shift in power from traditional bodies (the judiciary and police) primarily concerned with social order and public safety, towards groups such as business interests and the local state, with their imperatives of capital accumulation and desire to expand the cultural and night-time economy. At the same time, door security is caught between issues of social control and profit-making. While some citizens' groups (largely middle-class residents) are also part of this equation, consumers and workers in the night-time economy are largely silent here. Such regulatory transformations are also applied differentially, aiding corporate investment and profits while ignoring and often criminalising alternative/oppositional and residual nightlife groups and spaces.

Legislating the night

Traditions, cultural norms and habits within nightlife vary considerably between and within national contexts. The UK, for example, remains an island apart at the beginning of the twenty-first century with respect to an 11 p.m. watershed for the closing of bars and pubs, in contrast to other parts of the western world where nightlife patterns are later and staged between a variety of activities such as eating, drinking and going to a club. Drinking habits also vary. Sharing pitchers of beer is more widespread across North America, pints of lager are the preferred option in northern Europe, while small glasses of beer and wine are drunk in Mediterranean Europe. However, designer beers, strong 'psychoactive' alcopops, spirits and wines are now universally popular, and there is evidence of a convergence of drinking trends among young people (Beccaria and Sande, 2002).

Approaches to regulating the night, especially alcohol consumption, are framed within a variety of moral, social and political concerns which vary between

Table 3.1 Parameters among nightlife groups

Group	*Parameters*
Licensing judiciary	Implement national laws Respond to need for growth
Police	Restrict activity and maintain law and order Accept and manage growth of nightlife
Local state	Manage nightlife problems and promote equality and access Promote inward investment and economic development
Door security	Control access and stop disorder, often through use of violence Legitimate, professionalise and upgrade door security provision
Nightlife operators	Small-scale operators – creative motive Large-scale operators – profit motive backed by trade associations
Residents	Reduce nightlife to protect quality of life Seek fun in nightlife activities
Consumers	Distinction, creativity, difference Fun, hedonism, escapism
Workers	Low pay, long hours, poor conditions (bar staff) Financial and creative opportunities in night-time economy (managers, DJs, promoters, etc.)

countries. The USA, for example, has a long history of strict regulation of alcohol, most emphatically represented through Prohibition, which became law in January 1920 and lasted for thirteen years under the Volstead Act. Although the intention was to reduce criminal behaviour, the reality was an increase in illegal smuggling, sales and organised crime. 'Speakeasies' (illegal saloons), for example, proliferated, and by 1929 there were 32,000 in New York alone, twice the number of official bar saloons which had existed before 1920 (Miller, 2000). Strong anti-drinking sentiments have a long history in the USA, especially through right-political discourses on morality, the family and personal control. Efforts to curb, if not eliminate, alcohol sales historically rested with the religious-based temperance societies, for whom collective enrollment reached more than 1 million by 1840 *(ibid.)*. The saloon and the dance hall, centrepieces for working-class life in industrial cities such as Chicago, Milwaukee and Buffalo, were singled out as the dens of vice and moral decline in nineteenth-century America (Harring, 1983), and the anti-saloon movement went to great lengths to raise taxes to price them out of existence.

Remarkably similar moral concerns about alcohol have emerged again in contemporary American society (Engs, 1991). However, current attitudes towards alcohol are difficult to discern, reflecting both hedonism and puritanism and contemporary influences of a more globalised consumer society. Nightlife in the USA is also more decentralised, car—and home-based, and alcohol consumption is framed through strong moralistic undertones and a higher legal drinking age

(21) than in most other western countries.[2] Drink-driving is a particular concern, and groups such as Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) have played a key role in pushing for nation-wide legislation in terms of raising drinking ages and increasing penalties for drunk drivers. However, many young people have found creative ways around higher drinking ages. In Tijuana on the north Mexican border, lower legal drinking-age limits and inexpensive drinks have given rise to a nightclub district frequented by thousands of young Southern Californians; on weekend nights, more than 6,500 people cross back into the United States between 12 a.m. and 4 a.m. (Lange and Voas, 2000). Alcohol control remains high on the priority list for both state and federal governments. Each state has strong measures over the night-time economy through dedicated departments such as Alcoholic Beverage Control Departments and the State Liquor Authorities, which regulate the sale and consumption of alcohol and the issue, suspension and revocation of liquor licences, while the Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) regulates alcohol at the federal level.

Attitudes and regulations towards nightlife and alcohol vary widely across Europe. Northern European countries, especially the UK, are plagued by images of 'lager-fuelled yobs'. Here, drinking cultures are distinctive. Heavy binge drinking occurs on weekends and special occasions rather than with meals; many people drink for the purposes of getting drunk, and public drunkenness is more or less accepted. Age limitations are often established for legal alcohol consumption, and alcohol is generally prohibited for children (Engs, 1991). Nordic countries exhibit strict laws over personal consumption through state monopolies which control the production and distribution of alcohol through state-run stores.

In contrast, southern European countries have more relaxed drinking cultures often based around wines, generally consumed with meals. Drunkenness is less accepted, even at celebrations, and children are often given diluted wine with meals as part of a rite of passage into adult drinking cultures. In these cultures there are fewer perceived psycho-social problems and few strict control policies regarding alcohol use *(ibid.)*. Nevertheless, regulations are hardening. In Spain in 2002, for example, the government introduced a law, backed by heavy fines, banning drinking in the streets and the sale of alcohol to people under 18 years old. Such laws reflect a growing moral panic towards rowdy youth street drinking, known as the *Botellón,* (see Box 8.1) and concern over recent figures, which showed that 76 per cent of people between the age of 14 and 18 consume alcohol. This country, which has pursued a rather liberal approach to social control in the post-Franco era where children have been allowed freedom to drink, is now showing evidence of turning towards the USA model of banning alcohol to those under 21 years of age (De Rituerto, 2002).

In the UK, the government has been involved with the regulation of the sale and distribution of alcoholic drinks since the thirteenth century, due to concerns about beer purity, price and public order. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, licensing magistrates were granted absolute powers to refuse or grant new licences for pubs, taverns and hostelries where there was deemed to be sufficient

'need', in order to control what was seen as the 'odious and loathsome sin of drunkenness' (Justice Clerks Society, 1999:29). These archaic laws have remained, with very few amendments, for almost two centuries, and licensing magistrates still wield power in the control and development of the night-time economy despite their non-elected and non-representative status. They are often highly dependent on police information and intelligence about particular persons, places and premises, and are criticised for being out of touch with current trends in youth popular cultures and urban development. Many magistrates rely on stereotypes of young people and nightlife and have little direct experience of the activities for which they are legislating.

However, this seems set to change in the near future. By the 1990s, there was a growing awareness that licensing magistrates were interpreting 'need' in a way which was protecting the interests of existing licence-holders and restricting competition (Justice Clerks Society, 1999:77). In this context, the judiciary were encouraged to balance the needs of the free market and the demand for urban regeneration with those of controlling potential disorder and disruption. More fundamentally, the whole licensing system has been reviewed through the White Paper *Time for Reform* (Home Office, 2000), much of which is aimed at simplifying procedures for the sale of alcohol and entertainment and encouraging more and later nightlife activity, while at the same time granting tough new powers to the police and transferring more responsibility to the local state. While the judiciary has often upheld the status quo and controlled competition, many groups have voiced concerns over this shift in power. There is a recognition that magistrates at least provide independent judgement, anchored within a legal framework, while conflicts of interest may arise within the local state as it tries to balance economic development with public need (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001).

Legislating the night, then, is an arena of conflict between established and emerging styles of governance. In many cities with tough working-class industrial images, the authorities have kept a tight control over the development of nightlife through concerns over violence, guns, drugs and under-age drinking. Such fears seemed partially founded in the case of Manchester in the UK. Experiencing a rapid growth of nightlife in the 1990s, it was also widely dubbed 'Gunchester' due to gang violence in its clubland (Haslam, 1999). However, most large urban areas have actively transformed themselves from their industrial pasts through a business-led quangocracy, and in such places established regulatory groups have succumbed to a more deregulated and pro-growth approach to the night-time economy. In European countries, European Union legislation is encouraging a standardisation of regulatory arrangements which are more flexible, simple and market-responsive.

Policing the night

Any discussion of the role the police play in nightlife needs to be situated historically. Harring (1983) suggests that the police largely emerged from the class

struggle of industrial capitalism and are part of the broader development of capitalist social institutions. In particular, from the point of view of commercial employers, middle-class residents and religious and temperance groups, the police were seen as essential in upholding morality in the emerging industrial city, including nightlife. While policing only became formalised in the nineteenth century, in countries such as the UK their role in regulating the night dates back to the fourteenth century, when parish constables were given duties to regulate alehouses and taverns (Rawlings, 2002). In the USA, historically, police attitudes to nightlife activity were mixed, as constables could often be found in saloons having a beer and simultaneously monitoring the behaviour of locals (Harring, 1983).

Within the contemporary night-time economy, the police have adopted a more systematic, sober and professionalised approach, and largely fulfil a dual role: advising on the development of licensed premises and directly policing nightlife. In effect, they simultaneously pursue a moral and a coercive role (Cohen, 1997). This latter role has come under stark relief due to concerns over public disorder from increases in nightlife activity. In the UK, for example, the image of 'lager-fuelled youth' has become commonplace in the media and has led to legislation aimed at shutting down 'thug pubs' and curtailing drink-fuelled violence and vandalism.[3] Framing the night through such discourses of disorder has led the police to embark upon a crusade to crack down on perpetrators and 'clean up' the night.

The USA has its own set of issues in terms of policing the night, relating to more pronounced urban—suburban divides and car-based nightlife cultures, the race issue, gang violence and higher gun use. Policing in the United States is decentralised, with county and local police forces having significant levels of autonomy; hence, variations exist in terms of approaches. The USA has also witnessed a rise in nightlife violence, especially in clubland, which many believe relates to the reluctance of some nightclubs to summon police through concerns that they will be shut down. Leslie Ayers of San Francisco Late Night Coalition, a group of citizens, DJs and record producers, suggested that frequent emergency calls by venues increase the likelihood that they may be closed, which 'makes people think twice about calling 911' (quoted in Myers, 2001:3). More importantly, as we see in Chapter 8, certain music genres, especially rap and hip hop, have been blamed for creating a culture of violence (Giroux, 1996).

However, these impending law and order crises and concerns with moral decline overlook a long history of street violence and crime (Pearson, 1983). Additionally, the extent to which the police can claim absolute control over the night is always open to contestation (Herbert, 1999). Night-time spaces are inherently difficult to police, monitor and control as they are subject to flux, instability and constant renegotiation by the fluid movement of consumers. Police investigations here often have to unravel encounters which are framed through a cocktail of drugs (both legal and illegal) and emotionally charged behaviour. Nightlife is evasive,

fleeting and fast-paced, which repels the order that modern-day policing relies upon. Many nightlife spaces are indeed 'no go' areas for police.

Police attitudes to nightlife regulation vary and, in general, views on liberalisation and deregulation often depend upon the nature of their relationship with groups such as the local state, the business sector and religious groups. Young (1995) describes how police in Newcastle in the north of England have historically dealt with drunkenness in highly gender-specific ways, much of which relates to time-honoured institutionally imbued cultures of drinking among male police officers themselves. In localities which have embraced a more pro-business approach to development and the 24–hour city, the police have moved away from narrow law and order discourses and have taken on board more liberal interpretations. A central part of such moves has been the acceptance of staggered closing hours as a method for dissipating late-night flashpoints and violence. The police are also cognisant of the influence of design on nightlife violence and are keen to back café and style-based venues, where people are seated and alcohol is mixed with food.

However, problems including anti-social behaviour, outbursts of violence, excessive and under-age alcohol consumption, urinating and vomiting in the streets remain, whatever the type of nightlife. Many police forces have been unprepared for the scale of growth in nightlife, and, compared to other large sports and music events, street nightlife receives comparatively few resources. This has led them to seek complementary methods to police the city at night. In particular, there has been the emergence of what Newburn (2001) has called 'new security networks' which involve hybrid, and increasingly privatised, policing networks. Private door-security firms and doormen (or bouncers) play a key role in such networks, who in general outnumber police by a ratio of ten to one in many down-town areas at peak times. There has been a departure from the old-style tactics of containment and confinement, towards focused use of officers in conjunction with wider urban surveillance networks.

CCTV plays a crucial role here, yet its status as an effective tool for policing the city is hotly contested (Norris and Armstrong, 1998; Fyfe and Bannister, 1998; Toon, 2000). The effects of CCTV are beyond those of mere crime prevention and there is little doubt that it has changed the individual's experience of the street. While this so-called 'silver bullet' of crime prevention has brought cost savings and reductions in crime, it has wider implications as a '1984'-style Big Brother tool which induces conformity and abolishes the potential for deviance (Norris and Armstrong, 1998:6). In this sense, it assumes deviance is a taken-for-granted part of urban life, and seeks to manage it and appoint blame rather then looking at its causes. Although reported support for CCTV is debatable and is often based upon dubious surveys (see Ditton, 1998), as Bannister *et al.* (1998:27) point out, CCTV is popular as it feeds off a 'fear of difference' and the unpredictability of collective behaviour. Hence, it is often used to further the privatisation and purification of public space. Those opposed to CCTV outline a number of

alternative strategies involving self-policing by repopulating streets, coupled with a greater diversity of downtown activities and a sense of civic responsibility.

Police are also increasingly channelling their work through multi-agency teams and partnerships, comprising local councils, licensees and door security, which aim to tackle some of the root causes of late-night disorder. One of the remaining issues for the police is the reconciliation of their agenda of maintaining law and order with the agenda of larger nightlife operators who have a legally binding and fiduciary obligation to maintain commercial profits for shareholders. Here, there is a growing recognition that nightlife companies must take some responsibility for late-night disorder, through, for example, financial contributions to policing, especially the larger branded venues which sell alcohol in significant amounts.

As we discuss in more detail in Part II of the book, alternative independent venues, rather than using formal policing methods and relying on door security, draw upon self-regulation through customer identification with the ethos of the premises, which includes a more liberal approach to dress codes and a blurring of the consumer—producer divide.Yet the police often view alternative venues as 'deviant', particularly in terms of illegal drug use, despite their better record in terms of lack of violence. Nightlife wedded more to the working-class industrial city, as in market taverns, ale-houses and saloons, is perceived by the police to be inhabited by what has been described as the urban 'underclass' (Campbell, 1993); these spaces are hence often regarded as sites of criminality, violence and debauchery, worthy only of containment or surveillance.

Policing styles in the contemporary nightlife economy, then, reflect different nightlife contexts. While alternative and oppositional nightlife such as squats and free parties are often policed out of existence for being 'illegal', rough working-class places are treated with suspicion and interventionist policing. However, in other contexts, especially the world of downtown corporate-led branded nightlife, the police no longer treat it just as a source of vice and crime, but have acknowledged its role in profit, growth and employment in the post-industrial city. Policing roles here are not so much about controlling the morality of the industrial working classes, but supervising the pleasure-seeking of the young and the wealthy. However, in general the police find it difficult to grasp the wider social significances of drinking and drunkenness for young people beyond those of disorder and moral decline (Tomsen, 1997; Warrell, 1994). Policing urban nightlife, then, is caught between competing discourses of law and order and the imperatives of growth.

And while there is some evidence that the police at a local level show some willingness to understand socio-cultural phenomena such as drug and dance cultures, new legislation is also emerging which is constraining the parameters for acceptable nightlife activity across the board. In the UK, for example, the 1997 Public Entertainments Licences (Misuse of Drugs) Act was introduced to tackle drug use at dance events and allows local authorities to revoke the licences of clubs that have a 'drug problem', while the Criminal Justice and Police Act (2001) gives police powers to shut down problem venues and issue on-the-spot penalties

for disorderly behaviour as well as ushering in powers to clamp down on public and under-age drinking. Moreover, legislation such as the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1994) and the Terrorism Act (2000) has severely restricted certain forms of activity, especially the right to assemble, protest and party. Similarly, in Australia the New South Wales Ministry of Police issued a 'Code of Practice for Dance Parties' (1998) which, although not as restrictive as anti-rave legislation in UK, has sought to contain dance culture within legitimate sites, and hence curtail smaller-scale, illegal rave spaces (St John, 200 la).

Changing times on the door? Bashers, bouncers and style selectors

> 'Bouncer' is a very old-fashioned term for somebody who used to be a big gorilla. Originally that's all the job was in the 1960s.You just had to be able to bash people. And now obviously it's changed an awful lot and it's a highly skilled job.
>
> (Door staff manager 1, Bristol)

Door supervisors, otherwise known as 'bouncers', play a key role in regulating the night. As Hobbs *et al.* (2000) have outlined, the 'culture of the door' has long been pervaded by violence, physical force and intimidation, and this culture is still very much alive. However, the actual operation of door staff has begun to change over the last few decades, supplementing the still pervasive 'hard man', with 'door pickers' and 'style selectors'. Door supervision in general has become more professionalised. In the UK, this trend is being encouraged through local authority Door Registration Schemes and also the National Security Industry Authority, which has established a register of approved providers of security industry services. Similarly, in the USA, more than a million people have undertaken Training for Intervention Procedures (TIPS), a nationally certified programme organised by Health Communications Inc. which is designed to teach bartenders, managers, security personnel and consumers of alcohol how to prevent intoxication, drink-driving, under-age drinking, and alcohol abuse. TIPS certification lowers the premium bars and restaurants pay on liquor liability insurance, and hence in most licensed venues it is a requirement for employment. Due to the high number of alcohol-related deaths on college campuses, a particular focus of TIPS has been educating university students about responsible drinking. The basic job of door staff, however, remains deciding upon the suitability of customers in order to maintain order and the commercial viability of licensed venues, using both violent and non-violent tactics (Lister *et al.,* 2000). They are the definitive gatekeepers of the night-time economy, who ensure a connection between venue ambience and clientele. As one door security member interviewed commented,

> It's the constant problem of trying to ram square pegs in round holes, isn't it? We know that there are certain people that are comfortable and right for a dance-based venue and there are certain people where you put them in a café-based place. So, yeah, we don't just slam people in at all, it's got to be thought about.
>
> (Door security personnel 1, Leeds)

Door cultures still vary significantly. Many old industrial cities which have a lingering tradition of tough, male-dominated working-class nightlife are often regarded as behind the times (Winlow, 2001). The link between door cultures and criminal cultures is still clear enough, especially in localities flavoured by a hard working-class history. In Newcastle in the UK, for example, thirty-eight door staff had police files, while Morris (1998:11) outlined that in both Tyne and Wear and Merseyside criminal groups forced 'existing door supervisors, through intimidation and extreme violence, to "pay" them a "tax" for running a door, whilst also requiring them to allow "approved" drug dealers to operate in the premises under their supervision'. Lister *et al.* (2000) outline how many door staff operate with an ambivalent relationship towards the formal law. When complaint cases of assault arise, very rarely are bouncers successfully prosecuted, thanks to collusion among door staff, police empathy, the victim's perceived risk of intimidation, and problems of drunkenness which lead to poor-quality evidence *(ibid.)*.

Clearly, different types of nightlife venues have their own set of entry requirements, expectations and subtle forms of discrimination at the door based on age, appearance, social class, gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). One of the most visible differences in door cultures is between more mainstream branded and alternative independent venues. While many busy downtown mainstream venues view strong-arm tactics as necessary due to problems such as under-age drinking, excessive alcohol consumption and violence, many alternative venues do not use door supervisors at all, relying more on self-regulation. Images associated with alternative or fringe venues based around particular musical styles, sexual preferences or ethnicities act as effective forms of self-policing, and many of these premises form an 'extended family' or 'community' which literally helps the venue to police itself and detract unwelcome clientele. Such forms of self-regulation create subtle forms of 'autosurveillance' (Atkinson, 2001) in which consumers internalise a set of codes, assumptions and expected behaviours. The peripheral location of many alternative venues also creates a kind of self-policing and reduces the chances of infiltration and disruption by unexpected groups of consumers.

With the rapid growth and diversification in nightlife, door staff have to respond to the introduction of new venue concepts and wider shifts in music and youth cultural styles. In particular, as young people express a more eclectic 'mix and match' approach to style and appearance, it is more difficult for bouncers to make simple judgements about clientele based simply on their initial appearance.

However, in some localities and types of venues, many door staff still adhere to established nightlife style conventions such as ‘no jeans’, ‘no trainers’, ‘no skinheads’, ‘no visible tattoos’ policies, which in such eclectic times, where links between style and social structure are more complex, raises a whole host of problems for identifying ‘the right sort of people’.

Many door policies in central areas are encouraging an ‘upgrading’ of styles and appearances (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). Much of this upward drift is due to a number of perceived, yet extremely problematic, links between style and behaviour. As one city-centre bar owner commented: ‘We do really push for reasonably smart dress purely because if people have made the effort to get dressed up they’re not going to be causing trouble. They don’t want to wreck their clothes’ (Bar owner 2, Bristol). Here, more exclusive venues use ‘door pickers’ in conjunction with bouncers to implement ‘hyper-selective’ style barriers. Such upgrading of door policies is generally an attempt to sanitise consumer markets and price out ‘trouble’ from the market. This has a number of implications for diversity and access, not least in relation to provision for poorer groups. At the same time, basic criteria for non-entry, such as the ‘wrong’ style or excessive drunkenness, are often disregarded by managers of large busy corporate nightlife venues, who are under tremendous pressure to fill the venue and maximise beer sales.

Door cultures, then, have to reflect a complex interplay of styles and aspirations of consumer cultures, a need for order, and the dictates of corporate owners. As a result, ‘informal’ door cultures where access is maintained through community and networks of trust, ‘rational’ door cultures based around strict delineations between types of consumers and types of venues, and ‘hyper-selective’ door cultures which are more subtle yet equally coercive, all co-exist within contemporary urban nightlife. As housing, labour and leisure markets continue to be upgraded in central areas, the ‘door’ will increasingly becoming a mechanism for distinction and exclusion.

The makers and rakers of urban nightlife

A number of institutional players, who come together through a complex set of interrelationships, profit from urban nightlife developments and thus have a keen interest in how it is governed. First, as we outlined in the previous chapter, a small number of leisure merchants (Hannigan, 1998) have emerged to dominate the ownership, distribution and consumption of nightlife. Second, an equally small number of land, property and real-estate developers and managers back such large entertainment conglomerates, especially through complexes drawing together a number of corporate tenants. In some cases, these companies are one and the same, with entertainment giants such as Sony, Disney and Warner becoming shrewd realestate developers. In the UK in the 1990s, property developers Urban Splash were among the first to recognise that redundant buildings could be adapted for new residential and entertainment uses, and have spearheaded a new wave of

developments which have brought wealthy professionals back downtown looking for the buzz of city living.

Further, Scottish & Newcastle have taken a leading role in developing sizeable urban entertainment destinations. They have been closely involved in Birmingham's £75 million, 25-acre Star City leisure complex, which features four of its branded bar outlets among an assortment of multiplexes, bowling alleys and restaurants, and are planning other Star City developments across Spain. Similarly, by 2000 the Heron Corporation was developing a new generation of urban entertainment centres called Heron City across Europe, in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and Stockholm. Also spearheading this spate of new leisure—retail—nightlife complexes are companies such as Land Securities, redevelopers of Birmingham's notorious Bull Ring, who with fixed assets in excess of £8.3 billion is one of Britain's leading realestate companies. Third, a whole set of corporate financiers, venture-capitalist and pension fund operators, have recognised the potential gains to be made from lifestyle nightlife destinations, especially those which are branded and hence riskaverse. Finally, as we discuss next in this chapter, the local state has come to profit from this area, mainly through selling land and collecting tax revenue from these middle-class consumption ghettos.

National regulations entail different opportunities for these makers and rakers of urban nightlife. As we highlighted in the previous chapter, in the UK remonopolisation and reconcentration has occurred with a small number of large, often multinational, companies dominating ownership, and independent operators and local brewers increasingly squeezed. However, regulatory mechanisms in countries such as Germany and Belgium are more supportive of local producers, and in North America the established system of brew pubs promotes a slightly more deconcentrated nightlife market to a certain degree.

Well-organised and vocal trade associations and lobbying groups have emerged to influence the current development of nightlife. One of the most powerful of these is the Portman Group in the UK, an independent company established in 1989 comprising the world's largest alcohol producers, such as Bacardi, Scottish & Newcastle and Interbrew. While the company's stated aim is to 'reduce the misuse of alcohol', the Portman Group have been an effective vehicle for ensuring that large alcohol providers are portrayed as responsible corporate citizens and that their needs are taken on board by government. Further, the Association of Licensed Multiple Retailers (ALMR) was set up in 1994 in the UK to promote the growing number of independent multiple retailers. ALMR now exists as a strong lobby group for licensed retail companies (tenanted and leased pub estates, the retail divisions of brewers) and key suppliers of goods and services (brewers, distributors and support services). A similar group exists in the nightclub sector through the British Entertainment and Discotheque Association (BEDA). The net effect of such groups has been more effective lobbying for large established capital interests in terms of influencing the national regulatory terrain for nightlife.

Small-scale independent operators have been less successful in mobilising and creating a sectoral voice in such a regulatory landscape, and as a result their views

are not as readily heard. Nevertheless, the independent sector has created its own organisations. In the UK, longstanding lobby and advocacy groups such as the Licensed Victuallers' Associations, the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA) and the Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) campaign to maintain the traditional nature of British pub and beer culture. Many clusters of small operators have also joined forces to lobby for their rights. In Leeds, for example, the growing number of independent bars formed the Leeds Café Bar Association, while a number of cutting edge nightclubs formed the Leeds Nightclub Association, both of which felt a need to voice their concerns about encroaching corporate influence in the city's nightlife.

Finally, there are those who actually work in the nightlife industry, producing it night after night, including managers, bar staff, cleaners, promoters, DJs, etc. In the UK it has been estimated that the nightlife sector (including brewing, bars and clubs) directly and indirectly employs 830,000 people (BLRA, 1999). The growth of nightlife has opened up financial opportunities for many people, especially young people looking to 'double-job' or supplement their income. This is not just in terms of bar work, but also in terms of more creative jobs such as interior design and music. However, the Low Pay Commission (1998) in the UK outlined that 40 per cent of people employed in the hospitality sector are paid below the minimum wage, the highest of any sector in the economy. On a more personal level, work here is often mundane and disempowering, and very rarely are the voices of many people working within the industry heard at all in the debate about nightlife. The disconnection which is evident between the head offices of large nightlife conglomerates and their individual venues is often reflected in customer relations. As one young reveller commented to us: 'Go to most bars and staff will be on £3.50 an hour. Their bosses are somewhere in the Shetland Islands that don't know their name and they're just on a payroll, and you can see that in somebody's face' (Jason, 21 years old, Newcastle). The realities of working in the nightlife sector, then, for all but a few successful entrepreneurs equate to long hours, few entitlements, low pay and little or no say in how the industry is run.

The local state and the entrepreneurial nightlife city

It is now common parlance to suggest that the local state has added a more entrepreneurial, promotional and partnership role to its more mundane task of 'managing' social welfare (Harvey, 1989a; Cochrane, 1987). Such shifts are part of a wider restructuring of institutional arrangements across the west, and in conjunction with the transformation from mass production to one of 'flexible accumulation' (Harvey, 1989b) there has been a rolling back of the 'welfarist' state in terms of its powers of economic intervention and in its style of governance. In both the UK and the USA, cash-strapped city councils have increasingly been supplanted by various QUANGOs (quasi-autonomous non-governmental organisations) (O'Toole, 1996) and public—private partnership schemes and

corporations (Zukin, 1995) to stimulate economic development, or have become increasingly dependent on attracting mobile corporate capital investment.

This shift towards a more pro-active business-led entrepreneurial local state is now a common feature not just of mainstream economic development but also of the cultural and night-time economies. Many cities have sought to reinvent themselves as places of consumption dependant on a diverse and vibrant 'after dark' economy, partly as a response to a rapidly changing post-industrial populace (Savage and Butler, 1995; Wynne and O'Connor, 1998) and shifting patterns of investments towards the 'symbolic' economy (Lash and Urry, 1994) and lifestyle brands (Klein, 2000). Localities which have been at the forefront of the emergence of 'cool' economies have been those which have promoted a liberal, business-led partnership and market-driven approach. In places such as Glasgow, Melbourne and Barcelona, nightlife activity is now heralded as an integral part of the new post-industrial urban economy as much as the business or retail park. However, many older industrial localities have neither the infrastructure nor the clientele to fuel a 24–hour cultural economy and have found it difficult to create a more cosmopolitan image because of a strong tradition of highly gendered masculine nightlife cultures and the lack of a critical mass of professional classes (Hollands, 1997; Gofton, 1990).

This 'entrepreneurial turn' signifies a shifting balance of power between the local state and capital interests. The erosion of national or local government's ability to control and regulate the activity of capital interests is well documented (Monbiot, 2000; Hertz, 2000). In the UK, for example, the government used to have powers to dismantle any commercial enterprise 'tending to the common grievance, prejudice and inconvenience of His Majesty's subjects'; however, the state has largely renounced this historic role and refuses to interfere with the operation of the free market (Monbiot, 2000:314). In particular, the emergence of public—private partnerships encourages the local state to come into line with the needs of business and creates platforms from which business elites can exercise political influence (Jessop *et al.,* 1999). Fundamentally, then, the deregulation of nightlife is part of the reassertion of capital and the renewal of new forms of capital accumulation (Jessop *et al.,* 1991).

Urban nightlife has become a visible example of this process in which capitalist enterprises, aided by a new business-friendly state, can seek out new profit arenas. Many large property developers, landowners and nightlife operators receive public subsidies for renovating and expanding buildings for entertainment and nightlife use. As one city council employee in the UK stated:

> The role of the local authority is to create the conditions in which developers can invest so as to stack up fairly major sites…inevitably plc's [public limited companies] are going to be the ones who come forward… So I think the effort of the city at the moment is behind large-scale development proposals.
>
> (Local authority representative 1, Newcastle)

The fact is that many urban governments have little room for manoeuvre due to their own declining financial position in relation to central government funding, restrictions on raising local revenue, and various protocols ensuring they get value for money whenever development opportunities involve the sale of public land. The local state is increasingly using the rhetoric of access, creativity and diversity, associated with the idea of the 24–or 18–hour economy, to 'court' big national corporate operators, getting the best deal on public land sites and, understandably, is happy to fill up what were once derelict and empty buildings.

While it is not the remit of local authorities to inhibit or encourage certain types of activity, this is not to suggest that city councils are somehow entirely powerless to influence the nature of nightlife development. Local planning policies and guidelines are critical in deciding types of uses, and the local state is responsible for granting a variety of entertainment and liquor permits. Yet planning powers are extremely blunt instruments and in many cases can be easily overturned. The local state does, however, have to balance its entrepreneurial role with the more mundane management of the side-effects of the night-time economy, such as noise and litter. Many councils have established legislation to restrict the growth of late-night venues in so-called 'stress areas' and have introduced bylaws to curb drinking alcohol in the streets (see Plate 3.1). Westminster City Council in London, for example, with the unenviable job of managing Soho, has a tough reputation for restricting night venues to reduce noise and disturbances. However, such legislation is not set in law and several large leisure groups have challenged and overturned decisions in High Court appeals.

Many small-scale local entrepreneurs find it difficult to find a place within this new night-time economy geared towards meeting the needs of large-scale corporate capital. Such operators face further problems as they are regarded as unknown or 'risky' entities, while national/international operators are seen as a 'safe bet' in terms of credibility, financial situation and policing methods such as mandatory use of door staff. Moreover, ale-houses, taverns and saloons which provide leisure options for working-class groups do not feature in the priorities of large corporate operators or the entrepreneurial local state, who are both eager to change the image of downtown areas away from their industrial past and instead court the wealthier post-industrial service classes.

Waking up the neighbourhood

Ultimately, one stumbling block for the deregulation of the night-time economy is the clashes which emerge between night-time revellers and local residents. Where nightlife activity has grown in central and suburban areas, residents have become more vocal participants within the governance debate. In particular, as suburbanisation and the growth of decentred polycentric areas continue apace, places far from downtown areas are becoming nightlife destinations in their own right. These areas are often more attractive to developers due to the saturation of city-centre markets, cheaper property and less restrictive licensing, and a side-

Plate 3.1 Tough regulations to curb public alcohol consumption; Liverpool city centre, UK, 2002

stepping of the disbenefits of central areas such as overcrowding, violence and lack of late-night travel.

Many traditional residential and suburban areas are becoming saturated with latenight bars, pubs, restaurants and multiplexes. This is partly associated with the clustered growth of nightlife-active groups such as university students, young professionals and single couples in more cosmopolitan and transitional parts of large cities (Chatterton, 1999). Growth usually occurs along established arterial routes, many of which are near university campuses or halls of residence, and examples in the UK include Clifton in Bristol, Jesmond in Newcastle, Headingly in Leeds, Selly Oak in Birmingham and Chorlton in Manchester. In many places, growth of this nature has provoked a strong response from established, older and wealthy residents. One paper in Newcastle ran the headline 'Drinkers turn upmarket suburb into "a hell hole"' (*The Journal,* 5 October 2000:12). Meanwhile, in Bristol, vocal residents' associations successfully opposed several nightlife developments at public inquiries, drawing upon letter-writing campaigns, testimonies and covert video footage, winning a landmark decision from the local authority to restrict the granting of new licences to places which also serve substantial meals along with alcohol.

Many cities across the west have also encouraged a rapid, if selective, repopulation of downtown areas which has created tensions between partying and living. Initially, this trend is often spearheaded by gentrifying pioneers such as artists, writers and students. As such groups increase the bohemian feel and amenity value of an area, higher-income groups quickly move in. This continued growth of wealthy professional classes in central areas displaces many of the traditional lower-income residents, and stimulates demand for a variety of central amenities, including exclusive stylish nightlife activity (Solnit and Schwartzenberg, 2000). Ironically, although these new gentrifiers are often extensive users of city-centre nightlife, they are also the most articulate and vocal in asserting their objections to its negative aspects such as noise, disorder and vandalism.

The Ribera district in the heart of old Barcelona has experienced such change. An area near the city's waterfront formerly populated by merchants and sailors, in the twentieth century it experienced decline as the city grew outwards. Over the last few decades, Ribera has slowly been colonised by more bohemian groups of artists, students and musicians, due to its central location, its ramshackle medieval architecture and labyrinthine network of streets. As more affluent groups move in, the area has become one of the city's newest nightlife destinations, with the once quiet Passeig de Born in particular now packed with bars and restaurants and wandering crowds on weekend nights. A concerted campaign by local residents has ensued, with banners, lobbying the mayor for restrictions on the growth of nightlife, draped from numerous balconies and windows in the area (see Plate 3.2), and a dedicated website has been set up, linking up with similar campaigns in cities throughout Spain.

In spite of small victories which residents might gain, their perception is that licensing procedures are heavily weighted in favour of the trade, its legal advisors, statutory agencies and the court, who all use the system regularly. The public in whose name the whole process is said to be necessary are seldom mentioned and are uncertain how to participate effectively. Nor are the laws framed to take into account the cumulative effect of granting a large number of licences in one area on the rest of that environment.

Consumers, self-regulation and consumer democracy

Finally, consumers of nightlife are rarely, if ever, included in the governance equation. This is not surprising considering the complex array of motivations for a night out, which range from quiet socialising to hedonism, escapism and creative engagement. Nevertheless, one of the problems is that many regulators such as the police, local authorities and licensing magistrates have little understanding of the range of social groups, styles, identities and divisions within the night-time economy. It seems fair that those being regulated must be left some freedom to decide how nightlife is governed. Yet how this is to be achieved is unclear, and there are few examples of regulators consulting consumers as to their views on

Plate 3.2 ‘*Ssst…nens dormint* (Shhhh…children asleep).’ Residents voice their concerns over the growth in Barcelona’s nightlife; Ribera district, Barcelona, Spain, 2002

solving problems, let alone defining them. Moreover, the mainstream press is also susceptible to villainising young people for some of the excesses within nightlife (Hollands, 2000).

One concern is that the police and the local state often restrict nightlife options as they adopt a paternalistic, and often patronising, approach towards certain consumers. In particular, there are few opportunities for young people in city centres outside the narrowly defined ‘consumption experiences’ (Toon, 2000). Specific groups of young people such as Goths, punks and skaters are generally stereotyped and subject to police harassment, mainly due to their outwardly different appearance and perceptions that their presence will have a negative effect on retail (see Plate 3.3 and Borden, 2001; Snow, 1999). Younger people have

Unruly kids are damaging our businesses, claim city traders

They have just Goth to go!

SQUARING UP – gangs of Goths gathering in Newcastle's Old Eldon Square have been causing a nuisance, hitting takings at shops there

Plate 3.3 Young kids villainised for hanging out downtown; Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Source: Newcastle Evening Chronicle, 23 February 2001:27

fewer and fewer reasons to be in cities if they are not 'consumers'. Many parts of city centres at night, then, are largely alcohol-fuelled consumption ghettos with few public, flexible, mixed-age places. As we discuss in Part II, oppositional forms of nightlife (squats, free parties, raves) open up avenues for more democratic and participatory forms of regulation, while more historic forms of nightlife, like community pubs and bars and even the street itself which cater for lower-income groups, are increasingly being redeveloped or sanitised out of existence.

What we have highlighted in this chapter are the substantial changes over the last few decades in the regulation of nightlife. In particular, while the organisation and control of urban nightlife has shifted from a rather straightforward control-oriented set of mechanisms towards a seemingly more complex 'governance' approach, the interests of capital accumulation and the more well-off are clearly dominant. In particular, the needs of acquisitive nightlife corporations and developers have increasingly come first, aided by a more compliant and entrepreneurial local state. Similarly, while there have been voices of dissent, including more vocal residents' groups and overstretched police forces, most regulators have begun to embrace the 'new consensus' of profit-making first and dealing with social problems second. In this sense, there is evidence of a legacy

of more historical modes co-existing with newer sets of priorities, and hence impulses towards both re-regulation (to maintain law and order, especially in terms of certain groups regarded as more troublesome) and de-regulation (to stimulate economic development). In Part II of the book, we explore in greater detail the changing balance between more entrepreneurial/probusiness, alternative/resistant, and historic/working-class nightlife.

4
CONSUMING NIGHTLIFE
Youth cultural identities, transitions and lifestyle divisions

Nightlife activity is an integral part of many young people's consumption lives (Hollands, 1995; Chatterton and Hollands, 2001; Malbon, 1999). It encompasses a complex array of youth cultural styles, experiences, identities and spaces—from free warehouse and street parties to sports bars filled with rugby players, corporate Christmas parties in lap-dancing clubs, rock bars, gay villages, young office workers in wine bars, ladies' nights out, student unions and underground clubs. Understanding the plethora of young adults' experiences in these various nightlife consumption spaces is further complicated by the fact that youth as an age category is cross-cut by a range of overlapping social identities like class, gender, race, ethnicity, geography and sexual orientation. Additionally, the development of a prolonged 'post-adolescent' phase and rapidly changing labour market transitions has meant that young people are continuing to engage in youth cultural activity for much longer periods of time.

With a significant proportion of urban-livers composed of young adults (Mintel, 2000:14), many cities around the world are reasserting themselves to meet their consumption and entertainment needs (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). Visiting bars, pubs and clubs is a core element of many young people's lifestyles. In the UK, 80 per cent visited pubs and clubs in 1999, an increase of 12 per cent over the previous five years (Mintel, 2000:15). The 15–24 age group is also ten times more likely than the general population to be a frequent visitor to a club, with 52 per cent going once a month or more (Mintel, 1998:22). The over–25 'rave generation' in the UK, Europe and North America continue to visit clubs, and as a result 'clubbing will remain as popular as it is now, and more sophisticated nightclubs will cater for diehard party animals in their thirties' (Mintel, 2000:45). There has also been a move away from traditional nightclubs, and their association with seediness, violence and excess, in the wake of the phenomenon of 'clubbing', which emerged from the 'one-nation' dance, rave and—to a certain extent—drug cultures of the late 1980s and early 1990s (Collins, 1997). While the club scene has diversified, grown and fractured along the lines of a number of smaller consumer groups, since the mid 1990s it has also been commercialised and a distinction between underground and mainstream clubs has been clearly drawn (Thornton, 1995). The experience of going to bars and pubs has also been transformed as traditional ale-houses, bars and taverns have given way to the

emergence of style and café-bar venues and hybrid bar/clubs (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001).

Motivations for engaging in nightlife activity have also changed. While immensely varied, changes in the nightclub and pub/bar sectors mean that music, socialising, atmosphere, dancing and lifestyle performance and distinction are now among the main motivations for a night out (Hollands, 1995; Chatterton and Hollands, 2001), alongside more traditional reasons such as letting go, courtship or seeking casual sex. On the surface, more fragmented experimental 'mix and match' behavioural patterns are evident, in which different styles and types of venues are woven together to create a night out. However, young people's labour market position and social identities continue to contour their experiences of nightlife (Hollands, 2002).

Alcohol and, increasingly, drugs play key roles in shaping young people's nightlife activities. In more industrial times, drinking was associated with masculinity and the rituals and relationships of the workplace (Gofton, 1983; Brain, 2000). The changes which have been wrought over the last few decades through the advent of lagers, ciders, spirits and the presence of more women have altered the role of drinking in pubs and bars from a largely male ritual to a broader phenomena associated with fun, hedonism and lifestyle. Going out in urban centres has more and more become the preserve of the young, who in contrast to their more mature predecessors sometimes have problems handling their drink (Coffield and Gofton, 1994). In terms of young people's drinking habits, in the 1930s 18–24 year olds were the lightest drinkers in the UK population. By the 1980s this situation had reversed (Institute for Alcohol Studies, 1999; General Household Survey, 1999). In the USA, by the time they reach high school, over 60 per cent of young people have been drunk, while almost half of college students binge drink (Wechsler *et al.,* 1994). There is also evidence that many young people over the last ten years have turned towards illegal drugs such as Ecstasy, especially through the growth of club cultures (Henderson, 1997), or have chosen to smoke cannabis at home (Coffield and Gofton, 1994). In the UK, among 16–29 year olds, 49 per cent admitted having ever taken any drug, with 42 per cent consuming cannabis, 20 per cent amphetamines, 11 per cent LSD, 10 per cent Ecstasy and 16 per cent poppers (Mirrlees-Black *et al.,* 1998). Such changing habits have been cause for considerable concern from the brewing industry. Drinks producers have responded by 'recommodifying' alcohol products and creating what Brain (2000: 2) has called a 'postmodern alcohol market', in which the range of alcohol products is more extensive and product strengths are higher in an attempt to win back the 'rave' generation who are eager to find greater highs, and where products are based more around marketing and lifestyle advertising.

In Chapters 2 and 3 we have already outlined the varied ways in which production and regulation differentially contour young adults' consumption of the night-time economy. In this chapter we go on to provide a context for understanding youth cultural identities and lifestyles in the night-time economy. Slater (1997:4), for example, reminds us that the consumption of goods and

services is 'always carried out under specific social arrangements of productive organisation, technological abilities, relations of labour, property and distribution'. Furthermore, we also need to recognise that youth consumption is increasingly being framed by contradictory regulatory regimes involving the expansion of the night-time economy as part of urban regeneration strategies, more informal and 'privatised' forms of policing style and appearance, and a general sanitisation of activity through increased surveillance. While it is essential to see consumption as a symbolically meaningful and active relationship through which experiences, identities and feelings are created (Campbell, 1995; Bocock, 1993; Slater, 1997) and young people as active 'reflexive' participants in nightlife, our approach also stresses how the production and regulation of nightlife provision actively creates 'leisure divisions' within the youth population.

First, we look briefly at the historical role young people have played as consumers, including a discussion of subcultural theory (Hall and Jefferson, 1976). We then turn to an analysis and critique of some postmodern approaches to youth culture through the guise of terms such as 'club cultures' and ideas about 'neo-tribes' (Redhead, 1993, 1997; Muggleton, 1997; Bennett, 2000). Here, one suggestion has been that identities for many young people may be as likely to develop around the consumption of commodities, experiences and lifestyles as through engaging in economic production itself (Wilkinson, 1995; Willis, 1990). This notion, combined with the fact that nightlife cultures are changing so quickly and frequently through increased individualisation, fragmentation and globalisation, has supposedly fuelled a complex array of youthful lifestyles in the postmodern period (Miles, 2000).

However, our approach suggests a much closer link between the work and production sphere (Fine and Leopold, 1993), lifestyles and social divisions (Crompton, 1996; Miles, 2000), and the creation of a hierarchy of taste cultures (Bourdieu, 1984; Thornton, 1995), resulting in a more socially segmented set of youth consumption spaces and groupings (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001, 2002). We develop a more complex typology of youth identities in the night-time economy which reveals the formation of a number of consumption spaces, encompassing various social groups among young people. While minority elements of 'neo-tribal' and hybrid forms of youth identity and consumption clearly exist in the night-time economy, we argue that the main focus for the development of downtown nightlife is a more 'mainstream' form which exploits existing social cleavages in the population, segregating young adults into particular spaces and places. This is an active process, fuelled partly through an internal competition among youth groups to maintain social and status distinctions (Bourdieu, 1984). Finally, we expand on how the mainstream also works to marginalise older residual nightlife spaces and groups and alternative and oppositional youth cultural forms.

Consuming youth: from the 'affluent' teenager to subcultural analysis

As we have argued, young people today, particularly in the realm of nightlife, are heavily coveted members of consumer society. Yet historically, this was not always the case. Young people have only recently emerged as an important consumer entity in the twentieth century, mainly through the creation of a distinct period of adolescence. This does not mean that youth cultures did not exist previously—evidence of urban youth street cultures can be traced back to the early twentieth century, although these were often small and localised, as well as being almost exclusively (male) deviant/criminal and non-commercial (Pearson, 1983; Davis, 1992). Fowler (1995) provides evidence of the beginnings of a teenage market in the UK in the 1930s, with magazines, films and dance halls increasingly orienting themselves to young people. Palladino's (1995) work on the history of the American teenager relates the beginning of youth consumption in the USA with the development of mainstream, largely middle-class consumer tastes. Interestingly, Miles (2000:108) locates these earlier forms of consumption as being 'in training for adulthood', rather than as youth cultures functioning to maintain some kind of independent status between childhood and adulthood.

The Second World War is often viewed as an important turning point in consumer society in general, with post-war economic growth bringing employment, increased production of goods and services and higher disposable incomes and consumer expectations among young people.[1] Notions of youngsters as 'affluent teenagers' (Abrams, 1959) having more money to spend, then, were characteristic of this period (Osgerby, 1998). This era, which was seen generally as the start of a mature consumer society, and a developing teenage market in the late 1950s and 1960s, around fashion, music, food, clothes and drink (see Bocock, 1993), led to ideas that youth was at the forefront of a conspicuous, fast-paced, leisure-oriented consumption phase (Stewart, 1992). Discussions of the younger generation as a 'class in itself' (Berger, 1963), functionalist analysis of the 'generation gap' (Parson, 1942), combined with the views of advertisers and manufacturers that there was a homogenous teen market, fuelled a somewhat Fordist approach to youth consumption. In other words, it was assumed that all young people shared primarily the same values and ideals and hence all would want to consume roughly the same types and styles of goods.

The main critique of the 'disappearance of class' and 'affluent teenager' thesis came from the Marxist-inspired class-cultural perspective developed by Stuart Hall and his colleagues at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) in the early 1970s in the book *Resistance through Rituals* (Hall and Jefferson, 1976; also see Cohen 1997, chapter 2). Although they did not claim that their subcultural paradigm was intended to be a model which explained youth cultures in their entirety, Hall and Jefferson's (1976) work clearly demonstrated that there were very different sub-sets of youth subcultural styles, expressions and meanings, rather than a general and homogenous 'youth culture'. While it was true that CCCS

concentrated almost exclusively on looking at male white working-class cultures, this early work contained one of the initial discussions of the absence of young girls (McRobbie and Garber, 1976) and the impact race and ethnicity had on white subcultures (also see Hebdige, 1979). A more careful reading of *Resistance through Rituals* also reveals some discussion of middle-class youth cultures and how they might be more differentially understood (pp. 57–71). In particular, Hall and Jefferson (1976:60) prophetically hinted at the 'individualisation thesis', a dominant theme in 1990s youth sociology (see Furlong and Cartmel, 1997), by arguing that middle-class youth cultures 'are diffuse, less group-centred, more individualistic'. In fact, many of the youth subcultures CCCS looked at involved working-class youths borrowing from media-based middle-class cultures, punk being the most exemplary (see Hebdige, 1979), debunking the fact that the 1990s alone were characteristic of a 'pick and mix of youth styles'. Teddy boy and mod culture are other classic examples here (see Jefferson in Hall and Jefferson, 1976).

Yet one of the continuing problems with the subcultural perspective is that it remained somewhat within a 'correspondence' framework, with working-class youth leisure paralleling elements of their 'parent' or wider working-class culture (i.e. encompassing the values of masculinity, toughness, solidarity, territoriality—see Clarke's (in Hall and Jefferson, 1976) study of skinhead culture in particular), with close homologies existing between the cultures adopted and social position (Willis, 1978; although for an exception see Hebdige, 1979). Additionally, issues around gender and ethnicity, although raised, were not sufficiently well developed theoretically to deal with the expanding role young women and black youth were beginning to play in adolescent cultures of the 1980s (Griffin, 1985; McRobbie and Nava, 1984; CCCS, 1982; Pryce, 1979). Finally, the economic crisis of the late 1970s and early 1980s brought about by the decline of manufacturing, political conservatism represented by Thatcherism (Hall and Jacques, 1989) and Reaganism, and increasing concerns about policing youth through disciplining them in the labour market (Hollands, 1990) meant that the youth resistance paradigm of CCCS appeared far less appropriate as a form of analysis.

Ironically, as young people's declining economic position in the 1980s appeared to distance many of them from the rapidly growing consumer market, Miles (2000) argues that youth consumerism during this period actually became more of an accepted 'way of life'. In the USA, the work of Gaines (1991) unearthed a nihilistic culture of 'no future' among many young people coping with economic downsizing and industrial decline, while others spoke pessimistically about 'slackers' (Kellner, 1994) and 'Generation X' (Howe and Strauss, 1993; Coupland, 1992). Stewart (1992:224) also suggests that youth consumption in this period became increasingly more incorporated into the mainstream, representing core values rather than rebellion, and becoming more individualistic yet more homogenous in many aspects. Of course, this was also the era of the 'yuppie', not to mention the expansion of higher education, fuelling the beginning of both a gentrified and student leisure and consumption market. Yet it also represented a time of increasing concern about 'race' and young ethnic identities (Hall *et al.,*

1978; CCCS, 1982) and changes in the relationship between gender and generation (McRobbie and Nava, 1984). By the end of the decade, youth culture had returned as the 'second summer of love', with the rise of acid house and rave, cultures described as decidedly fragmented and postmodern, encompassing elements of punk DiY, gay culture, disco and New-Ageism (Redhead, 1993). Youth subcultures were viewed as in terminal decline in the 1990s, replaced by more loose, fragmented, hybrid and transitory global 'cultures of avoidance' (Redhead, 1997). Similarly, as youth cultural styles continue to explode up the age hierarchy, the teenage consumer is proclaimed dead.

Consuming youth: postmodern club cultures and neo-tribes

One of the major impacts on social theory in the last decade has been postmodernism (Harvey, 1989b) and more specifically the development of such a perspective in the analyses of culture and consumption (Wynne and O'Connor, 1998; Slater, 1997; Featherstone, 1991). This general approach has had a huge impact on a range of fields, including youth studies. As Cohen and Ainley (2000: 86) argue, by 'the early 1990s the textualisation of cultural studies was complete' and, by implication, the study of youth cultures was decidedly influenced by postmodern thinking exemplified by a somewhat diverse set of writings around 'club cultures' (Redhead, 1993, 1997; McRobbie, 1993), and 'neo-tribes' (Bennett, 2000; Malbon, 1999; Maffesoli, 1996).

Here, symbolic, hybrid forms of consumption are seen as crucial for an understanding of contemporary youth cultures, as is an assumed loosening of traditional sources of identity and a blurring of traditional social relations like class, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientations and national identities (Roberts, 1997). Moreover, the past two decades have seen an ongoing shift from collectivised to more individualised and privatised forms of consumption (Clarke and Bradford, 1998: 878). The difficulty for youth today, according to Willis (1990:13), is that many 'of the traditional resources of, and inherited bases for, social meaning, membership, security and psychic certainty have lost their legitimacy for a good proportion of young people'. In this regard, he goes on to use the term 'symbolic work' to express young people's everyday creation of meaning and identity in the social world. Willis (1990:10) defines the term as:

> the application of human capacities to and through, on and with symbolic resources and raw materials (collections of signs and symbols, for instance the language we inherit as well as texts, songs, films, images and artefacts of all kinds) to produce meaning.

According to Willis, symbolic work is as 'necessary' and as fundamental to the production and reproduction of daily life as material sustenance itself. The importance of this notion in the debate about the changing relation between work and leisure for young people is central. For instance, if youth is a social group

more likely to be excluded from productive work, meaning and identity for them, it might be argued, is as likely to be undertaken on and around the products of material production as it is through engaging in economic labour itself.

Hence, a proportion of young people may experience an ambivalence in defining themselves in relation to work and occupation. As Ball *et al.* (2000:7) state: 'occupational status and work may not be that important in the lives of the young…other sources of identity and identification deriving from music, fashion and leisure may be more central to how they think about themselves' (also see Hollands, 1998). Some young adults are seeking to redress the balance between work and play, rejecting low-paid low-skilled jobs and reacting against the constraints of the work ethic (Kane, 2000; Wilkinson, 1995), while a minority may have become dissatisfied with consumer and corporate culture altogether (Klein, 2000). Additionally, the changing economic and social position of young women, and their greater insertion into youth cultural activity, consumption and nightlife (see Chapter 7) has led to the questionning traditional gender roles, while the mixing of black and white youth cultures has worked to create some examples of ethnic hybrids (Jones, 1998; Back, 1996). Finally, the expansion of higher education and the creation of student consumption identities, with the ascendance of more middle-class forms of youth culture (Roberts and Parsell, 1994), have also blurred traditional leisure demarcations.

Further processes at work here are the globalisation and internationalisation of youth cultures (Miles, 2000; Bennett, 2000). It is argued that there has been a move away from nationally based youth cultures to more global and eclectic formations. The appropriation of American rap and hip hop by youth across the world is one example here (Mitchell, 2001). Unfortunately, much of the discussion surrounding this globalisation process often fails to give enough emphasis to the growing role that international capital and corporatisation play in the production of increasingly standardised and homogenised youth cultural provision. The contribution made recently by youth geographers is more suggestive here, hinting that despite an increased globalisation of youth cultural activity, locality and 'socio-temporal' contexts remain important (Skelton and Valentine, 1998).

The first real alternative youth cultural paradigm to challenge the notion of subcultures from CCCS came out of Steve Redhead's postmodern-inspired work (see Redhead, 1993, 1997). Redhead's position can best be summed up by the assertion that class subcultures—if indeed they ever existed—have now been surpassed by 'club cultures' (Redhead, 1997): loose, globally based youth formations grounded in the media/market niches of contemporary dance music (see Plate 4.1), and the regulation and indeed criminalisation of youth cultures characterised by a kind of 'hedonism in hard times' (Redhead, 1993). Redhead's work clearly captures important transformations in youth cultures over the last thirty years, and is a useful benchmark in any analysis of contemporary youth identity and nightlife. For example, his contribution to ideas about fragmentation and the 'cultural mixing' of styles, highlighting the global nature of contemporary youth cultures and the state's obsession with regulating them, is exemplary.

Plate 4.1 Clubbing has transformed many aspects of nightlife and has become an important 'way of life' for many young people; Rockshots nightclub, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2001

Source: Louise Hepworth

Yet, as with many postmodern-inspired analyses, there are also some fundamental shortcomings and weaknesses in his approach. First, Redhead's use of the term 'club cultures' is vague and ill-defined, not to mention being somewhat allencompassing. In essence, despite its importance, clubbing does not encapsulate all types of youth leisure and is actually only one form of nightlife activity. Second, postmodern conceptual frameworks often lack an underlying economic and spatial context. While it might be argued that club culture has become somewhat of a global phenomenon due to the role of the media and the increased mobility of young people, nightlife experiences for many remain largely rooted in specific localities (see Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Third, Redhead's (1993, 1997) analysis of contemporary youth cultures is somewhat unidimensional, with too much emphasis on regulation, criminological and media-based forces and

determinations, rather than examining the whole political economy of popular culture (such as ownership patterns, corporatisation, commercialisation, etc.).

Other postmodernists have been more explicit in arguing that there is no relationship between contemporary youth styles and their articulation with social relationship. Muggleton (1997:198), for example, argues: 'Post-subculturalists no longer have any sense of subcultural authenticity, where inception is rooted in particular socio-temporal contexts and tied to underlying structural relations.' As such, style is seen as constituted solely through consumption, and is 'no longer articulated around the modernist structuring relations of class, gender, ethnicity or even the age span of youth' (*ibid.:* 199). Yet one might legitimately ask: how can youth cultural activity not be rooted in a socio-temporal context, as it is there that it has to be 'performed'? Similarly, how can style no longer be influenced by existing social structures and relations, even if they are changing? In an attempt to distance themselves from the class-based analysis of CCCS, many postmodern accounts might be accused of overlooking the whole issue of youth inequalities altogether.

Others, meanwhile, utilise the postmodern-inspired idea of tribes or neo-tribes to theorise aspects of contemporary youth cultures (Bennett, 2000; Malbon, 1999). The suggestion here is that today it is virtually impossible to tie youth cultural styles and musical taste down to any strict notion of social class (although see Martinez, 1999, for a counter-argument). This is particularly the case when it comes to looking at dance music, which itself has identifiable tribal elements. For example, dance events involve quite fleeting and loose forms of sociation, rather than any rigid structure or internal logic. Clubs and club events become temporary sites of 'social centrality' (Hetherington, K., 1996), providing intense but short-lived moments of collectivity and indeed 'ecstasy'. As such, young people, rather than remaining committed to a static and formal organisation, move easily in and out of particular styles, forms of music and temporary communities. What we do not appear to know about these tribes from available research is how common they are, or whether or not they represent existing fragments of older social divisions or the creation of new forms of social hierarchy and distinction (although see Henderson [1997] on gender).

New concerns with hybridity, tribes and post-subculturalist forms, although interesting, have often meant that 'En route questions of class trans/formation were rather left to one side' (Cohen and Ainley, 2000:84). While postmodern analysis appears on the surface more amenable to examining how fragments of social identity like race, gender and sexuality combine and articulate with one another in leisure and consumption, often their analysis of youth simply collapses such distinctions through its emphases on decentred subjectivities. Clearly, there are examples of contemporary postmodern youth cultural activity to be found. Yet the same question that often plagued earlier theorists of youth subcultures remains: are postmodern examples any more representative or empirically demonstrable among the young than minority subcultures were? The problem with postmodern theorising and methodology here is that they do not appear to find inequalities or

stratified youth cultures, partly because they are not looking for them. Additionally, they do not have a theoretical framework that allows them to see social division within the leisure sphere, differentiate young people on the basis of their economic or domestic situation, or account for the role locality plays in youth culture.

There is a sense in which much postmodern analysis of youth ends up either as a discussion about endless chains of signification, competing generational multicultures or decentred subjectivities (Cohen and Ainley, 2000). At best, attempts are made to show what these hybrid youth cultures say about so-called postmodern society and culture—usually in the form of reaffirming its existence, thereby masquerading as both 'evidence' and 'cause' simultaneously. Postmodern approaches have also curiously lacked the tools of analyses for understanding the 'economisation' of the cultural industries—in other words, looking at the impact of capital investment and disinvestment on lifestyle, consumer choice and the standardisation (Ritzer, 1993) and corporatisation of youth cultures. Consumption, as Edwards (2000:3) argues, is not 'simply a matter of style, it is also a matter of money and economics, social practice and social division'. Existing social divisions and transitions, locality and corporate investment patterns, then, continue to be important contexts for understanding consumption 'choices'. Next, we take a closer look at a range of work on youth transitions, lifestyles and social divisions, to help us unpack how youth cultures in the night-time economy are not just fragmented but are also segmented.

Youth transitions, lifestyles and consumption

The various weaknesses of postmodern theorising around youth cultures have lead others to reassert how social divisions continue to influence consumption decisions and lifestyle choices. This has been partly accomplished through studies of youth transitions, in addition to a number of approaches concerned with theorising youth lifestyles. Transition studies of youth in the labour market (Roberts, 1995), education (Griffin, 1985; Willis, 1977), training (Mizen, 1995; Hollands, 1990) and the family household (Morrow and Richards, 1996), have continued to emphasise the structural aspects of young people's experience and highlight the persistence of social inequalities and divisions that exist around class, gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. For example, studies of the youth labour market have shown both the disadvantages that labour market restructuring has brought to many young people (Roberts, 1995), and the persistence of intra-class and gender social divisions in youth transitions (Banks, 1991). However, with exceptions, very few of these studies have been helpful in determining how such transitions connect up to youth cultures, leisure and lifestyles.

Indeed, Miles (2000) has argued that many transition sociologists have 'exaggerated the impact of structural influences on young people's lives' (p. 9), treating them as 'troubled victims of social and economic restructuring' (p. 10). Such work, he suggests, blinkers us from important concerns with lifestyle, culture

and identity. Age transition studies have often assumed a predetermined and linear sequence of events and transformations that are no longer applicable to the lives of many young people. They have also often been narrow, economically driven and positivistic in their orientation (Cohen and Ainley, 2000:80). This is not to suggest that the economy is unimportant, only that there has been a too easy 'reading off' of identity from young people's economic or educational pathways (Banks, 1991). Feminists have argued that transition studies have also been limited to the 'masculine' realm of employment rather than thinking more widely about household transitions (Griffin, 1993), while others note an absence of a discussion of skills and knowledge and sexual or leisure transitions (Cohen and Ainley, 2000).

MacDonald *et al.,* (2001) suggest that, increasingly, transition studies are focusing on more complex, broken, interrupted, unpredictable, contingent transitions and 'critical moment' events and active biography making, rather than assuming linear pathways. A recent example is a study of youth choices and transitions by Ball *et al.,* (2000), which takes on much wider notions of transition by looking at the combined interaction of education, training, labour market, house-hold and leisure pathways, while maintaining a notion of the impact of social divisions. MacDonald *et al,* (2001) also cite work concerned with youth from a deprived northern estate (Johnson *et al.,* 2000), which provides biographies including discussions of drug use, anti-school cultures, and involvement in dance cultures and peer groups in 'creating transitions' (also see MacDonald and Marsh, 2002). One might, however, argue that much of the recent transitions literature, while increasingly interested in 'cultural' aspects, has tended to focus largely on disadvantaged youth while ignoring other whole categories of young people, like service workers, further and higher education students, privileged professional workers and studies of middle-class youth in general. The result is that there is very uneven information about the transitional experiences of a range of young people and how this might impact on youth cultural activity or lifestyle.

Another contribution to thinking about social divisions in the leisure sphere is through a general concern with theorising lifestyle. While the notion of lifestyle can be traced back to the work of some of the classical theorists including Weber, Simmel and Veblen (Bennett, 2000:25), it has also been utilised by postmodernism writers such as Featherstone (1991) as well as in more sociological analyses concerned with exploring its relationship to social class (Crompton, 1998). As such, part of the argument here revolves around whether culture and lifestyle, rather than the economy or economic position, gives rise to identity. Pakulski and Waters' (1996) notion of 'status conventionalism' suggests that occupation is only one marker of stratification and that status is as likely to emerge from cultural consumption in today's society, while Crompton (1996, 1998) continues to maintain that identity formation is connected to social divisions and economic relations. Some of the most relevant theorising and research for our work on nightlife (see Chapter 5) has come from studies of lifestyle concerned with the middle class and gentrification (Butler, 1997; Savage and Butler, 1995; Savage *et*

al., 1992; Wynne and O'Connor, 1998), while Miles (2000) has attempted to apply the concept to youth.

Roberts (1997:3) suggests that young people are often commonly cited as being especially associated with the rise of lifestyle-based identities, while Miles (2000: 106) argues that if young people are valued as anything in contemporary society, it is through their role as consumers. As Campbell (1995:114) elaborates: 'Not only is youth…necessarily a life-cycle stage in which experimentation with identity is a central concern, but it is also a stage when individuals generally have little in the way of regular, fixed financial commitments.' Miles (2000) defines lifestyle as an 'active expression of a "way of life"' (p. 16) and 'as the outward expression of an identity' (p. 26), and discusses the concept in relation to a range of theoretical approaches and conceptual debates. One of the advantages of using the term is that it is broader than either 'club culture' or 'subculture', and potentially accounts for a diversity of youth cultures and styles—mainstream as well as alternative. Additionally, one can think of lifestyle as being at least 'contoured' by social divisions and transitions (also see Crompton, 1998; Savage *et al.,* 1992).

Similarly, Bourdieu's method of social inquiry provides a useful framework for understanding the relationship between social space and lifestyles. His work locates:

> the production of lifestyle tastes within a structured social space in which various groups, classes and class factions struggle and compete to impose their own particular tastes as the legitimate tastes, and thereby, where necessary, name and rename, classify and reclassify, order and reorder the field. This points us towards an examination of the economy of cultural goods and lifestyles.
>
> (Featherstone, 1991:87)

Bourdieu's central concepts of field, habitus and different forms of capital are useful here. A field, in Bourdieu's words, is 'a space in which a game takes place *(espace de jeu),* a field of objective social relations between individuals or institutions who are competing for the same stake' (quoted in Moi, 1991:1021). Each field requires a practical mastery of its rules (Wacquant and Bourdieu, 1992), and once this is achieved it is possible to confer or withdraw legitimacy from others in that field without this being recognised as an act of power. Habitus is the collection of durable dispositions which allow people to know and recognise the laws of the field through practical experience within it. It can be thought of as the mediating mechanism between the objectivity of social reality and the subjectivity of personal experience.

Bourdieu's social spaces (fields) are also mediated by various types of 'capital': economic—access to various monetary resources, social—resources which one accrues through durable networks of acquaintance or recognition, and cultural or informational—competence and ability to appreciate legitimate culture related, in

particular, to level of education. People actively invest social and cultural capital to realise economic capital, and vice versa (Savage *et al.,* 1992:100). The interplay between different types of capital leads to the emergence of different social groups such as industrialists, new petite bourgeoisie and artists. Bourdieu, then, constructs a social space of tastes on the basis of the possession of different types of capital, not just income. Therefore, groups can be distinguished according to cultural practices, tastes and consumption preferences in many areas such as art, food, clothing and sport.

Thornton's (1995) work on youth and club cultures represents a reworking of various aspects of Bourdieu's model and offers a useful way of thinking about nightlife and lifestyles. Club cultures for her are the 'colloquial expression of youth cultures from whom dance clubs and their eighties offshoot, raves, are the symbolic axis and working social hub' (Thornton, 1995:3). For Thornton, these club cultures are essentially taste cultures, and utilising the work of Bourdieu (1984), she develops the notion of 'subcultural capital' to explain how hierarchies of taste and a diversity of dance styles/cultures evolve. In her view these are based around notions of authenticity versus inauthenticity, hipness versus mainstream, and underground versus the media/commercialisation.

Thornton's approach, with its emphasis on young people defining themselves in relation to their peers and the role the media plays in constructing such subcultures, again forms an important contribution towards comprehending youth nightlife, despite once again being confined to clubbing *per se*. Yet there are problems and inconsistencies with her approach. For instance, the mainstream/ underground divide is rather dichotomous and overlooks residual cultures, and it is not clear from her empirical work what subgroups go towards making up the mainstream. Her analysis also begs the question of how cultural capital, and indeed her own concept of subcultural capital, relates to social categories like class, gender, ethnicity and, importantly, place. With regard to class, for instance, Thornton (1995:13) rather ambivalently argues that 'subcultural capital clouds class background', while stating that 'class is not irrelevant' (p. 12). She is somewhat clearer with respect to gender when she argues that young men are more likely to possess larger amounts of subcultural capital than young women (*ibid.*: 13), and she also mentions that 'race' is a 'conspicuous divider'.

Cohen and Ainley (2000) argue that new inequalities organised around the post-Fordist labour market, education cleavages, spatial inequalities of neighbourhoods and social networks, and new segmentations in the leisure and consumption spheres, can begin to show how youth transitions can be related to cultures without slipping into either a 'structureless' postmodernism or a structurally 'determinist' sociology. In terms of labour market restructuring, as Harvey (1989c) argues, the general impact has been to create not only a polarisation between core secure jobs and insecure peripheral ones, but greater flexibility in the labour process and more differentiated transitions and consumption patterns. For youth in particular, it has meant both an extension and fragmentation of transitions into the labour market and a delay in transitions into adulthood. The post-Fordist labour market has not

only worked to delay and interrupt traditional youth transitions, but it has also worked to complexify them. Young people today make a bewildering array of labour market transitions, including moving through various training and educational routes through to temporary, contract and part-time work, and in some cases to secure full-time employment. As some commentators have argued, this fragmentation has resulted in greater 'individualisation' among young people, where they are more prone to take personal responsibility for both their economic fate and the construction of their own identity (Roberts and Parsell, 1992; Furlong and Cartmel, 1997).

Such fragmentation partly obscures the continuation of stark social divisions within both the general and the youth population. Bauman (1997), for example, refers passionately to the dichotomy between a relatively affluent and secure group tied to the work ethic but seduced by postmodern consumption enclaves and an endless stream of new products (which includes nightlife), and the swelling ranks of the dispossessed, the redundant and the criminalised. These latter groups, the 'flawed consumers' (*ibid.:* 14) who are time-rich but cash-poor, are no use to today's consumer-oriented markets. In a similar way, Hutton (1995) refers to a three-fold segmentation of the labour market—40 per cent well-off core permanent workers; 30 per cent in unstable employment; and 30 per cent excluded. What is being stressed here, then, is the endurance of significant segments within youth populations (Furlong and Cartmel, 1997)—between, for example, the unemployed or those dependent on welfare benefits or unstable employment, university students and those in high-level training, and young professionals in stable, well-paid and mobile employment. Differences between and within these categories of young people are underpinned by a host of factors such as educational background, parental income, household situation, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation and geographical location. For example, as MacDonald and Marsh's (2002) work shows, there is a growing section of young people exposed to unstable labour market conditions or welfare dependency, whose participation in certain forms of youth cultural activity is often extremely curtailed to certain activities and certain places. For a whole host of reasons such as price, geographical marginality, racism or merely feelings of disenfranchisement, significant groups of young people are largely restricted to leisure in their homes and estates, or community pubs and social clubs.

Other sections of working-class youth have adapted to the new post-Fordist service labour market, and while inherently insecure and underpaid, many attempt to engage with mainstream commercial lifestyles. Yet even here there are subtle leisure inequalities. As Ball *et al.,* (2000:6) argue, 'as always, some are more able than others to participate in the experiential commodities of youth consumption. Going clubbing, drinking, smoking, recreational drugs, fashionable clothing and other lifestyle accessories do not come cheap.' They go on to mention the purchase of cheaper clothing imitations and 'look-alike' labels as a way of dealing with such inequalities. Others may save, beg and borrow in order to transcend what is

in reality unaffordable, in order to purchase lifestyle accessories which are literally beyond their economic means.

Students have come to be an identifiable consumer group. Students in further and higher education have substantially increased, with the bulk of this group made up of 'non-traditional' students who are often older, locally based and living at home, sometimes working class and increasingly female (Chatterton, 1999). While the diversification of the student body has served to broaden the nature of cultural activity somewhat, traditional wealthy adolescent students remain strongly targeted consumers, with identifiable swathes of all British cities devoted to meeting their educational, housing and nightlife needs (Hollands, 1995; Chatterton, 1999).

Finally, many young people emerging from universities and professional qualifications are able to enter into a world of relatively stable employment and consumer lifestyles. In metropolitan centres which have benefited from the spoils of professional and business service decentralisation, entertainment and cultural provision for this relatively privileged young middle-class group is plentiful. These young urban service workers, knowledge professionals and cultural intermediaries—the denizens of the re-imagined urban landscape (Featherstone, 1991)—as well as accumulating economic capital also seek symbolic capital and status through consumption, and hence are implicated in a virtuous cycle of growth. Bauman (1997:180) has called such groups 'postmodern sensation gatherers' who constantly search for new exhilarating 'peak' experiences. Hence, nightlife, like other forms of consumer practices, offers the potential for the consumption of positional goods for this group of 'white-collar' service workers to distinguish themselves from other social groups (Bourdieu, 1984). Such distinction requires constant effort and the continual reworking and upgrading of new nightlife concepts through which participants can maintain social 'distance' and social status. Numerous studies have examined these new class factions in urban contexts (Wynne and O'Connor, 1998; Savage *et al.,* 1992; Bourdieu, 1984), suggesting that they have stimulated an explosion of cultural goods and services.

Of course, these rather general categories represent only an analytical starting point. The task remains to develop a more sophisticated theory of social division beyond old dichotomies or correspondence class theories (Crompton, 1998) by taking into account how labour market conditions and structures have changed (i.e. class displacement, realignment and recomposition) and lifestyles have expanded. One should not assume a completely homogenous working-class youth cohort, either occupationally or in terms of lifestyle (Roberts, 1997). Cohen and Ainley (2000), for example, point to differences in the way some working-class kids are able to utilise cultural power and knowledge to achieve economic power, while Ball *et al.,* (2000) provide empirical evidence of a wide spectrum of working transitions based on educational, occupational, domestic and leisure factors. For instance, work and training in style occupations and the new cultural economies (hairdressing, fashion, nightlife, tourism, etc.) may help produce very different

youth cultural identities from those produced through traditional service employment like retail and office work.

Even those employed in similar occupational strata may differ in their leisure choices, with some content with mainstream choices while others try to achieve higher social status through consumption of a more premium lifestyle. There are also documented distinctions evident within the young middle classes in terms of occupational and lifestyle identities (see Ball *et al.,* 2000; Wynne and O'Connor, 1998). Savage *et al.,*'s (1992) three-fold distinction of ascetic, postmodern and undistinctive lifestyles within the middle classes is useful. However, such work does not really deal well with the youth dimension, although Ball *et al.,*'s (2000) work is suggestive of different lifestyle patterns within middle-class youth in some instances. Higher and further education also provide many young people with a degree of latitude in which to forge more distinct identities within the general category of studenthood, even though they retain quite strong class connotations. And, of course, all of these above groups are made more complicated by gender, ethnicity and sexual orientation. Nevertheless, there remain clear transitional differences between the young poor literally unable to make the transition to work, adulthood and high-consumption lifestyles (MacDonald *et al.,* 2001), and those more middle-class patterns of avid consumerism, delayed or postponed employment, or a rejection of traditional definitions of work (Gorz, 1999). In the end, most young people come to recognise that their eventual status will be crucially influenced by their relationship (either negative or positive) to the labour market, and other key resources such as credit, housing, education and leisure (see Crompton, 1996).

As we go on to suggest in Part II, in the context of young people's use of urban nightlife there is a continuing polarisation between highly mobile, 'cash-rich, time-poor' groups of young people who can access a variety of entertainment choices, a large mainstream middle ground, and those experiencing unemployment, unstable employment, low wages, high debt and restricted leisure opportunities. Additionally, we outline how nightlife experiences are still contoured by higher education (Chapter 6), gender and sexual identity (Chapter 7) and ethnic differences (Chapter 8). In the next section we outline our own typology of consumption spaces in the night-time economy and briefly sketch out how they are inhabited by different segments of the youth population.

Consuming youth nightlife: mainstream, residual and alternative spaces and groups

Contrary to either a free-floating, individualised, 'pick and mix' story of post-modern youth cultures or a simple 'class correspondence' model of leisure, nightlife activity is instead characterised by hierarchically segmented consumption groupings and spaces in cities, which are highly structured around drinking circuits or areas, each with their own set of codes, dress styles, language and tastes. Despite post-modern assertions that hybrid eclectic styles today make

it more problematic for young people to distinguish between themselves and other youth cultures (Muggleton, 1997:199), many young people have no such difficulty in identifying varied nightlife spaces inhabited by different social groups. Below, we reveal three main types of nightlife consumption spaces—mainstream, residual and alternative—that are inhabited, made and remade by a range of competing youth cultural groupings characterised by various cultural tastes and polarised transitions. Clearly, such consumption groups and their spaces are fluid and overlapping rather than rigid categories. For example, students, gays and groups of women are identified at a 'common-sense' level on a night out, but clearly all have dominant, residual and alternative variants. Finally, our research reveals an increasing domination of gentrified mainstream nightlife space and its marginalisation and usurpation of residual and alternative places and groupings.

Primary among these segmented spaces is one that we have labelled 'the main-stream', as it stands out as the dominant mode of young adults' consumption of urban nightlife culture (also see Chatterton and Hollands, 2002). This is despite the fact that it proves rather hard to define precisely, partly because it often functions as 'the other' (what other less stylish young people consume) and partly because of its complex make-up (Thornton, 1995). Although at first the mainstream may seem a rather blunt instrument for understanding the diversity of groups and places downtown at night, we use it here to encompass the well-recognised weekend commercial provision of chain and theme pubs and traditional nightclubs which are characterised by smart attire, chart music, commercial circuit drinking, pleasure-seeking and hedonistic behaviour. Venues here include large, somewhat tacky (what many refer to as 'cheesy') established nightclubs, theme and chain super-pubs and bars owned by multinational entities, encompassing both dated 'chrome and mirror' styles and more contemporary minimalist café-bar styles. Hence a range of social groups and identities can be considered part of this large social space of the commercial mainstream, and it is inhabited differentially by a range of youth groups from across the middle-ground social spectrum, including the young working class, students and a range of young professionals. As such, it brings together a variety of traditional nightlife behaviours, alongside emerging middle-class, upgraded, sanitised and gentrified styles.The important point for our analysis here is that the unifying factor of the mainstream is commercially viable and profit-oriented provision. Further among all those who consume the main-stream there is a desire for ease of access and familiar environments, and a rather uncritical—or perhaps undeclared—stance towards issues such as profit, ownership and exclusion within the city at night. This is not to say that people are cultural dupes in their leisure time, but rather, obviously, that the majority of us choose to focus on socialising, pleasure and status-seeking during a night out, rather than critiquing and academically deconstructing the 'ins and outs' of what makes nightlife.

The mainstream, then, is consumed by numerous overlapping groups, entails a range of types of provision and is internally divided in terms of behaviours and styles. However, rather than a random and chaotic mix of postmodern styles, as

we go on to show in Chapter 5 the mainstream has a number of internal social divisions and is a segmented social space reflecting, for example, intra-class, gender and local stereotypes (see Hollands, 2000). Differentiation here is constructed at two levels around labour market position and various taste communities based upon style, music, fashion and argot, leading to a preference for particular nightlife social spaces. As the boundaries of these two levels shift over time, youth groupings within the mainstream compete for new positions along the nightlife hierarchy and constantly seek out new fashions and spaces to re-differentiate themselves.

In this regard, one of the main transformations within the mainstream is a clear attempt to introduce more up-market and sanitised environments (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Traditional nightclubs, with their rather seedy images of violence, drunkenness, chart music and reputations as 'cattle-markets', have been joined downtown by smaller, safer and more niche-oriented specialist clubs, and larger super-pubs owned by multinational entertainment operators. Similarly, many of the new bars, characterised by terms like 'café culture' and 'style venues', have attempted to create an up-market feel, with polished floors, minimalist or branded décor and a greater selection of designer drinks (see Plate 4.2). As such, many of these new venues are perceived and experienced by young adults as more cosmopolitan (Chatterton and Hollands, 2002).

This cosmopolitanisation process has been partly driven by two important influences on youth nightlife spaces over the last thirty years—the increased presence of young women and the overlap between mainstream and gay cultures. As we go on to argue in Chapter 7, while many nightlife spaces remain heavily gendered and 'sexed', a loosening of sexualised identities has paradoxically opened up new opportunities for young women and gay youth to express themselves, while drawing them into the mainstream particularly through the gentrification process (for gender, see Chatterton and Hollands, 2001; Difford, 2000a; for gay gentrification see Whittle, 1994; Chasin, 2001).

The gentrifying mainstream also attracts elements of the wealthier end of the elite student market and an increasingly older, more mature and upwardly mobile section of the local working-class population, who clearly view such places as sites to express their perceived mobility and status. Part of the explanation for the trend towards a more 'exclusive' mainstream can be found in theorisations about 'subcultural capital', an emphasis on the importance of 'peer distinction' (Thornton, 1995) and the acquisition of positional goods and hierarchy within nightlife youth cultures. The idea that these cultures are essentially 'taste cultures' (Bourdieu, 1984)—in this case the acquisition of knowledge about what is 'trendy'—partly explains how more specific hierarchies of style evolve and constantly change. Differences between youth groupings and cultures fuel a never-ending and tail-chasing game of 'cool-hunting' (Klein, 2000). To sum up, the commercial mainstream is a differentiated playground for the active production and reproduction of various social groupings of young people, keen to refashion their consumption identities in relation to their peers and in light of their own socio-

Plate 4.2 The wealthy and fashionable at play; the Fine Line Bar, Bristol, UK, 2000

economic and labour market positions. In essence, it is the fluidity of the mainstream, and its constant trend towards gentrification and stylisation, which drives the system forward in a constant search for new consumption experiences.

However, while the mainstream succeeds in meeting the style aspirations of white-collar workers including young professionals, graduates and service employees, ironically it works to produce a rather predictable, serially reproduced and rationalised environment. Longhurst and Savage (1996) argue that it is actually often commonality and conformity, as well as a desire for difference and distinction, which marks out this large middle-class, middle-brow faction. As we consider in more detail in Chapter 5, such aspirations signify an increasing desire for safe, risk-free consumption environments. What Wynne and O'Connor's (1998) study of middle-class urban-livers in Manchester found was that this affluent, mobile and largely childless group were not particularly experimental or postmodern, but represented a large 'open middle' of consumer tastes who avoid environments where access is unfamiliar. Much of this lack of experimentation reflects balancing work, family and social commitments for such 'cash-rich, time-poor' groups, but it also reflects wider personal insecurities and a retreat to the familiar, in what is regarded for many as an increasingly complex and dangerous world (Beck, 1992). Hannigan (1998:70) comments that to reduce the concerns of the middle classes over the safety of downtown areas, consumption experiences have become more sanitised and programmed. By regulating access, branding and

rationalising product sales and controlling movement through design of interiors, music and furniture, urban playscapes more and more reflect this dystopic, standardised world of McDonaldisation (Ritzer, 1993). In this sense, Clarke and Bradford (1998:875) point out that those consumers in stable employment are 'seduced' by the commercial mainstream and its marketing machine, which generates ever more sophisticated needs and desires and an all-important escape route from some of the less palatable realities of urban life.

Smith (1996) in his work on the gentrified city suggests that up-market developments represent a business and middle-class backlash against the urban working-class population. In light of this dominance of the mainstream, and more specifically the growth of up-market style bars, the fate of more 'residual' forms of urban nightlife consumption have rapidly diminished in many cities. By 'residual nightlife' we are referring to those more traditional spaces of the city inhabited by increasingly excluded sections of the youth population, including community bars, pubs and ale-houses, as well as the general purview of the street, the neighbourhood ghetto or council estate. These spaces are inhabited, predominately by the young urban poor or Bauman's (1997) 'flawed consumers'—the unemployed, welfare-dependent and criminalised who represent the 'other' city of dirt, poverty, dereliction, violence and crime (Illich, 2000), in contrast to the stylish gentrifying mainstream. Connected to the industrial city, residual spaces are now surplus to requirements in the newly emerging post-industrial corporate landscape, replete with its themed fantasy world and expanding consumer power. Similarly, residual youth groupings, including the young unemployed, homeless, poor and often those from ethnic backgrounds, are excluded, segregated, incorporated, policed and in some cases literally 'swept off the streets'.

As such, the younger generation of this 'socially excluded' section of the population have a limited number of choices of nightlife. They can steer clear of the increasingly 'middle-class' city (Ley, 1996) and socialise within what is left of their rapidly declining communities, and in some cases ghettos. Community pubs on estates, social clubs, house parties and the street (Toon, 2000) may remain their only choice of venue. Others continue to inhabit those declining traditional city spaces made up of 'rough' market pubs, ale-houses, saloons and taverns, earmarked for redevelopment, while local police often view them as sites of petty crime. Finally, some venture out and attempt to consume the 'bottom end' of mainstream commercial provision. Clearly, groups such as these will continue to be further maligned and increasingly excluded from city-centre nightlife, as gentrification and urban rebranding for a wealthy elite continues apace.

Finally, we found that a number of young adults were less sanguine about the new outward stylisation of much mainstream nightlife. As we highlighted in Chapter 2, increasing corporate control of much of the style revolution means that, for some young consumers, it is all style and no substance (Klein, 2000). The degree to which this stylisation represents choice or a 'real' step up the social mobility ladder is highly debatable for some young people. A disenchantment with

what is on offer in the labour market and mainstream nightlife has led many young people into forms of active resistance and the search for alternatives. Urban nightlife, as such, contains numerous oppositional places, and hence retains elements of transgression. While many alternative spaces are simply more bohemian versions of mainstream culture—the British dance music industry (see Hesmondhalgh, 1998) and its associated infrastructure in clubs, hybrid bar-clubs, independent clothes and record shops is a good example of this model—others openly identify themselves as actively oppositional against the mainstream (Chatterton, 2002a).

'Alternative' nightlife spaces, usually independently owned or managed, in the form of unique single-site music, club and bar venues, or one-off squats and/or house or free parties, form the basis of more localised nightlife production—consumption clusters. Such places exist to meet the needs of particular youth identity groups, and styles here can be quite specific and related to certain genres of music, dance cultures, clothing styles and ethnicity (such as Goths, post-punk, grunge, indie, hip hop, garage, nu-metal, etc.; see Bennett, 2000), politics or sexual identity (Whittle, 1994), or are generally more 'casual' in relation to the formal regulation of dress than in the mainstream sphere. Because they are less likely to be corporately owned, such places are typically found on the lower cost margins of city centres, and consumption here is usually related to a conscious identity, style or lifestyle rather than a passing consumer whim. Marginal spaces are often distinguished by shocking, out of place bodily appearances, often displaying an anti-aesthetic, setting them apart from the respectable, fashionable mainstream. Consumption here can also be driven through musical appreciation (i.e. live music, or specialist DJs or particular underground club nights) or being with like-minded people, and can sometimes combine arts, culture, performance and politics.

The important point is that within such sites there is more of a blurring of the division between producers and consumers, through the exchange of music, shared ideas and values, business deals and networks of trust and reciprocity. Examples of more underground alternative provision include illegal warehouse, house parties or squats, where the link between production and consumption is literally indistinguishable (Chatterton, 2002b). It is here and in the more underground club scene that the more fleeting and loose forms of tribal sociation as suggested by Bennett (2000) and Maffesoli (1996) are identifiable.

However, minority cultural identities in the guise of lifestyles or 'neo-tribes' do not negate the idea that social and spatial divisions, inequalities and hierarchies continue to exist within urban nightlife. Within nightlife, internal cultural diversification in the industry is as much about social hierarchies and ensuring continued profitability as it is about 'tribes' and hybridity. Urban youth nightlife consumption cultures, then, remain segmented around a dominant commercial mainstream, with its various subdivisions, and diminishing opportunities for alternative and residual experiences. It is to these nightlife experiences we now turn in Part 2.

Part II

URBAN NIGHTLIFE STORIES

Experiencing mainstream, residual and alternative spaces

5 PLEASURE, PROFIT AND YOUTH IN THE CORPORATE PLAYGROUND

Branding and gentrification in mainstream nightlife

This chapter is about making and experiencing what we call mainstream commercial nightlife and here we discuss a number of aspects. First, and foremost the commercial mainstream is a place of capital accumulation and only coincidently does it have anything to do with creativity, diversity and access. Hence it is a battleground for profit-hungry entertainment conglomerates eager to attract both mass and niche audiences, but also equally concerned to segment them. Second, it is also an area where city councils are active in terms of 'place marketing', hence the emphasis on large-scale development showcases filled with corporate pubs and restaurant chains, rather than addressing the entertainment needs of a broad public and opportunities for local entrepreneurs. Finally, the commercial mainstream is a differentiated 'playground' which offers a number of goods and spaces for the active production and reproduction of social groupings of young people, keen to refashion their night-time consumption identities in relation to their peers and their own labour market positions.

Our story here considers the interaction between these three elements. Our argument is that a mode of mainstream commercial nightlife dominates downtown urban nightlife, characterised by growing corporate activity aided by the entrepreneurial city, resulting in a segmented and increasingly gentrified consumption experience. This should not imply that this mode is somehow either fixed, uncomplicated or monolithic. In fact, it is the fluidity of mainstream nightlife, with its changing styles and constant upgrading, which both drives it forward in a constant search for new consumption experiences and, ironically, works to produce a rather predictable and rationalised environment (what Harvey (1989b) refers to as 'serial reproduction'). In this sense, what was stylish for pioneering producers and consumers a few years ago becomes the fodder for today's less differentiated and mass nightlife market.

There are some general themes within mainstream nightlife which distinguish it from both residual and alternative nightlife (see Chapters 8 and 9 respectively). Foremost, it is characterised by corporately owned themed/branded or stylised environments and strict regulatory practices, including mandatory doormen and smart attire, and typified by the consumption of commercial chart music, circuit drinking, pleasure-seeking and often over-indulgence. It is the well-recognised young adults' Friday and Saturday night out in bars, pubs and clubs in most major

cities around the world. Yet within the mainstream one can also discern different levels, such as the well-publicised mass market of hedonistic and sometimes over-exuberant drink-fuelled behaviours (Hollands, 1995), as well as a growing tendency towards stylisation and exclusivity, particularly in terms of prices and certainly dress sense (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Rather than condemning mainstream activity through moral panics associated with unruly yob cultures, or assuming that these spaces are part of a brave new world for post-industrial urban centres, it is important to place such nightlife within a broader economic, regulatory and consumption-based framework.

Second, difficulties defining mainstream nightlife arise from the fact that it func tions as an imprecise 'other' for both young people and youth researchers. As a result of this othering, and its changing nature, it is often an imprecise and inconsistent category (Thornton, 1995). Echoing the Frankfurt School, the mainstream is denigrated to the level of unsophisticated, commercial mass culture, representing a creeping sameness which is evident across a number of cultural styles such as music, fashion, film and TV (Swingewood, 1977). However, it is important to recognise that nightlife here is internally divided and contains numerous overlapping and segregated groups of consumers. All forms of nightlife consumption require a range of knowledge and competencies and, in a Bourdieuian sense, different forms of social, cultural and economic capital (or subcultural capital) will circulate in different nightlife consumption arenas, even within the mainstream (Thornton, 1995). There is no single 'mainstream', then, but a variety of mainstream scenes.

However, as discussed in Chapter 2, a key trend within the mainstream is a growing tendency towards gentrification, the pandering towards middle-ground tastes, and associated effects such as commercialisation purification and privatisation of urban space. Gentrification of housing markets, schools, shops, leisure provision, entertainment and nightlife is increasing social and spatial differentiation in central areas. The move 'back into the urban centre' (Wynne and O'Connor, 1998) continues to be highly selective, creating hermetically sealed living—working—playing environments for a new group of mobile, wealthy, young urban-livers who are increasingly driving the development of mainstream nightlife. Along waterfront locations, this process has become all too obvious, with cities like Baltimore, Cleveland, Barcelona and Melbourne all creating leisure nightscapes from the residue of their industrial infrastructures. This has had the effect of creating certain demarcations and a hierarchy of nightlife spaces within the mainstream, suggestive of who is welcome and who is not. Yet, at the same time, in many of these now post-industrial cities, young people in less stable and lower-level service and manufacturing jobs also consume these spaces, resulting in a continual game of upgrading and downgrading of premises. Below, we outline an understanding of mainstream nightlife within such a framework.

Serial (re)production, corporate 'brandscapes' and the gentrification of mainstream urban nightlife spaces

As outlined in Chapter 2, the mainstream is defined through a particular mode of production characterised by the disproportionate role corporate operators play in nightlife in central areas and their use of branding/theming and market segmentation. With regard to ownership, one independent bar owner in the UK (Bristol), reflecting on the dominance of large national brewers, commented: 'What horrified me was their influence on the way cities operate, and that influence is still totally endemic.' Others referred to the impact of corporates through various 'disease' metaphors.The danger of corporate buy-out, as expansion-hungry corporations hunt for easy ways to adopt winning strategies and enter established markets, is particularly felt by smaller independent nightlife retailers.

The impact of corporate dominance within mainstream nightlife on cultural diversity and consumer experiences is considerable. For instance, large publicly quoted companies have a legal fiduciary duty to shareholders and directors, not the cities they reside in. As one bar manager interviewed intimated: 'At the end of the day, breweries and major companies are run by accountants. All they're interested in is how much profit is being made' (Bar manager 2, Newcastle upon Tyne). One of the quickest and safest routes to profit is branding, and hence branded nightlife ideas that work locally are rolled out nationally. Such a focus on profitable brands has implications for wider cultural development. As one music producer interviewed reflected: 'The people who are controlling the investment aren't looking at the cultural aspects, they're just looking at the business —selling pints' (DJ 1, Newcastle upon Tyne). Finally, the mainstream mode of production creates a particular set of relations between those who profit (owners), labour (bar staff) and consume (customers). In general, this relationship is more 'producer-led' and is often manifested by a division of command between the corporate centre and nightlife venues, with control over what happens in the venue in terms of style, music, lighting and products residing at external head offices. One bar manager, from a large national bar chain, commented: 'At the end of the day Head Office stipulates what we can do, what we can't do. We're not even allowed to promote things unless Head Office gives us consent' (Bar manager 3, Bristol). All of these factors result in a more standardised nightlife experience, with a serial reproduction of similar premises emerging across cities.

Clearly, large corporate operators understand that dominating mainstream nightlife markets is not simply a case of 'one size fits all' (see also Chapter 2). They are also cognisant that they have a relationship with smaller, more creative operators, whether about learning new bar concepts or in terms of potential buyouts of successful independent brands (see Chapter 9 for an extended discussion of the independent mode of nightlife production). For example, attempts by smaller independent operators to create diverse, cosmopolitan and more café-bar atmospheres, drawing upon motifs associated with 'Europeanisation', have sought to encourage different types of licensing, new

attitudes to dress codes and gender relations, a diversity of uses mixing eating and drinking, a 'chameleon' approach by appealing to different audiences throughout the day and a broader range of alcohol preferences, such as wine, spirits, bottled designer beers and alcopops (Difford, 2000a). Many new nightlife venues are also keen to place themselves as wider lifestyle venues and one-stop-shops for nightlife. Such multi-functionality means that the physical boundaries between types of premises are blurring. In particular, hybrid half-club/half-bars have emerged which have eroded the distinction between a 'bar' and a 'club' experience. While originating mainly from small-scale local entrepreneurs, many of these concepts have subsequently been usurped by corporate chains. Figure 5.1 shows the layout of S&N Retail's award-winning Bar 38 branded venue, based around a number of drinking, eating and socialising spaces between which similar cash-rich consumers are encouraged to circulate. Note in particular the TV screens, cash point and fourteen CCTV cameras. (Contrast this to the layout of a traditional pub in Figure 8.1, Chapter 8, which catered for a number of different social groups through distinct rooms such as the tap room or lounge.)

The 'brand' has become a key motif for success for operators within mainstream nightlife, which is of little surprise in our brand-obsessed (Klein, 2000) and symbol-ridden environment (Gottdiener, 2001). While urban areas have always had elements of a 'symbolic economy', what is new is the symbiosis of image and product, the scope and scale of selling global images, and the way in which branded spaces increasingly speak for social places and groups. The symbolic economy within branded nightlife works on a number of levels. Semiotically speaking, signifiers such as bar or club 'denote' certain meanings such as 'beer' or 'dancing' but, beyond this, branded and themed nightlife spaces 'connote' wider social meanings. Such connotations may refer to particular social and spatial settings and a myriad of historical or geographical reference points such as sports bars, sushi bars, Moroccan bazaars, Aussie and Irish pubs and beach bars, which invite consumers to step outside their immediate environment and participate in structured fantasies. The logic of such easy-to-read themed environments is that their legibility stimulates our propensity to spend. Themed environments, then, offer 'perfectly engineered enticements, directing our behaviour toward the spending of more money, and making us like it' (Gottdiener, 2001:152). In short, people like to be entertained while they spend money *(ibid.)*.

Rather than representing a homogenous mass, successful mainstream corporate operators have developed strategies to attract both niche and mass audiences through developing a portfolio of brands, with some following themes such as Europeanisation-cosmopolitanisation, while others adopt a more McDonaldisation-Americanisation model. On the one hand, smaller-scale more design-intensive venues for status-conscious customers involve higher start-up costs and lower revenue from a restricted consumer base, but are able to maintain profits by charging higher prices at the bar and at the door. The design of such specialised, one-off stylised environments appeals to small, niche-market segments, usually based upon highly individual, esoteric and avant-garde design

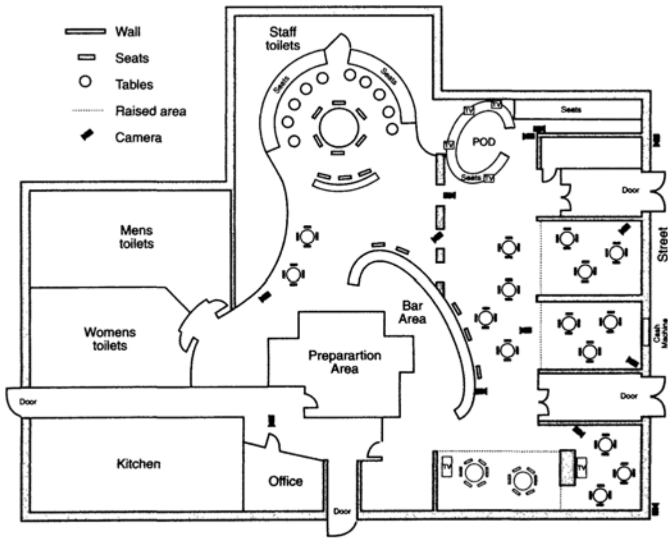

Figure 5.1 Plan of a style bar; Bar 38, Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2002

Source: Scottish & Newcastle Retail

and minimalist features—stripped wooden benches, metallic walls, glass frontages. Such places often become well-used leisure spaces for those involved in the creative industries. While these venues are more bohemian variations of the mainstream, they still share many characteristics of the commercial sector such as traditional gender roles, patterns of alcohol consumption, ownership, pricing policy and producer-consumer relations. Moreover, such premises can quickly become colonised by more mainstream audiences, eroding their creative impulses. Such is the fate of the latest chic style bar.

On the other hand, it is the large-capacity (1,000 plus), themed, mass-oriented mainstream venues based around well-known high-street brands which have come to dominate nightlife, particularly in countries like the UK, as they provide the best opportunities for economies of scale and profit maximisation. While initial outlays on centrally located property may be costly, profit returns from downtown locations are high and multi-site brands offer production and maintenance savings, while the parent company can negotiate large bulk discounts from suppliers. Such massified venues attempt to appeal to the widest possible audience, and design features and themes are constructed to attract a broad, inoffensive middle ground comprising bright walls, rock and pop music, legible signage and well-known drink brands, in which many different groups can feel at home. Globally, operators such as Hard Rock Café (see Plate 5.1) and Planet Hollywood are the best-known examples of this latter strategy.

In the UK, the JD Wetherspoon pub chain perhaps best epitomises such an approach. It is actively engaged in the serial reproduction of nightlife, with its

Plate 5.1 Hard Rock Café, Barcelona, Plaça de Catalunya, Barcelona, Spain, 2002

cheap beer, no music or TV, 'just a pub' philosophy. Established in the 1970s, the company rapidly reached a pre-tax profit of £15.6 million in 2000 and hopes to boost its estate from 400 to 2,000 pubs over the next few years. The company has been able to dominate the mainstream high street through bulk buying and selling heavily discounted drinks and food. Similarly, Brannigans, one of the fastest growing UK late-night entertainment brands with plans to double the size of the business over the next three years (*UBS Capital,* press release, 16 November 2001) has a brash and no-nonsense approach to nightlife provision. Unlike many bars who aim to hide alcohol drinking behind a veneer of style, it has an upfront approach to the brand's philosophy of 'Eating, Drinking and Cavorting', placing this slogan in large bright neon letters outside all of its venues (see Plate 5.2). Its 'fun pub' formula combines music and dancing in a pub setting with a music policy which concentrates on pop classics and live tribute bands.

Other companies have used approaches to move towards the upper end of mass nightlife markets to attract more affluent, stylish, middle-class audiences (see Box 5.1 on Six Continents Retail, for example). Chorion Leisure's Tiger Tiger brand, which started in London and plans to roll out premises across the UK, is described as an 'up-market nightclub' or themed 'super-club' (comprising bars, restaurant and club in one) catering for a 25-plus age group. Moreover, Luminar Leisure, the UK's largest nightclub operators, owners of the Slug and Lettuce chain, describe these venues as 'yuppie' bars 'aimed at affluent urban professionals, offering quality food and premium beers'.

Plate 5.2 'Eating, Drinking and Cavorting' on the mainstream; Brannigans bar, Bristol, UK, 2002

BOX 5.1
: SIX CONTINENTS RETAIL: FROM WORKING-CLASS BEER TO MIDDLE CLASS HOTELS

Bass Breweries, establislied in Burton-on-Trent in 1777, has recently moved out of beer production after selling its brewing division to Interbrew —now is slowly divesting from many of its traditional pubs. Subsequently, Bass has relaunched itself as Six Continents Retail because the Bass 'brand' was seen as too localised for its global ambitions, Six Continents now sees itself as a global leisure group concentrating upon up-market hotels such as Inter-continental in the USA, SPHC in Asia, Holiday Inns in Europe and branded restaurants and nightlife venues such as All Bar One, O'Neills and Harvester, Tellingly, the company has been divesting from what have traditionally been lower-profit working-class and community-based activities such as traditional tenanted pubs, Gala bingo halls and Coral bookmakers. A further 988 smaller pubs were sold in February 2001 for £625 million as they were deemed not suitable for rebranding. As a result, Six Continents Retail is now concentrating on 2,

000 larger nightlife venues in the UK, with a very high proportion either branded or due to be branded.

Scottish & Newcastle Retail have also sought to utilise middle-class values as a yard-stick for the development of their various brands. In a discussion of brands they argue: 'Today's middle-class customers are more experienced, better travelled, have higher aspirations, and higher standards' and 'bars have become the norm for increasing numbers of mainstream young consumers, whose levels of sophistication have risen' (Scottish & Newcastle, 2001; also see Plate 5.3). Additionally, JD Wetherspoon has introduced a more style and café-type venue called Lloyds No. 1 to its established portfolio. A review of its Manchester premises stated that: 'Lloyds is Wetherspoon's slightly more ambitious cousin—tastefully decked out with comfier seating, music to fill the pregnant pauses, nicer toilets, but the same hugely competitive beer, wine and food prices' (JD Wetherspoon, 2002). Finally, Wolverhampton and Dudley's own up-market chain, Pitcher and Piano, is aimed at 20–30-year-old young professionals and has attracted enough attention as a brand to be considered an attractive 'package' for potential buyers. Branding and the move up-market, then, is not only designed to tap into that cash-rich and allegedly more 'trouble-free' clientele, but is also driven by the need to increase the value of brands (Batchelor, 1998) in light of continued concentration and conglomeration within the industry, and the desire from growing companies to float on the stock exchange and raise money for further expansion.

Most large chains focus upon rolling out branded environments across several localities, which gives consumers an all-important sense of familiarity and connected- ness across geographical places. At the same time, large branded nightlife venues are also trying to create a far-reaching corporate strategy in which the venue is not just a place for drinking, but offers a wider lifestyle experience, with international recognition, cross-merchandising and potential to expand in other locations. Hard Rock Café, Pacha and Ministry of Sound are some of the most visible examples here. As one UK nightclub owner told us: 'It's a brand that you buy into as a customer. When you go to Ministry of Sound it's the whole ethos, you get the magazine and the CDs and the t-shirts and the record bag' (Nightclub owner 1, Bristol).

As mentioned in Chapter 2 (see Box 2.1), different traditions of licensing, the sale of alcoholic beverages with food and/or in conjunction with other leisure activities, and a greater suburbanisation of entertainment, have resulted in a more varied pattern of mainstream nightlife ownership and branding in North America. The majority of branded premises here tend to be 'bar-restaurants', serving food and drink together, as well as being themed around other forms of entertainment whether it be sports, video and arcade games, music, sexuality or geographical 'place spaces' (i.e. Irish, Aussie and English pubs; see Box 5.2 for some examples). Sports bars, taverns and bar-restaurants in particular are one of the largest growth

Plate 5.3 Putting on the style: S&N Retail's award-winning Bar 38 brand; Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2002

areas in North America, decked out with endless banks of TV screens and offering burger and beer deals served by often scantily clad waitresses. Whole web pages (such as www.sportstavern.com) are devoted to them. Similarly, Irish theme pubs have also grown tremendously, providing musical entertainment as well as 'authentic cuisine'. Many of these themed environments tend to be casual and even family oriented, rather than being gentrified spaces targeting young adults specifically (although the cost of drinking and dining together may be prohibitive, and some places not suitable for children). Finally, such branded spaces in North America tend to be suburban, being located in strip malls and in out-of-town leisure complexes, while also increasing their presence in downtown core areas.

BOX 5.2
: EXAMPLES OF NORTH AMERICAN THEMED 'BAR-RESTAURANTS'

ESPN Zone

The ESPN cable sports network and sports bars and rastaurant chain has become a well-known brand across the USA and has attracted the attention of global corporations like Disney, which has secured a majority shareholding in the company, ESPN Zone now has footholds in major entertainment sites such as Times Square, located on 42nd and Broadway (Hannigan, 1998).

Hooters

Described as having a 'casual beach theme', the bar-restaurant is primarily characterised by its Hooters Girls (cheerleader-like waitresses; see also Figure Box 7.2), 1950s said 1960s jukebox music, and sports on television, From a single location opened in 1983 in Florida, the brand now has over 310 location in in forty-three states and in Asia, Aruba, Canada, England, Mexico, Singapore, Taiwan, Argentina, Brazil, Austria, Switzerland and Puerto Rico, with its website stating-the brand 'has proven successful in small-town America, major metropolitan areas and internationally'. Around 75 per cent of its sales come from food and merchandising, with 25 per cent coming from its sale of wine and beer (Hooters does not sell liquor). Today, the company is involved in cross-marketing itself through its own magazine, billboards, TV and sports partnerships with the National Golf Association Hooters Tour and the United Speed Alliance Hooters Pro Cup racing series.

Firkin Group of Pubs

Following the opening of their first premises in downtown Toronto in 1987, the Firkin Group of pu bs added three more abs five years, before deciding to franchise the idea of a traditional English neigh bourhood pub, encompassing good beer, good food and good company, the company trades on the logo 'Everyone's s a little different. One's just right for you.' There are now thirty-six franchises operating in Canada, the majority in Ontario.

Dave & Buster's

Dave & Buster's launched their concept of combing food, drink and interactive games back in 1982 in Dallas, Texas, and today are a nation-wide institution operating in fourteen states, Canada and Taiwan, In addition to their bars and restaurants, they offer interactive entertainment attractions such as pocket billiards, shuffleboard, state-of-the-art simulators, virtual reality and traditional carnival-style amusements and games of skill. Guests under the age of 21 (legal drinking age) must be accompanied by a parent or guardian, and are restricted after certain hours. As well as expanding in the USA, Dave & Baster's have granted several international licensing agreements for future expansion abroad. In 1999, they began trading on the New York stock exchange.

Prime Restaurants

Prime Restaurants develops, manages, buys and sells franchise restaurant concepts, and with 130 restaurants in Canada and six in the USA and revenues of nearly $300 million (Canadian), it is a going concern in the bar-restaurant sector, From its early beginings in openging Casey's Bar and Grill (there are now thirty across Ontario and Quebec), the company is perhaps best known for developing the East Side Mario franchise. In 1996 it engaged in a joint venture to open a series of Irish puds in Canada (with brand names such as Fionn MacCool's, D'arcy McGee's, s,1ir nan Og, Paddy O'Flaherty's). In 1999 they launched Esplanade Bier Market in Toronto, selling imported beers and upscale Belgium food.[1]

In a bid for some form of authenticity and history, branded and gentrified urban nightlife has also increasingly colonised abandoned and decaying industrial architecture. While many of these buildings were originally reused by bohemian

artists, intellectuals and students (Zukin, 1988), not to mention small nightlife operators, in the face of increasing property values a vast collection of ageing buildings have more recently been transformed by large entertainment conglomerates. Old banking halls, schools and hospitals are now garish fun pubs, grain stores and warehouses have become wealthy riverside lofts or art galleries, bingo halls and working men's clubs are transformed into stylish nightclubs and restaurants, while mills and churches now stand as new offices, apartments or mixed-use arts venues. In many cases, older and industrial architecture rooted in the very fabric of working-class and community life now serves as an infrastructure for a new class of high-income pleasure-seekers, tourists, office workers and city-livers (see Plate 5.4).

Hallmarks of nightlife brandscapes include a fleeting and fast-moving experience, a preoccupation with the new, and a rapid turnover of styles and fads. Such new nightlife styles, no doubt, have radically changed the look and feel of many urban areas. In Bristol in the UK, for example:

> In 1982 there were pubs and a smattering of (God help us) cocktail bars. The middle-aged middle classes drank in wine bars. By 1992 there were theme pubs and theme bars, many of them dumping their old traditional names in favour of 'humorous' names like the Slug and Lettuce, the Spaceman and Chips or the Pestilence and Sausages (actually we've made the last two up). In 2001 we have a fair few pubs left, but the big news is bars, bright shiny chic places which are designed to appeal to women rather more than blokes with swelling guts. In 1982 they shut in the afternoons and at 11 p.m. weekdays and 10.30 p.m. Sundays. In 2001 most drinking places open all day and many late into the night as well.
>
> (Byrne, 2001:23)

This branding process also works at the level of the city (Julier, 2000) through the creation of urban brandscapes, linking nightlife and the wider city identity. For example, Leeds, a former textile city in England's northern industrial heartland, has gone to great lengths to rebrand itself and create a new visual culture. As one newspaper commented: 'After years of being saddled with the image of flat caps and Tetley Bittermen, Renaissance Leeds has been largely modelled on continental 24–hour cities…groups of chic revellers throng in the streets, Leeds is the only place to be' (Simpson, M., 1999). With European flair, Leeds has developed a bustling café-bar culture and claims to have 'waved goodbye to post-industrial decline and welcomed, with open arms, caffe-latte society' (Difford, 2000b: 4). There is some truth in this. For example, between 1994 and 2001, licensed premises increased by 53 per cent and special hours certificates (post 11 p.m. licences for bars) increased by 155 per cent (West Yorkshire Police, 2001). There is, however, another side to this story of prosperity, especially in the areas surrounding the city centre. The UK government's Index of Local Deprivation states that twelve of the thirty-three wards in Leeds are within the worst 10 per

Plate 5.4 New nightlife mixes with the old city; Beluga, Edinburgh, Scotland, 2002

cent of wards nationally. Much of this rebranding process, then, is about creating place myths to reposition urban areas within an international hierarchy (and cater for wealthy city-liver groups), rather than a concern with the everyday life of cities and their citizens.

The development of mainstream branded nightlife is linked to more general social and spatial processes and hence is a visible feature of suburban and exurban areas (Gottdiener, 2001). Over the past thirty years, there has been a recognition of significant changes in urban form through a move away from a simple centre—suburb model towards outer or edge cities (Garreau, 1992), and a development of 'polycentric' or 'peripheral' urbanisation. Soja (2000) has described this through the term 'postmetropolis' in which the experiences, forms and functions of the city, suburbs and wider metropolitan region are blurred, and the notion of 'exopolis'—a city turned 'inside out' and 'outside in', in which spatial incoherence and polarisation are norms. The spread of gentrified living and branded nightlife beyond the urban core is part of these spatial transformations. Commercial

developer interest has increasingly focused upon multifunctional themed complexes comprising strip malls, casinos, multiplexes, bars and nightclubs which serve expanding metropolitan regions. These multi-functional, exurban and suburban entertainment and nightlife ghettos have been established for many decades in suburban locations, especially in North America and Australia. They have appeal to groups who have significant demands on their daily lives from families and work, and hence demand an efficient use of leisure time. Moreover, by offering the option of private car travel, family conviviality and easy-to-navigate consumption environments, they reduce the risk factor of downtown nightlife and are removed from aspects of urban life such as poverty, dirt, homelessness and crime. While European cities continue to have a stronger tradition of more economically buoyant and cultural vibrant city cores which has resulted in a greater focus of nightlife in central rather than suburban or edge locations, nevertheless Urban Entertainment Destinations (UEDs) have markedly grown on urban fringes and in suburbs across the UK and across Europe, bringing together cinema, retail, eating and nightlife.

Mainstream branded and gentrified nightlife spaces, then, are colonising many parts of the urban fabric and redefining urban space. At the most basic level they are eroding more traditional historic forms of nightlife (as discussed in Chapter 8) and pushing alternative nightlife to the margins (Chapter 9). One can no longer linger without consuming, and traditional, older communities within nightlife venues are rarely present in the city today. The key point about any themed space is that it is part of the 'powerful forces that define the symbolic value of commodities to our society', which are essentially tools for business competition and place marketing rather than generating a wider social value or use (Gottdiener, 2001:10). Success in the night-time economy results from using themes and symbols to differentiate what are essentially similar serially reproduced products (bars, pubs, clubs). Many mainstream nightlife venues are little more than 'machines for drinking in', employing lifestyle strategies and symbolic identification to increase alcohol consumption. Branded nightscapes, then, are part of 'the merry-go-round of consumer culture that circles and circles over the same territory, but requires ever new fantasies and modes of desire in order to maintain a high level of spending' (Gottdiener, 2001:67).

Upgrading downtown: promoting and policing mainstream styles

As we outlined in Chapter 3, corporate dominance of mainstream nightlife is facilitated by a more entrepreneurial, business-led and growth-oriented local state, eager to attract large-scale developments and major inward investors. One small-scale bar owner outlined why local politicians and planners were likely to join forces with large corporate developers and nightlife entertainment conglomerates: 'They [the local state] just see that leisure-driven development is the easy way out for them… they're not going to go bust, the big plcs [public limited companies]'

(Bar owner 2, Leeds). This approach ensures that city authorities are getting the best deal on public land-sites, securing tenants for derelict buildings and decaying infrastructure, and raising the profile of urban areas. Further, simply to favour one type of nightlife developer over another would attract the prying eye of scrutiny councils and district auditors, not to mention law suits from aggrieved developers. As one planner told us: 'I mean, you can't say that I'm turning this down because it's corporate' (Local authority representative 2, Leeds).

As long as the local state remains tempted by the short-term gains of corporate investment, then, the impetus behind nightlife developments is likely to remain with large developers rather than the public interest. In particular, much of the development of the night-time economy is geared towards raising the external profile of the city. As one councillor in Bristol in south-west England suggested about their recent initiative to develop a '24–hour city':

> That was an attempt to promote the city and strengthen the local economy. Because by doing this we are obviously attracting more major club funding, leisure funding, brewery funding and that people are now being bussed from the Midlands, Birmingham, Bath, Cardiff, Devon.
>
> (Local authority representative 1, Bristol)

Such an approach, oriented towards meeting the needs of larger, externally located, publicly quoted companies, inevitably leads urban regeneration in a particular direction. It calls into question the use of public money to subsidise entertainment and nightlife facilities for the profit-hungry corporate sector (Harvey, 2000). Independent nightlife continues to face a number of barriers in such a context, such as rising property values, bulk buying by corporate chains, and more complex navigation through the regulatory system. Many small-scale schemes are sidelined, as they stand outside what the local state perceives as inward investment. As one small-scale bar owner remarked: 'It seems almost that if some corporate big guy comes in they're going to give him whatever he wants because it's inward investment' (Bar owner 4, Newcastle upon Tyne). Of more concern, it also allows the local state to literally divest responsibility for how central nightlife areas should develop and who they are for.

Behind the carnivalesque mask of mainstream and increasingly gentrified nightlife, then, there is a reinforcement rather than liberation of social roles. Mainstream nightlife often represents instrumental and choreographed rather than liminal serendipitous space. Creswell (1996) discusses the relationship between place and ideology, and specifically that certain places contain particular meanings and expectations of behaviour. Mainstream society has its own set of rather overt taken-for-granted norms and sense of limits, reinforced and circulated by an ever growing media and advertising industry. In day-to-day urban life there are few presentations of alternative possibilities and little questioning of the legitimacy of the dominant social order. In this way, mainstream nightlife is a 'normative landscape' in which particular actions and behaviours have become pre-inscribed,

tolerated and accepted, while others are not. This is a geography of common sense which renders unacceptable the other, the different, the dirty. One has to look a certain way (through designer clothes), be expected to pay certain prices (for designer beers) and accept certain codes and regulations (from door staff).

While older nightlife places like community pubs and taverns were based around narratives in which people were regarded as citizens/residents (Gofton, 1983), mainstream gentrified nightlife spaces are 'products' in which people are merely (stratified) consumers. Bounding, regulating and controlling are distinct features of mainstream nightlife and bouncers are the ultimate choreographers, by closely regulating access and ensuring an homology between consumers and venues. In essence, mainstream nightlife spaces are the ultimate 'gated (entertainment) community'. Yet within the mainstream there are a variety of regulatory approaches, differentiating mass venues from specialist ones, and 'style and selection' from more 'strong-arm' tactics.

The regulatory character of the mainstream is enforced directly by door policies but also through a complex set of pressures from peer groups, the media and consumer cultures. As one woman (Jackie, 23 years old, Leeds) commented to us about one new city-centre bar in the UK:

> Everybody inside was all tarted up and I was wearing trainers and looking a bit scruffy…It's just the way they make you feel once you're in there. The people who sort of sneer at you, and you think, I don't feel comfortable here because I can't relax when everyone else is sort of preening and trying to pull, and essentially, I'm not.

The mainstream, then, is imbued with certain codes which (problematically, we would add) link style with behaviour. As one owner of a large city-centre nightclub told us:

> We like people to come down and make an effort and we do turn people away quite a lot. Our sort of feeling is, you know, this is a club not a pub, so don't come down dressed for the pub, basically. We like people to make an effort to look smart. Well, not necessarily smart, but just to look trendy rather than that they've just thrown on any old t-shirt and any old scabby pair of trainers and a baseball cap. We want people to come down thinking, 'I'm on a night out, I'm looking good.' That's the kind of feeling we want. Also helps to attract a slightly better class of clientele. You find that people that have actually made an effort are usually a little bit more social and civilised than people that just come down dressed in whatever.
>
> (Nightclub owner 2, Leeds)

However, many established sports and casual brands have been tainted by their association with mainstream laddish nightlife culture, and as a result have come

to signify an 'anti-style'. As one chain bar owner commented: 'People who wear Rockport and the like cause trouble…they're scallies' (Finnigan, 2001:8). Many venues, then, have outlawed some mainstream branded styles on the door in their quest to further distinguish themselves from the mass consumer experience. In the process, they are promoting exclusive, upgraded nightlife environments, tailored more to cash-rich groups (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001).

This upgrading of nightlife has generally been welcomed by the police and local government, and is part of an attempt, as one senior police spokesperson told us, to help 'design out' problems of excessive drinking and violence. Whether this approach has been successful or not is another matter (Hobbs *et al.*, 2000; Newburn and Shiner, 2001). However, there is also evidence that such an approach is increasingly welcomed by city councils and city management teams (Reeve, 1996). As one local authority representative commented to us:

> I think the slight emphasis on that is trying to move away from the loutish party image to a more up-market one…but also looking to the future, the medium to longer term, it is more beneficial to have, what shall we say, a better class of clientele but probably a more mature clientele who are perhaps not so irresponsible as some of the younger ones.
>
> (Local authority representative 2, Newcastle)

Many more style-conscious venues are keen to ensure entry is restricted to elite groups and have 'unconscious dress codes', enforced by 'style pickers' and backed up by bouncers. In other places, a new orthodoxy of 'anti-fashion' style codes are enforced, based upon discreet but still expensive brands and looking, as one person told us, 'stylishly scruffy'. Additionally, managers of busy central bars are increasingly under pressure from shareholders and the corporate centre to maximise returns, which often equates to compromising on strict door policies, and hence safety. As one door security member in the UK told us: 'The manager is under tremendous pressure and he has to sometimes override door staff to make sure he's got a packed house so he can get all his money in his till' (Door security personnel 3, Bristol). Despite the fact that style codes in the mainstream appear to be continually changing, these new leisure spaces clearly remain zones of permitted, regulated and legitimised pleasure (Shields, 1992:8).

Experiencing the gentrifying mainstream

One of the difficulties of articulating mainstream nightlife is that while it is bounded by certain material structures, like patterns of corporate ownership, branding and particular forms of regulation, it is also 'experienced' and hence has a more subjective dimension. In many cases, this subjectivity is formulated not just directly, in terms of what people consume, but relationally, in terms of what 'others' consume and do on a night out. As such, while we need to see mainstream nightlife as 'fluid', it is equally important not to collapse all youth groups into a

'postmodern maelstrom' where cultural boundaries are blurred, or ignore the impact of social structures and consumption divisions. Explanations of the construction of nightlife identities are connected to understanding 'other' youth groupings, not just as 'imagined others' but as 'real' social categories. 'We create groups with words', as Bourdieu (1977:101) argues. Class and gender remain central to understanding the mainstream here, although it is important to move some distance from conventional assumptions about these social divisions (Crompton, 1998), with sexual identity and 'race'/ethnicity also playing a part in creating distinctions within nightlife groupings. In the remainder of this chapter we explore a variety of youth nightlife consumption groupings, by considering the experiences and internal divisions within the social space of the mainstream.

As we outlined in Chapter 4, the social spaces of mainstream nightlife can be unpacked at a number of different levels: actual and relational labour market position, and taste and culture/consumption preferences, both of which are shaped by a host of factors such as gender, current age, ethnicity, geographical location, family background, schooling, etc. Combined, these aspects create preferences for various segmented spaces within the mainstream. Clearly, some people's use of the mainstream cannot be understood just through this schema, as one of the main points about mainstream nightlife is that it is always in flux, always being redefined and struggled over. Many people also consume in fluid, contradictory and unpredictable ways, and there are many overlapping positions and specific subgroups within this general category. In one sense, then, our typology is an ethnographic moment 'frozen in time'.

Our first level of interpretation, which reveals itself time and again, relates to the labour market and concerns young people's positioning within a gradient ranging from stable and well-paid employment to those at the bottom end who are unemployed, or welfare-dependent, with a bunching of young people in the middle in full-time, medium-income but unstable employment (Roberts, 1995). Although there is a range of employment opportunities, then, Beck's (2000) notion of a 'Brazilianization of the west'—a political economy of insecurity in which the majority rely upon unstable, nomadic employment—is increasingly instructive for understanding the changing labour market experiences for many young people. There are a number of other factors to consider here within this labour market gradient. For instance, Savage *et al.,* (1992) point towards leisure and taste divisions within middle-class consumption, and there are distinct leisure differences between specific occupational groupings. For instance, creative industry workers (i.e. those in the fashion, music and nightlife industry itself) are often prolific, stylish and competent consumers of nightlife cultures.

A second level of interpretation concerns taste and cultural preferences in the night-time economy, and ranges from the consumption of mass/themed/ commercial environments towards more individualistic and stylised commercial tastes in more gentrified spaces, each of which implies a whole range of clothing, style and social codes. Again, this is a rather fluid gradient, with some groups consuming across the spectrum, while others consume more narrowly.

Additionally, one should not automatically assume that all groups consuming mass themed commercial environments are 'cultural dupes', or that they approach nightlife in the same way. Here, gender and sexual orientation also influence taste cultures, particularly in the direction of preferring more up-market and stylish environments (Whittle, 1994). Below we map these occupational and taste cultures on to the differentiated nightlife spaces within the mainstream.

Before unpacking the mass mainstream and discussing some of these different youth consumption groupings, it is worth noting some of its general characteristics. One of the most prominent features is its sheer hedonism and excess or, as one person suggested to us, 'the kind of wanting to go out and get completely mindlessly drunk every single night' (Mike, 18 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne). 'Cheesy' nights out, based around happy hours, cheap drinks, themed environments, thundering commercial chart music, the chance of sexual encounter and the possibly of violence/vandalism, continue to define the mainstream. Heavy drinking, then, is an important symbol. As one of our interviewees stated: 'We're going out with the intention of being absolutely hammered rather than just going out to have a nice time' (Sean, 23 years old, Bristol).

As we outlined in Chapter 3, 'yob culture' has become one of the strong discourses within discussions of the mainstream nightlife (Hobbs *et al.,* 2000). While there has been a concerted attempt to reduce violence in the mainstream through design and upgrading, as our opening example of Port Vell in Barcelona showed, this is not always successful. Problems of violence and vandalism appear endemic to alcohol-led northern European and college-campus binge drinking cultures. In particular, while continental European nightlife is regarded as more cosmopolitan, British nightlife is seen to lack class. One city councillor in the UK commented:

> I mean, I'm all in favour of this continental style but somehow we just haven't got the class that French people have, we just never get it quite right…you have to drink yourself into oblivion every weekend to prove yourself, which is rather unfortunate, and everything has to be done to excess. You can't just go out for one or two drinks, it's got to be a bender.
>
> (Local authority representative 5, Newcastle)

The commercial mainstream is fundamentally geared towards selling alcohol, and for many people the problems associated with such drinking cultures should be partly acknowledged by those who create them. As one door security staff supervisor told us: 'It's alcohol, it wipes away everybody's inhibitions, takes away all their common sense. And it's all down to alcohol and I think the breweries have a major role to play in the blame' (Door security personnel 1, Bristol). The responsibility of large operators in the night-time economy is a theme we return to later.

The mass mainstream is also characterised by sexual permissiveness, although as Hollands' (1995) work has revealed, images and stereotypes often exceed the reality when it comes to actual encounters. Relationship-seeking, casual sex and flirtation are all, at some point and in some combination, part of nightlife for many young people. One bar owner on a mainstream circuit was candid about the role of his venue in facilitating sexual encounter in the city:

> If it was just the drink that people wanted you would buy a six-pack, sit in the house and get a bottle of whisky. But it is actually, as a company we sell, covertly, we sell sex, whether it is just a chance of a meeting of the opposite sex or whether it is actually introductions that go further.
>
> (Bar owner 4, Newcastle upon Tyne)

This formula, although successful in profit-making terms, creates an atmosphere for sexual voyeurism rather than interaction. As one (male) bar worker commented: 'Who cares about talking when you can look at her?' (Bar worker 1, Newcastle upon Tyne).

Finally, the popularity of the mass mainstream results from predictable environments which offer easy-to-read sensory cues and familiar pathways through consumption choices. This partly accounts for the popularity of the mainstream, which allows consumers to satisfy their needs without much stress (Gottdiener, 2001). Familiarity and risk aversion are key aspects which many people seek from consumer experiences. Hannigan (1998) has described the feel of these themed environments through the term 'riskless risk', in that they offer the dual image of 'safe excitement' and predictability. Work by Hubbard (2002) has made similar points in relation to the growth of multiplex, out-of-town cinemas in the UK. In this sense, such people are wary of experimenting beyond what they know. One person commented to us: 'I think I'm quite wary of going off the main track' (Charles, 22 years old, Bristol). 'Self-exclusion', from environments which consumers may be wary about or have little knowledge of, is also a key element in the maintenance of segregated nightlife spaces. Many people, then, are often unaware of other opportunities outside the growing mainstream. As one of Charles's friends commented, in their pursuit of more variety in Bristol's nightlife: 'The question for me is, well, I wouldn't know what was there even if I did want to go out' (Geoff, 19 years old, Bristol).

Despite maintaining these general features, commercial mainstream nightlife spaces are differentially consumed. As we mentioned in Chapter 2, Urry's (1990) 'collective gaze' of the sociable working classes and the 'romantic gaze' of the more detached middle classes is useful here. This has some use for understanding that while some mass mainstream venues have become recognisably predictable, and many groups themselves contain a degree of uniformity in terms of dress sense, symbols and argot, other groups consume themed environments in more individualistic ways, often through the use of irony and pastiche. The most stylised

environments encourage a greater degree of individuality, spontaneity and use of cultural or subcultural capital (Thornton, 1995).

One of the largest general consumers of the mass mainstream is a broad middle of working-class youth. Many young working-class people use these spaces to develop a strong sense of identity and place within them, often drawing on distinctive local cultural resources and habits. One interviewee (Dave, 31 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) mentions here how the consumption of mainstream nightlife literally identifies him with the city in which he lives:

> It's great to be in one of those groups. It feels really powerful in a horrible sort of way…you are accepted, you know, it sounds, you know, really spooky, but it's like you own the city, you know…and it's like you've joined it at last, you've joined the real world, you know.

Here, many young people have found a limited degree of labour market mobility and security through service sector employment. As such, many choose an escapist hedonistic 'weekend' nightlife culture, despite the fact that they may be in part-time employment and could also go out on mid-week nights. A number of specific media texts, images and stereotypes have attempted to define this largely working-class mainstream. In the UK, films like *Letter to Brezhnev,* TV programmes like *Tinseltown* (set in Glasgow) and many of the party-night docu-soaps (such as *Ibiza Uncovered, Club Reps Uncut*) as well as the classic 'Essex man' and 'Essex girl', lager lads and ladettes stereotypes,[2] are examples of this cultural form. One recent youth consumer survey from Carat Insight (2001) typecast this group as 'L-Plate Lads' (and we would add ladettes)—single, still living with their parents, into lager, relationships and popular culture (video games, lifestyle magazines, designer brands). On the female front, Thornton (1995), for example, discusses the 'chartpop' culture of the 'Sharons' and 'Techno Tracys', labels which refer to the unhip, uneducated newcomers on the dance scene. While we are cautious about adding to such stereotypes, our research reveals variations along this typology which coalesce around the mass mainstream.

The following journalistic vignette from Leeds illuminates the nightlife styles of this mass mainstream group:

> The queue is full of large groups of boys in luminous Ben Sherman shirts and spiky hair and girls in tiny tops…There is a stage where those celebrating special occasions get up to show off and which, tonight, is occupied by a girl wearing a plastic sash reading 'The party starts here' and four of her friends in bikini tops and paste tiaras. Their happiness is representative of the mood of the place, and even the boys are dancing unselfconsciously to the mixture of house and disco music. A conga line takes off before they remember themselves and drop it, but the atmosphere is one of general abandon and festivity.
>
> (Brockes, 2000)

Many of the elements of this culture are familiar. Mainstream venues reflect the expectations of many revellers, especially the desire for fun and escapism among young people in the face of economic hardship. For some young revellers, the weekend and the evening is their time and space, outside the rigours and rules of the workplace and the watchful eye of bosses. One student (Clare, 19 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) observed about this group:

> My friends call them workies, people who work nine to five, five days a week, you know what I mean, and they just want to go out and just forget about everything…they're passionate about going out so it takes away everything else that they have to put up with.

Some young people, then, regard the 'weekend' as a sacred time for letting go and self-indulgence, which is a reward for the time and effort spent in routine work during the week. Telesales is an increasingly common employment option for many young people. Many people commented to us about the tedious and repetitive nature of such work and hence the increased importance of free, time outside the rigid structure of work. As one person who worked in a telesales centre told us: 'It's just nice to go out and relax, get drunk and enjoy yourself, especially when you've, say, got a job on the phones as well. I suppose it's quite stressful, like constantly stressful' (Paul, 29 years old, Leeds).

Going out, performing and dressing-up has become an important part of life for many young people and is clearly a crucial part of mainstream nightlife. As one young reveller told us: 'I like to get dressed up. I mean going out, I like to make it an affair' (Emma, 25 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne). Further, Robert (23 years old, Bristol) suggested to us: 'It's nice to dress up to go somewhere. It makes an evening of an event.' While part of the explanation here clearly comes from young people's desire to say something about themselves through their appearance, whether it be appearing more 'grown up' or up-market or simply wanting to be 'on display', many mass mainstream venues also play a part here through their imposition of 'stylish' dress codes.

Ironically, many of the dress codes that have evolved in the mass mainstream are now clichéd, and reveal significant disjunctions between 'appearance' and 'behaviour', as well as providing important markers which help to distinguish between groups within the mainstream. For example, one typical nightlife group often identified were locals or 'townies', who were easily distinguished by their particular dress styles, demeanour and attitude, as the following quotes testify:

> They're down there in their Ben Sherman's and their black polished shoes looking very smart, but acting like wankers.
>
> (Paul, 23 years old, Leeds)

> I think you could classify them as they do not really go for the music so much as for the chance just to get pissed and maybe have a fight, and they have had a good night then, look for a lass.
>
> (Cathy, 26 years old, Leeds)

Within this general grouping, there exist various subdivisions, based partly on intra-class hierarchies, age, gender and the particularities of locality. Under-age townies, 'your kids, or for want of a better word, your arseholes', as one pub owner (Bar owner 3, Newcastle upon Tyne) colourfully put it, are distinguished from older, more mature and clued-up locals labelled 'trendies', who gain their increased status from more 'respectable' behaviour, diverse musical tastes and the wearing of more stylish labels. Townies are also subdivided according to gender, with lads being vilified more for violent and drunken behaviour and young women for being catty and sexually promiscuous (Hollands, 2000).

There are also strong regional variations in the depiction of townies. In the UK, for example, various slang terms like 'scallies', 'Kevs', 'Trevs', and 'Tracys' describe local nightlife groupings. In northern cities, townies are often subdivided into 'charvers', which connotes a section of locals who inhabit particular social spaces in the city's mainstream nightlife, as well as those who engage in certain types of behaviour. As a group of people reflected:

Simon: They wear Ben Sherman shirts and they go out and get pissed.
Jane; …have a shag and have a fight…
Simon: Shag, fight and a kebab, very loud.
Geoff: You feel a bit of sort of agro in the air and you get sort of clientele like that in clubs.
Simon: Testosterone fuelled.

(Focus group 3, Newcastle upon Tyne)

The term 'charver' as it is used here, is almost exclusively masculine and refers to young men on the margins of the economy and at the 'rough' end of the class spectrum. The gender equivalent, 'slapper', refers to an equally coarse, vulgar and 'promiscuous' female townie (see Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Central elements of mainstream nightlife, then, are intra-class and gender social divisions, which reflect certain styles and forms of behaviour.

Continuing problems with mass mainstream venues, combined with growing numbers of aspiring service-sector workers and young professionals, not to mention the impact of various city council initiatives to market their cities, has led to attempts to gentrify and further upgrade nightlife. Those associated with elements of yuppie culture—in marketing-speak the 'cash-rich, time-poor'—are becoming a growing focus for mainstream nightlife producers. Significant parts of mainstream nightlife are being upgraded, with young people attracted to more mixed-use style and cafébars, which have attempted to create a more up-market feel with polished floors, minimalist and heavily stylised décor and a greater

selection of designer drinks. These new style venues are perceived by young adults as indeed more cosmopolitan. As one of our interviewees exclaimed in relation to them, 'There's just a better class of people' (Sarah, 21 years old, Leeds), while another young woman summed up the link between her identity and the type of venues she frequented with the simple comment: 'I'm a cocktail person' (Clare, 25 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne).

Many of these bars are extremely style conscious and have become, for some, too pretentious. Referring to one new bar which had opened in a popular student area, one undergraduate (Emma, 21 years old, Leeds) commented: 'It's pretentious and showy and everyone is more bothered about what everyone else is doing rather than having a good time.' Another person (Ben, 20 years old, Leeds) commented: 'They're all, like, posh blonde birds who go round in puffa jackets and things like that. They've got rich daddies and you can tell, because they usually have a Moshcino bag or something, and they walk around with these silly handbags.'

Gentrification, then, in terms of both displacing older users and upgrading the expectations of others, is a developing trend within mainstream nightlife, and it is closely tied up with the middle classes as driving forward particular forms of leisure and usurping established social spaces (Savage *et al.,* 1992; Butler, 1997; Savage and Butler, 1995). Historically, representations of the middle classes at leisure have been relatively simplistic, focusing on stereotypes about suburban living and/or images about 'yuppies'. Savage *et al.,* (1992) recognise that different middle-class groups draw upon various resources—property for the petit bourgeois, bureaucracy and organisation for managers, and culture and credentialism for professionals. As such, recent evidence suggests that sections of the middle class consume in differentiated rather than homogeneous ways. Research by Savage *et al.,* (1992) on cultural and consumption habits reveals at least three types of middle-class lifestyles—ascetic (public-sector welfare professionals), postmodern (private-sector professionals and specialists) and an undistinctive group (managers/government bureaucrats). Private-sector professionals, he argues, are more into 'California sports', conspicuous consumption, individualisation and eclectic consumption, while the public-sector middle-classes engage in more ascetic and health-conscious leisure pursuits. However, the important point is that all these different consumption practices are still framed within capitalist entertainment provision.

How might some of these general consumption patterns relate to mainstream nightlife and the tendency towards gentrification and stylisation? The growth of private-sector professionals in many urban centres, with their more eclectic lifestyles, has fuelled a range of mainstream consumption practices ranging from branded and themed environments to more up-market, gentrified style bars. Roberts (1999:201) typifies this upper strata as 'leisure omnivores' who 'have sufficient money to nurture and indulge their wide-ranging tastes'—a kind of postmodern consumer. As one young woman, Claire (19 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne), told us: 'I'm a regular everywhere…I go to all the clubs so there really isn't anywhere that I wouldn't really not go. We try to go to as many places

as we possibly can before we run out of money' The idea of the 'post-tourist' relates to those who, often with a certain amount of irony and pastiche, do not seek authentic experiences, choosing to revel in the artificial and ephemeral atmosphere of themed entertainment spaces (Urry, 1990).

Some young professionals, however, did display a return to neo-traditionalist attitudes in their desire for 'authentic' pubs which foster close interaction rather than the 'artificial' atmosphere of bars whose layout encourages disengagement. One group of young professionals told us:

Fred: That's something you definitely miss in bars. It's like a conversation of six of you all sat round a table…

Brian: You're drinking, you're round a table enjoying yourself [in a pub], but when you're in a bar you're all stood, the worst thing is finding yourself all stood at the bar sort of like looking off in different directions. You've got no interest there. You've got no focal point. You can't just sit in a circle.

(Focus group 1, Leeds)

Such groups of hard-working young professionals are often more motivated by socialising and 'catching up with friends' than the latest nightlife trends. In Wynne and O'Connor's (1998) study of middle-class urban-livers in Manchester, they found that this affluent, mobile and largely childless group were not particularly exploratory in terms of cultural practices and represented a large 'open middle' of consumer taste. Much of this lack of experimentation reflects balancing work, family and social commitments for such 'cash-rich, time-poor' groups. As one person (Sally, 28 years old, Bristol) told us:

> And it's nice to sit round with a nice bottle of wine, have a chat or whatever, and then if you want to go out after that, then fine. But, you know, it's a good way to sort of see people, particularly when you're working, you don't see them every day.

More specific occupational groups within these general class factions also reflect differences in nightlife consumption. For instance, private-sector professionals in style or creative occupations (advertising, fashion, media) are more apt to consume the latest trendy and up-market nightlife styles and venues (Wynne, 1990). Butler and Robson (2001) also present a useful understanding of the increasing social and spatial divisions within the middle classes, which are not simply sectoral (i.e. public versus private) but based mainly around lifestyle and cultural differences. In the context of London they suggest four broad types of middle-class lifestyle or consumption settlements: highly mobile empty-nesters with heavily work-dominated lives; high-consuming gentrifiers who are attracted to 'global' places of consumption; hedonistic counter-culturalists who are drawn to marginal areas; and enclavists who huddle together in protective ghettos. Such an understanding is useful for thinking about the internal segregations within middle-class mainstream nightlife cultures.

It is not difficult to see what is attractive about these newly developing gentrified space. Clearly, part of their success has been in catering for the increasing numbers of high-spending young professionals and service employees (Ley, 1996). These more exclusive places act to separate this affluent group out somewhat from the more traditional mainstream, providing an atmosphere for networking, socialising and meeting other social climbers. However, they also provoke reaction. As one interviewee observed:

> Some of them are just really stuck up. Some of the times that I've been in this Quayside bar, when I come out of there I just want to drop a bomb on it, you know…there is a dress code sort of thing…and people in there think they are something different. I get that feeling it's mostly like a Don Johnson thing.
>
> (Dave, 31 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Many groups in the gentrified mainstream, then, value style over content, social posturing over social contact. The following conversation exemplifies a rather fashion-conscious clientele in one dance-oriented nightclub:

Steve: It is out of the way, it is too expensive to get in, the drinks are expensive on top of that, and it is just, I don't know, you have a certain type of person that goes there, that is into their dance music.
Sarah: People who are dressed in all the designer stuff.
Steve: Pretentious people on a Saturday.
Sarah: Yeah, they will not get sweaty, they really should do.
Peter: Your obnoxious twats will go there and stand and they will not move in case they sweat, and it is, like, why do you come clubbing for? To get dressed up? To look good?
Steve: And I see a girl that gets up and dances and sweats. I hate to see these beautiful perfect people with their perfect make-up and their perfect hair.

(Focus group 2, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Such stylised spaces also appeal to the wealthier elements of the student population, young women and gay consumers and an increasingly older, more mature and upwardly mobile section of local working-class populations, who view such places as sites to express their perceived mobility, status and maturity. This latter group in particular could be seen as literally trying to 'escape' from their occupational and class background. Research by Savage *et al.* (1992) reinforces this by suggesting that lower-level technical and service workers were as likely to patronise wine bars as higher-income groups (see Box 5.3) and 'This perhaps indicates one function of wine bars is as a training ground for young people aspiring towards high levels of social mobility' (Savage *et al.,* 1992:118).

BOX 5.3

: A NIGHT OUT IN THE MAINSTREAM AFTER A HARD DAY'S WORK; LEEDS, 21 JUNE 2001

We met in Cosmos at 9p.m., the newest bar to open in Leeds over the summer of 2001. It was bang in the centre of the city's newly emerging southern quarter, a part of town experiencing a rapid growth of independent bars and record and clothes shops, Cosmos was mainly frequented by a young, stylish crowd, attracted by the novel blend of a noodle bar, an exotic if over-priced cocktail menu, and some of the city's coolest DJs playing music before they went on to play in the clubs. Silvia and Julie turned up late and brought some other friends, Brian and Dave, we hadn't met before. Grary and Paul, despite promises on the telephone, didn't didn't turn up at all. Apparently they had gone; straight out from working at the call centre at 5p.m., to play pool with their mates in their work section. This had become a bit of a tradition on a Friday, and they were usually tanked up by 8p.m., in it was of no surprise that they didn't make it, 'We might bump into them later at Bonkers Beach Club,' Julie said, 'but don't expect to get any sense out of them. They'll be well up for it and sharking girls. Gary's a right smooth talker after a few pints.'

They all knew each other from working at the call centre, and all were either still at university or had just finished, To break the ice early in the evening we talked more about working life. Silvia told us: 'It's a right laugh working there. Although we have to sit at the phones and constantly be alert, in the breaks we have a right giggle and we can't wait to go out as a group. We get slaughtered together and go clubbing and mess about and who knows…' Silvia and Julie were dressed stylishly in short black dresses, constantly smoking Marlboro lights with Bacardi Breezers their choice of drink al! night. 'I like getting dressed up,' Silvia commented, 'it's the only time I get to really go for it, and not have to wear a crappy old blouse at the call centre.' Brian, explaining that he felt the cocktails were a right rip-off in here, still bought a Havana Club and coke at £3.50 per shot, He told us that he liked coming here as it made him feel 'in with this new cool crowd, which is what Leeds is about these days'. Dave, dressed more casually in worn Levi's and Nike trainers, explained to us that 'the bouncers used to be right wankers. Would only let you in if you had crappy shoes and proper trousers on. Now this new string of bars round here has finally caught up and you can go out looking casual, which is cool, more like London.'

After Cosmos we went to Razzmatazz, a chain pub which opened about a year ago, with the slogan 'All YOU need for a night's entertainment'. As we entered, Brian explained that although, it was 'one of those wanky chains where everything is the same and the bar staff are fucking miserable, it's the only place you can go on a Friday night in the centre and get a cheap pint'. It was 'Office Party Night' in this huge 1,000–capacity super-pub, decked out with banks of TV screens and a large stage on which two people were singing, a karaoke version of a old Wham song from the 1980s. The throng of people, mostly a post-work crowd in suits, were eagerly consuming cheap bottles of Becks for £1 each. We met four more workers from the call centre in there, all with the same idea of making their slim salaries go further on a Friday night.

Our next stop was the Glass and Trumpet, one of the city's oldest pubs, which had recently been bought out by one of the country's largest pub chains. 'I used to come down here all the time,' Dave said. 'It was a great old man's pub, you know, and then they ripped it all out and put in all this fake shit which is meant to look traditional, right. There's no music or gamblers [betting machines] either, The bastards put the beer up 'n' all. I don't get it' to this rather tranquil atmosphere Silvia and Julie started to look bored, and we headed back out into the night. Our final destination before clubbing was Bar Che, a new chic theme bar which had just opened in the centre, complete with revolutionary memorabilia and cocktails such as as Castro's Revenge. Silvia was particularly keen to try it out as she knew one of the bar staff in there who, she told everyone, was well sexy, However, the 200-strong queue and the £3 price tag on the drinks deterred us and we headed into the night again,

We ended up at Bonkers on the middle of the High Street next to a group of other large theme bars, Downunder, Flanneries and Bar Samba. Dave told us some of these were his favourites: 'They've got all the footy games on, top tunes on a night and the birds in here are all right. Sometimes we have a right laugh. Just get pissed up and make an arse of ourselves and forget about it all…work and that. Some of'em are open late, which is wicked, so we can go on dancing and drinking till at least 1 o'clock. Sometimes I get a bit of hassle from the bouncers for being scruffy, but fuck 'em.'

It was £5 in to Bonkers, £4 if you were lucky enough to be handed a promotional flyer from the young woman in a leopardskin jumpsuit roaming the street outside. The bar staff in Bonkers were all in either bikinis and hotpants, which Brian said was the best reason for coming here, Cheesy house music was playing; it was too loud to talk so we all headed for the dance floor, and, anyway, by this time too many designer bottled lagers had taken their toll. We had lost Silvia and Dave. Julie said it had been on the cards for ages that they'd get it together as they'd spent loads of time together at work. A whole bunch from the call centre were reunited on the dance floor and were jumping around, laughing and grabbing each other to 1970s and 1980s classics. Paul and Gary were there, looking worse for wear, but with their hands raised to the ceiling, singing along to 'It's raining men, hallelujah'. Gary muttered something incoherent to us, which sounded half like an apology, as they headed off to the bar with two women. About half past three we stumbled out of the club in search of taxis and chips, £40 lighter after a night on the town.

Despite examples of weekend hedonism and various forms of escapism, what can also be observed in the gentrifying mainstream are the links between work and leisure. In this sense, just as Fordism implied a broad socio-economic system which did not stop at the factory gate, so too post-Fordist forms of work have reverberations well beyond the boundaries of the call centre or the office (Sennett, 2001). Contrary to the pattern of escaping work discussed earlier, some companies, particularly those involved in financial services, are encouraging their employees to attend particular venues. Brannigans bar chain in the UK, for example, has set up a working relationship with a number of large corporate firms in the service

sector, such as Directline, and offer workers discount cards, drink deals and free transport to the bar. Many bars have emerged exclusively to satisfy the demands of after-work consumers, epitomised by the minimalist chic branded venue of All Bar One, which also promotes its female-friendliness to attract both men and women from the business world.

Many young professionals in the private business sector consuming gentrified nightlife adopt a set of values and aspirations from the corporate world of work which respects the value of the brand, corporate loyalty and a 'work hard, play hard' ethic. Corporate workplaces are eager to foster a sense of sociability both in the workplace and outside it, by linking up with certain nightlife operators. In the series *Slave Nation,* screened on Channel 4 in the UK in 2001, presenter and writer Darcus Howe questioned the value and motivation behind some of these new company identities. In such 'work-friendly' venues, nightlife has become an extension of work, another arena in which business is conducted, networks extended, lifestyles consolidated. Sennett (2001:4) has argued that new flexible working practices are creating parallels in terms of social relations and spaces in cities: 'now, just as the workplace is affected by a new system of flexible working, so the city, too, risks losing its charm as businesses and architecture become standardised and impersonal'. Gorz (1999) further suggests that the dominance of the 'full-time work' ethic has downgraded the right to work and play in other ways.

In summary, clearly, there are some young people who travel across the boundaries of the mainstream and into more alternative and older residual forms of nightlife (see Chapters 8 and 9). Many, with limited financial resources, seek ways to maximise their participation in mainstream nightlife, through buying noname brands and taking advantage of 'drinks specials'. In contrast, traditional and 'respectable' working-class groups who pursue steady relationships and save up to buy a house and/or get married (which some marketing agencies (see Carat Insight, 2001) have labelled 'new traditionalists') do not particularly prioritise 'going out'. One nightclub operator in the UK lamented about this tendency:

> At one time all they wanted to do was get their pay, or get their unemployment benefit, and go out and spend it on drink…they're interested in mortgages and holidays and things like that. Now I think they're a lot more responsible. Their capital is tied up in other things.
>
> (Nightclub manager 3, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Others, such as art college students, young artists and subcultural groups on the fringe of mainstream nightlife, both participate in the mainstream and critique it. Further, as the population in many western countries begins to 'grey' (get older), mainstream nightlife operators are looking towards older 'post-adolescents' and couples with larger disposable incomes, as well as increasingly courting the 'less rowdy' professional female and gay market. The mainstream, then, is constantly shifting ground, fuelled by competition within and between groups. However,

these shifts increasingly point to a sanitisation, purification and upgrading of experience.

Limits of the gentrifying mainstream

Arguing that mainstream nightlife in general is more structured and intentional should not imply that it is an immutable monolith. It is continually produced and reproduced by different groups of young adults pursuing their own version of a night out, and is also defined through various contradictions and disillusionments. Ritzer (2001), for instance, highlights a number of general aspects of mainstream production, such as efficiency, control and technology, which are contributing to the 'disenchantment of the consumer world'. Additionally, many countries (especially continental European ones) and regions have competitive local nightlife markets, which makes it more difficult for brand penetration and corporate domination to succeed. Certain companies with global aspirations have also experienced brand saturation, often due to over-exposure of their products. The Planet Hollywood chain is perhaps the most well-known example of such hype, decline and failure in the mainstream.

Smaller urban centres sometimes also overestimate their cosmopolitanism in an attempt to embrace the corporate world. Teatro, an exclusive private members' club owned by actress Leslie Ash and ex-Leeds footballer Lee Chapman, originally opened in London's Soho, with a second venue opening in Leeds in the north of England. One local fashion magazine suggested that they 'hope to inject a shot of glamour and glitz into Leeds' burgeoning social scene, and provide a much needed haven in which local celebrities and high-profile types can socialise and relax, away from snapping cameras and harassing fans' (*Absolute Leeds,* June 2000). However, one year later Teatro had failed to attract a celebrity crowd and was duly closed. While some blamed the location, others knew better. Leeds may have a chic new centre, but it is still located in England's northern industrial belt, far from London.

Further, while many aspects of these new nightlife spaces appear positive and choice has increased, especially through the decline of male-dominated drinking environments, even flexible brands and niche stylised nightlife environments offer largely standardised, sanitised and non-local consumption experiences. Underneath the façade of cosmopolitanism and diversity, a more corporate uniformity and placelessness is growing in downtown areas through expanding pub and bar branded experiences. One journalist lamented to us:

> I think this last, say, especially five years, you know, your designer labels have come in more…obviously if you have got these middle-of-the-road mainstream looks, you are going to get smart middle-of-the-road mainstream bars…Well, eventually, essentially you are still getting the same names and the same products.You know it's global and it's horrific. I hate that.

(Journalist 1, Newcastle upon Tyne)

This dominant mode of nightlife production based around serial reproduction and expansion of chain or theme bars continues to provoke criticism from groups such as the Campaign for Real Ale, civic trust associations and residents' associations. Concerns and disillusionment are also raised by consumers, as the following quotes highlight

Simon: The thing is…all the bars and clubs are owned by big organisations and a lot have taken over, and that's what needs to change. It needs some individual investors.

Peter: I would not like everywhere owned by the same place because it would just be the same and nothing more. Boring.

Simon: If it is a new pub, you think, ah it is just like a replica.

Julie: It is the same club and the same pub, it has just got different names, the same people…The bar staff are just clones.

(Focus group 3, Newcastle upon Tyne)

There is some evidence of a 'brand backlash' (Klein, 2000; see also Box 5.4), with battle-weary consumers rejecting the serial monotony of high-street nightlife brands. New tastes on the mainstream can quickly turn sour. Like the neo-traditionalists mentioned earlier, many consumers are eager to recapture more 'authentic' and 'characterful' nightlife away from the world of corporate brands. As one person told us:

> Corporate clubs and corporate pubs have got it so wrong, throwing money at it. It's the bland globalisation thing that someone in London has decided that's what Bristol needs and actually it's not. If you look what's happened with the big pubs, that are aimed at students and middle-class drinkers. I think there is a reaction to that and people are starting to go back to corner pubs and back-street boozers. There's something interesting about them.
>
> (Rick, 26 years old, Bristol)

BOX 5.4
: MINE'S NOT A GUINNESS

At least ten bars, mostly Irish, have joined a protest towards Guinness Corporation's involvement in starting new Irish theme bars in Philadelphia in the USA, Most of the pubs have discontinued the sale of Bass and Harp, which Guinness also imports, but four have even taken the popular Guinness Stout off tap, among them the city's oldest bar, McGillin s Olde Ale House. 'This is America, There's a lot of great beers

here,' McGillin's owner Chris Mullins said. 'We're the oldest bar (since 1860) In Philadelphia and we did not have Guinness before I bought the bar in 1993. We survived a long time without Guinness and we can make it without them now.' The bar owners are upset with Guinness' commercial development division and its relationship to the Irish Pub Co., which has built hundreds of Irish theme pubs around the world since 1991. The company put together its first pub in the United States in 1996 in Atlanta, Georgia, and scores have followed. Most import the physical components of the pub, sometimes even the bar itself, from Ireland, and cost up to $2 million to open. Some, such as the popular Fado pubs, are part of chains, while others operate independently. Their success has led other entrepreneurs to use firms other than the Irish Pub Co., to import Irish pub parts to the USA and open large pubs (Real Beer, 2000).

Many people felt that one of the main problems with the mainstream, then, was its lack of local embeddedness with local cultures. Moreover, for many, the upgrading of nightlife venues often meant all style and no substance. As one young consumer (Colin, 25 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) exclaimed: 'People want to belong to that elite crowd, but what people do not realise is that it's actually McDonald's with a marble bar.' While the mainstream is a negotiated and often contested space, its influence and acceptance continues in many cities around the world. We explore in more detail in Chapter 9 some of the groups who have more directly challenged this growing corporate sameness of urban nightlife and have sought to provide some alternatives.

6
SELLING NIGHTLIFE IN STUDENT LAND

This chapter is about studentland—a term which alludes to a bounded social and geographical space which leaves a distinctive imprint on many localities, especially at night. While it is a growing, differentiated and indeed fluid space, our argument is that mainstream corporate nightlife operators are increasingly targeting 'traditional' students as part of their general strategy of attracting 'cash-disposable' groups (like professional women, young urban-livers and gentrified gay cultures). As such, commercial nightlife operators help to construct studenthood and student experiences, as much as students help to create nightlife.

Life in studentland throws up many, often contradictory, images. The inter-war splendour of Oxbridge sits alongside hippies, radicals and beatniks of 1960s campus counter-cultures. Similarly, today tens of thousands of students in Indonesia, Korea and China continue to risk their lives in pro-democracy movements. Their peers across Europe and North America worry instrumentally about future careers while engaging in various night-time socialising rituals, with a minority turning their concerns to political issues including globalisation and the environment. Studentland, then, is a complicated place. It is a set of discursive practices brought together by several groups—students, staff, parents, locals, business people, the police—who in their own ways define, delimit and create it. Groups have different motives for engaging with studentland—for younger students it is learning, fun and an important rite of passage experience; for city bosses universities may mean having a skilled and educated future workforce; and for businesses it is a potentially important source of revenue and profit.

Over the last few decades studentland has become gradually occupied by a more diverse population which has moved slowly away from a purely 'elitist' model, with more blurred student—local distinctions and the segmentation of the student body into various subcategories (Hollands, 1995; Chatterton, 1999). Some have argued that the changing context of higher education has led students to become more instrumental in their outlook and more mainstream politically and culturally (Loeb, 1994). Yet there are specific characteristics and trends which mark out students from those outside the university, such as higher levels of free time, disposable incomes and a learning-oriented approach to life. Additionally, there continue to be durable dispositions and habits, common sites and spaces inhabited by students (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1979).

This chapter attempts to unravel studentland, and in particular student nightlife, by looking at how it is produced, regulated and consumed. Social life and nightlife activity are central aspects of student identity. Finding friends, sexual encounters, pranks and nights out are as important, if not more so, to the university experience as the formal curriculum. Much of university and college life, then, is about balancing education and work with fun, drinking and socialising. However, surprisingly little research has looked into the cultural and nightlives of students (although see Moffatt, 1989; Chatterton, 1999; Hollands, 1995). We begin by providing a context for understanding student life today by looking at both change and continuity. In particular, we highlight the creation of a more instrumental and mainstream outlook, in terms of both work and play, which means that studentland has also become ripe for commodification, theming and branding. The second part of the chapter takes a closer look at some aspects of nightlife in studentland, including the role of students as consumers and spenders, and the growing dominance of middle-ground mainstream tastes. In particular, we examine the trend towards a 'corporate campus' in which studentland is increasingly packaged, sold and commodified, especially through the machinations of large nightlife operators eager to cash in on this important consumer group.

Changing contexts for studentland

Different national contexts have a significant bearing on the character of studentland, and hence affect nightlife activities and styles. Each country has developed its own distinctive system of higher education, university cultures and patterns of student nightlife. The UK and the USA, in particular, have some notable differences worth mentioning here. While there was a rapid increase of student numbers in the UK in the late 1980s and early 1990s, access to studentland is still largely restricted to the wealthiest strata of young people, and real differences remain between the elite 'finishing school' experience of the older universities, with a large upper—and middle-class, adolescent, white cohort of 'traditional' wealthy students, and the 'service station' experience of the newer teaching-based former polytechnics (Ainley, 1994; Chatterton, 1999). Studentland in the USA is a far larger and diverse place with over 14 million students spread over 3,400 institutions, and with participation rates at almost 40 per cent as far back as the 1960s. This is not to say that studentland is open to anyone in the USA. Many poorer social groups are virtually absent in higher education (Males, 1996), and there is a long tradition of racial segregation and black struggle here.

In terms of nightlife, differences also exist between national contexts. As we shall see, students in the USA are often more constrained in their leisure time, due to high numbers in employment and engaging in sport/leisure, not to mention a more home-based and private drinking culture and a higher legal drinking age (see figure 6.1). The UK, on the other hand, is often seen as an oasis of student hedonism where young people travel away from home (the 'Great Teenage Transhumance' (Walker, 1997)) to party for three years, while their more sober continental

European counterparts usually remain in the parental home during their university careers and maintain existing social bonds. Underpinning such characteristics are a number of structural differences, especially in terms of geographical mobility within countries (Charles, 2000).

Constructing studentland: continuity and change

Students are one of the 'ideal types' which many of us use to understand the world around us (Schutz, 1972). The dominant perception of this ideal type of student is that they are somehow separate from the rest of the population, suspended from the mundane and at a distance from securing the necessities of life, living, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1979:29) put it, 'in a special time and space…flouting the distinction between weekends and weekdays, day and night, work and playtime'. Echoing such views, Brake (1985:26) described student life as a 'moratorium from wage labour' which places them in a unique and privileged position. Such separateness is often reflected through a range of contradictory images. On the one hand, Evelyn Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited,* and the film *Chariots of Fire* evoke the nostalgia and romanticism of upper-class Oxbridge student life in inter-war England. On the other, there is a bundle of images associated with alternative, radical and hedonistic student cultures captured in films such as *Animal House* and the campus scenes in *Born on the Fourth of July* and *Forrest Gump*. Students have also been associated with 'Generation X' (Coupland, 1992) characterised by a preoccupation with lifestyle and disaffiliation. A cluster of images of students in a British context emerged from the TV comedy *The Young Ones,* which depicted a group of student no-hopers, each stereotyped by a particular characteristic; Rick (middle-class 'lefty'), Vivian (nihilistic punk), Neil (hippie) and Mike (wheeler-dealer mature student).

What is the basis for this student 'ideal type' and associated stereotypes? As we discussed in Chapter 4 in relation to Bourdieu's (1984) concepts of field and habitus, studentland allows participants to adopt fairly durable and common dispositions which are developed and maintained within regulated and segregated residential and entertainment environments such as the library, shared student house, dorm, hall of residence (and, in the USA, the fraternity and sorority)[1] and the pub, bar, club or café (Chatterton, 1999). Student spaces act as sites of 'social centrality' within university life in which the rituals of studenthood are undertaken (Hetherington, 1996:39). Although students are only brought together temporarily, they opt for strong forms of 'elective sociality' (Maffesoli, 1996) based upon their own rituals of initiation, closure against outsiders and a desire for belonging and association. Moreover, the experience of the (often overwhelming) mass campus means that students are keen to seek manageable forms of identification.

Campus cultures are also particularly strong definers of students' leisure and significant contrasts exist between big city campuses and smaller rural campuses in terms of choices and the range of cultural opportunities. Course cultures, too,

mark out particular student groups, often separating the more culturally oriented arts and humanities students from their less cultured science-based peers (Gasperoni, 2000). Finally, participation in sports clubs and societies is an important factor which shapes student identity and leisure. Sports teams, and more generally exercise and health, structure large parts of social life, especially for US students (see Figure 6.1). Life for sports students is often far removed from their more hedonistic liberal-arts classmates, and many stick together when socialising, as one college American Football player recounted:

> We have a lot less time, you know. We have to have all our classes done by two o'clock because we have to practice for the rest of the day. It's also important to stay out of trouble. We'd be in the papers for drinking or fighting.
>
> (Ben, 22 years old. Strong safety for the Badgers American Football team, University of Wisconsin—Madison, USA)

Student life is also about 'coming of age' and age grading (Moffatt, 1989). Lifestyle and going-out cultures between different age groups are particularly pronounced, especially between the more carefree freshmen and sophomores and the more serious and worldly seniors. Most students alter their self-identity and socialising patterns around work and financial pressures in later years of degree courses. As such, they may begin to adopt a new set of aspirations and styles, to prepare themselves for life as young professional graduates in the workplace.

Many of the habits, places and rituals within student life have been weakened by the quantitative and qualitative changes within university populations in most western countries. In particular, the number of women has increased dramatically in higher education and in many contexts is equal to, or exceeds, the proportion of men, and there has also been an overall increase in the numbers of previously under-represented groups within higher education such as mature students, working-class youth, overseas students, ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, access entrants, recurrent and returning learners and part-timers. In the USA, Horowitz (1987) has discussed how these 'new insiders' sit uncomfortably alongside the more established and affluent WASP (White Anglo-Saxon Protestant) elite on college campuses.

As such, studentland is now more than just an adolescent transition, especially through the increase of young adult learners, mature students and those taking gap years. In many ways, studenthood is now a broader post-adolescent life stage 'characterized by a prolonged experimentation with life's possibilities' (Johansson and Miegel, 1992:85–6). More people have joined in the extended 'socialising ritual' of being a student, played out in the consumption-oriented city. This rapid growth of university populations over the last few decades, and extension of what it means to be young, has led to a more generalised college and higher education culture, and hence students have become a focus for, and indeed have taken a more

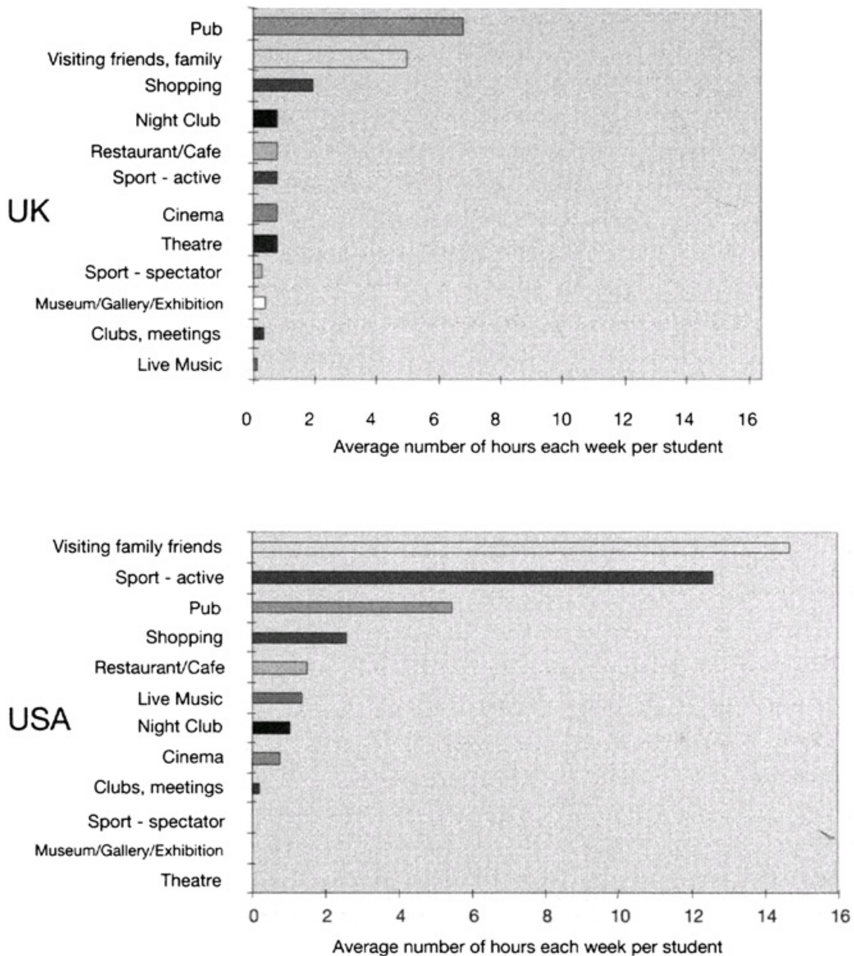

Figure 6.1 Student leisure time in the UK and the USA, away from home

Source: Chatterton, 1998

leading role in, youth styles and consumption generally (Roberts and Parsell, 1994).

In reality, then, the student body of today is a more complex and internally divided social group, and rather than representing one rather homogenous lifestyle it consists of several communities such as the 'Sloanes', the 'intellectuals', the 'arty' crowd, the 'jocks' or sports students, the 'lads' (and increasingly the laddettes), the beer boys and the good-time girls, the radicals or the eco-warriors, the skaters, and the entrepreneurs, among others. Such subcommunities may not be so readily observable to the outsider, but hold much sway in the internal discourses of studentland[2]. However, all these student communities still share a

common cultural archetype of the 'student' characterised by higher levels of free time, disposable income, socialising, experimentation, youthfulness and a more learning-oriented lifestyle.

One of the most visible student groups around campus are those from wealthy and privileged families, where going to university has long been a rite of passage. Such students have various labels and are known notoriously as the 'Sloanes' in the UK or the 'preppies' in the USA, attired in slacks, loafers and Oxford shirts (Moffatt, 1989). Marked out by their designer labels, blasé attitudes, mobile phones and convertible cars, they are often the source of jibes from fellow students and conflict from local young people. Moreover, they are also a key source of the public's stereotypical views of the 'traditional' student, not to mention forming the archetypal 'student consumer' which much of the business community targets.

Of course, not all students come from this wealthier and more privileged section of society, and the expansion of numbers in higher education to include some of the less well-off population has resulted in issues like debt and a rise in part-time employment. Debt has become a particularly important context for understanding student spending and consumption patterns (McCarthy and Humphrey, 1995). The abolition of the maintenance grant in England and Wales in 1999 has increased levels of genuine student poverty, while the introduction of entrance fees is deterring many working-class youth from enrolling on courses. The National Union of Students in the UK has estimated that students can now expect to owe up to £12,000 upon graduation. In the USA, the combination of readily available credit with loans to cover rising tuition costs means the average student now graduates owing $14,000, rising up to $80,000 for medical students. One student at New York's Niagara University commented that 'It's pretty common for us to sit around discussing why we put ourselves $10,000 in debt to make $25,000 a year.' (Chatzky, 1998). Rising levels of debt not only have an impact on the ability of poorer students to go out, but also on well-being, with those amassing excessive debts on graduation more likely to suffer anxiety and depression compared with other students (Scott *et al.*, 2001). A key part of student life, then, is mixing periods of hedonism and release with periods of stress and money worries.

As such, some students are turning to part-time work to supplement their income and avoid high levels of debt. While this has long been the case in the USA, a recent study in the UK by Barke *et al.* (2000) found that 54 per cent of students had been employed sometime during the academic year, working an average of 12 hours per week. The main area of employment was 'sales assistants or checkout operators', with an average weekly take-home pay of £49. It was also found that in the UK younger students, under 26, now have more money at their disposal than any time since 1988/9, but only because more of it is earned, received as gifts, drawn from savings or borrowed against future earnings (Callender and Kempson, 1996). Rather than spending less, then, students faced with money worries are becoming more selective, instrumental and focused in their use of leisure time.

Today's students are often seen as more career-oriented yet less critically engaged than their predecessors (Bloom, 1987). Due to increasing work loads and

money constraints, it may be fair to say that there has been a mainstreaming of attitudes and apathy among students. As one newspaper in the USA put it: 'Tomorrow's leaders are a bunch of uninformed, apolitical, and apathetic college kids worried about little more than their own self-interest' (Brook, 1996:12). What is also evident is that studentland is increasingly becoming a more 'professionalised' arena through a cadre of student support-service professionals, who manage, and to some extent control, adolescent development, and create 'post *in loco parentis*' structures in the mass university. Such trends are more prevalent in the USA, while UK students retain more autonomy over their extra-curricular lives (Silver and Silver, 1997). Many universities are also significant cultural, entertainment and nightlife providers in their own right, which further extends the formal reach of the university into the extracurricular lives of students. As the formal curriculum extends outside the classroom and into the private lives of students, both worklife and nightlife in studentland are becoming less a series of possibilities, or serendipitous encounters, and more a programmed and directed experience.

The important point here is that despite increased diversity within the university population and the development of a wider range of identities in studentland, counter-forces are at work which are leading towards the creation of more mainstream tastes, instrumentality and the need for readily packaged educational and socialising experiences, as well as working to construct an 'ideal type' of student consumer. In essence, it is still the traditional white middle-class adolescent, with relatively high levels of free time and disposable income, that is held up as the archetypal student, and this is often the specific grouping which businesses, including nightlife operators, specifically orient themselves towards in their provision of goods and services to the student body. It is to such issues that we now turn.

Understanding nightlife in studentland

Students as consumers

Since the 1960s, it is generally assumed that societies in the west have become more middle class, or at least focused more upon the tastes and needs of this particular class (Savage and Butler, 1995; Ley, 1996; Smith, 1996). The expansion of higher education and white-collar and professional employment has played a key role here. The growth of a well-educated middle class, it is argued, has stimulated an increase in demand for cultural goods and services (DiMaggio, 1991). Such a class of consumers represents the 'more-more principle' in that they are likely to consume more goods and services across more areas *(ibid.)*. Moreover, 'there is a tendency on the part of some groups (especially the young, highly educated, sectors of the middle classes) to take on a more active stance towards lifestyle and pursue the stylisation of life' (Featherstone, 1991:97).

Table 6.1 Percentage of students participating in activities over previous three months

	Pub	*Nightclubs*	*Cinema*	*Live music*	*Museum / gallery*	*Theatre*
Henley Centre survey (16–24 years)	82	70	72	16	23	21
Sample of UK students[a]	90	81	65	46	31	28

Source: Chatterton, 1999

Note: [a]This data is based upon a survey of 500 students at two universities in Bristol, UK

Students are clear examples of this active 'more-more' approach to lifestyle. One of the most significant divides within the consumer tastes of the young occurs at the age of 18, when a proportion of young people go to university and the rest enter into employment, training, unstable employment or indeed unemployment. Research by Roberts and Parsell (1994), however, has shown that the difference is not so much the 'type' of leisure which these two groups participate in, but the 'amount'. As Table 6.1 shows, in the UK, at least, students do not necessarily go on to pursue a different set of leisure options, but simply do more of them compared to their non-student peers.

Due to the sheer size of the student population, not to mention their purchasing power, students increasingly play a dominant role in the reshaping of youth styles and cultures generally, and are now a favoured target for the entertainment industry. Student life is part of a larger lifestyle phenomenon which has a pre-student phase (at high school, etc.) and a post-student phase (graduates, post-graduates, young professionals). The expansion of this wider student lifestyle has extended a broad middle ground for youth cultural styles, in which mainstream, middle-class values take centre stage (Miles, 2000; Roberts and Parsell, 1994).

Because of their higher levels of free time and disposable income, students are able to become fuller participants in consumer culture. Unlike their working-class counterparts, students also have legitimate and extended transitional spaces and mechanisms which allow for more personal development and experimentation. During this time, students are offered an array of resources such as consumer goods, easy credit, promotional discounts and employment opportunities, as well as personal and academic support services, which allow them to access consumption opportunities and citizenship rights to a greater extent compared to those outside studentland.

Students, then, play an important economic role in many localities, not just in the housing and labour market but also in terms of spending and consuming. A large part of this impact occurs in the night-time economy. An average UK university city has 50,000 students with an average annual expenditure for each student of roughly £5,000, with one fifth (about £1,000) spent on entertainment (Callender and Kempson, 1996). This equates to a spending power of around £250

million a year, and nearly £50 million spent on entertainment alone. Across the USA, according to the research firm Student Monitor, undergraduates spend more than $21.6 billion per year overall (Marcus, 2001).

Such spending capacities have attracted the attention of many businesses hoping to cash in on this lucrative market. A broad national infrastructure comprised of magazines, books, CDs, web pages and music tours has developed, specifically aimed at a student consumer audience. In the UK, the Virgin Corporation, for example, has launched www.virginstudent.com, offering a range of services for students, including reviews and local guides. Locally, many businesses invest heavily on marketing to attract them, offering student discounts in cinemas, restaurants and, of course, bars, pubs and clubs. Student spending is distinctive due to its seasonal, weekly and daily fluctuations. A range of businesses are keenly aware of, and eager to exploit, these differences in student life outside the customary working day, and in particular students' desire to go out in quiet mid-week periods. Local shops, taxis and fast-food vendors regularly state that, out of term time, business is slack and takings drop. These economic impacts of students are pronounced in smaller college towns and more rural university campuses. Many places have become dominated and even synonymous with their university, and to a certain extent depend, both financially and culturally, on the student body.

In some places, students have also played a key role in the gentrification process and the recovery of downtown populations. This has particularly been the case through the building of university accommodation, where students are new residents for redeveloped urban cores, being suited to reconverted difficult-to-let office space due to their transience, less rigid daily routines, desire to live in the middle of things and high propensity to spend. The publicly funded expansion of universities has also created a stable income stream for many property developers. Many localities, then, 'are busy turning old office blocks or a derelict leisure centre into fashionable mid-town apartment blocks full of undergraduates looking for a good time after a hard day's learning' (Tavener, 2000).

Yet student leisure patterns, while exemplifying the 'more-more' principle, still appear somewhat limited in their horizons. Figure 6.1 gives a flavour of the amount of time spent on various activities out of the home by students in the UK and the USA (see Chatterton, 1998).[3] While there are some similarities, such as an across-the-board popularity for the pub/bar, students in the USA understandably show a greater tendency towards non-alcohol-based leisure, such as sport and visiting friends. What it certainly dispels is the notion that students spend much of their time out of the house on a variety of pursuits, especially high cultural ones such as going to the theatre or visiting galleries.

The leisure tastes of students, then, identifies them as part of the large 'open middle' of consumption who are not particularly high on exploratory cultural practices and may be deterred from certain forms of cultural participation where access is unfamiliar (Chatterton, 1998, 1999; Wynne and O'Connor, 1998:853). Students' tastes increasingly reflect mainstream and commercial cultural styles, many of which have little resonance with their radical predecessors: 'Mr and Mrs

Undergraduate 1996 more closely resemble Saffy, the censorious and infuriatingly sensible daughter in *Absolutely Fabulous,* than Neil, the spaced-out hippy of *The Young Ones'* (Kingston, 1996). Sections of the student body have also become more stylish and brand-conscious, revelling in designer labels and more gentrified forms of consumption:

> Scruffy, baggy. Badly dressed… Well, you can forget all that: students have moved on and closer to the once unimaginable—absolutely fabulous. Over the past decade designers such as Gucci, Prada and Alberta have been slowly reflected in university campuses.
>
> (*Guardian Education,* 2000)

Students in general are as much, if not more, driven by mainstream values such as pleasure-seeking, hedonism and release through popular and cultural forms such as drink, drugs and nightclubbing, as they are by experimentation or interest in high culture.The majority of students, then, have become rather uncritical and passive in their role as consumers (Chatterton, 1998). Work, time and money pressures may have begun to create a more instrumental outlook among students which pervades both their worklife and their nightlife. In such a context, many nightlife operators have increasingly begun creating nightlife packages, tailor-made around the tastes of brand-aware and fashion-conscious students.

Commercialising the student nightlife infrastructure: studentland up for sale

As Figure 6.1 shows, going to the pub and club is still one of the most significant pursuits in studentland (Thornton, 1995; Malbon, 1999). Many students in the UK choose particular universities on the basis of the nightlife of the locality as much as the academic profile of the institution. Numerous alternative guides have been published to help students choose universities on more than just academic indicators. The *Push Guide* in the UK, for example, offers information on a number of vital statistics such as sex ratio, flunk rate, graduate unemployment, average local rent and average price of a pint of beer, while the *Virgin Alternative Guide* gives universities marks out of twenty for the 'campus/town social scene'. Bristol University, which received the most applications per place in the UK through much of the 1990s, has achieved this not just on its academic performance, but because of the cultural and social vibe of the city, much of which was associated with the 'Bristol sound' of Tricky, Massive Attack and Roni Size. Moreover, in 1996, a survey found that 70 per cent of students at Liverpool's John Moores University said they chose to study in Liverpool because of the presence of Cream nightclub, one of the world's best-known super-clubs (www.clubbed.com).

A key part of nightlife in studentland is a distinctive infrastructure comprised of 'pathways' of venues which weave distinctive time—space patterns through certain areas (Chatterton, 1999). Students colonise, inhabit and modify many

places such as pubs, cafés, bars and bookshops within, or adjacent to, student residential areas and university campuses. As outlined earlier, this nightlife infrastructure represents a relatively bounded field (Bourdieu, 1977, 1993), in which students invest and accrue social and cultural capital, which is of equal importance alongside educational capital gained from the formal university calendar. The pub, bar, club and café, then, are spaces which are as central to studentland as the lecture theatre and library.

Students also contribute to nightlife infrastructures themselves through roles they play as producers as well as consumers of nightlife. They are involved in a variety of activities such as small-scale, experimental and underground parties and clubs, DJ-ing and promoting events at local pubs and nightclubs. House parties, in particular, are a source of much creativity and are often used as an experimental space for students involved in producing or organising musical events. Some also remain in their university town after graduation and use their knowledge of the 'scene' to establish or manage venues or to pursue artistic careers. Sid Fox, one of Leeds' most famous techno club nights, for example, evolved from a group of students running house parties in the city's student areas before moving first to a local community centre and then to residencies at the city's top clubs such as the Warehouse and the Mint Club.

For many young people, being away from home for the first time can initially be somewhat of a hedonistic experience (see Box 6.1). One UK bar manager reflected on what he saw:

> I mean, can you imagine just coming out of high school and going to university, the boys and girls would be like dogs with three cocks. They think, bloody hell, this is fantastic, never been out on their own before, right. Never been out of parental control, and here they are in Sin City.
>
> (Bar manager 3, Newcastle upon Tyne)

BOX 6.1
: STUDENT DRINKING AND DRUGS

Drinking, usually to excess, is one of the hallmarks and rituals of student culture. As Silver and Silver (1997:111) explain:

> There are peer-pressures to drink, and the bar—rather than the political party or the campaign, the concert hall or even the disco—has become for many students the balancing focus for their studies, part-time jobs and tensions. Drinking and getting drunk are for some students a personal and collective response to campus and social pressures, and to some extent an aeceptance of traditions associated in the past.

Alcohol and drugs are central to student nightlife and their use is motivated by sex, peer pressure, stress and socialising (Humphrey and McCarthy,

1998; Morgan, 1997), However, their excessive consumption has become a major concern, mainly due to evidence linking it to academic and health problems (Morgan, 1997; MacLeod and Graham-Rowe, 1997), Binge drinking by freshers and recent alcohol-related deaths associated with Norths American fraternity culture and the practice of 'heazing' have also become issues of concern, Similarly, one report found that 'sensible' drinking levels were exceeded by 61 per cent of men and 48 per cent of women within the student population in Britain (D'Alessio, 1996:4), while another showed that students at Durham, Edinburgh and Glasgow consumed an average of 36 units of alcohol per week—compared to a recommended weekly Intake of 21 for men and 14 for women (Morgan, 1997). Alarm over alcoholism reached new heights at St Cathering's College, Cambridge, when the dean was forced to

write to students about excessive intake, following cases of alcohol poisoning and drinking games at formal dinners which required several women students to be carried from their seats, and unacceptable amounts of vomiting around common-rooms (Chrisafis, 2001).

While drinking as part of the undergraduate rite of passage has an enormous international legacy, in the USA the recent history is complicated by the raising of the legal drinking age to 21 in 1987 (Silver and Silver, 1997:112). This is not to say that under-age students in the States do not drink—alcohol consumption has simply become a more private rather than public affair, framed within house and fraternity parties, Concern over alcohol-related deaths and an increase in alcohol-related violence on US campuses in recent years have prompted colleges to crack down on under-age and irresponsible drinking through educational programming, campus policies (including the creation of 'dry campuses') and interdiction by law enforcement personnel (Engs and Hauson, 1994). For example, in 1996 across US college campuses, alcohol arrests rose by 10 per cent and drug arrests rose by 5 per cent, with Michigan State University leading the league table for alcohol related arrests, while UC-Berkeley had the greatest number of drug arrests (Honon, 1998). Under-age drinking among students in the USA is dealt with harshly, carrying a $ 148 fine for a first offence and a $640 for the fourth. At UW-Madison in Wisconsin, the Madison Police Department even embarked upon an under-cover operation code-named 'Operation Sting' to infiltrate illegal student drinking parties. In spite of these risks, most students are happy to procure false identity cards for under-age drinking, Moreover, many students in the USA use the spring break as an opportunity to head out of the USA and south to Costa Rica and Mexican resorts such as Cancun to party and drink beer, due to more relaxed licensing laws and cheaper alcohol. Numerous package companies have emerged to service the party needs of college kids during spring break.

Concern also stems from the effects of mixing heavy drinking with illegal drugs, a practice which is common among this young, hedonistic group, Drugs are now a common element of youth consumption and are readily available in studentland. Cannabis, in particular, is a cultural norm for many sections of the student

population. Despite moral panics, often fuelled by high-profile Ecstasy-related deaths, drugs continue to play an important role in student culture.

Learning about the perks and pitfalls of nightlife in studentland is mediated through certain initiation rituals such as Fresher's Week and the Freshers' Fair, and a host of student publications, print and web media and radio, as well as through peers. These are arenas where the 'rules of studenthood' are learnt and embodied. Such spaces, while not liminal or carnivalesque in the classic sense of an inversion of social roles, do temporarily stand outside the normal working day.

One of the distinguishing features of nightlife in studentland, however, is its rhythms, routines and rituals. One fresher (Toby, 18 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) commented on the weekly student nightlife routine:

> First year kind of seems to be dominated by people flocking to certain places on certain nights, so, for example, Monday night would be the Boat nightclub and Tuesday night is a bit of a rest day, and then Wednesday night is Baja Beach Club and Thursday night is Legends nightclub, and then Friday night, everyone goes to the Students' Union.

The pub crawl is another distinctive ritual and rhythm within student life. In Leeds, the 'Otley Run' along the Otley Road has become infamous among students and has been immortalised in a board game in which all of the pubs have to be visited by closing time. Starting at the Boddington hall of residence, it finishes at the main university campus, taking in fifteen pubs and ending at the infamous 'poly bop'.

Students' Unions used to have a monopoly on the supply of entertainment to students in this infrastructure, following a rather formulaic model of 'cram them in, pile it high, sell it cheap'. However, this situation has changed and new 'merchants of leisure' (Hannigan, 1998) increasingly recognise the student market as a lucrative source of income. Competition for a more discerning student 'spend' is now fierce, especially between campus-owned and private operations. Chains such as Taco Bell, KFC, Starbucks and Pizza Hut now litter university campuses in North America (Klein, 2000), while most large nightlife operators in the UK have developed student-oriented venue brands, usually within easy proximity of universities. These operators update their knowledge of the student community through focus groups and other marketing schemes to find out what they want from a night out. Some have recognised that close contact with students is the best way to develop nightlife attuned to their needs. As one nightclub owner commented: 'If you haven't been to university you don't understand the mentality…by being so interactive with the student community you know your audience and how to attract it' (Nightclub owner 3, Bristol).

There are a number of common perceptions which for many bar operators typify student nightlife. One nightclub manager suggested student nightlife continued to be based around a well-established formula: 'The only thing you can do to get

students in is to offer them cheap beer and cheap entry on the door or some type of theme night. They're easily pleased' (Nightclub owner 2, Leeds). However, this model of a cheap and simple night out in many cases is responsible for a downgrading of nightlife. As one bar owner commented: 'With the best will in the world, a venue may start out by offering a sedate environment for the over 25s, but soon be tempted into selling cheap drinks to students to avoid bankruptcy' (Bar owner 2, Newcastle upon Tyne). Student nightlife, then, comes with its own distinctive set of rules and regulations, especially in relation to door policies. As one bar owner commented:

> We don't mind students being a complete prat. Our doormen are trained. I dislike doormen who see students messing around and misinterpret it as a problem. The great thing about students is that if one pukes on another they turn round and laugh. If a student pukes on a townie they end up on the floor with no teeth.
>
> (Bar owner 4, Bristol)

Other nightlife operators, however, are aware that some students have moved away from easy stereotypes of being scruffy and only wanting a cheap night. Many are just as likely to listen to the latest Garage and R&B tunes, drink premium bottled branded lagers and wear Dolce and Gabana. As such, many of the mainstream gentrified premises discussed in Chapter 5 also attract their fair share of students, who sometimes opt for a more 'premium' or 'exclusive' night out.

Plate 6.1: Branding studentland: 'It's A Scream' bar brand owned by Six Continents Retail; Middlesbrough, UK, 2002

While nightlife in studentland, then, is many different things to many different people and is a place of possibility, fun, hedonism and experimentation, most large corporate nightlife operators have a specific policy for both attracting and indeed 'constructing' the student audience. While there is nothing new about recognising the financial gains which can be earned from targeting the student body, through such corporate interventions studentland is increasingly being packaged and commodified on a scale and intensity not seen in the past. The structuring of student socialising, once the preserve of the university, is now being undertaken by a host of cultural, media and entertainment firms.

Brannigans, one of the fastest growing city-centre bar chains in the UK, is particularly eager to attract students. It courts them through its student night, 'The University of Pubbing—a degree in drinking', which does little to hide the company's desire to play on stereotypes of student life to increase its profits. The 'It's A Scream' nightlife brand (see Plate 6.1) owned by Six Continents Retail (formerly Bass Retail) is one of the most vigorously marketed student bar brands in the UK, promoted as:

> …a concept designed to appeal especially to students and those who prefer the student way of life. Located in towns and cities mainly close to colleges or universities with a large student population, It's A Scream gives students value for money on food and drink as well as a great night out.
>
> (Six Continents Retail, 2002)

Each pub comes fitted with chunky tables, bright walls, menus offering burgers and pint deals, discounts on lager, oversize games such as 'Connect 4' and 'Yenga', a pool table, and juke boxes filled with student classics from the Stone Roses to Abba. However, the relationship with studentland doesn't finish there. As they state: 'We believe firmly that university isn't just about lectures and essays but taking advantage of the opportunities to develop extra-curricular skills and talents.' *(ibid.)*. As a result, It's A Scream also hosted the UK 2001 Student Radio Awards and sponsors the national Student Talent Programme, which involves encouraging new work by student journalists, writers and photographers as well as, one would imagine, drinking alcohol. Not all students are accepting of the penetration of the 'It's A Scream' brand into studentland. As one student, Chris from Oxford, commented:

> Bass are scum, because they take over previously great pubs and destroy them utterly. When I was at college in Cardiff, a short stagger from our front door was Clancy's, a bona fide Irish pub selling gorgeous Guinness at less than two quid. Came back from summer break to find it had been Scream-i-fied; splattered in yellow and purple with South Park and the Simpsons scrawled over the walls, a huge yank up in prices, and (according to the student paper) a policy of serving people under 25 first to drive out the old

> fellas who used to sit in there and smoke the place out. Tradition and variety just annihilated forever in pursuit of the student pound.
>
> (Chris, 2001)

Student unions have responded to this new competitive arena and many have developed large campus entertainment facilities with a wider public role. The Octagon at Sheffield and the Academy in Manchester, for example, both within their respective universities, function as a main live gig venues across the city. In many ways, student unions are one of the few remaining places left which offer experimental nightlife, as they can subsidise a more specialist product based around music genres such as Goth, rock, indie, drum and bass, electronica and R&B, from profits made from commercial house nights during the weekend. However, student unions are also increasingly becoming commodified and are changing in response to a more mainstream demand from students. In the UK, for example, a youth satellite TV channel called Translucis, backed by drinks manufacturer Diagio, has signed up several campus bars to help them tap into the lucrative student audience. Advertisers signed up on the channel include Bacardi, Budweiser, Sol and Virgin (*The Publican,* 17 September 2001:4). Further, the norm for campus music tours are tie-in promotions and sponsorship from a range of fashion and media outlets. The Big Break Music Tour featured across UK university campuses in 2001 was held in association with TopMan Clothing Company and *Dazed and Confused* magazine, with limited edition French Connection 'Fcuk alcopops' on sale during the night.

Through such corporate activity, the bricolage, traditions and rites of passage of studenthood are being appropriated, sanitised and sold back to students by corporate nightlife operators eager to cash in on this lucrative market. The commercial world has taken many of the 'authentic' moments of student life and transmitted them to wider mass audiences, diluting their former meanings. The student experience is now for sale. Many ex-students are employed in marketing, promotions and advertising within entertainment, nightlife and retail firms to pass on detailed and up-to-date knowledge about student tastes and cultures. These intermediaries who have been 'cool hunted' by large corporations (Klein, 2000) are a key part in the ongoing insider commodification of studentland.

Within such commercial nightlife spaces, students are sold an identity (fashionable, carefree, young) which they can adopt for a few years and then discard, before moving on when they graduate to adopt other lifestyle personas such as office worker, young professional or creative entrepreneur. As we highlighted in Chapter 5, student tastes are being shaped within a broader mainstream nightlife linked to other cash-rich groups in the city. Hence, clusters of corporate, branded and themed nightlife operators develop portfolios of venues to socialise and prepare young people as they move from nightlife in 'studentland' to nightlife in 'workland'.

Many modern nightlife venues, then, decrease the experimental and often spontaneous character of student life with heavily scripted spaces regulated

through prompts and stimuli, often of banal proportions. As with most other areas of life, this selling of studentland is part of the processes of globalisation and the increasing commodification of lifestyles and cultural forms. Selling it, along with selling other youth cultural styles, is a way of defining and controlling youth cultures (Massey, 1998). Behind the seemingly vast array of consumer choices, nightlife consumption options for students are often highly curtailed and limited. Nightlife in studentland, then, is increasingly a homogenous space, driven by large nightlife producers eager to get a slice of the market and narrow possibilities in the name of profit. Moreover, the expansion of student night spaces is a powerful gentrifying force in many localities, displacing established and lower-order residential and leisure uses, not to mention resulting in instances of community conflict (see Box 6.2).

Resistance and incorporation in studentland

Radicalism and resistance have long been hallmarks of university campuses (Loeb, 1994) which have been a source of both social change and moral panics concerning hedonistic and rebellious youth (Wilson, 1970). A common perception of studentland today is that student radicalism is on the decline. Campus life by the twenty-first century, it seems, has become more apolitical and apathetic. In general, student politics have shifted from wider political causes (such as militarism, government corruption and global poverty) to more specific campus— and student-oriented issues such as debt and an insecure job market, which have made them more instrumental rather than experimental (Seale, 1972).

In reality, radicalism in studentland has always waxed and waned, and in general there has always been a more apolitical majority and a more radical minority (Loeb, 1994). Alternative and radical currents still remain and come in many different guises. For example, in many campuses across the USA, students have embarked upon widespread campaigns against corporate influence such as Nike and McDonald's (Klein, 2000), while in the wake of the September 11 attacks, Stop the War movements have spread to campuses in the USA and Europe. The housing co-operative movement, seen as a haven for 'veggie', 'lefty' and more politically active students, remains a focus for alternative student cultures, especially on certain US campuses where many are organised through the North

BOX 6.2
: CONFLICT IN STUDENTLAND

Images of students as carefree, wealthy adolescents have been the source of many loogstanding tensions between students and locals, especially at night. With the expansion of student numbers, some of these tensions have dissipated, while others have grown. One of the current tensions in studentland stems from the mobility and temporality of students and the

territoriality of many local young people. As one student Kay (19 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) commented to us: 'You get people coming up to you and saying, oh you're a student, aren't you, you're not from round here, and it's very intimidating when they single you out because you don't sound the same as them, you don't look the same as them.' One bar worker (Barworker 1, Newcastle upon Tyne) reinforced such a division from the 'other side of the fence':

> It seems that they're [students] doing a lot more kind of irresponsible things because they don't feel they have any responsibility to anyone since they're going home pretty soon anyway. And they're just going to be up here and party round in someone else's back yard, and just do what the fuck they like.

The presence of students in a community can also raise mixed feelings from local residents (Kenyon, 1997). They are often catalysts in the regeneration of local facilities, create a lively, youth-oriented environment, add to safety through their street presence, and are sometimes viewed as less problematic and more polite than local young people. However, they are also the source of a number of tensions concerining parking, waste disposal, noise, deterioration of housing stock, burglary and a decline of community feeling, As one newspaper in the UK put it: 'Neighbours who party all night, streets littered with takeaway containers and trash, neglected, crumbling houses, rat-infested discarded mattresses in back gardens; university students are destroying our neighbourhoods in in Birmingham, Leeds, Cardiff' (Collinson, 2001).

In the UK, several post-code areas in the inner city have gained notoriety due to large student populations and associated problems such as transience, crime (Bond, 2001b) and low levels of owner-occupation. Many areas are being overrun by students and the subsequent development of student bars, cafes, pubs and shops, Headingly, a once prosperous and leafy suburb in Leeds in the north of England, has been colonised by large numbers of students, graduates and young professionals due to the location and high amenity value of the area. However, this increase in young transient people is cansing a rapid downturn in the quality and maintenance of the local housing stock, with Leeds Civic Trust claiming that the increase in multiple occupancy was reducing housing conditions to those of 'nineteenth century slums' (Bond, 2001 a: 15). Local Member of Parliament Harold Best has embarked upon a crusade to solve the issue, stating that the two universities were 'devastating the community that has been its host for generation after generation' *(ibid.)*. Large nightlife operators continue to move into the area to exploit the market opened up by the existence of a large youth population, resulting in outrage from many sections of the older, established community. The Whitbread company's largest grossing pub in the country is located there, and, to the dismay of many local residents, Six Continents Retail have recently been granted permission to convert an old banking hall in Headingly into a new student pub.

In the USA, since 1994 the Housing and Urban Development Department (HUDD) has established a number of Community Outreach Partnership Centers (COPCs) to try and build better community—university relations. However, in spite of the best of efforts, the problem can often get out of hand. After an end-of-semester party at the University of Colorado, for example, more than 1,500 students overturned dumpsters, set bonfires and pelted police officers in full riot gear with rocks, bricks and bottles. The riot was largely a result of a year of simmering tensions between police and students over alcohol consumption which resulted in the closing down of Greek-sponsored parties due to under-age drinking, and the loss of charters by a number of fraternities. One member of the student executive commented that 'in an attempt to curb under-age drinking throughout the Boulder community, students have been treated as a nuisance rather than valued members of the community' (Zaret, 2000). Due to the disturbances, the University Hill Action Group was established, one aim of which was to 'educate university students about responsibilities as good neighbours',

American Students Co-operative Organisation (NASCO). Finally, the Coalition to Defend Affirmative Action By Any Means Necessary (BAMN), founded in July 1995 in Berkeley, California, is a national organisation dedicated to building a new mass civil rights movement to defend affirmative action, integration and the other gains of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, and in particular to oppose the racial re-segregation of higher education (Liberator, 2001).

Pockets of resistance exist in elements of the student movement in Europe as well, where global environmental campaigning remains a strong thread. People and Planet in UK, predecessor of the Third World First Movement, became active in the late 1990s across most UK university campuses and organises campaigns on climate change, fair trade and the arms industry. Similarly, across Spain in November 2001, up to 200,000 students and staff took to the streets to object to the imposition of the 'Ley Organica de Universidad' by Spain's governing Partido Popular, as it was seen as both an erosion of university autonomy and an intrusion of business interests.

Corporate influences on campuses continues to cause outrage from some quarters. In particular, the advent of malls and food courts on university campuses has significant consequences for the student experience. As Klein (2000:98) comments: 'the more campuses act and look like malls, the more students behave like consumers'. In many ways, the university campus in some European countries is one of the few remaining spaces which has not been penetrated by corporate brands and commercial culture, representing the nearest thing left to a public culture open to a 'dialogue of difference' (Bender, 1988). Remaining radical threads means that there is much to studentland which is still uncommodified, shadowy and unregulated, and future attempts to corporatise the experience may continue to meet resistance from sections of the student population. In the sphere of nightlife, students continue to make their own fun and indulge in hedonism, carnival and transgression.

Some of these experiences encapsulate a do-it-yourself ethic, a step outside the corporate controlled spaces of studentland. Additionally, the right to party and drink alcohol outside formal venues and events can also lead to conflict and resistance. For example, clashes between police and students on college campuses in the USA over the right to drink alcohol in familiar areas and during traditional party weekends have become widespread over the last few years (Sanchez, 1998). In July 1998, for example, a rowdy, largely drunk, crowd of 1,500 people gathered near Penn State University after the bars closed, and set fires, damaged street signs, vandalised cars and smashed three storefront windows after one long weekend. Fourteen police officers were injured during a two and a half hour riot and twenty people were arrested, with damage estimated at $50,000 (Weininger, 2001). Meanwhile, at Michigan State University in Lansing on 1 May, about 2,000 students rioted after administrators announced a ban on alcohol at Munn Field, a popular spot for tailgate parties before football games. Police barred students from entering the field and protesters poured into city streets, rioting and lighting fires. Police in riot gear confronted the protesters, and several people were treated for tear-gas-related injuries (Lively, 1998).

What of the future of nightlife in studentland? Despite the fact that it contains potential alternatives, transgressions and different ways of thinking about the relationship between work, leisure and play, it is still a bounded space, which is slowly being encroached upon by mainstream entertainment and nightlife providers who are increasingly commodifying its rituals and places. Financial and work pressures are also creating students who are more instrumental in their outlook, which enables nightlife operators to create and sell easily consumed and packaged experiences. The 'corporate campus' and the surrounding corporate city are increasingly intertwined. The future of work and play in studentland is not just up for grabs: it is also up for sale.

7
SEXING THE MAINSTREAM
Young women and gay cultures in the night

Two of the most fundamental influences on nightlife over the last thirty years have been shifts in gender relations and the impact of gay and queer cultures. The first half of this chapter discusses young women and their changing experience of nightlife. It has been suggested that they have been quietly leading a 'genderquake' revolution (Wilkinson, 1994a) in this sphere, reflected in 'ladies-only' nights (Hollands, 1995) and greater involvement in rave and dance cultures (Henderson, 1997), not to mention an increased feminisation of nightlife venues (Difford, 2000a). In particular, there has been an obvious targeting of young, single and professional women by the nightlife industry (Lleyelyn-Smith, 2001; Chaudhuri, 2001). The second part of the chapter looks at the rise of gay bars, clubs, dance cultures and 'villages', and in particular how they have been pulled them towards the commercial mainstream (Wallis, 1993). Most accounts of the origins of 'acid house', for example, credit the role gay clubs in the USA played in terms of inspiring the music, dress styles and general argot of rave culture (Redhead, 1993). At the same time, nightlife spaces for gay men and lesbians are also increasingly being consumed by heterosexual youth populations (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001), and increasingly packaged and commodified (Chasin, 2001).

While the general 'sexualising' of urban nightlife is a positive trend, it is also important to remain aware of a range of continuing obstacles and problems raised in relation to young women and gay men and lesbian revellers. Despite some of the changes alluded to above, dominant mainstream forms of nightlife remain highly masculinised in terms of the male domination of space and the policing of compulsory heterosexuality. Young women's nightlife experiences often continue to be structured by less financial resources, leisure time and actual involvement in the 'production' of nightlife, continuing assumptions about their sexual availability (by young men), and fear of attack and harassment. At the same time, the 'equality' that many young women have gained in the nightlife sphere has often been on male terms, and contains their own negative consequences like increased levels of drunkenness, violence and drug consumption. Additionally, not all young women have equally benefited from the spoils of a feminised nightlife culture, with the gentrification of the mainstream being as discriminating against the female poor as the male poor.

Similar caveats also extend to understanding nightlife spaces for young gay men and lesbians. For example, the domination of downtown areas by heterosexual space has historically meant that what little gay nightlife provision existed often found itself on the 'urban margins' or 'fringe' (Whittle, 1994). Gay men and lesbians generally only really experience dominant mainstream nightlife spaces as 'invisible gays'. While this isolation has sometimes resulted in the creation and development of 'gay enclaves' or villages, these spaces also have their downside, including commercial incorporation. Those enclaves that have become stylish are partially a victim of their own success, being increasingly infiltrated by straight women, gay people's straight family members, and students (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001). Finally, it is important not to typify and stereotype gay nightlife as a monolith (Buckland, 2002) and to accept that within it there are significant generational and gender (between gay men and lesbians) differences and subject positions, not to mention huge variations in the provision of spaces and premises for gay men and lesbians in cities around the world. The general argument in this chapter about 'sexing the city', then, is that while there are clear transformations in terms of the feminisation of nightlife and a greater acceptance and influence of premises and nightlife styles aimed at gay men and lesbians, these changes are also bound up with the ongoing corporatisation and gentrification of nightlife.

Young women and nightlife

The impact young women have had on transforming the character and atmosphere of urban nightlife is huge. This is particularly the case when one considers the limited role women played in the traditional pub (Hey, 1986) and historically in the city in general (Wilson, 1991). Much has changed even in the last decade, when Lees (1993:81) wrote: 'the pub is a male environment where girls may go with their boyfriend but do not feel confident to go on their own or even in a group of girls', following McRobbie and Garber's (1976) earlier lament over the way young women were once trapped within the confines of a 'bedroom culture'. While Wilson's (1991:7) contrary comment that 'The city offers women freedom' is somewhat overstated, numerous commentators have noted the powerful influence young female consumers are having on the transformation of nightlife premises and cultures of cities (Barnard, 1999; Wilkinson, 1994a; Hollands, 1995; Andersson, 2002:264).

Yet, while one of the issues is explaining the roots of this change and assessing the new opportunities it provides in terms of enjoyment not to mention identity and power, the debate about gender and nightlife also needs to consider some of the economic differences between young women. For example, the feminisation of nightlife is also tied up with the dominant trend towards gentrification in the mainstream, a shift that disqualifies poorer women from participating fully. Within nightlife, one also needs to recognise that there are a range of 'new' femininities developing, such as aspiring young professionals versus laddettes as only two

examples (Laurie *et al.,* 1999; McDowell, 1999). In order to more fully understand the various dimensions of this gender shift, one needs to look at the changing economic, educational and domestic (marriage) position of young women, not to mention their roles as consumers of entertainment and their bridging of the gender 'divided' city (McKenzie, 1989).

Women in most developed economies now constitute a considerable proportion of the workforce (ranging from 40–50 per cent, see Brush, 1999:172). While some of these gains have come in 'routinised' export processing jobs in areas like textiles, electronic components and garments, there has also been an increase in women in 'professionalised' public-service employment (Moghadam, 1999:136). While male economic activity rates continue to fall in countries like the UK, women's participation rates continue to rise (Wilkinson, 1994a: 10), and it has been estimated that around 80 per cent of new jobs created in the EU since the 1960s have been filled by women (Brush, 1999:172). In the UK and USA respectively, women who run small businesses form one quarter and one third of the total respectively (Wilkinson, 1994a: 32–3).

The important point here is that there has been an increase in economic activity among young professional females (see Walby, 1997). As young women begin to take advantage of increased educational opportunities and gain qualifications, they account for a higher percentage of professional jobs and gain higher disposable incomes with which to consume. For example, in the UK girls now out-perform boys in terms of high school qualifications, with 54 per cent and 25 per cent achieving five or more GCSE grades (A to C), and two or more A levels respectively, while in comparison boys managed only 44 per cent and 21 per cent (Kelso, 2000). They also outnumber young men in higher education (HEFCE, 2001), and are less likely to be unemployed following graduation (Wilkinson, 1994a: 24). While still behind men, women make up 38 per cent of all professional jobs, with significant gains being made in medicine, law and accountancy (Wilkinson, 1994a: 11). While a gendered wage gap stubbornly persists, it appears to narrow somewhat for the younger generation. In the USA, the average hourly pay rate for a young male high school graduate fell 28 per cent from 1973 to 1995, while for females it fell only 19 per cent. Young women especially are gaining on their male counterparts in the labour market (Brush, 1999:166).

Historically, women's involvement in leisure has been constrained not only by their lack of fiscal resources but by domestic/family commitments. USA figures show that while hours of domestic work have decreased in the last twenty years, women still did twice as much as men (Brush, 1999:176), and British Social Attitudes Surveys continually demonstrate that women continue to do the bulk of cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing. Again, however, there are generational differences. Griffin's (1985:37) work revealed that 45 per cent of young women did any domestic labour as opposed to 100 per cent for their mothers. Wilkinson's (1994a: 20) research shows evidence of young women prioritising careers and jobs over and above having children and raising a family, reflected in the fact that

the mean age for getting married in the UK for women is now 28 (30 for men) (Kelso, 2000),

All of these factors—increased economic activity and professionalisation of at least a section of the female job market, greater educational success, a decline in domestic duties and delays in getting married and starting a family—have had an impact on young women's capacity for leisure and consumption, including their involvement in nightlife activity. As such, numerous commentators have noted that young women in particular have begun to traverse the 'divided city' from the more private spaces of home (bedroom culture), community and neighbourhood, to occupy the public spaces of the street, the bar and the club (Barnard, 1999; McDowell, 1999; Hollands, 1995). For example, McRobbie's (1993) research discusses the increased involvement of young women in many contemporary youth cultures, and Henderson (1997: 69) notes the significant presence of young women at raves. Hollands' (1995) research in Newcastle upon Tyne also comments on equal numbers of young women on nights out in the city and supports the notions that their desire and commitment to nightlife cultures rivals that of young men. The research found that young women went on nights out to the city centre more frequently, and that a higher percentage of their income was spent on nights out, when compared to their male counterparts. Furthermore, women reported that they would feel worse than men if they were somehow restricted from going out for a period of time, and more said they would continue to go out as much as men, even when married (Hollands, 1995:23–4).

Young women have also been at the forefront of transforming nightlife cultures away from a purely sexual and marriage marketplace (Griffin, 1985), the so-called 'cattle market' phenomenon (de Vries, 2001), through a greater emphasis on the 'socialising' function of nights out. Hollands' (1995:42) research notes the importance of 'socialising with friends' as one of the primary reasons given for going out, and young women are at the forefront of the creation of these 'mini communities' (87 per cent of local women gave this as one of the main reasons why they went out, as opposed to 40 per cent of local men). Represented most strongly by what have come to be known as 'ladies-only' nights out, there has been a move away from traditional 'best friendships' patterns (Griffin, 1985) and the desire to find a potential husband on an evening out among young women, to increased group loyalty and sisterhood. For instance, consider the quote from a young woman (Jan, 31 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) interviewed by Hollands (1995:87):

> It's a shame really 'cos we used to have such good nights out when we used to all go out in a foursome with two other girl friends. That was great, such good fun. Because we just laughed all the time, we weren't interested in men, because, like, I was married, me friend was married, me other friend was married, and the last one, she was quite a plain girl who was quite fat, and she wasn't, she used to pretend not to be interested in men, because she

> couldn't get them, basically, you know. So we went out, we weren't interested in men, we weren't relying on men for conversation.

While the effect of this growing female solidarity on young men is often threatening, with some anecdotal evidence of young women being assaulted for their lack of interest (de Vries, 2001), it is also indicative of a deepening of female friendships (Griffin, 2000).

It has also been suggested that young women have helped fuel a more general shift towards androgyny and equality on the dance floor, particularly in what has conventionally come to be called 'rave' or dance culture (Malbon, 1999). Henderson's (1997) research shows the attraction many young women felt towards the intense social interaction here, heightened by the music and, of course, drugs (particularly Ecstasy). Pini's (1997) work also supports the idea that rave culture worked to 'unlock' the heterosexual coupling associated with the dance floor, with its emphasis on the relationship between the individual dancer, the music and the collective group. Many young women spoke to Henderson about the 'erotic' nature of the dance experience and the move away from outdated notions of the club as a place to meet men. As one interviewee said: 'We do fancy blokes at raves and enjoy flirting with them…but it's like going back to when you were younger, you don't want to get them into bed, you're just friendly' (Henderson, 1997:71). Similarly, Pini (1997:122) quotes one young women who states: 'I never really focus on men when I'm dancing. In fact, I like looking at women much more,' with another saying: 'I think my feelings—if they're sexual—apply to everyone, women and men alike. I do like looking at other women dance, and sometimes this gets very strong, almost like an attraction.'

The most sustained political challenge, however, has come from young females occupying alternative nightlife spaces. The emergence of the 'riot grrl' phenomenon in the USA in early 1990s, and its subsequent development in the UK, is a good example of how young women, through the formation of their own music youth cultures, have challenged the status quo of male commercial nightlife (Gottlieb and Wald, 1994; Kearney, 1998). Coming out of the post-punk movement, the riot grrl philosophy was both anti-capitalist and anti-patriarchal. Described as a 'self-styled subgenus of 14–25–year-old feminists' (Van Poznak, 1993), and 'girl-punk revolutionaries' (Matthewman, 1993), riots grrls were involved in creating music through bands such as Huggy Bear (UK), Bikini Kill, Bratmobile, Babes in Toyland (USA) and communicating through zines, impromptu meetings and the internet. Bikini Kill, a riot grrl band of the early 1990s, had a manifesto which suggested 'envi sioning and creating alternatives to the bullshit Christian capitalist way of doing things' (quoted in Gottlieb and Wald, 1994:262).

Diluted by both their popularity and extensive media defamation, the riot grrl phenomenon appeared to fade as quickly as it arose. However, it might be suggested that it has left a lasting legacy of 'invisible' change among at least a section of young women. Blackman's (1998) UK ethnography of a resistant female

youth culture, which he called 'new wave girls', is an example of the effect of such a cultural shift. His study reveals a group of confident young women challenging conventional femininity through clothing styles, non-conformist attitudes (towards both boys and school) and heightened female solidarity. Similarly, the Hell Raising Anarchist Girlies (HAGS), a Brighton based collective of anarcha-feminists, were established in 2000 and have been organising pro-women events, publications, squats and conferences.

While Blackman's (1998) study is set largely within the school, it also looks at how these young women challenged the male status quo through their use of public spaces such as the street, parks, cafés and pubs. With respect to the latter space, and in contrast to assertions made by Lees (1993) in her early research about conventional girls seeing the pub as a largely negative male environment, Blackman (1998:216) asserts that the 'new wave girls' identified the pub as a positive place, and they often went together as a group, unaccompanied by their boyfriends. Similarly, as Chapter 9 discusses, alternative nightlife spaces reveal more equal roles for young women, including involvement in organising, promoting and running such venues. Ironically, such young women often face double discrimination when they step outside alternative nightlife provision, as they are often challenging both traditional images of women and expectant male behaviours within mainstream nightlife.

All this should not imply somehow that either new wave girls are typical, mainstream nightlife has been fundamentally challenged, or that 'rave influenced' nightlife spaces have become a post-feminist panacea. Indeed, Henderson (1997) warns that the commercialisation of dance culture back into the mainstream has signalled the return of both alcohol and increased sexism. It is also crucial to recognise that while young women have become more important consumers of urban nightlife, they have made far fewer inroads into its actual production. In fact, beyond their historical role as 'landladies' (Hunt and Satterlee, 1987) and bar staff, our interviews revealed few young women as brand and regional managers for breweries or pub companies, bar managers, promoters, DJs or musicians. The entire music industry is still very male dominated, even though some research suggests that it is changing slowly (Raphael, 1995; Whiteley, 1997). While young women DJs are growing in number, they are still a minority on the club circuit, especially among A-list DJs (exceptions include Mrs Woods (React), and Rachael Auburn (Truelove) and Kemistry and Storm (Metalheadz)). In a telling quote, Rachael Auburn, hints at one of the dilemmas of being a female DJ: 'Obviously, you have to deliver the goods, but I do feel that you're not taken quite seriously being a lass. I still kind of get the vibe that you're basically there for attraction value to a degree' (P and Swales, 1997:10).

Additionally, despite an increased presence of young women in cities, gender inequalities in the occupation of public space continue (Laurie *et al.,* 1999; McKenzie, 1989). As Lees (1993:69) suggests, 'girls' appearance on the street is always constrained by their subordination', and this is learned early on in life. Seabrook and Green's (2000) work shows that young girls' fear of public spaces

is closely linked with the behaviour of men, and Griffin (1985:65–9) provides ethnographic evidence that young women limit their leisure activities and access to space for similar reasons. Fear of attack and harassment is particularly acute at night. A Canadian survey conducted in Ottawa—Carleton showed that females were six times as likely as men to feel unsafe in their neighbourhood after dark and over 80 per cent limited their activities in some way because of this fear (i.e. didn't go out alone, didn't stay out late, avoided certain places). Additionally, over one third had suffered some form of verbal harassment at night over the previous five years (Andrews *et al.,* 1994). And finally, Hollands' (1995:65) work in Newcastle upon Tyne, England, revealed that young women were more aware of dangerous areas in the city, and 60 per cent were either physically or verbally harassed on a night out in the city.

As Skeggs (1999) argues, 'respectability' is a crucial component for how women come to occupy public space. The idea that 'nice girls don't go there' is revealed in the following conversation about going out to the city centre at night from Hollands (1990:133):

Julie: Depends on what part you go to…
Interviewer: Would you go on your own?
Julie: But I wouldn't go on me own. A girl, it's not, it's funny if a girl goes on her own. It's not a thing to do really—not at night.

Others sought protection in large female groups or gangs, and worked hard not to get separated on a night out. However, these safety mechanisms are at least partly compromised by women being more dependent on public transport to get home.

Aside from 'self-policing' and being in a large protective group, a number of young women were consciously choosing nightlife spaces that they perceived were more 'women friendly' or at least safer. Sometimes this involved going to a gay club, or at least a female-friendly bar. Here, two women managers of a Leeds club, who put on gay-friendly nights, talk about the importance of providing such an atmosphere:

Bar manager 5: When so many women come to the club it is because they know that they're not going to get hassled.
Bar manager 6: Because we've always promoted it to be a safe place.
Bar manager 5: As a member you have the right to remove anyone who you feel is detracting from the club, if someone is aggressive to me as a member or a straight guy gets a bit drunk there and he won't take no for an answer. It's not that he's trying his luck 'cos everyone does that, it's that he's bothering me and he'd be out like that. We are, that is another female-orientated thing, we are quite protective about girls getting harassed in there. We don't like it at all and if we see it, they get a warning and if they're physical with it, I've twisted arms behind backs myself and taken them towards a bouncer if I've seen them getting out of control.

Despite evidence that some young women have pushed the boundaries of gendered nightscapes, many are increasingly taking on behaviours characteristic of young men in this sphere. As Wilkinson (1994a: 7) argues, 'Women's increasing outer-directedness is leading them to display what we used to see as male characteristics.' In these cases, rather than challenging male domination of mainstream nightlife spaces by creating alternative female cultures, young women appear to be simply competing on men's terms through a crude 'equality' paradigm (i.e. proving they can be as 'bad' as young men).

One example of this is young women's changing views about sex and traditional courtship on nights out. Wilkinson (1994a: 20) notes that only one quarter of young women believe that they need a stable relationship in order to be fulfilled, and UK statistics show that this generation are far more interested in sex than ever before, with 10 per cent of 25–34 year olds having ten or more partners, compared to only 4 per cent of their mothers' generation (Johnson *et al.,* 1994). Similarly, in the USA the National Health and Social Life Survey (1994) showed that young women aged 20–30 were six times more likely to have had multiple sexual partners by the time they turned 18 than their predecessors born thirty years earlier (Fillon, 1996:39). While one might interpret such findings as evidence of a new-found sexual confidence, *Sex and the City* style, other commentators have referred to aspects of this phenomenon on a night out as a female 'sexual safari' (Campbell, 1996), with young women adapting a similar 'predatory' sexual attitude to men. Although a minority pattern, there was some evidence of this approach found within our research, as the following quote testifies: 'One time we had a competition to see how many men we could pull in one night, and we were all fierce to get out there. Honestly, we were like man-eaters' (Yvonne, 26 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne). The downside of this so-called 'sexuality equality' is that often young women in general can be differentially stereotyped as 'slags' (Hollands, 2000), and hence seen as being 'sexually available' to men. Much of this boisterous sexual behaviour is symbolic, which ironically occurs during the infamous 'hen night' (the celebration of a young woman's impending marriage). Chatterton and Hollands (2001:76) also found evidence that beneath the sexual bravado lurked more traditional beliefs about romance and meeting the 'right man.'

Similar arguments hold for young women's increase in alcohol consumption and use of illicit drugs.The Institute of Alcohol Studies (2002:4) cites factors such as more women working and more female professionals, pubs and bars becoming more women-friendly and drinks targeted at women, as the main reasons behind increased alcohol consumption. Table 7.1 highlights that young women aged 16–24 years old are the heaviest drinkers, and this has particularly increased over the 1990s. One third now exceed the weekly limit and nearly 10 per cent drink over 35 units (Institute of Alcohol Studies, 2002) with this rise fuelled largely by young professional women *(ibid.)*. A survey in the USA also revealed that 7 per cent of 12–17-year-old girls reported binge drinking even at this early age (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 1999). Additionally, surveys across Europe and Australia show increases in illicit drug use among young

Table 7.1 Weekly alcohol consumption for women 1992–2000, UK

	1992		*2000*	
	16–24 yrs	*All*	*16–24 yrs*	*All*
Weekly alcohol consumption (no. of drinks)	7.3	5.4	12.6	7.1
Percentage drinking more than fourteen units[a]	17	11	33	17
Percentage drinking more than thirty-five units	4	2	9	3

*Source: Institute of Alcohol Studie*s (2002) Women and Alcohol Fact Sheet.

Note: [a]14 units per week is the recommended limit

women over the last decade (IAS, 2002; Parker *et al.,* 1998; Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 1999).

Finally, there have been general studies of young women's increasing involvement in crimes of violence in numerous western countries (McGovern, 1995; Chaudhuri, 1994; Morse, 1995; Siddeall, 1993). Perpetrating and/or being a victim of a crime of violence is, of course, strongly linked to alcohol, and hence being present in nightlife spaces. Hollands' (1995:63) research in Newcastle upon Tyne surprisingly found the percentage of young women reporting that they had ever been involved in a violent incident was actually higher than for men.

Yet two of the biggest threats to a progressive equalisation of nightlife provision for women are ironically tied to some of the gains they have made over the years. First, the emergence of more 'feminised' nightlife spaces directed at attracting young women (Difford, 2000a) has gone hand in hand with a creeping corporate gentrification of bars, pubs, cafés and clubs (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). Bob Cartwright, Communications Director of Bass Leisure Group which runs the All Bar One chain, said: 'We created bars with big open windows, large wine displays and extensive menus, and we put newspapers by the bar for women to read while they are waiting for their friends' (quoted in Chaudhuri, 2001:53). In essence, such moves to cater for more women customers have subtly been about extending provision to only certain types of female consumers—professional middle-class women with higher disposable incomes. Up-market bars and expensive clubs both attract a certain type of young female while disqualifying others because of dress codes, style policies or expense (see Plate 7.1). Poorer working-class women and those with children can be excluded here (MacDonald and Marsh, 2002), and those who do attempt to consume the gentrified and feminised mainstream are often labelled with derision as 'fat slags' and 'scratters' (see Chapter 8). Additionally, there appears to be little evidence to suggest that women in gentrified mainstream nightlife spaces are any less harassed or exposed to various forms of sexism (Hollands, 1995; Chatterton and Hollands, 2001).

The other main nightlife development of concern, which is linked to the gentrification of nightlife, is the recent rise of corporately owned table—or lap-dancing clubs (see Box 7.1). Curiously, one of the arguments in favour of such spaces is that with supposed 'gender equality' in the nightlife sphere, such places are no longer an affront to women. In fact, some venues suggest that women are among their clientele, while others point to female attendance at male strip events

Plate 7.1 A group of young women enjoying the newly gentrified waterfront nightlife; Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2002

Source North News & Pictures

such as the Chippendales to argue the case that equality of provision is a reality. However, it is the corporate infiltration into this sphere of nightlife entertainment which provides justification for arguments about the 'respectability' of premises and their increasingly gentrified clients. As a spokesperson for Surrey Free Inns Group, owners of For Your Eyes Only, table dancing club argues: 'We are a highly reputable business, appealing to the corporate market' (*Herald and Post,* 14 November 2001:14).

BOX 7.1:
LAP-DANCING GOES UP-MARKET: SPEARMINT RHINO

One of the world's largest lap-dancing chains, with thirty-one clubs in the USA, six in the UK (with ambitious plans to expand to twenty or more) and even one in Moscow, Spearmint Rhino has 3,500 employees and a tornover of $60 million (Doward, 2001). Its Las Vegas branch is reputed to have made more than $1 million in a single month (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001), with its Tottenham Court Road branch (see Plate 7.2) turning over more than £300,000 per week before Christmas (Morris, 2002). John Gray, the 44–year-old owner of the company, is estimated to have built up a fortune of £38 million, and is now concentrating the

company's expansion plans in the UK (Morris, 2002). The company describes lap-dancing as 'theatrical entertainment' (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001) and in the USA bills itself as the 'largest, most elegant gentlemen's club in the world' (Morris, 2002). The company points towards its up-market décor and five-star food menus as an indication of its quality and respectability:

In defence of his business, Gray claims dancers earn between £5,000 and £25, 000 monthly, have private health insurance, there is a 'no-touching rule' on stage and the company prohibits any extra-curricular activity with clients (Ellis, 2001). However, earnings figures have been hotly disputed, with some dancers saying that their takings can fluctuate between £50 and £400 a night (Morris, 2002), and the no-touching rule does not appear to apply to sessions offered to individual clients in private booths *(ibid.)*. Allegations that some dancers were soliciting in and around the club (Brigett, 2001) were dismissed by the company, who claimed that on at least one occasion the woman in question was a 'plant' (Ellis, 2001). More seriously Adelle Hamilton, am 18-year-old dancer with the Slough, branch, was found murdered at home, after last being seen getting into a car outside the club (Dometriou, 2001).

Spearmint Rhino has faced numerous protests and forms of opposition. Community groups in Camden failed to prevent the opening of the Tettenham Court Road branch, despite concerns about safety, traffic congestion, noise and rowdy behaviour (Salman, 2000). same branch was under investigation by Camden police with respect: to allegations of prostitution nine months after opening, but despite this had its licence renewed for another six months (Brigett, 2001) The opening of the club's latest branch in the prosperous conference destination and market market town of Harrogate In the Yorkshire Dales has also created some cause for concern among residents and councillors (Morris, 2002).

Half a decade ago there were very few lap-dancing clubs in the UK and those that existed were small-scale and seedy venues. The UK industry is said to be worth £300 million, and there are more than 300 venues, set to increase to 1,000 over next five years (Doward, 2001). The sector is still in its infancy here compared to the USA, where the sector is worth $5 billion, with 700 table-dancing venues in Manhattan alone (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001). Prominent companies like Coca-Cola, NatWest and Merrill Lynch have allegedly had lapdancing venues host their Christmas parties in London, and numerous celebrities have tacitly lent their support through their attendance at such nightlife spaces (Ellis, 2001; Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001). Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club in Birmingham was recently turned into the city's ninth lap-dancing establishment (Morris, 2002:13) in a belief that it would be more profitable. City leaders have become worried that this proliferation of lap-dancing venues, especially in the Broad Street and New Street areas, is giving Birmingham a sleazy image which could damage its bid for European Capital of Culture in 2008, and is planning new legislation to restrict their growth (Guthrie, 2002:14). Piers Adams, owner of the London nightclub Rock, has also admitted to applying for a licence (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001).

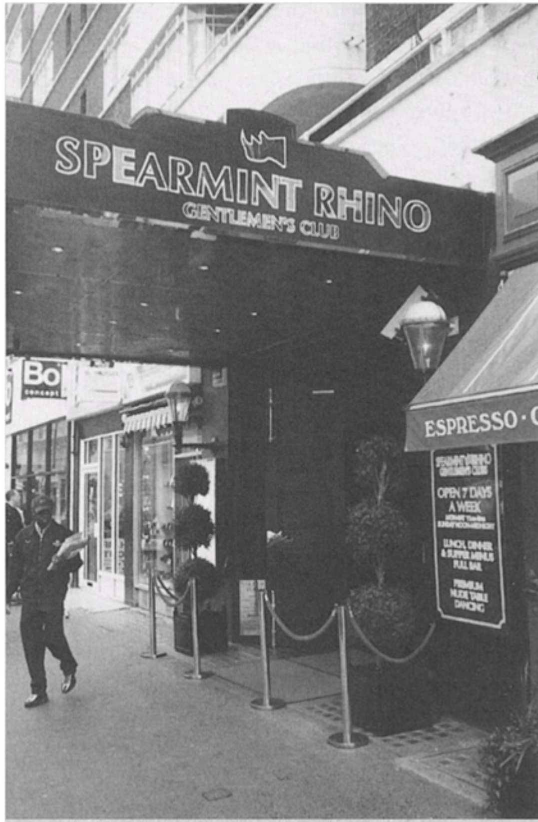

Plate 7.2
Spearmint Rhino Gentlemen's Club, Tottenham Court Road, London, UK, 2002

In short, the growth of lap-dancing venues points to the normalisation of the sex industry within urban nightlife on the basis that it is a stylish, up-market and respectable form of entertainment, which can enhance the urban economy and benefit young women by providing employment. Table-dancing is portrayed as 'theatrical entertainment', while other operators euphemistically refer to it as an 'art form' and 'the glamour industry' (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001). Profitability is ensured by corporate expense accounts and a core audience is drawn from the business community during the week and stag parties at the weekend (Doward, 2001). Trade appears to be flourishing, and many existing operators are expanding and others are switching to this area due to higher rates of return. Dancers usually pay the company a be to dance (around £50–90 a night), and in some of the best establishments are reputed to earn in the region of £500 in an evening, although such figures are hard to substantiate. Some premises have booths at the back for 'private dances', which is where most dancers earn the bulk

of their money. Although companies are keen to stress they are providing dance entertainment only, there have been stories and incidences which reveal that sexual transactions do take place both on and off the premises (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001).

While some city councils have been reticent about the issueing of licences to lap-dancing clubs and have sought to ensure that adequate regulations are put in place, in the main their hands are tied. For example, a loophole in the law allows any establishment with a public entertainment licence to convert into a lapdancing club, as long as it complies with the conditions of its original licence (Morris, 2002:12–13). Some councils, like Hammersmith and Fulham, have sought to mandate regulations like the 'three-foot exclusion zone' (between patrons and dancers), as well as banning total nudity at tables (i.e. dancers must wear G-strings) (*Evening Standard,* 3 November 1998:6), while Nottingham County Council has a clause in its entertainment licence that prohibits stripping and table-dancing nudity altogether (*Evening Standard,* 16 March 2001:8).

Protests were sparked in Newcastle upon Tyne over the opening of the city's first lap-dancing club (Olden, 2001). A liquor and public entertainment licence was granted to For Your Eyes Only (FYEO), a corporate lap-dancing club owned by the Surrey Free Inns (SFI) group, in the city in 2001. SFI also own well-known bar brands like the Slug and Lettuce, Bar Med and Litten Tree chains, and currently has five FYEOs around the UK. It is reputed that its London Royal Park branch makes £1 million annually (Olden, 2001). Earlier in 2001, the proposed site of the lap-dancing club was occupied to raise awareness of issues including the safety of women in the city and the lack of affordable nightlife. The protesting group put on various alternative music events, a women's day and a café to demonstrate what the building could constructively be used for. Despite opposition, the magistrates, backed by the city council, granted a licence for the club.

On the club's VIP opening night, a protest march of 200 people was organised, drawn from student unions, a rape crisis centre and other community, women's and local groups. The march culminated at the club and various members of the group took photos of men going in and out of the club, which were then posted on a 'name and shame' website on the internet. The main arguments of the protestors focused upon issues of sexism and the exploitation of dancers (including issues around prostitution), but also around the impact such venues have on how young women in the vicinity are likely to be viewed and treated. Protesters argued that the venue sent out the wrong message about young women in the city, as well as drawing attention to the dancers. As one spokesperson said:

> There's a young women's project 300 metres away and this is going to bring loads of sleazy blokes into the area. We're also concerned about the women who'll work here. They'll have to pay £50 a night to work, then charge £10 a dance.
>
> (Olden, 2001)

BOX 7.2
: HOOTERS: 'DELIGHTFULLY TACKY, YET UNREFINED' (THE COMPANY MOTTO)

Possessing a 'casual beach theme', this North American bar-restaurant is known specifically for its scantily clad Hooters Girls. Popul lar lar university students, sports fans and—in downtown areas at least—businessmen, it is it is primarily a male-group-dominated environment, although if in claimed that around 25 per cent of their customers are women, Describing them as 'all-American cheerleaders', the company believes the Hooters Girl is 'as socially acceptable as a Dallas Cowboy cheerleader, *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit model, or Radio City Rockette'. The company employs approximately 12,000 Hooters Girls, who also make promotional and charitable appearances in their respective communities as part of their job. Hooters also insist that women occupy management positions all the way from Assistant Manager to Vice President of Training and Human Resources, and they claim that they have a longstanding non-sexual-harassment policy For waitresses which works.

Critics argue that the whole 'Hooters Girl' etbos is inherently sexist and exploitative to women in general. For example, women and community groups protested against the conversion of a pizza restaurant near Penn State University into a Hooters, and in Ahwatukee Falls, USA,. local residents opposed the siting of one of their premises near two schools, arguing that the restaurant was not compatible with the 'family-oriented neighbourhood'. While the chain acknowledges that many consider 'Hooters' a slang term for a part of the female anatomy, 'they argue that their logo also contains an owl (whose eyes fill in the two Os in the company name), thereby creating ambiguity over its meaning. Curiously, the company's only brush with equal opportunities legislation came from a somewhat unexpected direction, when they were accused of carrying out hiring practices that discriminated against men (the case is now in abeyance). They also point out that they are good corporate citizens through their involvement In raising money for local charities via their Hooter Community Endowment Fund.[1]

To sum up, there are changes afoot in gender relations within the nightlife industry. Some of these transformations are positive, especially an increase in young women's participation as consumers of nightlife, enhanced through the growth of female-friendly venues and the decline of male-dominated ale-houses and saloons over the past few decades. Such changes have sought to challenge existing gendered relations and barriers. However, in spite of a gradual feminisation of nightlife in terms of style and provision, some of these gains have been made in 'male' terms. For example, many young women have problematically adopted heavy drinking and involvement in violence, and little has been done to maintain access for less well-off sections of the female population, especially those more home-bound through child-rearing (see Chapter 8). The increasingly corporate nightlife city, then, is far from developing spaces which promote sexual equality and question established gender roles.

Gay cultures and nightlife

Gay and queer cultures have increasingly played an important role in the development of nightlife. While most 'world cities' like London and New York (Buckland, 2002; Chauncey, 1994) have a long history of gay activity, others like San Francisco in the USA (Castells, 1982) and Manchester in the UK (Hetherington, 1996; Walker, 1993; Whittle, 1994), have become internationally renowned for their gay politics and cultural provision. Guidebooks to many European and North American tourist destinations invariably contain a section on gay services and spaces, particularly gay nightlife, as a marker of cosmopolitanism, diversity and tolerance. (See Plate 7.3.)

The development of nightlife for gay men and lesbians not only has important consequences for the creation of gay identity and pride, but also has a major impact on heterosexual cultures of 'going out'. For example, youth dance cultures throughout the 1980s and 1990s have been influenced by gay fashion styles and musical anthems, not to mention taking up aspects such as androgyny, pleasure-seeking and questioning the dominance of 'compulsory heterosexuality' (Henderson, 1997) or 'heteronormativity' (Buckland, 2002).

At the same time, gay cultures have been beset by a range of problems, contradictions and internal/external pressures. Labels such as that the gay community are rather clumsy, and terms such as 'gay', 'lesbian', 'homosexual' and 'queer' are ambiguous descriptive categories invoking a multitude of political, social and cultural affiliations. The acceptance of homosexuality and its cultural expressions has been a rather uneven story. The rise of AIDS-related 'moral panics' of the 1980s in both the USA and the UK, and the aggressive re-zoning and regulation of 'adult establishments' (including gay nightlife premises) by the Giuliani administration in New York in the mid 1990s (Buckland, 2002) has tempered the growing acceptance of gay cultures within nightlife. The ongoing problem of gay-bashing and harassment is also reflected in figures suggesting that 33 per cent of men and 25 per cent of women in the UK had experienced violent attacks because of their sexuality (Mason and Palmer, 1996). In addition, nightlife spaces for gay men and lesbians continue to be marginalised or ghettoised in many cities, and even where such enclaves have been deemed 'successful', there have been problems of the usurpation of such spaces by heterosexuals and a general trend of upgrading and sanitisation (Chasin, 2001). Finally, gay nightlife spaces continue to be dominated by gay men at the expense of the lesbian population (Valentine, 1993), and influenced by changing notions of masculinity (Nardi, 2000) and gender politics (Edwards, 1994).

There is now a significant body of gay, queer and feminist studies, which helps to locate the issue of sexuality and sexual identity within wider economic and social contexts (Richardson, 2001; Plummer, 1994; de Laurentis, 1991;Weeks, 1989). Similarly, there is a developing body of work which has begun to map out a more spatial dimension to the question of gay identity and look at the ways 'in which space, place and sexuality are implicated in the constitution of each other

Plate 7.3 Sitges is a popular holiday destination for gay men from all over Europe; Parrot's Pub, Plaça de l'Industria, Sitges, Spain, during the February Carnival, 2002

and society as a whole' (Knopp, 1992:651). Finally, there is a range of more specific studies looking at the role nightlife in particular plays in the development of gay identities, and the impact that gay cultures and spaces have on the night-time economy (Buckland, 2002; Whittle, 1994; Hollands, 1995; Chatterton and Hollands, 2001; Taylor, 2001).

It is clear that gay cultures cannot be understood outside general social theories concerned with gender, capitalism and power (Knopp, 1992; Edwards, 1994). For example, with regard to patriarchal capitalism, heterosexuality helps to maintain existing gender divisions and male domination, not to mention reproducing traditional notions of the nuclear family which aid capital accumulation. The historical separation of men's public (work, politics, the street) and women's private spaces (home and the community) in the industrial city provided a spatial dimension which buttressed the existing patriarchal order (McKenzie, 1989), allowing little room for ambiguity and, indeed, 'otherness' to arise (Knopp, 1992). As Buckland (2002:3) states, denied access to many state, church, media and private institutions, many 'people who identify as queer are made worldless, forced to create maps and spaces for themselves'.

However, economic restructuring, the rise of social movements and the search for identity through consumption in the contemporary period have all meant a gradual loosening of traditional sexual categories, allowing a range of gay

identities to emerge and flourish. This process has been far from even. As Edwards (1994:108) argues: 'The paradox of the 1970s was that gay and lesbian liberation did not produce the gender-free communitarian world it envisioned, but faced an unprecedented growth of gay capitalism and a new masculinity.' Adams (1987) also links the commodification of gay lifestyles with an increased masculinisation of gay men's culture. A crucial divide, then, concerns the dominance gay men have enjoyed economically, politically, culturally and spatially over gay women, for instance (Peake, 1993; Edwards, 1994). It has been suggested that lesbians historically have tended to operate more around interpersonal networks, rather than through occupying particular territories or premises in cities (Valentine, 1993), replicating women's general position of urban subordination (although see Podmore, 2001).

Despite these differences, one of the key shifts has been not only the emergence of a more public gay identity, but a transformation in the types of spaces occupied. This has not been a completely linear progression, with, for example, interventions like the re-zoning and policing of many gay spaces in the city of New York in the mid 1990s (Buckland, 2002), nor has it been achieved equally (i.e. between gay men and lesbians). Edwards (1994), however, notes a historic move from informal, non-institutional and functional gay spaces (parks, public conveniences, cruising in cars), to more formal and institutional contexts such as gay bars, nightclubs and bath-houses/saunas, while Buckland (2002:7) talks about 'third' spaces of recreation opening up for gay consumers (work and home being the first and second spaces).

The importance of nightlife spaces for expressing alternative sexual identities, then, should not be underestimated. For example, the Stonewall Riots in the USA, often held up as a crucial turning point in the fight for gay rights and identity, were triggered by a police raid on the Stonewall bar in the West Village, New York City. Buckland (2002) argues that club culture in the USA has been an important arena for the construction of what she calls the 'queer life-world'. A crucial piece of legislation in England was the 1967 Sexual Offences Act, which first made it possible to open a bar catering to gay men or lesbians without creating an offence (Whittle, 1994:32). In the UK context, Hindle (1994:11) argues, pubs and clubs 'are probably the most important single feature of a gay community'. While one might contest the adequacy of the term 'community' here, and recognise that such spaces may not be equally important to all gay men and lesbians, it is clear that bars and clubs remain an important space for such groups, particularly in relation to sexual activity (Mutchler, 2000). Of course, such contexts and localities vary tremendously (Altman, 1997), ranging from a single gay venue in some small towns to gay tourist destinations (see Box 7.3) and entire gay villages and enclaves in major cities, encompassing not just bars and clubs but a whole range of employment opportunities and services. Research in the USA and the UK suggests that a minimum population of 50,000 is needed to support one gay bar (Hindle, 1994).

BOX 7.3
: SITGES: GAY NIGHTLIFE TOURISM BY THE SEA

Sitges is one of Europe's top gay tourist destinations. Located about 35 km from Barcelona, Sitges has a longstanding gay appeal, being renowned as a bohemian hang-out and artists' colony since 1900, Christened 'the gayest place on earth' by the Spanish, it has become a very popular gay tourist destination for Europeans and a summer hang-out for the gay population of Barcelona. Gay men come to this area in great numbers, especially since the mid 1990s when an increasing number of gay businesses were established. Calle San Buenaventura is the main gay area of the town, with the renowned Calle del Pecado (Street of Sin) packed with bars. During the February Carnival, 300,000 people flock to the town to see a series of parades and floats packed with an abundance of glamorous drag queens. Various tourist websites note the town's distinct lack of a visible lesbian scene, citing the domination of masculine Mediterranean culture as the reason. The lesbian scene is less tied to the bar scene and, while gay men are more than catered for, there are no visible female-only bars.

While much stigmatisation and prejudice continues to exist (see Buckland, 2002), it has been suggested that cultures and communities for gay men and lesbians have increasingly become more accepted and seen as an important part of urban cosmopolitanism (Aitkenhead and Sheffield, 2001; Simpson, 1999; Hetherington, 1996). The specific role nightlife premises have had on this transformation is crucial. As one young gay man (Steve, 25 years old, Leeds) told us about his city:

> I just think society's attitudes are changing. It's a sign of the times, I think, because gay pubs and gay clubs have become so much more established now and so much more open. I think gay people have been accepted into the community a lot easier now.

In contrast stands a description of the same city ten years ago, by Jim (28 years old, Leeds), a transvestite and a regular on the gay scene:

> But there used to be a point when you wouldn't come out on a Saturday night because there were gangs going round with baseball bats, chains, and they'd literally just pick a violent fight with anybody and now you can go out safely on a Friday, Saturday, Sunday night, any night you want. It's completely different.

Despite changes, this should not imply that homosexuality and gay spaces have been accepted by all sections of society, or even by the young, or that incidents of violence against the gay community do not continue to occur. In fact, one of the crucial issues concerning gay nightlife premises and/or enclaves in the UK, at least, concerns their marginal location (Hollands, 1995). Similarly, while many areas for gay men and lesbians in North America have been gentrified, most originally sprang up in marginalised, run-down areas of the inner city (Bouthillette, 1994:65). As Hindle (1994:12) states, they are 'often in what otherwise might be down-at-heels inner-city areas' and, once established, 'inertia has ensured that gay venues stay there'.

City councils have often exploited the potential contained within these marginal areas and have promoted the idea of gay villages. The Old Market in Bristol is one such area which became the focus for the city council's aspirations to create a gay village for the city in 2000, while also finding a way to breathe new life into an area desperate for regeneration after years of neglect. The area had become populated with several sex shops and lap-dancing clubs and is home to the city's largest gay nightclub. However, some gay men felt uncomfortable about being designated out of the city centre into the seedy margins. As one commented:

> It's a rough area of town. And although the venues are so close together it's on a major road…, so anyone who is openly gay, openly effeminate, anyone dressed in drag, is open to abuse, or to violence or to threats, intimidation. So to try and make that into a gay area is just ridiculous. There's a lot of drug problems in Old Market. Lot of heroin users in that area. So it's not really a safe part of town.
>
> (Craig, 21 years old, Bristol)

While the city council has been actively supporting businesses among the gay community moving into the area, there needs to be an awareness that the emergence of a gay village is a complex, slow and organic process. City council intervention can often have the opposite effect. Marketing can raise hope values and property values, and thus squeeze out established entrepreneurs who could develop the scene more organically. A similar process has occurred in Newcastle upon Tyne, where the city council became vocal about its wishes to see a gay scene thrive, in part to compete with cities such as Manchester and Leeds as a gay consumption destination. However, as one gay venue owner commented:

> The unfortunate thing is that Newcastle City Council decided to make their mouths go about the fact that we want our own little gay village; they had watched *Queer as folk* (a TV programme) because they had been on a bus trip to Manchester. Basically it has been one of the worst thing that could have ever happened because everybody who has got property now does not want to sell it. What might have cost you £40,000 last year will now cost

> you £1 million. Nobody will sell anything round here now, which is crippling the development of the gay scene.
>
> (Bar owner 6, Newcastle upon Tyne)

The location of gay nightlife in run-down areas of cities continues to have a range of implications, ranging from gay spaces being seen as 'seedy' through to higher incidences of violence, theft, and the impact of poverty and drug abuse. Designating areas as gay villages can also lead to them becoming a focus of violence, as reports of gangs of young heterosexual men targeting the gay community in Manchester in the late 1990s attest (Prestage, 1997). As such, a crime and disorder audit in the city in 1998 showed that the Central ward (including the gay village) was a 'crime hotspot' with the city's highest levels of reported assault.

This should not imply, for example, that gay spaces and enclaves are less safe than heterosexual spaces. In fact, in a study of the so-called 'Pink Triangle', the main gay area in Newcastle upon Tyne, Taylor (2001:23) found that an overwhelming 83 per cent of his sample identified 'safety from the threat of homophobia' as an important characteristic of the area. Generally, gay men and lesbians felt much more confident expressing same-sex desires (i.e. kissing, holding hands) in this space than they did in straight areas of the city's nightlife (Taylor, 2001). Outside gay premises and enclaves, homosexuals, and even those individuals perceived to be gay, often cannot express their sexual identity differently for fear of ostracism and potential violence (Mason and Palmer, 1996).

While Newcastle is something of an anomaly because of its peripheral location and masculinist history (Lewis, 1994), a group of transvestites from a more cosmopolitan English city, Leeds, also mentioned their reluctance to walk though mainstream/straight areas in the city on a night out:

Sarah: …not many people will walk here though. They prefer to get a taxi and pay two or three quid.
Giles: Yes, the first time we came to Speed Queen [a night club] we came out and had to walk for a taxi all the way round.
Jim: My God. Yes.
Derek: And the comments were like, oh, flying.
Jim: You get wolf whistles. They come up and you get wolf whistles.
Derek: They're usually derogatory wolf whistles.
Giles: I mean, now we just ignore them.
Jim: We did have some and you've ignored them, but I look more like a woman when I'm dressed up than some of the women.

(Focus group 4, Leeds)

Moreover, the often-cited case of a 33-year-old man in Canada, Alain Brosseau, who was dropped to his death from Alexandria Bridge in Ottawa by a group of youths who 'perceived' him to be gay, demonstrates the frequently ingrained

nature of intolerance to sexual differences. This led to the formation of a Bias Crime Unit in the city's police force in 1993, the first unit in Canada formed exclusively to combat prejudice-motivated crimes (Lynch, 1996). Bailey's (1999: 262) work on the city of Philadelphia also noted the formation of a police—gay community relations committee in the 1980s, to discuss issues surrounding gay—police relations. However, Messerschmidt (1993:182–3) suggests that police agencies actively move to regulate 'normative' sexual behaviour, through the criminalisation of gay activity in premises like steam-baths. He also cites research which shows that approximately 10 per cent of reported anti-gay violence involves physical assault from police officers (p. 183).

Yet the largest, and perhaps most invisible and contradictory, 'threats' to gay space and nightlife come from without and involve the usurpation of gay premises by young straights and the emergence of 'gay-friendly' premises. With regard to the first phenomenon, even by the early 1990s, five of the twenty-three premises in Manchester's gay village were described as 'mixed' (Hindle, 1994:12), and this number has since increased (Aitkenhead, 2001). By the late 1990s, the gay-led Mardi Gras festival (Prestage, 1997) in Manchester was seen as becoming too straight as the heterosexual population rushed to join in the fun. More recent reports suggest a virtual take-over of premises in Canal Street, the city's main gay area, by gay sons' mums and relatives, not to mention straight females (Aitkenhead, 2001), following the airing of the popular English ITV hit *Bob and Rose* (where a gay man falls for a straight woman). Young single female interest in the gay village bars is apparently motivated by their view of them as stylish and safe premises, not to mention being full of good-looking (gay) men.

The issue of 'gay only' space appears to be particularly important to the lesbian population. Taylor's (2001:30) survey revealed that lesbians ranked safety from the threat of homophobia as more important to them than gay men. Valentine (1993) argues that lesbians suffer double discrimination, first for being gay and second for being female. As such, there was some suggestion in our research that lesbians were more protective of gay space, as the following quote implies:

> Well, it is, we were shocked, honestly. We went round, we had been out all night and we went round on a Sunday [to a gay venue] just to get really pissed and have a good laugh and there was lesbians shouting abuse at some of our straight friends who were with us. 'You're straight so get out—what are you doing here?' And I think that is just as bad really, it is just, really it is.
>
> (Dave, 28 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne)

One of the paradoxes here is that as gay premises upgrade, they also open themselves up to straight women and men. A manager of a gay premises in Leeds mentions how a 'successful' conversion using trendy décor influenced the mix of clientele:

> Back then, the scene that came in were predominantly male, with a small selection of gay women coming in. Since we've had the re-fit we get such a wide range of people in here, we got a lot of students and a lot of straight people coming now.
>
> (Bar manager 4, Leeds)

While there are clearly potential progressive elements in this latter example, notably the inclusion of lesbian women, the mainstreaming of venues has some serious implications about the usurpation of gay space by the heterosexual population.

Another threat that also comes from without paradoxically derives from what are conventionally called 'gay-friendly' bars and clubs. One bar owner interviewed described the philosophy behind such places rather naively as: 'Gay people, straight people, white, black, everybody is welcome. We want people to have a good time. Like the world, this place is mixed' (Bar manager 6, Bristol). One of the problems for gay youth moving outside 'safe' spaces is that once they are spatially scattered or enter heterosexual territory, even if 'gay-friendly', 'they are not gay, because they are invisible' (Castells, 1982:138). And yet the development of such nightlife premises not only begins to blur the binary distinction between gay and straight venues: it can also work to challenge entrenched categories of sexuality. This is particularly the case in relation to young gay men's interaction with, and changing views about, straight people involved in 'rave'-inspired dance cultures. As Lee (25 years old, Leeds) said:

> I mean, I will admit when I was younger I used to be frightened of going to straight places. The people that I have met, the lads that I have met, straight lads, big butch skinhead lads, who will come up to me and hug and kiss me and they will freely give me a new light on straight people and… now I will go anywhere in the country straight, gay, whatever. I would rather go to straight places actually.

In this scenario, a greater tolerance and acceptance of sexual orientation within this particular dance culture not only opens up opportunities for the expression of gay identity, it also affords a similar rethinking of stereotypes of straight male attitudes. The next quote, from John (29 years old, Leeds), provides a further example of how a 'mixed' but obviously gay-friendly venue allows a young gay man to reject gay male stereotypes that clubbing always has to be related to 'cruising' and looking for sex:

> I think the best club I used to go to was the Paradise Factory in Manchester every month, and it was the best club because it was mixed and there was no attitude. Everyone was just there for a good time and a good laugh, and nobody was copping off with each other—it was not that type of club.

Finally, as we have already hinted, gay-friendly premises are also indicative of a wider shift of preference away from older seedier gay venues towards those perceived as trendy and modern (Simpson, M., 1999:211–13). As one club promoter exclaimed about a number of these types of premises: 'They're not pushing themselves as gay bars, as such, but because it's the new and trendy area, gay men love to go there' (Club promoter 2, Leeds).

These points are tied up with a broader generational transformation in gay attitudes and cultures (see Nardi, 2000, for a historical discussion) and reflect what we have outlined as the shift towards corporate and gentrified commercial mainstream nightlife. Attitudes, places and people have all begun to change in interesting yet contradictory ways. In particular, the following conversation highlights tensions between older and newer gay communities and venues:

Derek: Well, we usually go to up to [name of pub] first because it's a gay pub that's been around for years…

Jim: It's for the older people, the older crew.

Derek: The older cruisers.

Jim: I was going to say that. The old fogies that go around in forties clothes.

Derek: Which is weird for a gay pub.

Giles: Yes, it's like an old man's pub, isn't it?

Derek: They haven't changed it. It was altered in 1992, extended, and it was oak beams and things like that, and the new owners just never changed it. It just stayed like that. It's very weird, and the clientele are just stuffed like the pub is, I think, in a time capsule.

Giles: It seems strange because all the other big gay pubs are all very glamorous and quite cutting edge.

Derek: Yes, nice and loud.

(Focus group 5, Newcastle upon Tyne)

More serious than the derogatory language used here, Buckland (2002) in her work on gay clubs in the USA actually recalls a lesbian friend of hers being physically beaten up, to the words, 'old against the young'. Many gay men and lesbians also stressed to us the importance of this generational divide in terms of the link between age and style of premises, and here an owner of a recently up-graded gay pub talks about the different clientele:

> [It] used to be an old person's drinking/watering hole, I mean really old leathery queens, bit seedy, but just a general older crowd, pensioners-type age, gay people, you know. And that's shifted now and you've got very much a younger market, and one way we can tell that is that draft sales have gone down, bottle sales have gone up and wine has gone through the roof. You know, wine sales have gone through, you know, thirty times, thirty-fold, you know. A lot more people are sat down now with a, you know, a glass of wine on an afternoon, and reading one of the gay papers, because they feel so relaxed, and it's a proper pub; when they walk in it's like, wow.

(Bar owner 6, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Whittle (1994:38), in his work on gay space, critically refers to this phenomenon as the 'beautiful people syndrome', to describe the impact that the younger generation of gay men and lesbians were having on gentrifying their own nightlife. For him, the gay village in Manchester is a 'marketplace in which queer people are now seen as cultural consumers' (p. 37), and 'it is the time and age of beautiful young people' (p. 38). Whittle (1994) asks what there is for those left behind, through age or lack of money. He also questions what becomes of gay politics here, lost beneath the celebration of cultural consumerism.

Gay nightlife, then, is at the heart of the upgrading, stylisation and gentrification of downtown areas, much of which is fuelled by increasing corporate interest in the gay market. One manager of a tenanted gay pub in the UK hinted at how corporate interest in the 'pink pound' had changed over the years:

> You know, all they [the breweries operating tenanted pubs] are in it for is the money. Now back then they were quite happy—you know, have a tenant in there, he was going to make them money and sell their beer, but that is as much support as you would get. Now you are in the new millennium where you have got big operators like Bass, you have got your divisions who deal with gay premises. Scottish & Newcastle have got their own brand of gay pub. You know, all these big breweries are identifying the value of a pink pound.
>
> (Bar manager 6, Bristol)

Back in the early 1990s, the Allied Domecq Group was one of the first large brewery companies to cash in on the gay market in the UK through the venue Jo Jo's in Birmingham (Simpson, 1999). Scottish & Newcastle Retail Pub Company have also embraced the idea of gay venues. In Edinburgh, for example, after failed experiments with both Irish and sports bar themes, the company decided to revert one venue back to the Laughing Duck, one of the city's most well-known and hedonistic gay bars, and since has seen profits soar. The S&N Bar 38 brand has also become synonymous with gay lifestyles, mainly because of the location of these bars in Soho and Manchester's Canal Street. Moreover, gay and lesbian lifestyle brand Queercompany continues to develop branded venues such as hotels, spas, bars and restaurants as part of a planned property portfolio on sites around London and Brighton (Leisure and Hospitality Business, 2001). Larger, more corporate businesses have also invested in Manchester's Canal Street, mainly because of the profits to be made (Prestage, 1997). A similar trend towards the corporatisation of gay bars in Leeds has also been noted in the local press: 'Although a boost to gay Leeds social life, bars like Metz and Velvet are merely exports of Manchester brands, with Queens Court keeping it corporate by being part of Bass Leisure' (*The Leeds Guide,* September 2000:5). Corporate penetration and infiltration into the gay nightlife market, then, reflects some of the general

trends we have highlighted in the commercial mainstream, namely a tendency towards upgraded premises, yet a growing homogenisation of provision. As one gay consumer (Jez, 22 years old, Bristol) perceptively argued:

> Unfortunately a lot of the venues are trying to compete for the same customers. Instead of looking at what one pub is doing and looking for a niche in the market and trying to take on that, everybody seems a little bit frightened of trying something new.

The drive to retain corporate profits and keep shareholders happy with moves to open up trendy gay venues to more mainstream and straight consumers may compromise the gay character of many areas. Gerard Gudguin, of Manchester's Village Charity (an amalgamation of pub/club owners and leading figures of the gay community), stated: 'If we're not careful, the village will be like everywhere else, with hordes of testosterone-driven yobbos wandering around' (Prestage, 1997:9). In this sense, spaces for gay men and lesbians will become less about a gay community, and more about mainstream culture and commercial profit. Chasin (2001) has outlined how gay and lesbian cultures have been absorbed by mainstream cultures, sanitised and marketed, and how in the process the gay movement's political identity has been whitewashed. Popular gay areas, particularly those in the USA, are especially prone to intense gentrification, such that many non-professional gay men and lesbians can no longer afford to live there. Markowitz (1995) cites such areas as Greenwich Village in New York, the Castro district of San Francisco and DuPont Circle in Washington as no longer affordable to the majority of gay men and lesbians, with many now forced to move to the suburbs. In the UK, similar concerns were expressed, in particular that gay communities were being formulated around commercial corporately backed premises and pleasure-seeking which did little in the way of encouraging a wider community feel and infrastructure based around shops, services, etc.

Geoff: I do not like the gay scene. It is not a gay scene; it is not a gay community. It is anything but a gay community because people do not talk to each other.
Steve: It is not the sort of community that we would want to be involved with … What I would think of as a community is, people look out for each other, and they do not. They are just out for a shag.

(Focus group 5, Newcastle upon Tyne)

To sum up, it is clear that gay cultures have both impacted upon youth nightlife cultures and encouraged some of the wider processes of corporatisation and gentrification. The emergence of spaces for gay men and lesbians has to be understood against the backdrop of the domination of heterosexual and masculine ideologies, yet they have also provided an important outlet for gay identities, politics and 'safe spaces' to develop (Bailey, 1999; Moreton, 1996; Whittle, 1994). Buckland (2002:2) argues that queer club culture is 'vital to the cultural life of individuals, groups and lifeworlds' and can be seen as a 'carrier of utopian

imagination' (p. 3). A concrete example here of the mixture between leisure, pleasure and politics is Renegades, a club night at the Substation venue on Wardour Street in London for those who are HIV positive (Tuck, 1997).

At the same time, as gender and sexual identities are challenged and broadened through nightlife spaces like 'gay-friendly' bars and clubs, not to mention spaces for gay men and lesbians being infiltrated by both straight culture and corporate provision, a number of contradictory scenarios are emerging. One of these is a partial blurring of sexual types, which opens up the possibility of new sexual cultures and spaces developing among the young. Another contrary pressure is the increased infiltration of safe space for gay men and lesbians by heterosexual youth, and the corporatisation and gentrification of provision which has implications for the future of gay politics and exclusion within the community. The inherent difficulty would appear to be that the gradual opening up of sexual identities goes hand in hand with a tendency towards depoliticisation and an incorporation into the commercial mainstream.

8
RESIDUAL YOUTH NIGHTLIFE
Community, tradition and social exclusion

In the shadows of the bright neon of youthful gentrified nightlife consumption, there exists the 'residue' of near-forgotten groups, community/public spaces and traditional drinking establishments marginalised by new urban brandscapes and the commercial mainstream. Numerous commentators have drawn attention to increased polarisation within the contemporary city (Sassen, 1991; Zukin, 1995; Sibley, 1995) and this is no less true in the night-time economy. Nightscapes of decadence, bright lights and pleasure sit uncomfortably alongside landscapes of despair, poverty and the industrial past in many localities around the world. Inhabiting the less desirable spaces of the street, neighbourhood ghettos, council estates, cardboard 'homeless villages', ale-houses, market taverns and saloon bars, often in downmarket parts of town and clinging on to the vestiges of non-commercialised public space, groups of excluded young adults[1] are a well-recognised feature of many cities. Film images ranging from Richard Linklater's *Slackers* and John Singleton's *Boyz in the Hood* in the USA, to Danny Boyle's *Trainspotting* in Scotland and Mathieu Kassovitz's Paris-based *Le Haine,* are all examples of representations of various disaffected and displaced urban youth groups. These spaces and people, useful originally in the industrial city, are now a residual feature and are surplus to requirements in the newly emerging and redeveloping post-industrial corporate landscape, replete with its themed fantasy world of excessive hedonism and forceful consumer power.

This chapter examines the background to some of these excluded youth groups and residual nightlife spaces, charting their history and decline in the context of the post-industrial city, and explores their subordinate position in the night-time economy. Crucial to the analysis will be an understanding of the historic production of residual spaces like the traditional pub and saloon bar (Kneale, 1999; 2001), and their subsequent demise with the decline of manufacturing and the ushering in of new forms of work and leisure, making previous institutions, traditions, cultures and peoples redundant (Roberts, 1999; Clarke and Critcher, 1985). Also important here are historic and contemporary modes of regulating these traditional nightlife spaces and increasingly 'sanitising' the night-time economy through processes of incorporation, containment and exclusion. In some cases these exclusionary mechanisms are subtle (for example, through what Zukin

(1995) refers to as 'pacification by cappuccino'), while in others actions are more direct, such as seeking to 'sweep the streets' clean of unwanted groups altogether.

Yet, despite their marginalisation and attempts to cleanse the newly emerging gentrified night spaces of any 'undesirable' elements (Smith, 1996), some examples of residual youth street cultures manage to subsist, despite having few resources. Unfortunately, the commodification of some youth street cultures, like rap and hip hop, by corporate capital demonstrates how commercialisation and incorporation can succeed where repression and laws fail. We begin by defining what is meant by residual nightlife, and outline some of its main elements before turning to a discussion of the wider context and history of the emergence of these spaces and charting their subsequent decline and subordination. We then examine in more detail a number of marginalised urban youth groups drawn from the UK and North America, who struggle to retain a foothold in the corporate city through creating their own spatial practices. While some of these residual youth groups, activities and spaces initially appear to be somewhat removed from what might conventionally be viewed as 'nightlife', their various attempts to exist within the context of the rapidly gentrifying commercial mainstream demonstrate that these 'two worlds' are, in fact, intimately related (also see Smith, 1996; Toon, 2000).

Understanding residual urban nightlife: industrial decline, economic marginalisation and social polarisation

How can we best understand the position of groups of young people and night-time spaces that are increasingly marginalised and excluded by processes of gentrification and corporatisation? Where did these spaces emerge from and how might they be best contextualised and comprehended? First, what do we mean by the term 'residual' and, more specifically, what does residual nightlife consist of? To begin, the *Oxford Handy Dictionary* (1978:766) defines residual as 'remainder, what is left or remains' and 'left as residue or residuum'. In a more sociological vein, Williams (1977:122) utilises the term to mean 'effectively formed in the past, but…still active in the cultural process' and 'certain experiences, meanings and values which cannot be expressed or substantially verified in terms of the dominant culture, are nevertheless lived and practised on the basis of the residue …of some previous social and cultural institution or formation'. Williams (1977) goes on to remind us that although elements of the residual may be alternative or oppositional, generally major aspects have been incorporated or diluted by the dominant culture. For example, the 'traditional' working-class pub has been usurped by the middle classes and the corporate producers of 'artificially themed' traditional pub environments (Everett and Bowler, 1996).

By residual nightlife we are referring to those more traditional urban spaces inhabited by increasingly excluded sections of young people, including community bars, pubs and ale-houses, as well as the street, the neighbourhood ghetto or the council estate. Residual nightlife, then, is characterised by a number of features. First and foremost, these spaces are defined against mainstream

commercial development. In contrast to the modern—and indeed postmodern—veneer of gentrified nightlife, residual spaces are seen as outdated, obsolete and anarchic. Unlike the bourgeois and middle-class appropriation of the traditional pub, residual spaces are viewed as 'down-at-heel' dilapidated reminders of a lurid era of poverty, vice and debauchery associated with the lumpenproletariat of Victorian times, now occupied by their twenty-first-century counterpart, the 'urban underclass' (Murray, 1990; 1994).

So, a second characteristic is that these spaces are inhabited, or perceived to be occupied at least, predominately by the urban poor—the unemployed, welfare-dependent and shifty criminal classes. Finally, located either on the fringe of city cores, in poorer suburbs and council estates, or in marginal urban areas characterised as the 'rough' and 'down-market' part of cities (occasionally in traditional market areas and/or near the 'back end' of transportation networks), residual spaces represent the 'other' city of dirt, poverty, dereliction, violence and crime (Illich, 2000; Patel, 2000; see Plate 8.1). Created by industrial capitalism originally to meet the leisure needs of the working classes, these residual nightlife spaces have dramatically declined, are perceived as ripe for redevelopment, and are increasingly regulated by stigmatisation and formal policing. However, they continue to play a vital role in terms of meeting the food, entertainment and leisure needs of many urban groups.

These residual groups and spaces are rooted in the creation of industrial cities, their labouring classes and the rise and fall of the first phase of industrial capitalism. The development of the industrial capitalist city in the UK, North America and parts of Europe in the nineteenth century created not only different classes and separate spaces, but particular spheres of activity represented by the division between work, home and leisure. Characterised by rapid industrialisation ('smokestack' cities) and urbanisation, with many localities increasing their population many times over within half a century, the industrial city became infamous for its separation into rich and poor areas, with the former moving to the urban periphery and the latter experiencing over-crowding, bad housing, squalid and unhygienic conditions, pollution and moral decay in the urban core. In the UK, nineteenth—and early twentieth-century studies by Engels (1968) and Booth (1902) described the social structure of this industrial landscape, while in the USA at the turn of the century, the Chicago School's concentric ring model became urban spatial orthodoxy in terms of understanding social differentiation (Park, 1967). Additionally, the industrial city saw the formal separation of work (the factory) from the domestic (household/residential) and leisure spheres.

As such, 'redundant' populations have existed from the very beginnings of industrial urbanised capitalism. For example, Marx and Engels (1981) in *The Communist Manifesto* referred to the 'dangerous classes, the social scum, that passively rotting mass thrown off by the lowest layers of old society'. This was the reserve army of labour, the lumpenproletariat, the residuum left at the bottom of the emerging class hierarchy (Byrne, 1999:20). While Marx and Engels clearly saw this group as a by-product of capitalist urbanisation, their representation of

Plate 8.1 A few traditional ale-houses remain on the margins of rapidly gentrifying downtown areas; Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, 2001

Source: Mike Duckett

them was one imbibed with negative ideas about 'danger' and, indeed, political conservatism. The urban poor were also negatively represented in many of the early poverty studies conducted in the UK, such as Rowntree's study of the city of York and Booth and Mayhew's work on nineteenth-century London. Booth's description of some of the urban poor as a 'savage, semi-criminal class of people' (see Booth in Thompson and Yeo, 1973) was replicated in numerous commentaries of that period about the habits of the undeserving poor; of fecklessness, violence and over-indulgence of drink (Mann, 1990). In the USA, rapid urbanisation and the rise of capitalist manufacture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries produced sprawling slums and surplus labouring classes (many of them ethnic groups from European or Afro-American descent), viewed in need of reform and social control (Harring, 1983; Sennett, 1974; Jones, 1998; Sugrue, 1998:120).

As we outlined in Chapter 3, the continued imposition of Fordism in both work and leisure in the industrial city had numerous effects, including the taming of the dangerous classes through their uptake into employment, and various attempts to civilise and educate the working masses. Mass production and mass consumption meant a predictable link was forged between work and lifestyle. As the late Marxist historian E.P.Thompson reminded us, nineteenth-century working-class struggles were over space, time and leisure, as well as over the nature of work discipline

itself (Thompson, 1967). Industrial capitalism represented an increasing encroachment into the 'proletarian public sphere' (Habermas, 1991), rationalising leisure and free time as much as work (Clarke and Critcher, 1985). The street, the neighbourhood, working men's clubs, recreation and sport, entertainment, the pub and saloon bar were all sites of this broader 'conflict of culture' (see Palmer, 1979; Cunningham, 1980). The general struggle over working-class leisure and space is crucial because it is here that residual nightlife spaces were originally produced.

Of particular relevance to our discussion is the historical role of the UK public house and the North American saloon bar, both of which form part of what is left of residual nightlife (Harrison, 1971; Harring, 1983). In the UK, the importance of the public house for the working classes was exemplified by Harrison's (1971) famous quip that it was the working man's 'voluntary association', while Bailey (1978), Walvin (1978) and Jones (1986) reiterate its role as a central hub of working-class life and leisure throughout much of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Mass Observation's study of Bolton in the 1930s suggested that: 'In Worktown more people spend more time in the public houses than they do in any other building except private houses and work places' (Mass Observation, 1970: 17), and Jones' (1986:79) study of work and leisure in the early part of the twentieth century stated that the pub 'continued to play a central part in the social and cultural life of the working-class community'.

More specifically, early observers of pub life in the UK viewed it as an important space for the development of working-class identity, community and—in some cases—political education. Mass Observation's (1970:19) analysis in 1930s England saw the traditional pub as an 'unfettered space' and 'participator rather than spectator' in its orientation. As Adler (1991:391) writes, the 'pub, as a central node in this community of men, served as their centre for conviviality, political discussion and the rituals of drinking through which men affirmed in shared communion a collective identity'. Cunningham (1980) and Walvin (1978) specifically noted that it was the source of numerous libraries and political discussion groups historically, while Jones (1986:79) mentions that it was a focal point for numerous activities not 'conducive to capitalism'. The working-class pub, then, was historically a site of group, not individual, sociality (Mass Observation, 1970:78), including social ties of obligation, reciprocity and community. It is worth recalling, at least in the UK, that the traditional 'pub' is defined in the *Oxford English Dictionary* as a 'building with a bar and one or more *public* rooms licensed for the sale and consumption of alcoholic drinks' (emphasis added). In this sense, the pub fulfilled its historic function as a public meeting place and a source of community interaction.

This, of course, should not imply that the traditional UK pub of the past did not reflect wider social inequalities. Most commentators mention that it was primarily a male domain (see Harrison, 1971; Gofton, 1983) although Jones (1978:78) cites one study of Fulham pubs in the 1930s which suggests that around one third of patrons were in fact women. Historically, class divisions in premises were exaggerated in the separation of the lounge from the vault and tap room (Mass

Observation, 1970). However, Figure 8.1, reproduced from the Mass Observation study, shows that such spatial and social divisions were sometimes contained within one venue, contrasting greatly with upmarket mainstream venues today, who cater for only fragments of the gentrified middle classes (see Figure 5.1). In the traditional pub, the lounge was the largest room of the three, aimed at a higher class of consumer with correspondingly more chairs and tables, an enhanced décor and beer a penny a pint more. It was also the only room open to women (and hence couples). The one element the lounge had less of was spittoons for spittle, another class indicator. The vault or tap room usually just had linoleum on the floor and was generally used by workers. Clothing differences were apparent, with caps, scarves and overalls more apparent in the vault and tap room, and bowlers, trilbies, ties and 'good suits' characterising the lounge goers (Mass Observation, 1970: 141).

The crucial issue here, however, concerns attempts to wrest control of this working-class space through a combination of legislation and repression on the one hand and commercialisation and gentrification on the other. For instance, there were many examples of legislation directed specifically at working-class drinking establishments and habits, prompted by the middle classes and the temperance movement; these including restricting licensing hours, and targeting under-age drinking and certain types of behaviour. Ale-houses, as opposed to inns where middle-class patrons often spent the night (i.e. literally a hotel with a bar), had early reputations as a 'place of drunkenness, disorder and squalor' (Mass Observation, 1970:81). While the temperance movement in the UK was adamant about the link between poverty and alcohol (Booth, for example, argued that around 14 per cent of poverty was due to drink), control here was additionally concerned with types of sociality created in such places (Kneale, 1999; 2001: pp. 44, 45), including the role social drinking played in aiding worker solidarity and political mobilisation.

Also important here were broader social changes and trends which weakened working-class cultures and appeared to democratise leisure and entertainment (Hannigan, 1998). Early attempts to legislate the problem, including restricting licensing hours, were largely unsuccessful in comparison to more insidious forms of middle-class control through commercialisation, displacement and gentrification (Adler, 1991; Everett and Bowler, 1996). Williams' (1977) earlier assertion about residual cultural forms becoming incorporated or made redundant by more dominant interests is useful here. For example, in the UK, Bailey (1978: 171) argued that although it was difficult 'to supplant the public house in the affections and habits of the working man', the drive towards more 'rational' forms of recreation throughout the nineteenth century began to take its toll on this important institution. Jones (1986:79), among others (see Cunningham, 1980) notes an early drive towards the commercialism and gentrification of pubs—typified as 'public house improvements'—around the first quarter of the twentieth century in some cities, first to stave off state interference in the industry (some pubs in Carlisle actually became state-owned during this period) and second to

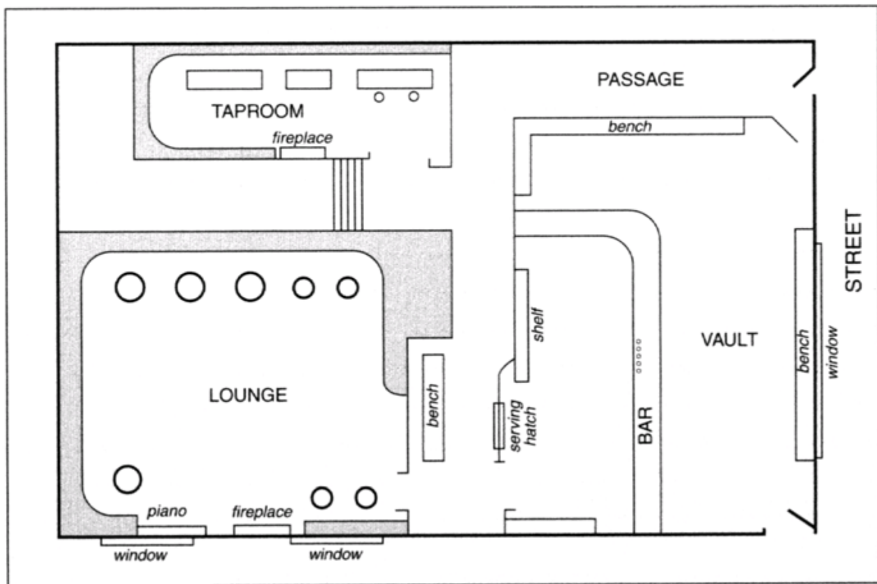

Figure 8.1 A layout of a traditional public house in England

Source: Mass Observation, 1970

deflect criticism away from the brewing industry. Mass Observation (1970) also related changes in pub culture to a wider institutional decline encompassing the influence of the church, politics and other working-class public spaces and pastimes. While they argued that, compared to many of these other spheres, the pub retained a relatively strong position as a fundamental maker of community, for the male working class at least, subsequent economic trends have meant that brewers and publicans were increasingly forced to sacrifice conviviality for efficiency and competition.

With the growing commercialisation of the brewing and pub industry in the UK in the post-war period, there has been a dramatic decline in the community function of the pub for the working classes (Adler, 1991:391). The changes in the British pub in this period have been described in one text as a shift from folk to a more popular, commercial culture (Everett and Bowler, 1996). Components of this shift include the impact of the Monopolies and Mergers Commission in the UK (Beer Orders Act 1989), demographic changes (going out became more youth-oriented, town-centred and gendered), cultural influences (both from European café culture and a North American McDonaldisation—i.e. the move towards efficiency and standardisation) and changes in tastes (from beer to wine, etc.). We would add here the consolidation of monopoly ownership (with large, acquisitive pub companies moving in), and increased gentrification, and regulation (i.e. the sanitisation of nightlife excluding cash-poor groups).

Similar arguments have been extended to the traditional role of the North American bar and saloon. Harring (1983, chapter 7) historically documents early twentieth-century attempts to regulate workers' recreation, particularly those activities that involved drinking and/or socialising in and around places where liquor was sold or consumed. A coalition of employers, the middle classes and the religiously motivated temperance movement in many US cities pressured the police to enforce licensing hours, impose higher licensing fees and crack down on the sale of liquor to minors. However, due to the fact that many of the saloon owners were petty bourgeois (not to mention that high numbers of them were often city politicians) and that licensing fees were an important component of municipal funds in many localities, the emphasis was placed primarily on negative working-class behaviours like crime, laziness and immorality, rather than being just 'anti-saloon'. In fact, saloon owners were rarely prosecuted for breaking the law and the imposition of higher licence fees in many cities resulted in the differential closure of many smaller working-class premises, while aiding larger and more middle-class premises composed of wine rooms, where more affluent mixed couples were found (Harring, 1983:159–62). The development of 'saloon bars'—larger and better-decorated premises—signalled that the North American middle classes were beginning to threaten the sanctity of spaces usually reserved for the US labouring classes (Kneale, 1999:335). Johnson (1986:527) suggests that arguments over the [American] saloon, were 'a struggle between middle-class notions of privacy and domestic happiness and working-class uses of public space'.

Post-war economic growth and welfare consensus in the political arena in both North America and the UK meant that there was a brief period of economic, political and cultural stability (Bell, 1961). Nearly full employment, growing post-war affluence and mass production and consumption created the impression of a growing democratisation of leisure, despite underlying inequalities (Aronowitz, 1973; Williams, 1961; Hannigan, 1998; Clarke and Critter, 1985). However, the 'consensus' began to break down with industrial conflict, economic recession and the oil crisis in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Free market economics and a declining state, exemplified by Thatcherism in the UK and Reaganomics in the USA, led to a major 'manufacturing shakeout' in the 1980s, resulting in unprecedented unemployment levels, economic decline and social polarisation. For example, unofficial unemployment levels in the UK rose to over 4 million people, while world cities like Paris lost 400,000 unskilled jobs from the mid 1970s to the 1990s (Body-Gendrot, 2000:182). Economic decline was more severe, however, in those cities with an industrial history. For example, Chicago lost 326, 000 (24 per cent) of its manufacturing jobs between 1967 and 1987 (Body-Gendrot, 2000:153), while Newcastle upon Tyne lost 25 per cent of its manufacturing jobs in the early 1980s (Robinson, 1994). Working-class communities were particularly hard hit, and all western societies experienced social polarisation and increased inequality during this period to some degree.

In the USA by the 1990s, the income of the richest 1 per cent rose by 91 per cent, while the income of the poorest 1 per cent diminished by 21 per cent (Body-

Gendrot, 2000:36). Poverty became very much a black urban problem, encompassing a thirty-year ‘white flight’ to the suburbs. By 1990 only 25 per cent of North American whites lived in the central city areas, compared with half in the 1960s, while the proportion was 57 per cent for blacks and 52 per cent for Latinos (*ibid.:* 30). Poverty rates in the so-called ‘Black Belt’ area of Chicago were double that for blacks elsewhere (Wilson, 1996:14–16), which in turn was substantially higher than for the white population. While many European cities were less polarised, thanks partly to a history of state intervention, inequalities still existed, while England experienced some of the highest rates of income inequality in all of Europe, during the Thatcher years in particular (Hall and Jacques, 1989).

Those left behind in this economic recession and restructuring form the new residual classes, made up primarily of the working classes, ethnic and immigrant groups and unemployed young people. Modern-day residual groups are a product of the dissolution of the ‘respectable’ working classes as they cope with industrial decline and the shift towards a post-Fordist labour market. One popular, if not problematic, way of thinking about this group is the contemporary idea of the ‘underclass’ (Murray, 1990, 1994; Darendorf, 1989; Jencks and Peterson, 1990). As MacDonald (1997:1) explains: ‘The idea that Britain and other late capitalist societies are witnessing the rise of an “underclass” of people at the bottom of the social heap, structurally separate and culturally distinct from the traditional patterns of “decent” working-class life, has become increasingly popular over the last ten years.’ Numerous critiques of the concept exist (i.e. see Bagguley and Mann, 1992; Morris, 1994), while others have sought to provide more sympathetic labels such as Byrne’s (1999) term the ‘dispossessed working class’, Wilson’s (1987) ‘ghetto poor’, Gans’ (1990) ‘undercaste’ and the UK Labour government’s favoured term, ‘the socially excluded’.

It should be noted that there are more liberal and social democratic versions of the underclass emphasising economic conditions (Field, 1989; Darendorf, 1989), but the concept has largely been hijacked by the right as a moral and cultural phenomenon, focusing on idleness, crime and immorality (Murray, 1990, 1994). While many on the left completely reject the underclass idea as a ‘moral panic’ or an ‘ideology of the upper classes’ (Bagguley and Mann, 1992), MacDonald (1997) persuasively argues that there has been little good empirical work to test out the concept either way. Still others have adopted the more social democratic notion of social exclusion, defined fundamentally as multiple disadvantage (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). MacDonald and Marsh’s (2001) ethnographic work has been perhaps the most helpful and detailed here. While their findings reject the underclass thesis, they are also reticent about various elements of the social exclusion paradigm, preferring to emphasise the complexity and multiplicity of disadvantage, while stressing the continuing importance of economic marginality.

Important to our discussion here is a recognition that such exclusion is not just economic but is also cultural and spatial. Byrne’s definition (1999:2) does include exclusion from ‘cultural systems’; this and Bauman’s (1998) recent thesis that the

poor today are excluded from seductive cultures of consumption rather than just the labour market are both instructive. Bauman (1998) argues: 'The way present-day society shapes up its members is dictated first and foremost by the need to play the role of consumer' (p. 24) and in 'a society of consumers, it is above all the inadequacy of the person as a consumer that leads to social degradation and "internal exile"' (p.38).

Spaces of consumption, then, are an important component of social exclusion. As Byrne (1999:100) argues, 'spatial exclusion is the most visible and evident form of exclusion' and the post-industrial city has seen an unprecedented polarisation of space (Lash and Urry, 1994) or what Sibley (1995) has called 'spaces of exclusion'. While there have always been historical attempts to create 'purified communities' (Sennett, 1974)—for example, keeping middle-class communities immune from contagious, dirty working-class ones—various writers have argued that recent attempts to sanitise and purify are exaggerated through place promotion and gentrification (Smith, 1996; Christopherson, 1994). Power is expressed through monopolisation of space by wealthy groups and the exclusion of weaker marginal groups, creating a socio-spatial hierarchy of winners and losers.

Smith (1996), for example, has argued that gentrification is endemic to the capitalist economic system. His idea hangs upon economic arguments about housing, whereby the 'rent gap' created by derelict inner-city properties, leads inevitably to their redevelopment in order to increase return to landlords and property developers, with capital flowing back into the city from the over-priced suburbs. He sees such developments as an attack by the middle classes on the poor, and typifies this scenario as the 'revanchist' city—revenge by the powerful to punish the poor, pushing them further to the margins and worst parts of the city. Ley's (1996) work on the middle-class city is based more on the rise of professional and service classes and their desire to escape suburbia and create a somewhat different lifestyle in inner-city areas. While this explanation is partly dependent on housing, it also involves the development of an appropriate cultural economy including wine bars, gourmet coffee shops, delicatessens and trendy restaurants.

BOX 8.1
:*LA BOTELLÓN*

Thousands of young Spaniards have taken to gathering in streets and squares across Spain, drinking ready-mixed potent blends of *calimocho* (wine and cola), spirits and beer costing around 2. The phenomenon of outdoor drinking called the *Botellón* (the big bottle), although nothing new, is now attracting a larger, younger and more rowdy audience. In Madrid, the number of young madrileños gathering for the *Botellón* has particularly grown and has incurred the wrath of neighbouring residents.

> Many cities have banned open-air drinking and the sale of alcohol after 10 p.m., while councils have also been ordered to compensate neighbours for the noise. Many teenagers suggest that they cannot afford to drink in expensive city-centre bars and discos and so take to the streets instead. This phenomenon is most pronounced in Madrid, where it is claimed by the authorities that 200,000 young madrileños drink in the city's public squares. At the beginning of 2002, the city's right-wing mayor, Jose Maria Alvarez del Manzano, pledged to put an army of police on the street to stamp it out (*Guardian Weekly,* 14–20 February 2002:13). Legislating against the *Botellón,* then, is eroding youth street cultures. Considering that a recent survey found that 79 per cent of 14–18 year olds in Spain drink alcohol, new youth spaces rather than increased surveillance and coercive legislation may be more realistic solutions.

One can see these processes of exclusion and sanitisation at work on a number of fronts. For instance, Key Note (2001), a market analyst company, suggests that the number of traditional pubs in the UK has fallen from 54,000 in 1990 to 49,500 in 2001, with part of this decline due to the conversion of many premises to other types of fully licensed drinks outlets, including café-bars, brasseries, sports bars and wine bars. Moreover, numerous writers (e.g. MacDonald and Marsh, 2002; Toon, 2000; Blackman, 1997) argue that there is a greater tendency for underprivileged groups to use the street as their domain, hence increased policing and street surveillance here is an explicit attack on the poor. The move towards making city streets 'dry zones' (no alcohol consumption legally enforced through fines), which has long been a feature of many North American cities, is now being adopted across many European cities, and is also an erosion of space for those groups who cannot afford to drink in even the cheapest bars and pubs (see Box 8.1).

To sum up, both residual groups and spaces are the product of the industrial city and its transformation into a post-industrial economic landscape. This has resulted in the marginalisation of groups, not only economically but also in terms of consumption and space, with increased gentrification and attempts to sanitise whole parts of cities. Below, we look at how various residual youth groupings have been affected and have sought to cope with some of these changes.

Marginal youth and residual nightlife spaces

Historically, young people have played a particular role in the emergence of the industrial working classes and urban street cultures. Concerns about the state of the working-class youth labour market, female reproductive behaviour and rowdy urban youth cultures formed part of the early debates about troublesome adolescence (see Griffin, 1993). Pearson (1983:74–5) mentions varied terminology for the street urchins of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, including 'street arabs', 'ruffians' and 'roughs'. The well-known term

'hooligan' was also used to describe gangs of rowdy youths during the August Bank Holiday celebrations in London in 1898 who were involved in drunk and disorderly behaviour, street robberies and fighting.

However, such boisterous street behaviour was not limited to the workless youth of the day. Employed youth were seen to use their wages to ill effect in Victorian times, with complaints of both sexes 'mingling promiscuously in the cheap theatres and taverns, sometimes in the company of prostitutes, drinking, singing and swearing in a lewd manner' (Pearson, 1983:166). In Manchester at the beginning of the twentieth century, the so-called 'street scuttlers' became notorious for their 'monkey runs'—a cross between loafing and cruising, in which gangs of working youth would circulate around the city, using the streets as a playground to avoid the police, encounter women and stay in contact with their mates (Haslam, 1999:48). Harring (1983:154) mentions that in the USA, at least one important aspect of the anti-saloon movement was to curb under-age drinking. By the turn of the twentieth century, youth disorder was not just a problem of the urban poor, but also of young labourers who used their wages to drink and hang around street corners and amusements, engaging in gambling and leading to worries about creating a loafing, street-corner society (Pearson, 1983: 57, 60; Harring, 193:147). Much of what came to be seen as traditional working-class pastimes formalised over this period, including music and dance halls, moving pictures, pool halls, the pub, holiday resorts, the football crowd and the 'cycle craze'. Youth, in particular, were seen as problematic participants in many of these activities (Harring, 1983, chapter 8; Pearson, 1983; Cunningham, 1980).

The rise of compulsory primary education in England in the late nineteenth century attempted to deal with problems of youth discipline (Griffin, 1993), and was followed by the development of secondary education (Humphries, 1983), the apprenticeship system and two world wars, all of which had an impact on shaping youth. In the USA at the turn of the twentieth century, various attempts to root out crime and delinquency among young people were made through moral training, responsible parenting and raids on pool halls and saloons (Harring, 1983:228–32). Such attempts to create a culture of conformity in the inter-war period in the UK were broken after the Second World War, with the early rise of youth cultures in the 1950s and 1960s (Hall and Jefferson, 1976), while the USA began to see the beginnings of gang cultures emerging (Miller, 1958). The creation of many of these working-class groupings were traced to an increasingly differentiated youth labour market, including the beginning of the service economy and the early demise of manual labour. The major crisis of youth unemployment began to bite in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with young people making up 25 per cent of the 'out of work' and 50 per cent of the long-term unemployed in the UK (Hollands, 1990), while in the USA the percentage of unemployed black youth in many urban centres reached over 40 per cent (Kelly, 1997).

So, one of the key 'residual' subgroups to have emerged out of the historical transformations discussed earlier is the young disaffected working class—literally the sons and daughters of the last of the industrial workers and various ethnic and

immigrant groups. In fact, MacDonald (1997:19) suggests that 'the underclass debate is in large part a debate about youth', and numerous commentators have charted the collapse of the youth labour market and investigated the changing family/household situation of the younger generation (Males, 1996; Jones, 1995). However, there has been less work on residual youth that has concerned itself with cultural and spatial exclusion (although see MacDonald and Marsh, 2002; Toon, 2000; Skelton and Valentine, 1998; Stenson and Watts, 1998; Loader, 1996). It is to this issue we now turn through a number of case studies.

Disconnected youth? Social exclusion and residual nightlife spaces in the UK

In light of the dominance of mainstream nightlife, and more specifically the growth of up-market style bars discussed in Chapter 5, possibilities for residual, historic forms of nightlife consumption in downtown centres have rapidly diminished. Consumers of more traditional community-based pubs and ale-houses in the inner city, which hark back to an earlier industrial era, today are described rather unflatteringly as the spaces for the 'underclass' or the 'rabble', often stereotyped as petty criminals, welfare scroungers and hardened drinkers by the police, local state, the media and other more middle-class and respectable consumers (Hollands, 2002). Residual youth groupings here include those left on council estates who are largely excluded from urban centres, the young homeless and transients, as well as sections of less well-off youth who consume what might be called the residual or 'bottom end' of the nightlife market.

As mentioned earlier, there is a long history of concern over 'troublesome' street youth in the UK (Muncie, 1999; Pearson, 1983; Corrigan, 1976). More recently, there has been a spate of 'moral panics' around young people's disruptive use of public spaces on estates, parks, playing fields and street corners (Stenson and Watts, 1998; Loader, 1996; Jeffs and Smith, 1996; MacDonald and Marsh, 2002), to the extent that a contemporary survey of communities argued that 'on all estates, and across all age groups, the biggest single issue identified by respondents was the antisocial behaviour of children and teenagers' (Page, 2000:37). MacDonald and Marsh's (2002) ethnographic study on the leisure careers of a group of socially excluded youth on a deprived north-east estate is perhaps the most comprehensive research on this topic. Their work confirms the prevalence of a well-recognised pattern of street-based socialising among young people living on poorer estates. As one young person described: '[I would] get up and used to go round and they all used to be sat there, like thirty of them, sat in one little corner, smoking and drinking at nine o'clock in the morning' (quoted in MacDonald and Marsh, 2002: 13).

Crucial to this pattern, besides a sense of belonging to a locale, was a lack of things to do and money to do it with, and a dearth of opportunities to consume other activities in other parts of the city. As Loader (1996:112), in his similar study of Edinburgh, puts it: 'Denied the purchasing power needed to use, or even get

to, other parts of the city (and most importantly the city centre) unemployed youths are for the most part confined to the communities in which they live.' A young man (Ian, 24 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) from one troubled estate in the north of England, the Meadowell, made this point to us even more starkly when describing his community:

> You can't go anywhere without the police following you, thinking you are up to something, some kind of deal. If you walk around the estate, they follow you. If you go across to [a local shopping centre] or into town they follow you. So you just stay here and do nothing. It's like a prison without walls, that you never leave.

This particular section of 'socially excluded' young people, then, have limited choices, socialising within whatever spaces they can find in what is left of their rapidly declining communities. Local pubs and/or social clubs on the estate (if they have not already closed down) and 'the street' (Toon, 2000) remain their main options. Two excluded groups singled out in particular by MacDonald and Marsh (2002) are young unemployed men and young mothers. Lacking social networks created by employment, some young unemployed men maintained longstanding participation in localised street cultures, often getting involved in crime and/or drugs. As one of their interviewees, Stu, said: 'You're just going back to the same place, the same group of people and it's easy to get back into it' (quoted in MacDonald and Marsh, 2002:10). Young single mothers, constrained by the demands of child care, financial hardship and trying to maintain a home, also found their leisure of nightlife curtailed:

> Gail: I used to go to the Capital [nightclub] and places like that…[but] I'm too much in my ways now. I don't miss it [going out]. I'm used to lights out, curtains shut, Joe [her son] on the settee. I sit on the chair and watch the telly and I'm in bed for 10 o'clock. It's my routine now since we had the house.
>
> (MacDonald and Marsh, 2002:17)

Despite the difficulties and constraints, MacDonald and Marsh's (2002) research also showed that by their later teens, some youths had moved on from street-based socialising to consuming more commercial and alcohol-based leisure in bars, pubs and clubs. A portion frequent those declining traditional city spaces made up of 'rough' market pubs and taverns inhabited by their parental generation, described by many city officials as 'potential sites of regeneration', while the local police often view them as criminal 'dens of inequity' (see Box 8.2). Below, a police inspector with responsibility for one UK city centre, had this to say about such places:

Very difficult some of them. I mean, they are in poor areas… They have still got to be policed…it is a place where if you go through the day you might get offered cheap bloody perfume or something that has been nicked from one of the shops, it is where shoplifters tend to get rid of their gear.

(Police inspector 2, Newcastle upon Tyne)

BOX 8.2
: A NIGHT IN THE TRADITIONAL BOOZER; BRISTOL, 5 SEPTEMBER 2001

The Admiral Nelson has been on the corner of the market for several decades, The pub rarely opens past 7 p.m. these days, largely due the fact that, as Ken its manager said, 'Once the market shuts people go home, they've got no reason to be here and they can' afford it anyway.' We had to agree with him. Once the shops and market closed around 5 p.m., this of town was now completely dead. Hence, the city council were keen to shed the area of its rather and dangerous image after dark. The Nelson had several rooms, a tap room with simple wooden stools and linoleum on the floor, a function room, a lounge furnished with tatty, torn, red velvet seats and curtains and a pool room with a huge TV. Like most traditional market taverns, it was dimly decorated and had a a small but loyal—and mostly male—clientele. Most of the rooms apart from the lounge were not used much although the pool room was always packed on a lunchtime or Sunday afternoons, when the market traders would stop in for a game of pool or to watch the foodball, One of the regulars, Frank, told us that a lot of young blokes used to come in here, but now they prefer the centre, 'where the booze is fancier and so are the women'. Geoff, another, continued: 'Our Kev sometimes still comes in here with me and his mum and his mates for a few pints before heading off to the discos, like. Cheapest place in town for them, like, to start off and sink a few cheap pints. Still £1.10 for a pint of ale in here, y'know. They all know Ken the barman 'n'all, from up where we live.' They felt that the city centre was changing and 'so should places like this, to keep up to date', However, they were less clear on what was going to happen in the future, As Geoff said, 'There's all these new coffee places round here and these posh clothes shops. Pubs like this, I dunno… What can we do? Maybe they've had their day'.

Nevertheless, for the large pub operator and brewer who owns the Nelson, business is good for the time being. Bulk sales of beer and ale are high and overheads are low. There is little need for sophisticated product lines, costly refits or advertising, and customers are steady and loyal. Furthermore, apart from the odd fight at lunchtime and police suspicion of handling of stolen goods on the premises, the Nelson causes very few problems for the regional manager.This is in contrast to other younger, livelier super-pubs he manages in the city centre, where there are frequent police visits due to under-age drinking, fighting, property damage, noise and litter complaints from new city-centre residents, and police demands for sophisticated surveillance and expensive security firms, Yet clearly the Nelson's days are numbered. A neighbouring pub in the area owned by a rival pub company has recently been revamped into a 'canteen bar to serve coffee and

food during the morning and afternoon to the growing number of office workers and city-centre-livers who are moving into revamped buildings in the area, It also stays open later into the night offering music and live performances. Ken mused, 'A refit'll mean more takings and work for the company. But I reckon a change that big'll be the end for me and this lot.'

Similarly, other young people ventured out and attempted to consume the 'bottom end' of mainstream commercial provision, where they are increasingly unwelcome, as the following quote from a bar employee at one new city-centre bar in Leeds exemplifies:

Interviewer: Are these locals [kids from an estate] being pushed out of the city centre?

Bar worker 2: I hope so.

These marginalised post-adolescents are viewed hierarchically as even further down the social scale than aspiring working-class groups (or what we called 'townies' in Chapter 5). For example, note the sheer contempt with which this young consumer (Mark, 22 years old, Leeds) describes a so-called 'scratters' night out:

> Nasty, horrible creatures of society, who crawl out from under their stone on Thursday 'cos it's dole day. They put on the same frock every week 'cos they don't wanna buy a new one until they get too fat. Mainly seen wearing the PVC skirts and boob tubes, which are too tight, sort of sagging and not nice.The over 40s, who still think that they are 18.

It is important to note the clear class and gendered nature of this stereotyped lifestyle of the socially excluded. Typified as welfare scroungers, who prefer to spend their social security cheque on a night's drinking, this group is vilified by the media and so-called 'respectable society' along a number of axes such as promiscuity, crassness and selfishness (see Hollands, 2000, 2002, for an extended discussion).

The most marginal elements of the UK's urban youth population—the homeless—fare even less well in the rapidly gentrifying nightlife (for the USA see Ruddick, 1998). Blackman's (1997) ethnography of youth homelessness shows how their nightlife options and spaces are seriously curtailed. Utilising their physical bodies as a last source of 'personal capital' via drug-taking and prostitution, some of the homeless nonetheless continue to play a marginal role in the night-time economy. 'Destroying a giro', to use Blackman's (1997:122–3) term, means periodically engaging in a somewhat 'normal' and hedonistic pattern of night-time consumption by literally spending their entire social security money on either drinking in a cheap public house or purchasing large quantities of alcohol or drugs and hanging out in the street. However, even this pattern was contoured by the

cost of drinks and going to premises with the cheapest prices, as most face barriers not only of cost but also of dress and style codes. In fact, simply being visibly homeless on the street can sometimes invite derision and physical attack. As Blackman (1997:121) writes: 'Attacking homeless young people was repeatedly seen as a sport by sections of Brighton's nightclub scene, who would play "kick the beggar" or "piss on the beggar"'. Obviously, groups such as the homeless are unwelcome and will continue to be further maligned and increasingly excluded from city-centre nightlife as gentrification and the 'style revolution' in nightlife continues apace.

Afro-American youth, rap, street culture and the 'hood; segregation, incorporation and cultural power

Living in one of the wealthiest and most powerful nations on earth, the USA, Afro-American youth in a relative sense are one of the most socially excluded and spatially separated generational groups in the world.[2] Yet, paradoxically, economic deprivation of this social group sits alongside their growing global cultural influence, particularly in the realm of music and associated nightlife cultures (Pimlott, 1995). As Lott (1999:125) argues: 'Despite their status as a group of Maroons in America's urban centers, ironically, black urban youth, through their culture, have had a major impact on mainstream popular culture.' Here we briefly examine the paradox that the majority of urban Afro-American youth continue to be excluded, while a few have made a significant intervention into global nightlife culture primarily through the medium of hip hop and rap (Mitchell, 2001). Clearly there are strongly felt differences here, between those artists who have retained some authenticity and connection with the 'hood (neighbourhood) and those who have 'sold out' and joined the commercial mainstream (Forman, 2002).

Comprising just over 10 per cent of the population of the USA (Oswald 2001: 18), Afro-Americans in general experience significantly higher unemployment and incarceration rates, have poorer health care, education provision and leisure amenities, with many confined to hyper-segregated inner-city neighbourhoods and urban ghettos. With around 30 per cent of blacks in the USA living below the poverty line, according to 'official' statistics, a figure four times that of whites (Cashmore, 1997:3) and with jobless rates double (Oswald, 2001:67), it is unsurprising that they are also three to four times as likely to be receiving food stamps, Medicaid and public housing than whites. Afro-Americans are also subject to criminalisation, constituting twofifths of all arrests in the USA, and 70 per cent of births are conceived out of wedlock in the black population as opposed to 22 per cent for whites (Oswald, 2001:45). The plight of poor Afro-American youth, and males in particular, is indeed much worse. Unemployment rates in inner cities, particularly those in the so-called 'rustbelt' of former manufacturing cities, conservatively exceeds 40 per cent for black youths (Kelly, 1997:46–7). And Afro-American youth under 20 years of age are four times as likely to the by murder

than white youth, and statistically they are more likely to go to prison than to go to university (32.2 per cent of young black men in the USA are either in prison, on parole or on probation (Cashmore, 1997:3–4)).

Many black families and youths are concentrated in large cities, confined spatially to decaying inner-city areas and urban ghettos. Robert Taylor Homes (also known as 'The Hole') in South Side Chicago, although now undergoing demolition, was a classic example of such a slum, with 96 per cent unemployment, an average annual income of $5,905 and rife with gang warfare and drug abuse (Vulliamy, 1998). Deindustrialisation, and the flight of both white residents and businesses to the suburbs and hinterland USA throughout the 1980s and 1990s, has taken its toll on many of these formerly 'working cities', leading to decay, neglect and dereliction. Cuts in public expenditure in areas like recreation and the growth of privatised urban spaces have meant that the street is the only place left for many black youths to occupy (Kelly, 1997:50). While a long tradition of residential segregation existed in many US cities prior to economic downturn (Sugrue, 1998), the current economic situation has made racial polarisation even more apparent.

There is also a long history of black subjugation in the labour market ranging from the transition from slavery to 'free labour' in farm and factory work, to the more recent shift from the decline of manufacturing to the rise of service work (see Jones, 1998). A more recent history has been aptly documented in Sugrue's (1998) study of race and inequality in post-war Detroit. This work shows how, from a boomtown in the 1940s and home to some of the highest-paid blue-collar workers in the USA, Detroit has become a city racked with population migration, decay, unrest, high black youth unemployment and racial segregation. The first generation of out-of-work black youth in the city began in the late 1950s/early 1960s, and anger and despair exploded in the Detroit riots of 1967. Black youth had a particularly important role to play here. As Sugrue (1998:260) argues: 'Growing resentment, fuelled by increasing militancy in the black community, especially among youth, who had suffered the brunt of displacement, fuelled the fires of 1967.'

While some piecemeal measures (i.e. job training programmes) were put into place to try and deal with the employment problem, the riots were a prophetic reminder of what was to come later in cities like Los Angeles in the 1990s. A continuing lack of jobs for young blacks in many US inner cities meant that crime, particularly drugs, prostitution and theft, increasingly became the mainspring of the local economy (Kelly, 1997:46–9; Jones, 1998:378). Of course, the hiring practices of the new service economy are not exactly favourable to Afro-American youth. Jones (1998:378) cites a survey undertaken in the late 1980s of employers' hiring practices in Chicago; this saw 'young black job seekers as too poor, uneducated, and temperamentally ill-suited for the rigors of modern office work'. Young black men in particular, with their increasing association of crime, violence and drugs, were seen as a particularly bad risk by employers, thereby squaring the discrimination circle.

Against this backdrop, rap and hip hop have emerged as potent black cultural forms and one of the world's most widespread youth articulations. Initially, areas suffering chronic economic depression were major sites for rap's consumption and production. In this sense, rap and hip hop are intensely urban in origin and importantly emphasise an intense sense of place and community, epitomised through metaphors of the 'ghetto', the 'hood', 'homies', and shout-outs to various 'posses' (Forman, 2002). Forman (2002:8) goes on to describe how hip hop and rap, through these various spatial discourses, have been central for young black people in their attempts to construct spaces of their own. Rather than being rootless, then, hip hop and rap cultures transmit a strong sense of place.

However, rather than occupying central visible locations or permanent venues, the street and its associated cultures of tagging, b-boying, break dancing and graffiti art acted as key sites for hip hop (Kelly, 1997). Such ghetto cultures segregated from the surrounding city were largely seen as dangerous and unruly, and hence were frequently the object of surveillance. Mobile sound systems in parks and at street corners were also crucial places for the development of hip hop, as were more private spaces of the car, gym hall, bedroom and black parties. The streets, then, as one of the only spaces open to many poorer black youth, have sometimes been viewed as a potentially resistant force (Pimlott, 1995). Giroux (1996:31) holds on to the possibility that such 'cultures of the street' potentially represent a new kind of postmodern hybridised cultural performance, resistance and politics. Many of the early meanings of rap and hip hop, especially those associated with 'message rap', reflected such concerns and appealed for greater cultural and political awareness of the plight of black urban America (Forman, 2002:82). From such informal places, a more legitimate black hip hop club scene grew up in the late 1970s, especially in New York, which more widely disseminated black cultural styles within nightlife cultures (Forman, 2002). Hence, rap and hip hop have spawned an underground network of clubs, bars and radio stations in urban areas across the world.

However, this cultural and spatial articulation has also resulted in quite negative images. A potent combination of youth, race and class has made rap and hip hop the dangerous 'other' of respectable American society. Moreover, the term 'underclass' in America is a racially coded word for black youth, crime and violence, and illegitimacy (Giroux, 1996; Lott, 1999). Of course, cultural representations of Afro-American black youth in the press and in popular culture (such as films, TV, music, etc.) have partly fuelled such stereotypes. Giroux (1996) cites films such as *Juice, Menace to Society* and even the more sensitive *Boyz in the Hood* in this regard, not to mention the way media reaction to 'gangsta' rap increasingly represents it as a growing culture of violence, misogyny and nihilism rooted in drugs, urban decay and black masculinity. Rap and hip hop have long been blamed for creating violence, with rap artists themselves becoming central players. A number of widely publicised media examples have spread the perception that violence is endemic in the growing club infrastructure which has emerged to serve rap and hip hop fans. For example, several shootings in

nightclubs in the USA have left people dead, with a number of high-profile rap artists implicated—for instance, Sean 'Puffy' Combs was charged with bribery and illegal gun possession in a shootout at Club New York in 1999, and Eminem was charged with carrying a concealed weapon in a Detroit nightclub (Myers, 2001:3). Similarly, several clubs in the UK have also been closed or raided because of an escalation in violence and their associations with black music such as jungle and hip hop. Black youth cultural spaces, then, continue to be criminalised and marginalised from central areas, due mainly to their ongoing, rather problematic, associations with violence, guns, drugs and gang-related activity.

The commercialisation of rap and hip hop has also been lamented as it mutated from an underground, street-based musical form which was the preoccupation of an urban minority into an institutionalised, global, multi-billion-dollar industry engaging people from a variety of ethnic and class backgrounds. Successful crossover artists, global media such as MTV, and its cool status as a youth cultural pastime have allowed rap and hip hop to penetrate deep into popular culture. Initial metaphors such as the 'hood have been appropriated and diluted, now often referring to upscale, gentrified enclaves (Forman, 2002:343). Further, Cashmore (1997), in his study of the black culture industry, suggests that the white power structure inherent in film, music and TV has either effectively appropriated and commodified black culture in the USA, thereby muting its political potential, or has continued to reproduce stereotypical images, hence keeping the racial hierarchy intact. Forman (2002) also points out that, from its origins, middle-class black entrepreneurs and their white peers were responsible for the production and recording of hip hop, while Kelly (1997) suggests that rap should not be romanticised as the authentic voice of black ghetto youth, arguing that it does little to challenge capitalism or raise black incomes (except for the few success stories). In a somewhat different vein, Cashmore (1997:171) argues:

> Rap transformed racism into fashion: something that blacks wore to impress and whites liked to glare at without actually doing anything… What started as a radically different, and in many ways dangerous, music was appropriated, domesticated and ultimately rendered harmless.

Rap music in this scenario becomes a 'culture of compensation', substituting for educational advancement and literacy (Gilroy, 1993).

Lott (1999), in distinguishing between hard-core and commercial rap, suggests the former does have the potential for resistance, particularly in the way it plays out knowledge of surviving on the street and dealing with social exclusion rather than believing in social mobility into a white man's middle-class world. At the same time, he suggests that there is no such thing as 'authentic' resistant black culture (also see Kelly, 1997), which is somehow separate from the wider white mainstream culture which surrounds it. Black music forms, like rap, for him represent a 'recoding' of dominant white values about individualism and hierarchy

(survival of the fittest), misogyny and violence which lie at the heart of mainstream American culture.

This is a crucial point in relation to how rap and hip hop have been taken up and rearticulated with other cultural forms and traditions elsewhere (Mitchell, 2001). As Mitchell (2001:1) argues, 'Hip hop and rap cannot be viewed simply as an expression of African American culture; it has become a vehicle for global youth affiliation and a tool for reworking local identity all over the world.' Of particular interest is its repercussions in the UK (see Hesmondhalgh and Melville (2001); also Swedenburg's (2001) discussion of its articulation with Islam in the UK in the same collection). Hesmondhalgh and Melville (2001) suggest that the appropriation of US rap and hip hop in the UK needs to be situated within the context of a preexisting Caribbean sound system culture and the evolution of British club culture. The UK has a long history of black 'blues party' culture imported from the Caribbean and a strong tradition of reggae-influenced sounds, not to mention Asian influences (exemplified by the Islamic inspired hip hop group, Fun-Da-Mental, among others), which have been fused with rap and hip hop imported from the USA. The continued mutation of rave and club cultures in the UK also took elements of hip hop and mixed them with techno, reggae and ragga to create jungle and drum and bass, while its fusion with various forms of psychedelic styles produced 'trip hop' associated particularly with the 'Bristol sound' of Tricky, Massive Attack, Roni Size and Portishead (Hesmondhalgh and Melville, 2001: 98–106). The impact of US rap and hip hop in the UK, then, has been far-reaching, albeit through the transformation and combination of the musical form through national and local music traditions and experiences (Back, 1996).

Finally, hooks (1994) argues that rap needs to be located in relation to wider structures of power—which for her is white supremacist, capitalist patriarchy. Young black men don't live in a cultural vacuum, hence one shouldn't be surprised to find that elements of their culture are a specific embodiment of wider norms: 'The sexist, misogynist, patriarchal ways of thinking and behaving that are glorified in gangsta rap are a reflection of the prevailing values created and sustained by white supremacist capitalist patriarchy' (hooks, 1994:116). She argues that gangsta rap is utilised by the industry to accumulate capital and stir up controversy to sell records (largely to white young male audiences), while at the same time acting to demonise black youth culture as steeped in violence and misogyny. hooks is careful to make clear that this doesn't mean black male youth are not, or should not be somehow accountable. In fact, in the summer of 2001, a rap and hip hop summit encompassing black leaders, rappers and record companies met to consider the problems and the future possibilities of the genre under the title 'Taking Back Responsibility' (Younge, 2001; Sturges, 2001). hooks is suggesting that we need to widen our view of the 'problem' of certain forms of male black youth culture, and not just replicate 'moral panics' around these cultures. Interestingly, rap and hip hop are among the few marginalised youth night cultures to reach and invade public consciousness. The key issues are what

impact these youth cultural forms have on the ongoing politics of the street, how they are taken up in other cultural contexts (Mitchell, 2001) and what space they have within contemporary nightlife, as well as questions about their incorporation and commodification.

Cleaning windows and cleansing the streets? Squeegee kids and the Ontario Safe Streets Act

In the late 1990s, numerous Canadian cities were gripped by a new 'moral panic' on their downtown streets—unemployed youngsters armed with squeegees, a sponge with a handle attached for cleaning car windows (Tyyska, 2001). Accused of 'tarnishing the image of the city' (see O'Grady *et al.,* 1998 for a critique) and branded as 'thugs' and criminals by prominent politicians (Spears, 1999), the squeegee kids quickly achieved the status of Canadian 'folk devils'. Furthermore, the streets at night were allegedly filled with these unwelcome visitors, who congregated in parks, street corners and alleyways, allegedly wasting their money on drink and drugs. Rather than welcoming their crude attempts to survive in the harsh neo-liberal Canadian economic climate by actually 'making work', many motorists apparently abhorred these young people invading their private automobile aura with their hand outstretched expecting some remuneration. The Toronto BMW brigade clearly were more concerned about having their paint scratched or having to wind down their window to part with some change, and hence complained long and loud about the phenomenon, particularly to the popular press. Similarly, no one seemed to be asking questions about why such a group was confined to hanging about the streets at night, rather than being able to access downtown facilities, because of their appearance and status.

As Howard Becker (1966) has long argued, there are few wholly deviant acts in society—only those that are perceived as deviant and defined as such. One might, for instance, imagine a university or charity fund-raising event which engaged in exactly the same kind of behaviours as the squeegee kids, albeit for some benevolent cause, which would be wholeheartedly and good-naturedly supported by the wider community. No such kindheartedness, however, could possibly be extended to those kids scraping for a living. Such an exchange meant, of course, actually being exposed to the 'problem' of homelessness and poverty—breaking the sanitised nature of separating rich and poor in society to avoid this uncomfortable issue. Additionally, these people were also primarily young—a second strike against them (Tanner, 1996). Technically, they should have been in school or at home, not destitute on the street or drinking in parks, reminding Ontarians that poverty, homelessness and unemployment do indeed exist in one of the so-called richest countries of the world (see Hagan and McCarthy, 1997).

Furthermore, these were not clean-cut University of Toronto graduates collecting money for charity, but were apparently grubby and strange-looking street punks trying to legitimise a 'free handout'. For example, consider the following opinion of squeegee kids by a Toronto driver, posted on a website:

> You're driving to work on an average day enjoying the sights as you approach a stop light when you are all of the sudden looking face to face with some punk looking through your windshield as he or she attempts to clean it with a squeegee. Clad in black or other grubby attire from head to toe, bearing chains and other metal objects both hanging off of and somewhat attached to their body, they finish their job and stand there waiting for you to hand them some money.
>
> (Censorfreeworld, 1998)

The key issue expressed here appears to be an abhorrence of coming face to face with Canada's young underclass in their full youth cultural attire. As such, there was only one way to tackle such an affront to the country's glorified car culture, gentrified nightlife and 'respectable' (moneyed) citizens, and that was to crack down on such perpetrators and literally sweep them off the street. As such, the Ontario provincial government forwarded a large collection of bills under the 'Safe Communities' umbrella that demonstrated its commitment to being tough on young people, street life and crime. For example, the Safe Streets Act banned squeegee kids from so much as stepping on to the road. The government has also passed legislation requiring permits for raves, and the Attorney General has written numerous letters to the federal government condemning the Young Offenders Act for its leniency, despite Canada having one of the highest rate of youth incarceration in the developed world (Winterdyk, 1996).

The Safe Streets Act makes squeegeeing and aggressive solicitation illegal, and allegedly protects people's ability to use public places without intimidation (excluding, of course, the squeegee kids themselves). In other words, the Act makes it illegal to give 'any reasonable citizen cause for concern', day and night. According to government sources, the Safe Streets Act was introduced in response to concerns from police, local officials, residents and businesses (Ontario Government, 1999a). In addition to making it illegal to approach a motor vehicle for the purpose of offering a service, and empowering police to arrest all but the most supplicant beggars, the Act makes it against the law to ask for money when under the influence of drugs or alcohol, outlaws ticket scalping and other forms of 'aggressive soliciting', and makes it illegal to dispose of condoms or syringes in parks or school yards (ICFI, 2000). Punishment under this legislation can mean up to $500 in fines, and a subsequent offence can lead to up to six months in jail (Ontario Government, 1999b).

Despite a series of protests and appeals from various civil liberty (Canadian Civil Liberties Association) and anti-poverty organisations (Ontario Coalition Against Poverty (OCAP)), the law came into effect in November 1999 and subsequently an Ontario court judge sentenced thirteen 'squeegee kids' for contravening it. They were charged in Toronto with aggressive solicitation, approaching stopped cars at intersections and cleaning their windshields in hope of payment. Toronto's estimated 25,000 homeless people had previously been targeted by an earlier drive in the summer initiated by the mayor of the city, Mel

Lastman, and his Community Action Policing programme, to crack down on squeegee kids and aggressive panhandlers in order to clear them from the streets of one of Canada's wealthiest cities (ICFI, 2000). With the new legislation and the cold Canadian winters backing their campaign, the city can rest assured that its attempts to 'clean up the streets' will be successful. As one of the police inspectors involved in the clean-up admitted: 'The best crime-fighting tool we have is minus-30 in February' (*Globe and Mail,* 26 July 1999:10).

The Ontario Conservative Party, in power since 1995, has waged a campaign to stigmatise the poor, slashing welfare benefits by more than one fifth. Subsequently, the government cancelled all support for social housing construction and instituted a mandatory 'workfare' programme for welfare recipients, depicting them as cheats, drug abusers and fraudsters. They have also announced plans to force all welfare recipients to undergo mandatory drug testing. Hence, there is a growing correlation between the increase in homelessness and panhandling and the cuts implemented in welfare, unemployment insurance and social housing and the closing of mental health facilities. But phenomena such as the squeegee kids are also rooted in family breakdown and violence and other social problems that are indicative, although in a less direct fashion, of the tensions and alienation produced by a society wracked by social inequality and economic insecurity (ICFI, 2000).

Shut out of most mainstream institutions, including retail stores, bars and coffee shops, street kids in Canada are even being denied access to the only space they still have—the street (Hagan and McCarthy, 1997). Much of the crackdown on public drinking is in effect a direct attack on the only socialising spaces left to groups like the squeegee kids. Drinking and drug-taking in the shadows of public parks, alleyways and car parks are the only residual nightlife spaces left to those excluded from all other social institutions. Hostels and squats may offer some refuge, but it is the street where most of these young people live out their daily lives. With few alternative programmes available, resistance against attacks on this space, to make them 'safe' for 'reasonable' and 'respectable' citizens, are growing.

A 'Squeegee Work Youth Mobilization' programme to teach them to get jobs repairing bikes was instituted as an alternative, but, as reported, many of the young people are wary of official agencies and 'make work' programmes (*Globe and Mail,* 27 July 1999: A9). More formal resistance has taken place, namely the 1998 'Hands Off Street Youth' march, jointly organised by anarchists and the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. And in 1999 OCAP organised a few-hundred-strong occupation of Allen Gardens Park, which had been an earlier target of the Community Action Program, where police cleared homeless people from the street. This was followed by a demonstration, in the summer of 2000 organised by OCAP and allies from unions and community groups, which ended in a full-scale police riot (Shantz, 2001). In the interim, the fate of the squeegee kids appears to have been largely sealed. Legislated off the street, robbed of their livelihood

and shunned by mainstream nightlife provision, they have been even further pushed back off the streets into the shadows of the increasingly gentrified city.

In conclusion, then, residual nightlife is by its very nature marginal. Either elements of it are commercialised and absorbed by the dominant culture, or it is viewed with disdain as a feature of a past that conjures up uncomfortable images of dereliction, poverty and moral decay. Many young people are similarly stereotyped in a highly negative fashion, through labels such as 'street kids', 'schemies', 'gang bangers', 'druggies' and 'criminals' or under more general terms like 'the underclass' or 'the socially excluded'. In the post-industrial city, residual spaces are viewed as potential sites for renewal and redevelopment, and marginalised groups are seen as easy fodder for 'make work' programmes or as targets for the latest street cleansing legislation. In light of such negative images and subordinate to the drive to gentrify the night-time economy, what resistant potential do marginalised youth cultures, like black and working-class youth, the homeless and the socially excluded in general, have? Clearly, part of their potential actually rests on their location outside the mainstream—reminding people that poverty and hardship remain and that not all youth are middle-class gentrified consumers. They are a thorn in the side of capitalism, which continues to expound 'trickle down' theories of wealth, general affluence and classlessness, despite evidence to the contrary.

Yet part of what is going on here in the regulation of various parts of residual nightlife is an 'out of sight, out of mind' exercise. The idea is that the issue will in effect be solved if you remove the 'problem' physically, whether it be renovating a derelict area of town, redeveloping a run-down bar or pub, forcibly removing the local 'undesirables' from the street (Jeffs and Smith, 1996), or ghettoising whole social groups into a particular neighbourhood or estate. Some of these approaches are very direct and, in effect, highly discriminatory, while others are much more subtle and understated. In the case of the Safe Streets Act in Ontario, one can literally see marginal youth being 'swept off the street'. On the other hand, the containment of Afro-American youth to their neighbourhoods and their engagement in largely masculine and misogynistic cultures may work to more subtly incorporate acts of resistance and quell political dissent.

In Chapter 5, we suggested how the continuing gentrification of mainstream nightlife is leading to higher levels of corporate control, alongside the increased regulation and sanitisation of youth cultural experiences of going out. The social polarisation of youth into 'good' gentrified nightlife consumers and those marginalised to 'the dark side of the street' is a visual expression of this process. While such changes are rapidly unfolding, there is plenty of disillusionment and resistance. The future role for residual nightlife spaces is part of the unfolding 'politics of nightlife'. Residual forms need to connect up to more active and alternative political acts and movements. If not, they will be likely to fade into the distant past, as they are incorporated, renovated and literally swept away by the new urban landscapes of pleasure.

9
'YOU'VE GOTTA FIGHT FOR YOUR RIGHT TO PARTY'
Alternative nightlife on the margins

As we have outlined earlier in the book, even though corporate ordering is a dominant feature of urban nightlife, it still contains many oppositional places and hence remains inherently transgressive and resistant. While some alternative spaces are simply more bohemian versions of mainstream culture, others openly identify themselves as oppositional. It is this nightlife 'on the margins', encapsulating both play and resistance, which we consider in this chapter.

All urban areas contain marginal spaces in which alternative cultures can grow. Such marginal nightlife spaces come in many guises from working-class cultures (Taylor *et al.,* 1996); gay areas (Whittle, 1994; Castells, 1982); ethnic communities (Rose, 1994); community centres and arts venues; the rave and 'underground' dance scene (Redhead, 1993; Collins, 1997; Chan, 1999); DiY and 'doof' cultures, and direct action and squatters' movements (McKay, 1996, 1998; Chatterton, 2002b; Bey, 1991;Wates, 1980; Corr, 1999; St John, 2001a). San Francisco's Mission, Haight Ashbury and Castro districts, Ibiza's and Ayia Napa's island dance scenes, and Barcelona's squats have all at some point featured in the landscapes of the alternative or bohemian. In this chapter we primarily reserve our discussion to forms of nightlife that involve intentional acts of resistance—which define themselves explicitly against the corporate 'other', the commercial, the mainstream. In particular, we look at how the 'independent' mode of nightlife production distinguishes itself from the dominate corporate form, and explore some examples from the rave and squatting scenes. Our argument is that while nightlife alternatives do exist in the margins, and offer models of resistance, the current tendency is that they appear to be squeezed further to the edges of the city by the growth of the corporate nightlife machine.

Understanding alternative nightlife on the margins

Resistant and marginal spaces are part of urban nightlife, despite often being sidelined by dominant narratives of the city. As a starting point, what do we mean by alternative and marginal nightlife? Alternative nightlife is often defined in opposition to and distinct from the 'mainstream', while the margins form the geographical edge of the centre. To begin to unpack alternative nightlife on the margins, we can first think of it through its physical location. For many reasons,

such as lack of consumer financial strength or self-preservation, alternative nightlife spaces are often found in 'fringe locations'. This location is a vital part of the self-regulation of the alternative scene, as it ensures that attendance is based on desire and empathy rather than chance. One dedicated traveller to a Goth night (Beth, 20 years old, Bristol) suggested that she felt 'a breed apart because you have to go quite a long way, you have to be quite dedicated'.

Margins are an important part of social and spatial ordering. They have a binary relationship with the centre—without margins there can be no centre, and vice versa. Clearly, dualisms such as centre and margin, and associated traits such as order and disorder, simplify the fluid and conflictual nature of urban life. Indeed, defining the boundaries between the mainstream centre and the alternative margins is an act of power in itself. For example, boundary drawing is often undertaken by property speculators, planners and marketers. Most people also accept and reinforce this spatial logic and choose to stick to their 'own' territory, often for reasons of self-preservation. Others invade, challenge or subvert such geographical imaginations, engaging in a more fluid sense of space in the night-time economy, inhabiting both the mainstream and the margins.

However, alternative nightlife spaces are more than physical spaces, they are also socially constructed, collectively imagined and ideologically defined. The margins evoke a strong 'sense of place', which goes beyond bricks and mortar. Clearly, both the mainstream and the margins are historically and socially contingent spaces, both continually reconfigured according to shifting cultural norms and styles. Today's margins can rapidly become tomorrow's centre, especially as alternative, deviant and counter-cultural fashions are commodified and the underground is pushed over-ground (see Plate 9.1). Neat divisions such as those between the commercial and the mainstream, the marginal and the resistant, are continually blurring and changing (Hetherington, 1997). As Negri and Hardt (2001) point out, there are now few outside spaces or margins left, so it is imperative to be resistant from within the heart of the capitalist empire.

Defining the margins also implies the use of a particular set of spatial and social strategies by a variety of groups and players. For many participants of the underground, a corporate 'other' is necessary to define their scene against, and in locations where the commercial centre is strong, marginal underground scenes are often thrown into stronger relief and given impetus. Yet even the mere presence of an underground scene can legitimate the introduction of restrictive legislation from the state. Various media also play a key role here. Thornton (1995) outlines the mass media as the main antagonist of the underground, epitomised by coverage of the acid-house, Ecstasy-led rave scene in late 1980s England which vilified young people and induced various moral panics. However, dedicated micro and niche media such as specialist magazines, zines and fliers also play a key self-support role in marginal cultures.

The 'other places' of the margins offer us alternative perspectives or ways of seeing (Hetherington, 1996). Such places play an important role for those who live outside the norms of society, especially through the often romanticised spatial

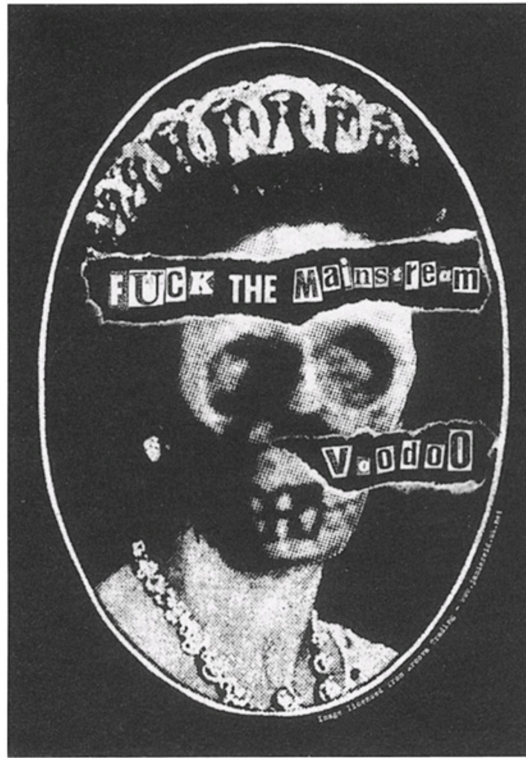

Plate 9.1 Creative dialogue on the under-overground; nightclub flier, Voodoo Nightclub, Liverpool, UK, 2002

Source: Arcova Studio

imaginaries of certain groups (Shields, 1991). Many alternative places (Stonehenge, Glastonbury, Woodstock) adopt a mythical status for individuals and subcultures and, as sites of 'social centrality', play a key role in identity-building *(ibid.)*. However, such place images can easily be overturned. Longstanding, affordable and sacred nightlife spaces on the margins—a cherished bar, an old restaurant, a corner kiosk, a seedy club, a squat—have been bulldozed to make way for the expansion of corporate culture, literally turning such places into dust through the imperatives of growth and profit (Solnit and Schwartzenberg, 2000).

An alternative viewpoint among participants is a key part of marginal spaces. The margins are places where people on the fringe of society can find a space to articulate themselves (Hetherington, K., 1998). They are often distinguished by shocking, 'out of place' bodily appearances, often displaying an anti-aesthetic, setting them apart from the respectable, fashionable mainstream. Moral panics abound from such appearances, centring around the deviant activities of

anarchists, squatters, artists, musicians, drug-users and punks, and other 'non-productive' groups not willing or able to join mainstream consumer and working society. The fringe, then, contains the shadowy and threatening 'other' of urban nightlife. They are part of the unspoken social norms of the segregated city. While many people naturally gravitate to such places, as they feel enfranchised by particular musical or dress codes (or, indeed, lack of them), others, through their own internalised 'sense of limits' (Bourdieu, 1984), exclude themselves by making judgements that such places do not contain 'people like me'. Denizens of alternative nightlife spaces, then, have their own sets of dispositions and practices, or a 'habitus', which differentiates them from the mainstream (Thornton, 1995).

The margins are thus often seedbeds for counter-hegemonic or resistant ideologies (Hetherington, 1997) which involve a commitment to an identity, community or 'cause' as well as an attachment to particular places. Such ideologies, however, come in many different forms. Pile and Keith (1997) have stressed that resistance occurs in many more situations than just those where there is a dichotomy between 'enemy' and 'victim' strung across (pre)defined structured power relations. In this sense, they suggest there needs to be a reconsideration of the relationship between domination and resistance, and that both are 'contingent, ambiguous and awkwardly situated' (*ibid.*: 3). In particular, too literal readings of the margins may regard it as always in strict opposition with mainstream culture, when many aspects of the underground creatively appropriate, plunder, co-exist, and/or simply ignore it (Slater, 1996). However, the whole idea of what counts as 'resistance' needs to be understood alongside the notion of intentionality (Creswell, 1996). In the context of nightlife, this throws up distinctions between actively oppositional cultural forms and more individualised variations in the mainstream, such as an independently run, chic style bar.

On one level, then, for many people resistance evokes images of overt and often heroic acts of defiance with the intention of struggling against identifiable power structures such as capitalism, patriarchy, commercialism and globalisation. Some groups embrace marginality and see it as a backdrop to being provocatively different or confrontational. The growth of radical environmental protests is a great impetus for such resistant lives, with many people, not interested in aligning to mainstream political parties and tired of waiting for change, simply 'Doing it Themselves' (Brass and Koziell, 1997). In the night-time economy, some groups have followed such trends (see Chatterton, 2002b), developing explicit and overt political agendas to resist: for example, staging illegal warehouse and forest parties, and squatting.

However, resistance is often more mundane and pragmatic. Many people simply transgress and disrupt in their own way during their everyday encounters with mainstream commercial culture. Resistance also entails a host of more localised 'backstage' actions, through the use of micro-tactics at the everyday level (Thrift, 1997; De Certeau, 1984), or through alternative conceptions of the self and of play (Malbon, 1999). Of relevance here are the 'ephemeral spatialised tactics of rebellion' which Flusty (2000) describes in relation to skate kids, street buskers

and peddlers evading the watchful eye of downtown security guards. Skateboarding, in particular, is an implicit critique of the limited design and uses to which we put our contemporary cities (Borden, 2001:173). In some cases, the criminalisation of skateboarding has led to a radicalisation of street skaters into 'pavement commandos' who fight for the right to skate unharassed (Flusty, 2000). Such acts of 'transgression', then, question appropriate codes of behaviours attached to place, and hence the margins often seem 'out of place' in relation to the 'taken-for-granted' invisible boundaries within social life (Creswell, 1996). While such acts are often not overt statements of opposition, they are a semi-permanent feature of the urban landscape which sometimes win small concessions or remind us of the arbitrary, and often banal, norms and rules which entwine urban space (Flusty, 2000). A context such as the city at night is replete with such acts of transgression, often mixed with pleasure-seeking.

On the margins, people are often actively engaged 'auteurs' in the making and remaking of the urban. These are Lefebvre's (1991) spaces of representation, which are directly lived, imagined and reinvented. The sheer scale, in terms of both physical form and interaction, makes cities sites of tremendous possibility. As Castells (1982) pointed out, cities are unfinished products and are the result of an endless historical struggle over the definition of meaning by a variety of opposing social actors. The history of cities, and thus of their nightlife, can be read as an interaction of the dominant commercial urban project, with alternative meanings and visions. Alternative nightlife is very much part of a desire to make an 'other' city, a free city, a wild city, a people's city. Many groups, from squatter movements to arts collectives, are busy exploring strategies for building a range of other 'possible urban worlds' (INURA, 1998). The margins, then, are an appeal for autonomy and self-management outside the influence of big business, government and formal planning. Many individuals and groups have envisioned alternatives based upon new relationships between space and society, challenging prevailing cultural values and political institutions, and exploring new meanings. Urban nightlife is not a mere product of planners, architects and bureaucrats (Borden *et al.,* 2001), and different/marginal groups continue to be involved in its creation, both materially and symbolically.

Beyond conscious acts of resistance, the alternative is also about tolerance, diversity, acceptance or echoing the punk ethic, just being who you are (Muggleton, 2000). It is a space for expressive identities which are less bound by the rigours of fashion and social protocols (Hetherington, 1998). The fringe is a chaotic, unstable, fluid space, an unbounded 'space-between' (Hetherington, 1997: 27) which brings together a collection of unusual things, and contains unsettling juxtapositions and alternative modes of social orderings. Many, often conflictual, identities pass through such spaces, and so while it has its regulars and 'insiders', it is also open to 'outsiders'. Berman's (1986) distinction between 'open-minded' and 'closed or absent-minded' spaces is useful here, with the former having relevance to the spaces of the margins. The concepts of the liminal and the carnivalesque also have relevance to the margins, in that a reversal of normal social

roles and a transgression of normative behaviour become possible, and in some cases established practices are replaced with new ones. Such places provide openings for more affective, if looser-bound, neo-tribal forms of identification and lifestyle (Shields, 1991; Maffesoli, 1996), or what Hetherington (1998) has called ‘expressive identities’ and ‘emotional communities’.

While alternative places are often ‘melting pots’ for a range of marginal groups, they are also characterised by a desire, however fleeting, for affectual solidarity and togetherness (Turner, 1982). Many groups on the margins have come together through disillusionment and frustration with mainstream culture, and represent attempts to recreate a sense of belonging, sociation (or ‘bund’, according to Hetherington, 1996) and ‘authenticity’. Hetherington (1998) comments that notions of belonging among ‘outsiders’ has led to the development of distinct ‘structures of feeling’ for many alternative groups. The so-called ‘death of society’ during Thatcherism and Reaganism, along with new legislation in the UK such as the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, has strengthened the need for such ties of solidarity and togetherness on the margins. Faced with insecure employment and housing, many young people have inverted the selfish individualism of modern consumer culture to create their own, more self-sufficient ‘mini-communities’. Solidaristic rituals and means of communication, such as zines, print and web media, gatherings and collectives, are constantly evolving on the fringe to offset the alienating excesses of mainstream culture. Many commentators used the emergence of ‘tribal’ youth cultures over the 1990s to point towards temporary and highly emotionally bound groups, from sound system collectives, squatters, road protest and peace camps to GM-crop trashers and Reclaim The Streets collectives. While labels such as ‘tribal’ often have more to do with media hype than sociological rigour (although see Maffesoli, 1996; Bennett, 2000), they do point to groups who, in their own ways, have attempted to create what McKay (1996) has called ‘cultures of resistance’.

Finally, nightlife on the margins is also driven much less by commercial styles and music and fads of mainstream culture, blending a variety of uses such as live music, socialising, performing arts, drinking and eating. Marginal nightlife spaces take their inspiration from subculturalists and specific communities such as gay and ethnic minority groups, or alternative musical styles such as hip hop, Goth and post-punk (Bennett, 2000). In this sense, there are important experiential differences between the alternative and mainstream. As one person told us (Joe, 23 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne): ‘I think there is no sense of, say, fashion consciousness. It’s almost like anti-fashion—people are either making music or listening to music, like non-radio music.’ The atmosphere and clientele, which is often described through labels such as ‘dark’, ‘seedy’ and ‘funky’, is vital to the margins.

Clearly, it is important not to over-romanticise such places. While the margins may display strong social and emotional bonds and a feeling of togetherness, they also have their own barriers to entry, stylistic codes, regulations and forms of exclusion. As mentioned in Chapter 4, what Thornton (1995) calls ‘subcultural

capital' also acts as the lynchpin of an alternative hierarchy which allows those 'in the know' to repel and distance themselves from the 'unhip' mainstream. Moreover, many people on the fringe, because they do not feel part of mainstream society, often consciously build defensive and exclusionary spaces between themselves and the outside world.

The independent mode of production: 'lifestyle over profit'

The margins are based upon a series of beliefs among producers and consumers which set them apart from larger, corporate nightlife operators and include: a greater emphasis on 'use' rather than 'exchange' value; a more prominent role for individual entrepreneurs and collectively run spaces; less emphasis on profit; a more fluid relationship between consumers and producers; and more self-regulatory forms of policing. Such beliefs are described through any number of monikers: 'ethically', 'socially' or 'ecologically aware', 'anti-consumerist', 'pro-lifestyle', 'pro-community' or 'pro-people', rather than 'pro-profit'.

Many alternative places have developed an atmosphere based upon 'a cult of the individual', in which one entrepreneur has catalysed and inspired people and a deep affiliation between the venue and a group has developed. As one DJ from Newcastle upon Tyne commented to us: 'You can't underestimate the power of a person. That person's kind of influence on every aspect of what you experience in that place, and it sounds very corny but it is giving a soul to a place' (DJ 2, Newcastle upon Tyne). Thus, unlike large publicly quoted companies who are ultimately answerable to a board of directors and have a 'fiduciary duty' to shareholders and the stock market, smaller operators are more answerable to themselves and their customers.

Indeed, many independent operators establish bars in order to provide somewhere for themselves, and their consociates (Muggleton, 2000), to socialise. They often feel that they pursue a different philosophy compared to larger commercial operators, in which the venue is part of their lifestyle rather than a vehicle for maximising profits. As one independent bar operator from the north of England eulogised:

> We are one of the few places in the city centre that's offering anything… that isn't Bar Oz [an Australian theme bar]. And we're not driven by fads. We've got our own rules. And it feels, at times, like running a different country. It feels like you're running an independent nation on the weekend. And everyone's having a good time and it's great. And that's the buzz of it for us. I like what I do and I wouldn't sell it for all the money in the world really. I'm far more interested that my children will grow up seeing me doing something that mattered than I am to take a big dollar off someone. Lifestyle over profit every time…you have to give the people who come here something… Almost like religion. And you feel, like, 'Ah, that's better, now

> let's get on with the struggle of life', kind of thing. It's a very romantic notion as opposed to the big-business things that people do.
>
> (Bar owner 4, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Creating an alternative vibe has indeed become one of the aims of some large corporations, eager to compete with their rivals in the independent sector. Corporate operators often track alternative venues hoping to predict new trends in nightlife, often employing 'coolhunters' (Klein, 2000) to extract the essence of 'subcultural capital' (Thornton, 1995) and replicate the 'organic' elements of what makes a great venue. However, the limitations to this process of replication are all too evident, as one music promoter located in Bristol commented to us: 'If you're a big pub and design your pub on market research you are reacting to taste, you are not being creative' (DJ 2, Bristol). Another small-scale promoter from the UK suggested that this 'edge' was not something that could be simply manufactured:

> It is just about having that street sort of edge to what you do and you cannot really define it. People get hundreds of thousands for doing that in London to give brands that kind of thing, and that is because it is, you cannot just write a paper on it and give it to some big company and say do this in your bar and you are going to be cool, man. You cannot do it. It is just intangible.
>
> (DJ 3, Leeds)

What the above comment suggests is that a good venue vibe does not stem from market research or focus groups, but flows from a deeper connection between the owners, staff and customers.

An important feature of the independent mode of production is the challenge it offers to the traditional producer/consumer divide, a split which is often much more explicit in market-based forms of leisure and consumption. On the margins, participation is more about 'active production' than 'passive consumption' and hence there is a more fluid boundary between producers and consumers through the exchange of music, ideas, business deals and networks of trust and reciprocity. DJs, musicians and record label owners have close associations with certain independent nightlife spaces to create an 'authentic' outlet for their work and a meeting place for like-minded people. In turn, clubbers, journalists, reviewers and wanna-be artists visit the venue, hoping to make connections or listen to the music they can't hear elsewhere. Marginal spaces in this sense are a source of creative innovation, revelling in a desire for novelty, conflict and dialogue. They often form the basis of more localised nightlife production-consumption clusters (Santiago-Lucerna, 1998), characterised by an independent and publicly funded ethos which provides a counterweight to corporate-led nightlife. Hesmondhalgh (1998) has pointed to the independent dance music industry as an example of a more democratic form of popular culture due to the affordability of technologies, which has led to a decentralisation of production epitomised through the 'bedroom

DJ' and the lack of a 'star system' which valorises certain big-name artists. The post-rave era has also seen the growth of a network of independent dance clubs, bars, record and clothes shops.

At one alternative bar, the bar manager described the vision of the owners:

> They want it to be a hive of productivity, if you like. They want people to come in here and write music, and produce music and play it where possible. They wanted to come down…and set up something that would be used by people to produce music and art work, and for it to be a place where you can come socially as well.
>
> (Bar manager 4, Bristol)

For another arts promoter DJ on the underground in the north of England, creating a fluid boundary between consumers and producers entailed allowing people the freedom to express themselves, which stimulated not only creativity but also critical thinking: 'Our aim is freedom of expression. It is to allow people to express themselves… If you curb creativity you are curbing society's ability to grow…to deal with big problems' (DJ 2, Newcastle upon Tyne).

Independent and alternative production, then, has a fundamentally different set of parameters compared to the corporate world. In contrast to the mainstream, it aspires to cultural creativity, more democratic and inclusive public spaces and the development of a closer link between consumers and producers. However, as we have seen in Chapter 2, the economic balance between these two worldviews has shifted, especially as large operators are able to gain cost advantages through rational techniques of production and 'synergies' between products (Ritzer, 2001). While central areas at night are teeming with places of corporate consumption, there are now far fewer places for creative interaction between producers and consumers.

Regulating the margins

As argued in Chapter 3, the 'normative landscape' (Creswell, 1996) of mainstream nightlife is imbued with certain styles and behaviours which are expected and accepted, enforced through door policies and technologies such as CCTV. In contrast, the margins offer the possibility of a less regulated, more fluid space defined by an absence, or defiance, of appropriate codes. However, rather than a place of absolute freedom or disorder, marginal spaces and practices have their own modes of social ordering, rules and relations of power (Hetherington, 1997). Alternative nightlife spaces strive for greater freedom and autonomy, not through less regulation but by striving to create more emancipatory forms of social order.

Codes and rules exist within alternative nightlife for a number of reasons. Many normative rules, such as health, licensing and fire regulations, are imposed by the local and national state from which few, apart from the 'unlawful', can escape. Yet, within this legal context, many groups on the fringe establish their own codes

of practice (Plate 9.2). The saying that 'there is no such thing as a free party' alludes to the fact that much organisation, regulation and self-policing is needed to hold a successful event. Lighting, sound systems, transport, water, door security, look-outs and even police liaison, all are ingredients in regulating free parties and raves. Many of these rules are self-generated and communally agreed to demonstrate and envision less hierarchical ways of social and spatial ordering.

Among the most visibly different aspects of the margins are its entrance requirements, which are often less formally monitored and based around self-selection and subcultural knowledge. One young woman (Cait, 27 years old, Leeds) reflected on her favourite alternative bar: 'No entrance regulations, I guess, crucially. Like no dress code, pretty friendly, non-pretentious kind of atmosphere. And there's, like, a bit of a kind of a social worker, caring profession, public sector sort of feel to it.' Additionally, some regulars of one bar on the alternative scene in Newcastle upon Tyne, opened by a collective of local actors and musical promoters, commented:

Andy: This is a great pub, loads of different stuff, the arts, playing here, absolutely fantastic Geordie productions. Some of them have got a history, they have not got Bacardi Breezers stacked in front of your face.

Sally: And you have got interesting people in there.

Andy: They are not in the centre of town, they are not full of drunken arseholes… The hen nights…

Sally: They play decent music, not just whatever is in the charts. It is quite a safe environment to look different, no skin off my nose, but there are folks, it is a safe place to be down here.

(Focus group 6, Newcastle upon Tyne)

Underpinning such self-regulation is the geographical location of many alternative venues on the edge of central areas—a liminal twilight zone which offers flexibility and anonymity.

Places on the margins, then, strive for self-selection. One manager of a bar/arts venue commented: 'The most powerful form of advertising is word of mouth' in order to attract 'like-minded people' (Bar manager 5, Bristol). For another independent bar owner, attracting such people through personal contacts was one way of avoiding the tension and possible conflict associated with larger downtown bars:

> Go to any of the smaller places, there's a more localised relationship between who is running the place or managing the place, or whatever, and its audiences, clientele. You know, the bigger the place the more of a problem there is. I mean, if you've got a small bar that you know is going to be run individually, you get rid of the social problems associated with the anonymity of the larger places which are just about consumption.
>
> (Bar owner 3, Leeds)

A FEW POINTS

The free party scene is radically different to the rave scene - it is Smaller, more intimate and far less intrusive. It is both non-profit based and more diverse than the rave scene of the late eighties.

Free party systems have been an important part of Brighton underground culture for almost twenty years - much local talent has emerged from this scene and it is of benefit to the community and the reputation of Brighton and Hove.

It is damaging to society as a whole to criminalise large sections of the community for what they consider to be a relatively harmless leisure pursuit.

Local government and police should try to accommodate the free party scene by talking to party organizers and finding ways of licensing events so that party goers can hold parties, local residents are not disturbed and the safety of people goers can be ensured.

Society changes - and the law and the manner in which it is upheld should reflect These changes. We feel that we are being penalized through knee jurk legislation that was developed to deal with problem that no longer exists. Legislation and attitudes should change to reflects the current situation in order to allow party organizers to lawfully hold smaller gatherings in agreed locations with the consent of both government and police.

Considerable more trouble is caused on an average Friday night in any town or city; free parties are on the whole relatively free of violence and crime. Free party organiz-ers and goers are well educated and aware of health and safety issues that are encountered in the organization and running of parties.

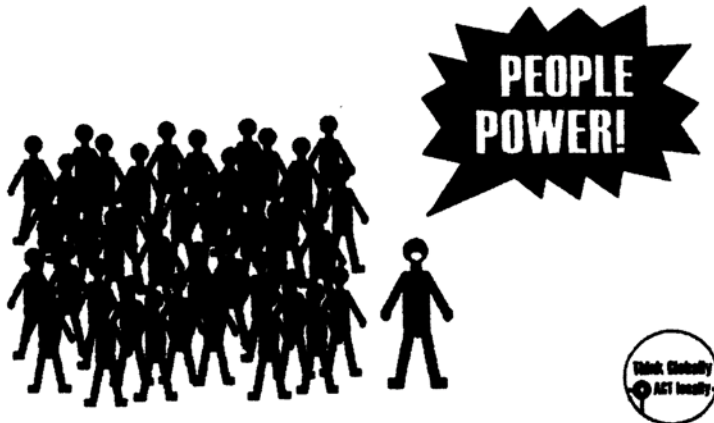

Plate 9.2 Flier given out at a free party; Brighton, UK, 2001

Many underground activities, such as raves, squats and free warehouse and forest parties, involve transient appropriations of material space which transcend established regulations and laws. Hakim Bey's (1991) notion of the temporary autonomous zone highlights the political potential of liberating spaces from their everyday meanings. Within these fluid spaces and among the debris of empty rooms and temporary decorations, young people are active participants in the social and spatial construction of their surroundings. Unlike many of the

formalised spaces of urban nightlife, then, free parties and raves are transitory events which are brought together through loose networks of communication. Rather than relying on conventional channels of communication, such events are brought together rapidly and silently through the internet, chat sites, e-mail, mobile phones and word of mouth to sidestep the police and local state bureaucracy. The physical location of raves and free parties and the virtual space of the internet combine to create a 'space of flows' and a range of possibilities to bypass corporate media and entertainment and develop the underground (Gibson, 1999).

The parameters and regulations for staging an event such as a free party are often temporary and fast moving. Once a venue is found and word of mouth is used to attract an audience, the party can commence. As one free party organiser (Simon, 30 years old, Bristol) in the UK put it: 'Personally, I just spot a warehouse, go and eye it up. Two hours before we're ready to do a party someone goes and opens it. Then we drive through the doors, shut it behind, set up, a thousand people turn up. Phone lines, word of mouth.'

Many people are attracted to the free party scene because of the ability to be 'free' and 'party' in the way they like. As an organiser from the 'Resis Trance' free party collective in the south-west of England commented:

> It's free. They're free parties. Obviously, you know, there's a sense of togetherness. But it's very, very different in the free parties. It's very anarchic, chaotic, messy, hazy. You don't have to worry about security … This is all about deregulation, you don't have to ask anybody for permission to do anything. There's a vibe there you won't get in a club.

However, a whole range of restrictive legislation has emerged to crack down on the unregulated nature of alternative nightlife on the fringe. Here, nightlife is often cast as deviant or abject—something 'impure which threatens the purified body of western culture' (Sibley, 1998:95). Hence, it becomes subject to a whole set of restrictive laws which casts participants further as 'outsiders'. In this sense, many groups on the margins are criminalised and seen as inherently transgressive due to their fluid rather than sedentary use of space *(ibid.)*. From such fears of the margins, various mechanisms of social control, such as the Criminal Justice Act (1994) in the UK, have emerged to curb nomadic and spontaneous groups such as New Age travellers and ravers. The media has also fuelled moral panics, often stemming from drug use (McKay, 1996), while other marginal groups, such as gays and ethnic minorities, have been subject to homophobic and racist policing.

Tensions also arise as the margins and the mainstream overlap, collide and antagonise, which brings different ideologies and styles into sharp relief. Many people who have constructed an outwardly alternative identity, for example, can provoke aggressive responses from the 'normal' world around them. As one young woman (Sally, 21 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne) commented:

> I was with a lass with a skin head and we went downtown and blokes would just stop you, would touch you for a start. Stand at the bar, someone runs their hand down your back and goes for your arse—now, I mean, that is not safe—'Are you a fucking dyke then?' because she has got a skin head.

During the course of a night out, then, such collisions periodically occur between alternative and mainstreams groups as they criss-cross the city to their respective venues.

Resisting corporate nightlife

As we have suggested, resistance to corporate nightlife comes in many guises and there are no ideologically pure spaces of the margins from which to resist. All cultural and nightlife activity is in some way either mediated through, or defined against, commercial culture. Many cultural forms, although linked to the commercial economy, are self-conscious and critical of their relationship with it. The Body Shop treads such a line, while corporate brands such as Sony, Warner, Gap clothing, Starbucks or Bacardi drinks have been 'outed' from the ranks of image-saturated consumer society as corporate 'baddies'. Popular culture, in particular, is a site of both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic ideology and action (Best, 1998). In this sense, while popular culture is clearly enmeshed with commercial culture, it also has a long tradition of thriving in the gaps, rejecting mainstream corporate culture and reflecting the urban margins (Haslam, 1999). From jazz and rock and roll to rap, punk, acid house and break beats, pop culture has borrowed, learnt from and identified with those on the margins.

Many groups and individuals have drawn their own battle lines and have developed tactics for resistance and self-preservation. For instance, one young person we spoke to pointed to the process of standardisation within nightlife: 'You know these super-clubs, you just go, like I say it's just like going into McDonald's. You're like a sheep. You go in for a product, get it, and leave' (Mike, 24 years old, Newcastle upon Tyne). As the following message on a chat board shows, sceptical consumers often expose another reality lying behind the hype of the city boosters and gentrifiers—that behind the glitzy veneer, there is not much going on:

> What the hell is going on? How many more trendy bars and clubs do we need? If Leeds is to live up to the cosmopolitan label it seems to have given itself, then there needs to be a whole lot more variety. Leeds has no arena, no big stadium gigs and is a city of mediocrity… Don't believe the hype, they're just trying to tempt everyone to Leeds to rent out their extortionately priced flats, drink their over-priced watered-down lager, wear their over-priced clothes—and for what? So you can call yourself cool!
>
> (Geoff, 2001)

Community-based provision continues to play a role in providing diverse alternative nightlife, mainly as public subsidies allow them a degree of flexibility outside the sole focus on profit. However, the growth of standardised nightlife products, especially those geared towards alcohol sales, were seen to have a detrimental effect on local creative and musical cultures and the viability of alternative spaces. As one musician in Bristol commented: ‘That’s what I worry about, the more it becomes about just drinking and about just money, the more the city’s creative cultures will suffer’ (DJ 2, Bristol). As larger theme bars come to dominate urban areas, local kids have to try and look harder to connect with creative musical scenes and smaller, more experimental clubs. Another music promoter, from the Rabble Alliance Collective in the north-east of England, reflected that for too long the nightlife market has been driven by established interests rather than being responsive to what people want. In this sense, he said: ‘There’s a difference between producing what people want and dictating what people get.’

Meanwhile, in Brighton, the anarcho-publication *Schnews,* offering a weekly round-up of radical news and direct action campaigning, outlines the issue graphically:

> The problem is that as we sip our well-earned pint we could be lining the pockets of some corporate nasty we’ve never even heard of…the days of your local, friendly, community boozer are definitely numbered. Pubs are being priced out of the range of ordinary working-class people. Soon only the rich or the trendy will be able to afford to drink in a public house. The global capitalist pub of the future will have all the character of the foyer of your local Sainsbury’s.
>
> (*Schnews,* 2001b)

What promoted such comments from *Schnews* was the forced closure of several traditional and well-loved pubs in Brighton. After tenants stood up to one of the UK’s fastest expanding multi-site pub owners over the issue of tie-ins on beer purchases, rents were hiked to force a change in ownership. The tenants, among 800 nationwide, became embroiled with the pub company in the European Court of Human Rights, in a battle over the legality of tie-ins (Tomlinson, 2002). Regulars from the pubs protested, many helping to organise a nearby temporary autonomous space to highlight the issue of corporate greed, while campaigns have been launched to expose the domination of Brighton pubs by two other large companies (*Evening Anus,* 2000).

While downtown areas are increasingly dominated by such profit-focused nightlife operators, many places on the margins have become well known as seedbeds for radical activity and alternative nightlife. A short walk from Bristol’s centre reveals a simmering, subversive nightlife culture, a heady mix of party fused with the politics of the underground. A stroll along Stokes Croft, the city’s alternative club destination, and across to Easton in the poorer east side reveals

flyposters advertising the underground. Environmental and political posters declare 'Bike It!', 'Vote for Nobody in the coming election', 'World Car Free Day —critical mass carnival', while others advertise nights of party, politics and protest. Tactical Frivolity has recently held a benefit gig for the European tour of the 'Carnival Caravan against Capitalism' at Easton Community Centre, while the 5th of May Group featured a 'resis-dance' event in support of the prisoner Satpal Ram, in collaboration with the local squat-cum-official resource centre, the Kebele, and its radical monthly publication, *Bristle*. In the city's predominantly black inner-city area of St Paul's, the Malcolm X Centre, long-time promoter of black arts and culture, recently organised the 'Resistance Conference', offering a chance to 'discuss and participate in issues you don't hear about on the news'.

So, many groups continue to mobilise around such concerns and disenchantment. Drawing upon their own energies and resources, creative communities of designers, promoters, musicians, fanzine makers, pirate radio producers, DJs, filmmakers, writers, squatters, punks and artists have inhabited the margins, signalling their opposition to corporate activity. Such groups have made more formal attempts to politicise a night out and raise various issues relating to corporate control as well as presenting alternative conceptions of how places might be differently organised. Direct action groups, for example, using techniques of civil disobedience and nonviolent action, take the battle on to the streets and into the private space of firms. Earth First!, the network for ecological direct action, for example, is informed by radical notions of urban consumption which question core assumptions about lifestyles in the west (Purvis, 1996; Wall, 2000), and to these ends groups across Europe and the USA have undertaken occupations and sit-ins at shops, offices and workplaces. The Stop the City movement of the 1980s, 'Reclaim the Street' street parties of the 1990s, and the ceaseless flow of protests at international trade and political meetings in, for example Gothenburg, Seattle, Prague, Washington and Genoa, are all wedded to an ideology of direct resistance to corporate power. In San Francisco, the Biotic Baking Brigade took to pie-ing politicians and business leaders, including the city's one-time infamous hard-nosed mayor Willie Brown, for their role in putting profit before people within the urban fabric. The consumption-based, growth-oriented and increasingly corporate-dominated city, then, is a focus for both social and ecological resistance as well as consumerism and play. Below, we look at two specific examples of such organised resistance—the free party scene and squatting.

Staying underground: raving, clubbing and the free party scene

The underground free party scene has long challenged the monopoly of commercial leisure providers, and it often creatively re-uses the debris of the urban environment. In fact, going out at night has changed fundamentally over the last few

BOX 9.1
: A NIGHT OUT ON THE MARGINS; NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, 3 OCTOBER 2001

We met John, Mary and Gaz at the Ferry Arms for a few pints first before going to the party. Mick and Steve were playing some hard house and techno tunes and then going on to play at the wardhouse, so no one was going to leave until they did. About 11.30 p.m. we all staggered in convoy down to the river, following the directions of the bar staff, who were eager to close up and follow. Down at the river, we met some friends of john's who were helping out:

Jay: Where's the pirty?

Pete: It's on the other side of the river. There's geezer meeting people on the bridge once an hour to take people over.

Jay: What's the place like?

Pete: It's an knackered old pub, man. Wicked. Derelict, but we've only using the downstairs 'cos the upstairs is fucked. We're gunna serve booze from the bar and we've got DJs playing behind there as well.

Jay: Who's playing?

Pete: Techno stuff, man. Bit of gabba as well. Got some live percussion from those blokes who play at the arts centre 'n'all.

Jay: What time's it finish?

Pete: All night, reckon. When the clubs kick out it'll fill up, Security's sorted. The police have been, but we've got a Section 6 notice up so they can't do us.[1]

Jay: See you over there.

Pete: Nice one.

The Cushy Mallet pub had been derelict for several years after the docks had closed. Whoever had broken in and taken the metal grids off the windows had cleaned it up and got the electricity on and fixed the water in the toilets. A bloke on the door, grinning forcefully, repeated to everyone, 'Pound for the sound'. The large bar in the centre of the main lounge was now back in operation after what looked like years of disrepair. Several people were busy rigging up sound equipment and sorting out beer, cigarettes and food to sell at the bar. We bought some bottled organic ale from them, brought in from a local brewer, although the drinks of choice that night were cans of Stella Artois and Kronenbourg from the local drinks store.

> We circulated aimlessly round the pub, catching the eye and chatting to people they had met at other similar parties, When the music came on, there was a loud cheer. Banging techno filled the small room, and the majority started to sway to its uplifting rtythms. Mani and his mates arrived about 1 a.m. with some more speakers and started selling Ecstasy pills to those who wanted them. 'Three quid each, like,' he repeated as he drew his large bag of pharmaceuticals out of his coat pocket. By 5 a.m. the party was in full swing, now full of lucky post-clubbers who had heard about it in town. A constant stream of people were coming and going, several DJs had their turn on the decks, a group of people had started drumming along to the music using some crates as an impromptu stage, and the bar staff chatted and negotiated with skint punters who pleaded for late-night discounts. Mad Leslie, was dancing on the bar. Gaz told us: 'She always goes for it. Ten pills and she's up for days. Crazy, never stops.' The police drove past a few times that night, but way, and that it wasn't the type of crowd to cause much trouble. And anyway, did nothing to stop the party, They knew it was too contained and out of the it would be more hassle than it was worth to kick everyone out.

decades, mainly due to the advent of DJ-based and prerecorded electronic dance music. Such shifts gained notoriety through the emergence of the 'one-nation' rave cultures in the UK in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Characterised by smiley faces, Ecstasy drug cultures, acid-house music and all-night free parties usually held in disused warehouses, forests and other marginal spaces, 'rave' has grown from a largely underground culture based around places such as London, Detroit, Chicago and Berlin, to become a truly global phenomenon (see Gibson 1999; Saunders 1993, 1995; Collins 1997; Garratt 1998; Bussmann, 1998). The history of rave and dance music is complex and their origins defy easy categorisation (Redhead, 1993). Nevertheless, nightlife changed dramatically after the rave scene and the 1988 'summer of love', when thousands of kids were first united under the banner of PLUR (Peace, Love, Unity, Respect) and DJs played a mixture of hip hop, disco, acid-house and techno music in the rave island of Ibiza.

The Do-it-Yourself (DiY) free party and festival music scenes have played a key role in providing entertainment and music based on the needs, desires and energies of participants, and have politicised a wider community about the dominant influence of the state and private capital play in structuring 'free time' (Rietveld, 1998). In the late 1980s and early 1990s, pioneering free party crews such as Desert Storm, the United Sound Systems, Mutoid Waste Company, Schoom and Psychic TV played a crucial part in developing such cultures of resistance. Spiral Tribe have been one of the most influential hardcore techno sound systems, holding marathon free parties in derelict buildings and warehouses across Europe since the 1990s. Subsequently, they have been central in establishing Network 23, an alternative non-profit information channel. Part internet networking tool, part cosmological doctrine, Network 23 was established around the time of the UK Criminal Justice Act to support and promote the underground scene and bypass the corporate music and entertainment system across North America and Europe.

The free party scene, not surprisingly, has led to the introduction of legislation designed specifically to curb its growth. This was particularly evident in the UK, where the unregulated rave scene was seen as a threat to the 'respectable' hegemonic project of Thatcherism (Hill, 2002:89). In particular, the Police Party Unit was established in 1989 to co-ordinate national action against the free party scene while the Entertainment (Increased Penalties) Act of 1990 raised fines for organising unlicensed parties from £2,000 to £20,000 plus six months imprisonment (Hill, 2002: 98). The summer of 1992 was a watershed for the scene and its various communities. A free party attracting 40,000 people, organised in the small village of Castlemorton in Worcestershire in the UK by Spiral Tribe, fuelled Middle England's terror of hippy travellers and drug-fuelled ravers and sowed the seeds of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (CJA) of 1994. The CJA had specific anti-rave clauses and high-lighted the desire of the government to legislate out of existence a particular youth cultural form. In its attempts to do so, the now infamous Part V, Section 63 of the CJA specifically mentions 'a gathering on land in the open air of 100 or more persons at which amplified music is played during the night' where the music includes 'sounds wholly or predominantly characterised by the emission of a succession of repetitive beats' (Home Office, 1994).

In spite of such attempts to legislate against rave and dance cultures, they have continued to evolve and have had profound effects on many aspects of nightlife. Many young people today acknowledge the vast differences between traditional 'nightclubs' characterised by 'cheesy' commercial music, sporadic violence, excessive drinking and established gender roles, and 'clubbing', based more around musical appreciation, artistic competence of the DJs and the uniqueness of the environment. Although club crowds are often regarded as diverse, they also offer a feeling that you are among 'familiar strangers', your own tribe. As one music promoter commented: 'You know, a club is a club, if you follow what I'm saying; it's like it's a feeling of belonging' (DJ 3, Newcastle upon Tyne).

Drug culture, and especially Ecstasy, has played a crucial role in the experiential aspects of rave and club cultures, taking many participants to a different state of consciousness (Saunders, 1993; Joseph, 2000; Plant, 1999). Ecstasy provided the magic ingredient for the dramatic explosion of dance culture which changed the face of clubbing, immortalised through the 'MADchester' phenomenon of the late 1980s (Haslam, 1999). Although drugs have long played a role within many nightlife cultures, through the growth of dance music they have become pervasive within youth cultures generally (Parker *et al.*, 1998), as well as in mainstream pub and nightclub culture. One of the legacies bequeathed by dance culture and this normalisation of drug use is a current distinction within nightlife between 'beer monsters' and 'E-heads' (Moore, 2000).

Further, rave cultures have to a certain extent challenged, or at least made more transparent, pre-inscribed sexual roles (Henderson 1997; also see Chapter 7). Scanty clothing for boys and girls, ravers sucking dummies and blowing whistles, primary colours, psychedelic doodles, images taken from familiar advertisements,

phrases and tunes lifted from children's TV programmes like *The Magic Roundabout* and *Sesame Street* are hallmarks of Ecstasy-fuelled dance cultures (McRobbie, 1994; Malbon, 1999). The club provides a facilitating environment, where temporary and playful regression or infantilisation to various stages of childhood and pre-sexual innocence are possible.

Over the last ten years, the dance music, rave and club scenes have changed dramatically. Legislation aimed specifically at curtailing free parties in the UK, such as the CJA, forced people back into licensed events and corporate-backed nightclubs. Dance music has also diversified and fractured along the lines of class, gender, ethnicity and musical styles, producing a myriad of styles such as trance, garage, drum and bass, hard core, techno, gabba—ad infinitum. Subtle nuances within dance cultures have come to delineate style and music tribes— the hardcore posse, the trendy trance tribe, the eurotechno ambient crowd and the hippy nouveau tribe (Sharkey, 1993). The unity and the 'we' of the rave generation have given way to schisms and sectarianism (Reynolds, 1998b). While such changes are often taken to represent a growing sophistication and exactitude among contemporary clubbers, they also signify more 'commercial' and 'client-based' pressures.

Once standing on the deviant margins of youth culture, then, dance and rave cultures have been partially legitimised by wider society—commercialised, sanitised and normalised as a global cultural pastime. Music, books, websites, TV programmes, magazines and fashions and wider creative infrastructures linking publishing, books, dedicated club magazines, and record and clothing shops with bars, clubs and galleries have all emerged to feed growing commercial dance cultures. With advances in technologies and the internet, the rave and club scene has also become a virtual commercial place as much as a 'material' space (Gibson, 1999). Over the 1990s, corporate clubbing and super-clubs have emerged and transformed dance cultures into major commercial entities. Club cultures, then, have taken on a truly world-wide meaning and now stretch across the globe from Ibiza and Rio to Tokyo and Bangkok. DJs with global brand recognition command huge paychecks for playing a two-hour music set. The whole meaning of the underground has become weakened as it is reformulated, branded and sold back to new generations of young people. Lifestylers rather than ideological purists abound. Weekend part-time ravers and urban young professionals, who make temporary incursions into the rave scene and retreat back to other 'corporate lives', have been denigrated for diluting the counter-cultural origins of the underground scene. The underground has fused with the overground, resulting in confused class categories such as 'hippy-yuppies', 'ethno-Sloanes' and 'ferals in suits' (St John, 2001a).

In response to such encroachments, some alternative forms of nightlife have emerged which continue to challenge the naked commercialisation of club cultures and, as a result, distinctions have been redrawn between underground and mainstream dance clubs (Collins, 1997; Thornton, 1995). Darker, more hard-core music scenes have developed to distance themselves from creeping

commercialism. Such simple dichotomies, however, conceal the many gradations within contemporary club cultures. For example, mainstream nightclubbing can encompass both the traditional 'meat market' venues, which play more commercial, radio-based music and also large super-clubs hosting world-famous DJs, while the 'underground' encompasses both small independent commercial venues and also more illicit squat and warehouse parties.

Nevertheless, many clubbers, especially those who experienced the early spirit of rave culture, view large mainstream clubs with suspicion, being aware not just of their differences in music, but also of attitudes, style and creativity. Some continue to be concerned about the effects of commercial clubbing in terms of limiting the range of night-time consumption opportunities, especially for younger people entering the scene. Josh (35 years old, Bristol), a music promoter, commented:

> Like commercial chain clubs, they go and re-fit their formula like McDonald's and then they get the same national circuit DJs to come and play the same fodder. It's not very innovative, it's very consumer-orientated. I guess if you're raving for the first time, which most of the people are, you know, they are getting served up what they want. Bright lights, loud music, drugs. The kids like that just buy it in. 'Let's pay this guy £2,000 to play here because he plays on the radio and the kids will like him.' It's corporate, they're just serving up a product.

In contrast, for many people involved in the free party scene it is not just about being free to dance, but about being a 'free individual' able to pursue an alternative lifestyle, usually outside the world of 9–5 work. As one free party organiser suggested to us:

> We are living a different life basically than the kids that are going to Mecca. Their Mecca's the 'working week' and going out for their explosion of 6 hours on a Saturday night. And it just seems that most people that turn up to free parties are living some kind of alternative life and want to meet, want to congregate. Don't necessarily want to do it in pubs with alcohol. Don't necessarily want to do it in very dressy, you know, dress-coded, you must be like this or you can't come in. It's just too regulated, and free individuals are looking for a certain vibe. For an entertainment licence you have to pay X pounds per head for those who might possibly attend. It doubles your ticket price. It's massive; entertainment licences don't come easy. I think really the crux of it comes down to freedom issues and whose laws you agree with and obey.
>
> (Geoff, 27 years old, Bristol)

The rave, festival, free party and traveller scene has no doubt helped to develop a critique of the commercialisation of contemporary nightlife. It has liberated a

generation and given expression to new musical, cultural and artistic forms. However, as mentioned, it has been subject to repressive legislation, epitomised by the Criminal Justice Act in the UK. Police tactics have also become more sophisticated to deal with and manage the growth of free parties and the rave scene. However, the underground has found new ways to exist, avoid police repression and distance itself from the mainstream. In particular, as laws tighten their grip on free party cultures, they have moved to places where legislation is less coercive, such as the Mediterranean and Eastern Europe, California and Goa. Members of pioneering free party collective Spiral Tribe have set up communities in southern France, while rave and New Age travelling communities from northern Europe have been part of the 'Spain Drain' by heading south and establishing teepee villages in abandoned settlements in the Spanish Pyrenees and the mountain towns of the Andalusian Sierra Nevada.

Direct actioners, techno-tribes, environmentalists and indigenous groups continue to expand beyond their place and forge global alliances. Australia's underground post-rave 'doof' scene, for example, is marked by a particular brand of inter techno-tribal gatherings, often called 'corroborees', which fuse dance music cultures and direct action with a religious ambience, with strong connections to tribal and indigenous aboriginal rights movements and the natural landscape (St John, 2001a). In South Australia, the Earth Dream Festival has brought together eco, rainbow and techno-tribes at the fringe of international youth culture (St John, 2001b). Earth Dream, inaugurated in 2000, was a caravan of travelling sound systems, musicians, engineers and performance artists mobilised against copper—uranium mining in the Australian outback on aboriginal land. The year after, over a hundred cities across forty countries participated in the Earth Dance festival. Meanwhile, at Black Rock Desert in Nevada, USA, over 20,000 people attend the annual Burning Man Festival to form Black Rock City—a settlement which describes itself as commercefree, an experiment in temporary community and an exercise in radical self-sufficiency. As the organisers explain: 'You're here to create. Since nobody at Burning Man is a spectator, you're here to build your own new world' (Burning Man, 2001). No events are planned, and participants are encouraged to create their own communities, art installations, stages and performances.

Restrictive legislation has also strengthened the resolve and has politicised many people in the free party community. The direct action, DiY collective Justice? from Brighton in the UK, for example, was born from a desire to raise awareness about the CJA, and has developed into a wider network, including the publication *Schnews,* promoting campaigns on social and environmental justice, especially through squatting. Reclaim The Streets, exporting world-wide their brand of party and politics and carnivalesque street parties which have brought downtown traffic to a halt, have also inspired a wider critique of urbanism, corporatism and capitalism. Street parties use samba bands, sound systems, theatre and live musicians which attempt, temporarily, to transform the sterility of the automobile-choked streets into a place of play, possibility and subversion.

However, it is to the squatting movement, which has attempted to envision more permanent alternatives, that we now turn.

Squatting the city: DiY nightlife

> Squatting creates space for much needed community projects. Squatting means taking control instead of being pushed around by bureaucrats and property owners. Squatting is still legal, necessary and free.
>
> (Advisory Service for Squatters, 1996)

While squats often evoke images of Third World squatter settlements and land struggles of indigenous groups, here we are concerned with squatters largely in the western world who have established, if only temporarily, alternative communities for working, living and playing. Outside the temporary nature of free parties and the commercial de-politicisation of much of contemporary dance culture, squats attempt to perform, embody and envisage radically different social and spatial practices. They not only attempt to take back an equal share of the urban fabric from corporate control, but also establish, or re-establish, small-scale human urban communities (Corr, 1999). Squatting as a form of direct action allows people to reassert their rights to self-determination and gives them a meaningful stake in modern city life.

Many groups squat out of genuine need for housing. Other more middle-class groups have squatted to establish counter-cultural ways of life, forming outposts of a new culture (Osborn, 1980). Such latter groups generally seek to make statements about the nature of property speculation, and contemporary ways of living (work, community, leisure). Squatting can transform forgotten urban spaces —dead zones, derelict areas, voids and wastelands (Doron, 2000)—into places of creation and performance. Often, such places are in a state of suspended animation, waiting for the latest plan for a multiplex, casino, fun-pub, restaurant or entertainment centre to emerge from developers, to be fed to the local cash-strapped state. Monbiot (1998:182) has pointed out the democratic limitations of this development process: 'If ordinary people don't like a local authority decision to approve a development, there's nothing whatsoever they can do about it.'

In this climate of lack of accountability from the local state and the standardisation of most development schemes, squatting and reclaiming land are sensible and increasingly widespread options. Squats often provide an alternative vision to commercial homogeneity and formal planning. While many urban developments point towards sterility and sameness, squatting values diversity and disruption, and represents a desire for serendipity, unpredictability and openness. It refuses to be caught by the bureaucracy of the urban planning system and the rules which currently stifle and regulate play, leisure and entertainment. Squatting

also celebrates the power of the local and is one of the few remaining resources which allow cities to retain their connection with people rather than profit. It illuminates a collective and creative use of urban space which sketches out possibilities for radical social change (Chatterton, 2002b).

While land squatting has a long tradition dating back centuries, more recently many European countries have developed a rich variety of urban squatter settlements.[2] For example, since the late 1960s, the urban fabric of Amsterdam's Centrum has been transformed by anarchists intent on promoting affordable housing and keeping corporate developments at bay. Christiania in Denmark is perhaps the best-known and longest-established European squatter settlement. Dubbed 'Freetown' after it declared itself independent of the Danish state, it has survived as a self-governing community since 1971 in a derelict military barracks, and is now home to 800 adults and 250 children (Corr, 1999). Christiania has developed into an almost self-sufficient eco-town, complete with community factories, cafés, bars and stages for cultural events. With half a million visitors a year, it claims to be Denmark's largest tourist attraction (Marshall, 1999). Barcelona's squatting scene, drawing upon Catalunya's strong anarchist traditions, flourished over the 1990s, as many of the country's youth developed their political ideologies in post-Francoist Spain (see Plate 9.3). The city's squatting movement continues to expand and is organised through the Squatted Social Centres Network (Centros Sociales de Okupas), which was established in 1996 to provide some co-ordination among the activities of twenty-one squatted social centres organising events and activities from crèches to bike maintenance courses, yoga, gigs, cafés and dance classes.

Over the 1990s, many squatted centres emerged in the UK, often in reaction to the Criminal Justice Act, which also became focal points for a new wave of politicisation and non-violent direct action. Several houses were squatted on Claremont Road in East London, for example, in an attempt to block the notorious three and a half mile M11 link road, which cost £350 million and led to the destruction of 350 houses. On the squatted road, houses were painted, art-work sculpture filled the street, bands played and an outdoor living room was set up, complete with furniture. During the final eviction of Claremont Road in December 1994, bailiffs and police faced 500 protesters who used a range of non-violent stalling tactics. A couple of years later, 500 activists from the Land Is Ours movement, inspired by the Diggers movement, squatted land on London's waterfront. Here for a brief time they established a community to highlight the shortcomings of property speculation (Halfacree, 1999; Featherstone 1998).

Many squats initially starting out as housing projects, then begin to incorporate working and leisure elements in an attempt to critique and redefine the boundaries of how we work and play, produce and consume. Many squats have become formalised into semi-permanent resource, advice and arts centres for community and campaign groups, run by local people to offer services which the local state is too underfunded or uninterested to provide. On Stoke Newington High Street in London, a group called Hackney Not for Sale set up a squatters' estate agents

Plate 9.3 The Montanya squat at the heart of Barcelona's squatting scene; Spain, 2002.

in 2001, where residents could view over fifty local authority owned properties that were in danger of being sold or privatised. This 'Estate Agents with a Conscience' acquired 'exempt' minutes from a council meeting which listed over 130 local authority owned properties to be assessed for sale as part of their 'disposals programme', including community centres, adventure play-grounds, allotments, nurseries, shops and houses. One of the properties, squatted and reopened as a community centre, carried the spoof advert:

> Formerly a nursery, but we got rid of the kids and their whining parents. We even fibbed in court, to get rid of the squatters who had reopened it as a community centre of all things. We told the master that we were not going to sell this building but, Ha!—It is now freed up to give lots of potential for profit as a yuppie wine bar or a private health club for city workers. Price: Don't bother enquiring, you couldn't afford it. In fact why don't you just move to another borough so that we can speed up the process of gentrification here in Hackney.
>
> (*Schnews,* 2001a: 1)

Against the rising tide of corporate nightlife, people in numerous places have been inspired to take matters into their own hands and develop their own forms of nightlife. In Leeds, an old church, soon to be sold by its owners to make way for a large student theme bar, was squatted and christened 'A-Spire'. The organisers

wanted to create a space where the types of activities which occurred there were not, within limits, prescribed:

> It is a place where people can go during the day or night and socialise away from the buy, buy, buy mentality that is present-day capitalism. Once there you can do pretty much whatever you want to (within reason). You can sit and chat with a cup of fair-trade tea or coffee, bring your lunch to eat in comfortable surroundings or eat some of our vegan, almost organic food. You can go to or put on a gig, read books from our radical library, organise a meeting, juggle, paint, make a date to come back for a specific gig or workshop. Basically we've opened up the space: if you want to use it, then do so.
>
> (A-Spire event flier, October 2001)

BOX 9.2
: EXODUS FROM BABYLON; THE 'RESPEETOCRACY'

> Exodus is a unique urban phenomenon which does not simply confront but intelligently challenges society's assumptions and values. They offer working, viable solutions to many of society's stated ills: poverty, crime, drugs, unemployment and the breakdown of community. Exodus blend a volatile mixture of rastafarianism, new-age punk and street-smart politics. 'We are not drop-outs but force-outs'.
>
> (Exodus, 1999)

The Exodus Collective, based in Luton, 40 miles north of London, emerged from a desire to put derelict land to use by providing entertainment outside of commercialisation, heavy entrance fees and security, Exodus, much more than a group of illegal rave organisers, describe themselves as a self-help collective. The Collective grew out of the free party and rave scene of the late 1980s, and since 1992 have been holding events which have attracted up to 10,000 people, mainly through word of mouth. Exodus suggest that their 'community dance events' are operated on a fundamentally different principle from a commercial event, as the intention is a community gathering free of exploitation, rather than profit generation (Exodus Collective, 1998). Some of the negative aspects of free parties, such as dtug-dealing, mugging and theft, are much less visible because, Exodus believe, their events are based upon 'mutual respect and consent, rather than strict policing' *(ibid.)*. The raves are much more than dance events, As one member of the Collective said: 'The raves serve as our contact with the community. People come to the raves to party, but while they are there they grow interested in the Collective and what we are about' *(ibid)*.

At such events, entrance fees are replaced with a community levy which provides an income for various community projects. The Collective have been responsible for setting up Long Meadow Community free Farm, which they initially squatted and eventually were able to buy. It has grown into a show-piece for sustainable living, working and playing, housing a permaculture centre and urban farm, organic food production and aternative energy systems. They have also squatted a number of other buidings, such as HAZ Manor, given to them for a peppercorn rent due to their work with homeless people, While police, local businesses and the local authority were initially hostile, and the police often violent, many of these projects have now gained legitimacy and legal status, A strategic police operation designed to halt the progress of the dance and squatting collective took place during the 1990s, but in 1995 Bedfordshire County Council voted in favour of holding a public enquiry following evidence of police malpractice during their operations. Exodus have gone on to be key players in the regeneration of inner-city Luton.

The Exodus Collective, originally inspired by the free party scene, have been able to negotiate their way through licensing regulations and establish community-owned entertainment, housing and working projects. One reason put forward for the great lengths to which the authorities went to try and dose Exodus down is that Luton has a history as a brewery town, where Whitbread have dominated for many years, During Exodus's events, takings in Luton's pubs and clubs are usually down by around 40 per cent, The Respectocracy has taken on the entertainment monopoly and shown that, with enough effort, the people can win,

Examples of the desire to create liveable, leisure alternatives to corporate monopoly continue apace. In London, the London Activists Resource Centre (LARC) opened in 2002 to act as a permanent home for the radical and direct action community, while the London Social Centres Network (LSCN) provides a forum for people interested in setting up social centres or working in existing ones. Jump Ship Rat (JSR) arts venue (see Plate 9.4) occupies a decaying warehouse on the fringe of Liverpool's city centre. In spite of little help or recognition from the local council and official arts organisations, JSR provides gallery space for local artists, performance space, bar, café and venue where bands, multi-media performances and art shows are held. Finally, a group in Brighton bought and opened a collectively owned resource centre in 2002 called the Cowley Club. One member of the Club was motivated by the following reasons:

> I'm fed up with drinking in pubs and watching my money disappear into the pockets of the mass entertainment industry. Why don't we start our own club and venue, outside commercial culture, where we can decide where profits from our pockets go?
>
> (Mike, 24 years old, Brighton)

A rich support network has also grown around squatting. The Advisory Service for Squatters was established in London in the 1970s, along with the London

Plate 9.4 Jump Ship Rat Arts Venue; Liverpool city centre, UK, 2002

Squatters' Union, and continues to this day providing legal, technical and material support for the squatting community, while San Francisco's Homes Not Jails undertakes a similar role. Websites have also developed to create a sense of a squatting community, such as *squ@t!net,* an internet magazine dedicated to promoting squatting throughout Europe.

Possibilities and limits on the margins

What we have sought to provide in this chapter is a discussion of alternative forms of nightlife on the margins of the night-time economy. In the main, we have high-lighted organised groups who have sought to identify an adversary (usually the corporate city), as well as those who have provided alternative models of urban living, working and playing. This is not to say that we do not acknowledge many different types of resistance in the night, for example through the micro-tactics of play and subversion found in many forms of dance culture (Malbon, 1999; Pini, 1997). Indeed, one of the strengths of the margins is its temporality,

unpredictability and fleetingness, its ability to form and reform in order to evade and bypass laws and regulations. It reminds us of how a fluid mosaic of resistance, made up of countless acts of defiance and self-determination both large and small, can help to produce social change and reaction, and provide alternative ways of life.

Yet the margins also contain their own contradictions and problems. Often, their transient nature means that they are more apt to disrupt rather than overthrow. In spite of the earlier discourses of freedom, acceptance and liberation within raves, free parties and the dance club scene, there is little evidence to suggest that they provide a coherent critique of dominant mainstream culture, or solve problems of inequality and hierarchy. As Rietveld (1998:266) suggests, you can lose yourself to the beat, but this does not question the foundations of society. Similarly, club cultures have also developed their own barriers and hierarchies (Thornton, 1995). In this sense, dance and music cultures are riven with differences and tensions, with notable differences existing between, for example, the largely white rave crowds and the black and Asian followers of jungle and drum and bass. The E-fuelled generation are also regarded as apolitical, 'nowhere people', merely escaping from society's problems through a loved-up world (Reynolds, 1998a).

In many ways, then, neo-tribal forms of sociality on the margins are unlikely to survive for long periods of time. In this sense, they are 'essentially tragic' (Maffesoli, 1996) and are unlikely to sustain a wider critique. Alternative counter-cultural lifestyles are susceptible to incorporation and commodification and have become well-established fixtures of the high street (Hetherington, 1998). Hesmondhalgh (1998) also questions whether alternative and independent cultural production is possible in the context of increasingly concentrated and internationalised cultural industries, especially when there is more emphasis on big-name, big-money artists, increasing collaboration between underground record labels and the music 'majors', and new strategies by large conglomerates to undertake joint ventures to assimilate the independents.

Finally, as we have argued throughout this book, alternative groups and spaces are being forced further out to the margins due to increasing property costs and the changing priorities of nightlife conglomerates, especially through branding and gentrification. Additionally, alternative groups almost invariably provoke strong reactions from the government, the judiciary and the media, which makes their activities harder to sustain. Increasingly, there are fewer opportunities to radically question, subvert and play with one's identity, social role and understanding of the urban. Squeezing out the margins is reducing society's potential for critique and reflection. With the growth of corporate culture and its spaces, 'rejecting what's sold to us and questioning what's told to us have never been harder' (Haslam, 1999:280).

Yet despite these odds, many young people continue to try and build something beyond escapist weekend culture. Challenging corporate nightlife means rethinking established notions of night and day, work and leisure, profit and pleasure, and calling into question the values of property speculators, the entrepreneurial state, and the monopolies which dominate ownership, distribution

and production. Many alternative nightlife activities and groups are linking up, especially through the internet, with margins outside their immediate localities to create a more global sense of the underground. Perhaps the current shifting of balance between corporate and alternative nightlife and the pressures on sacred marginal spaces is sowing the seeds of greater discontent. It is to some of these wider political issues and scenarios that we turn in the conclusion of the book.

10
URBAN NIGHT SCAPE VISIONS
Beyond the corporate nightlife machine

In this book, we have tried to untangle urban nightlife, to show how it is made and remade in various guises. Through this process, we have pointed to a number of contradictory trends. Fun, hedonism, socialising, sexual encounter and drunkenness remain long-held motives for a night out, while moral panics about disorder and lawlessness continue to increase. Corporate entities are increasing their grip on nightlife infrastructures, despite the fact that at the same time nightlife is marked by seeds of resistance. Major changes are also under way in terms of deregulation and re-regulation. In the UK, for example, gambling and a wider casino culture is becoming a more prominent feature of urban nightlife (Travis, 2001), and some optimistically suggest that the declassification of cannabis to a category 'C' drug may signal the early beginnings of an 'Amsterdam'-style cannabis café culture. Yet moves towards further restrictive legislation in the night-time economy seem to be the norm across much of the UK, USA, Australia and many parts of continental Europe, where, for example, drinking in public is increasingly curtailed through new government laws directed towards young adults.

Our work is part of a tradition of those who feel an ill wind blowing through the contemporary capitalist city (Harvey, 2000), which seeks to draw attention to the central influence of large non-local corporate entities in the making of urban nightlife. In particular, what we have highlighted throughout the book is the growing dominance of mainstream commercial elements. As we outline, this is to the detriment of more historic, older forms of nightlife which are increasingly seen as redundant and residual as urban areas reinvent themselves as post-industrial, high-value centres of activity. Alternative, independent and resistant night-time activities also find it harder to carve out spaces in expensive down-town areas and are often criminalised or treated with suspicion by the local state and police. In this final chapter, we reiterate some of the inherent problems and contradictions in current nightlife trends and flesh out some possible routes beyond the corporate nightlife machine.

Key arguments of the book

One of the main tenets of this work is the fact that our day-to-day lives are being increasingly compromised, narrowed and subdued by profit-hungry entertainment conglomerates (Gottdiener, 2001). While this is not a completely new trend, the range and intensity of commercial domination has grown for many people. As Monbiot (2000:4) states: 'Corporations, the contraptions we invented to serve us, are overthrowing us.' This process of growing corporate control has been well documented at the city level (see, for example, Solnit and Schwartzenberg, 2000; Hannigan, 1998; Davis, 1992; Zukin, 1995; Sorkin, 1992). More than ten years ago, Michael Sorkin (1992) spoke of the 'Disneyfication' processes—the development of 'ageographical cities', increasingly devoid of place and hermetically sealed from the surrounding reality of urban life. Meanwhile, Hannigan (1998:7) described entertainment destinations as 'urbanoid environments' and as 'glittering, protected playgrounds for middle-class consumers'. At the beginning of the twenty-first century, the serial reproduction (Harvey, 1989a, 2000) of downtown areas into us-style theme parks, multiplexes and 'casino culture' seems to be continuing apace.

It is against this backdrop of the corporate and gentrified city that we have explored the growth of branded, stylised nightlife. We have highlighted some of the global players, backed by international financial houses, who feature in the ongoing restructuring and concentration of the night-time economy. We have also sought to move beyond rather seductive arguments surrounding 'flexibility' and postmodern consumption, and have stressed more neo-Fordist interpretations of the nightlife industry. The 'new' nightlife mode of production is characterised by some novel features, but also by a continuation and intensification of many Fordist trends, such as a concentration and conglomeration of ownership and production, a lack of real consumer choice and diversity in spite of increases in design and branding, and continued social and spatial segregation as companies vie to attract a number of 'cash-rich' groups of young adults.

We have also outlined an emerging 'consensus' in the governance of urban nightlife. Although central and local governments remain key actors in the regulation of the night-time economy, this consensus is increasingly biased towards the needs of larger property and land developers and entertainment and nightlife conglomerates (Jessop *et al.,* 1999; Fainstein, 1994) and their target audiences, who are often more cash-rich consumers, wealthy urban-livers and professional service workers. For example, attempts by the local state and police to protect the interests of local residents and reduce problems associated with nightlife, such as disorder, noise and vandalism, are increasingly being superseded by the influence of large companies eager to protect their profits and expand their operations, using significant legal capacities to do so (also see Hobbs *et al.,* 2000). Priorities here include both deregulation, in order to aid entrepreneurialism and capital accumulation (i.e. extended hours, private—public partnerships and public development monies, etc.), and the 're-regulation' of gentrified nightlife premises,

increasingly through an emphasis on style codes and pricing polices.This emerging consensus is understandable given that many large-scale nightlife developments represent significant inward investment decisions and hence a sizeable revenue source for cash-strapped urban governments, while the public activities of 'cash-rich' groups provide vital ammunition for city 'imaging-building' and urban gentrification.

So, while we see the emergence of new styles of governance and deregulation for the wealthy few based around entrepreneurialism and lifestyle promotion, regulation priorities like restriction, moral order and control still remain solidly in place for the many. As such, there is evidence of intensified social and spatial control of nightlife spaces via formal mechanisms such as increased surveillance and door security staff, restrictive bylaws and design of the built environment (Christopherson, 1994), in conjunction with attempts to 'sanitise through style'. In particular, the commodification and theming of nightlife spaces have introduced increasingly restrictive codes which filter and control access and movement. Urban and interior design strategies are now replete with attempts to 'script space' in certain ways and civilise its users, while public urban space is increasingly 'managed' by adopting techniques from privately managed malls (Reeve, 1996). Much of this speaks to more apocalyptic readings of the urban, which have portrayed the post-industrial city as a combat zone in which surveillance and control techoniques have eroded democratic urban space (Davis, 1992; Zukin 1995). While a night out is still unpredictable and fluid, the 'security-obsessed urbanism' to which Davis (1992) alludes, where whole areas are removed from the realities of urban life and streets are sanitised of evidence of inequality, poverty and homelessness, has increasing resonance with the experience of nightlife.

What of the consumer experience of contemporary urban nightlife? Many young adults told us stories of how a branded, standardised, sanitised and largely non-local experience increasingly marks out urban nightlife. In this sense it is important to remain critical about rather seductive arguments of 'post-Fordist flexibility' (see Pollert's critique, 1991), which often assume the existence of a new set of differentiated consumption practices (Warde, 1994 also makes this point). The ongoing expansion of nightlife branding actually equates to *fewer* opportunities for non-market cultural space and alternative nightlife venues in downtown areas. What options are left for those who seek a range of differentiated products, serendipity and excitement in the contemporary city at night? We as consumers are offered a narrow selection rather than a real range of alternatives (Clarke and Critcher, 1985). As Monbiot (2000:16) suggests, we have 'a profusion of minor choices and a dearth of major choices'. Similarly, the ability to select from the latest range of nightlife brands is still dependent on economic resources.

The reality, however, is that commercial, branded nightlife continues to be popular. It is not difficult to see why. At first glance, there appears to be a greater variety of places and hence new resources for more consumer choice and reflexive consumption. Indeed, the physical appearance and design of urban nightlife spaces has changed dramatically over the last twenty years. This has mainly occurred

through a decline in the number of male-dominated ale-houses, saloons and working men's clubs, and also lager-fuelled 'cattle market' discos and pubs (Gofton, 1983; 1990) and the growth of upgraded, mixed-use, stylish nightlife venues blending food with alcohol, with more seating and higher-quality interiors, which have opened up the nightlife sector to different social groups (young professional women, gentrified gays, 'traditional' students). Yet despite these changes in style, appearance and opportunities, there are clear limitations here as well. As we have outlined, there is an underlying uniformity of ownership and rationalisation of production within nightlife. Moreover, many aspects of nightlife culture continue to be 'awash on a sea of alcohol' (Hobbs *et al.,* 2000), with heavy circuit drinking, vandalism and violence commonplace. Theme bars, for example, have recently been highlighted as the new 'palaces of drunkenness' (Newburn and Shiner, 2001). There is also little evidence that contemporary nightlife provision is really all that 'female-friendly', with continuing evidence of sexual harassment and assaults (Hollands, 1995). Finally, as we have highlighted in Chapters 6 and 7, the supposed opening up of nightlife to social groups like young women, gays and students has often been limited to wealthier sectors of these populations.

The growing boundaries of corporate-owned entertainment also raise issues about the fate of public urban spaces which offer opportunities for human creativity, dialogue and understanding. What do new forms of urban nightscapes mean for concerns such as access, civility and public culture? Clearly, the current round of nightlife restructuring has moved us some way from the historic predecessor of the pub as a public meeting place. The control of the night-time economy by corporate interests and the reduction of social meaning to superficial images within themed environments raise serious questions about the quality of our daily life (Gottdiener, 2001:207) and the types of encounters within it. The crowds we encounter here are both selectively chosen and highly regulated *(ibid.)*.

Downtown nightlife, then, is being sanitised and cleansed of 'undesirable' elements through continued gentrification of housing and leisure markets and the growth of a central urban professional service class. Smith's (1996) analysis of the revanchist city—a vengeful programme aimed at displacing certain types of activity and people, especially non-consumers, the homeless, the urban poor, punks and skaters—has much relevance here. Non-consumers in the corporatedominated city are cast as deviants—if you are not buying, why are you here? (Atkinson, 2001). While the night does retain some fluidity, there are clear trends towards the demarcation, sanitisation and privatisation of nightlife spaces, not to mention marginalisation of alternatives. As Smith (1996:105) comments: 'The more likely scenario is of a sharpened bipolarity of the city in which white middle-class assumptions about civil society retrench as a narrow set of social norms.'

In terms of urban nightlife, we are clearly only at the tip of the gentrifying iceberg. Brain (2000), echoing Bauman (1998), highlights that while those in stable employment (the puritans by day and hedonists by night) are seduced by the delights of pleasurable consumption, there are many who are excluded from

such fun. The exclusive nature of recent developments in the night-time economy is simply out-pricing many social groups and reinforcing perceptions that it is not a place for them (Chatterton and Hollands, 2001). There are groups of young people living in outer estates or ghettos who have never felt enfranchised by the bright lights of the urban centre, for reasons of price, access, racism, safety or style. What is clear is that the current wave of restructuring is likely to further disenfranchise such groups, as well as some current traditional users with only minimal resources.

Moreover, younger city-centre nightlife consumers are exposed to little choice and have few opportunities outside a narrowly defined role as a 'consumer'. As a result, rather than finding a wealth of opportunities for alternative or independent cultural styles, most young people simply seek escapism in the less risky world of corporate-packaged nightlife on the mainstream. This perhaps says more about the lack of actual choice downtown, and the difficulties involved in locating and travelling to alternative fringe nightlife spaces. Klein (2000:130) has argued that:

> [t]his assault on choice is happening structurally, with mergers, buyouts and corporate synergies. It is happening locally, with a handful of superbrands using their huge cash reserves to force out small and independent businesses… And so we live in a double world: carnival on the surface, consolidation underneath, where it counts.

Although global cultural practices are digested, adapted and resisted by places and certain social groups, there is an increasingly transnational secular ideology (Held *et al.,* 1999) where the brand is king and queen. In the context of nightlife, then, consumption options continue to be curtailed. A further aspect of this non-local branded space is a clear functional separation between the spheres of consumption and production. To quote Klein (2000:346) again: 'The planet remains sharply divided between producers and consumers, and the enormous profits raked in by the superbrands are premised upon these worlds remaining as separate as possible.' In this sense, larger non-local venues do little to promote or connect with existing cultural practices, and in general they are directed from remote head offices and have scant interest or knowledge of local musical tastes, styles and habits. Corporate entities are given free reign to produce, market and sell nightlife and alcohol, and accrue vast profits.Yet they are largely left free to regulate themselves, taking little responsibility for nightlife problems such as violence, noise and social segregation. Increasingly, then, what we are witnessing is the steady growth of 'cities of indifference' (Fincher and Jacobs, 1998), in which corporate, profit-led and alcohol-dominated nights out do little for developing meaningful and humane public cities.

Ways beyond the corporate nightlife machine

Are there ways beyond present forms of work and play which are more bound to human creativity and expression, rather than just the profit motive? It is worth keeping in mind that entertainment remains strongly linked to the world of capitalist work, and the general orientation of nightlife is towards profit rather than creativity and social inclusion. As long as this is the case, the hallmarks of urban nightlife are likely to be standardisation, exclusion and social and spatial segregation. Current regulatory practices also largely fail to address the core of the problem—the lack of a diverse range of nightlife activities and a predominance of mainstream alcohol-drinking cultures.

However, just as there are possibilities beyond a work-based society (Gorz, 1999), there are alternatives to current entertainment and leisure provision, including nightlife. Beck (2000), for instance, talks of the antithesis of the work society—the creation of a civil society built on willing, community labour which addresses some of the problems of the current capitalist system, such as employment shortages and routinised, demoralising jobs. Similarly, what continues to be under-represented in contemporary urban nightlife, are activities which do not simply reproduce capitalist work and leisure relations (Kane, 2000). Of course, such ideas are nothing new. Several decades ago, Bertrand Russell (1932) highlighted the need to reduce work and increase leisure, weaving the two together to tap into and increase human creativity. The pertinent question which remains to be answered is: how do we transcend current patterns of profit-led, urban nightlife when they are so closely tied to the whims of the capitalist labour market, and consequently to many people's means of survival? Under what conditions can oppositional forms of nightlife emerge which are genuinely democratically controlled rather than constrained by both the state and market? And what is the genuine potential for developing entertainment and nightlife spaces which spring from people rather than relations of profit?

There is, of course, no ready-made blueprint for researchers or activists in terms of challenging corporate orthodoxy—instead, there are only a range of strategies and practices emanating out of the politics of the post-Fordist city (Mayer, 1994). In this book we have highlighted examples of oppositional and alternative youth cultures such as the squatters' movement, DiY culture and the rave scene, as well as from more independent clusters of nightlife producers (Richards, 1997; Bey, 1991; McKay, 1998; Wates, 1980; Corr, 1999). What is the value of such alternative spaces beyond the corporate nightlife machine? It is often hard to gauge the potential of such transient spaces because many defy definition and occupy constantly shifting ground. While some participants suggest that oppositional cultures need to remain 'underground' and 'on the margins' in order to be protected from co-option or annihilation by those in power, others look for points of contact with the mainstream and wider communities. Whatever their hopes and aspirations, and however temporary some of them are, oppositional and alternative spaces as outlined in Chapter 9 are clearly a vital part of urban life (see Plate 10.1).

They function as important sources of creativity and provide opportunities for experimentation and transgression. Beyond the abstract, commodified, rigid spaces of capitalism, these differential spaces contain potentialities and prescriptions for different urban futures. Some commentators have suggested that this 'third space' may be the basis for new types of politics and notions of civil society—places where a more hybrid sense of identity can truly flourish (Pile, 1994; Soja, 1996). According to Sibley (1998), we need to be more open to such 'spaces of difference' and find new ways of appreciating and accounting for marginal activity 'in its own terms', rather than simply as a 'subversive other' for respectable society (see also Sibley, 2001).

Alternative marginal nightlife spaces also represent the importance of the 'use' rather than the 'exchange' value of the city. The margins halt the drift towards passivity—the tendency for market forces and vested interests to encourage us to consume rather than create (Haslam, 1999). Grass-roots independent culture signals a desire to be involved and to produce, not just to consume. Live to work, not merely work to live, as the saying goes. In many ways, nightlife on the margins is a constant reminder of the need to challenge, resist and transgress the 'taken for granted' boundaries of the city. While many forms of resistant nightlife do not and cannot provide concrete answers for issues such as under-employment, global capital flows or unequal gender relations, they do present powerful critiques of the boundaries we live by. As Creswell (1996:166) suggests, 'Within transgression lies the seeds of new spatial orderings.' As we have shown, squats and free parties subvert established geographies and normative landscapes. They sketch out possible alternative worlds based upon collective ownership, non-hierarchical decision-making and ecological and social awareness. Yet we also have to be aware of imitations here, not just in terms of the failed experiments by groups who attempt to create more equal and inclusive social relations, but also trends towards commodification, commercialisation and gentrification which incorporate and limit alternative experiments. As we outlined in Chapter 9, it is also important to temper some of the rather utopian readings of rave culture and the associated possibilities for radical social change beyond the dance floor.

Resistance continues to come from a variety of quarters, not simply anarchists, environmentalists, punks and urban social movements, but also citizens' groups, local communities, individuals and, in some cases, even radical local states. Ironically, while Klein (2000) mentions that young people in their role as avid consumers were seen as saviours of the brand in the early 1990s, a section of them also form the most voracious pockets of resistance. The growing anti-globalisation agenda has in various ways brought attention to the corporate control of urban space, while the 'free party', traveller underground (McKay, 1996) and 'rave' scene (Reynolds, 1998) have provided a constant thorn in the side of corporately packaged nightlife. Examples of resistance also exist at the local political level, such as the selective purchasing agreements signed by at least twenty-two cities in the USA barring the purchase of goods and services from firms which break certain ethical codes (Klein, 2000). France has been particularly resistant to the growing power of multinationals and their brands. The French government's

Squatters take over doomed building

Protest at big business dominating city centre

By Tony Henderson
Environment Editor

Picture: Simon Hobson

Determined: Protesters outside the building in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle.

PROTESTERS have taken over a building at the centre of a planned £60m leisure complex.

The building in Pilgrim Street, Newcastle, which has been empty since being vacated by the Children's Warehouse recycling body two years ago, is due to be demolished as part of developer J J Gallagher's Electric City leisure scheme which has been backed by city councillors.

The group which has seized the building say the action is to highlight the way they feel many people are being squeezed out of a city centre increasingly dominated by expensive leisure developments like "style bars" and multiplex cinema plans.

"We are witnessing a corporate takeover of the city centre by big companies which can afford to develop buildings and sites," said a member of the group, Newcastle University lecturer Paul Chatterton.

"Big business is dictating what happens in city centres and are concentrating on quick profit schemes such as bars, chain pubs, multiplexes, casinos and what are called family entertainment centres."

Mr Chatterton said that this was leading to a lack of variety in the city centre with no space allocated to smaller groups, interests and activities – and that such a lack of diversity could hinder Newcastle and Gateshead's bid for the Capital of Culture title in 2008.

"There is nowhere for local bands to showcase their music, for resource centres or meeting places, studios or craft workshops despite the fact that there is so much empty space in the city centre," said Mr Chatterton.

"We need places which are affordable and accessible for a diversity of uses. But a lot of people are being priced out of the city centre.

"We are increasingly living in corporate city which means a lot of expensive sameness with more and more people, especially younger people, being excluded and feeling they don't belong."

The group has opened a free cafe in the building, which it has christened Eclectic City, and has also provided a music venue using bicycle-powered generators, library and environmental centre with plans for recycling facilities for local businesses.

The Electric City development will include a family entertainment centre, multiplex, restaurants and bars.

Work has also started on another £60m leisure development, The Gate in Newgate Street, Newcastle, which will also include a multiplex, Sky Bar and other bars and restaurants.

Mr Chatterton said: "The group includes social workers, doctors, students and a whole spectrum of people. It is a commonsense group which cares about the city centre."

He said that there were concerns that rising city centre property prices were also excluding small scale activities and the architecture of the new developments fell short of what was needed for a historic city centre.

Kevan Jones, city council cabinet member for development, said: "Newcastle is a regional capital and it has to provide these sort of leisure facilities and if it means jobs and investment I make no apologies for that."

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Plate 10.1 Challenging the corporate city: activists open the squat 'Eclectic City' in Newcastle upon Tyne, UK

Source: The Journal, 17 October 2000:6

attempts to ensure 51 per cent EU output on national TV broadcast channels are legendary, as is the country's anti-globalisation hero, Jose Bove, who highlighted the deleterious effects of large foreign multinationals such as McDonald's on local social and economic life (Bove *et al.,* 2001). There are also Italy's Slow Food and Slow City movements, which have highlighted the ills of global culture on issues such as food, health and community life (Carrol, 2000). Much opposition exists despite the fact that organising against corporations is difficult and often illegal in the face of supra-national legislation such as the World Trade Organisation's anti-protectionist rules, while international human rights law only applies to states and not to companies.

Nightlife has not been a sector which has received much attention from the anti-globalisation and anti-corporate movement (although see Fawcett, 2002). In many ways this is understandable, as the reality of ownership concentration and foreign control by highly acquisitive international financial houses largely hides behind traditional, place-based brands. Consumers too have little knowledge of, or interaction with, companies such as Nomura or Interbrew, whose explicit logic is market growth and domination. A greater awareness of such corporate operators, and their strategies of branding, market domination and segmentation within contemporary urban nightlife, is a first step towards producing more democratic, creative and diverse nightlife infrastructures in our cities, and we hope that this book has contributed something here.The anti-globalisation movement might do well to widen their sights to include the entertainment industries in their analysis, including nightlife, as ironically this is where they will find young people most vigorously interacting with the corporate machine. As we have highlighted in this book, a desire for change and more effective and widespread resistance towards some of the global brand bullies may also come from within the mainstream, in the form of disillusioned consumers who are rejecting the blandness of corporate branded environments and seeking healthier, fairly priced and more 'authentic' lifestyle experiences.

What future lessons arise from our exploration of the making and remaking of urban nightscapes? We have shown a number of pathways which researchers and students can pursue in their own work; for example: looking beyond the corporate gloss, unpacking economic relations, mergers and corporate strategies across time and space; thinking about the strategies of regulatory bodies such as the police and judiciary, and the motives of the contemporary entrepreneurial state; examining the everyday desires, aspirations and motives of young people. More practically, whatever city we look at across the west, there seems to be an air of inevitability or macroneccessity (Jessop *et al.*, 1999) associated with how nightlife may develop in the future. Greater influence of brands, more corporate domination, more market concentration, increased moral panics about a youth generation out of control—all are hallmarks here.

However, there are a number of different choices and ways forward, each of which have different policy implications for nightlife entrepreneurs, the local state, police and consumers. First, downtown areas can continue to become 'Anywheresville' and embrace the global corporate world, hoping that they can

become its 'flavour of the month' bringing in all the big brands such as Starbucks, Hard Rock Café, McDonald's or Gap. This very much appears to be the current trend. Localities can get lost in hype and begin to substitute image for reality, advertising over people. In terms of nightlife, they can continue to go to great lengths to attract major developers and entertainment and nightlife operators. As such, smaller, locally owned nightlife spaces will continue to be squeezed and marginalised, with cities experiencing what Harvey (1989b) refers to as 'serial reproduction', losing their uniqueness and distinctive flavour as they become like other urban places in the west. The problem is that, even if successful in the short term, when a particular city eventually falls out of favour and corporate capital moves elsewhere (Harvey's (1989c) 'spatial fix') there will be little local infrastructure to build on.

Balancing the global, the national and the local is seen as a middle pathway. This would involve the local state working together with all interested parties in the night-time economy, and not allowing sectional interests and the profit motive alone to influence the types of nightlife growth. In such a context, there is a need for the local state to play a stronger role in the development of the night-time economy, especially to strike a balance between commercial and local need and all users of the city, whoever they may be. While many city authorities claim that they are making inroads here, the privatisation and corporatisation of downtown areas will carry on apace as long as they seek even greater returns on property, with only large commercial developers having sufficient resources to put derelict buildings back into use. Moreover, the views of nightlife consumers themselves are rarely heard, and there remain often large 'experiential gaps' between those who consume nightlife and those who govern it.

Alternatively, the local state and other formal regulators could take a step back and concede decision-making, space and finances to local communities and political groups to create grass-roots local nightlife cultures which emphasise diversity, creativity and difference. To encourage such a pathway, governance needs decentralising and mechanisms would need to be established to restrict large operators who are geared towards solely maximising profit and alcohol sales, and to open up many more opportunities for communities and local entrepreneurs. Moreover, it would point to a significant change in cultural values and philosophies based around a more shared sense of public space, encouraging the intermingling of different age groups and mixed night-time activities in which alcohol consumption, on its own, plays a much smaller role. The objectives of this approach would be to stimulate diversity, creativity and more democratic relations between producers and consumers—involving young adults as active contributors to nightlife culture, rather than passive consumers. Which way many cities go is still up for grabs. We have suggested that unhindered urban nightlife appears in many parts of the west to be heading down the corporate route. Much effort, activism and support for alternative nightlife provision will be needed to steer another course. Only then can nightlife cultures be built which counter-balance the seductiveness of corporate glam and the entrepreneurial city, and instead

respond to the interests of people rather than just the profits of the corporate nightlife machine.

NOTES

1
Introduction: making urban nightscapes

1 ‘El Maremagnum no renovara las licencias de los bares nocturnes’, *El Periodico,* 11 February 2002:2–3; ‘El huido del Caiprinha se entrega’, *El Periodico,* 8 February 2002: 1–3; ‘Prisión para los tres detenidos por el crimen de un ecuatoriano en el puerto de Barcelona’, *El Pais,* 31 January 2002:16.
2 For example, young adults in the UK are 20 per cent more likely to visit pubs and ten times more likely to frequent clubs than the general population (Mintel 1998, 2000), hence our assertion that night-time spaces are primarily youth spaces.

2
Producing nightlife: corporatisation, branding and market segmentation in the urban entertainment economy

1 This chapter is a version of an article to be published in the *International Journal for Urban and Regional Research* (see Hollands and Chatterton, 2003).
2 Fordism was largely based around a social consensus involving Keynesian welfare state management within a coherent national space, collective wage bargaining, tight fiscal and macroeconomic policies and the simultaneous creation of uniform mass-consumer goods and uniform mass-consumer markets. National markets for mass-consumer goods such as the motor car, electrical goods, home furnishings and clothing were all fuelled by increasing the purchasing power of the mass of workers.
3 Scott’s (2000) definition of the cultural economy is rather broad and focuses on the cultural-product sector, where he provides case studies on the jewellery, furniture, film, recorded music and multi-media industries. Zukin (1995), meanwhile, utilises the term ‘symbolic’ economy, which includes finance, media and entertainment, although she gives little attention to either popular culture (outside of Disney) or the nightlife scene. Our use of the term ‘entertainment economy’ borrows more specifically on Hannigan’s (1998) usage, as it includes themed restaurants and bars, and nightclubs, as well as casinos, sports stadia, arenas and concert hall/music venues, multiplex cinemas and various types of virtual arcades, rides and theatres. Again, unfortunately he largely ignores looking at bars and nightclubs, a crucial element of the night-time economy (see Chatterton and Hollands, 2002).

4 Traditionally, gentrification relied very much on a physical description of the phenomenon and its effects, rather than a theoretical explanation of why the process exists or why it has accelerated and declined in particular historical periods (Butler, 1997). Originally the term was coined by Ruth Glass in the early 1960s to describe the invasion and displacement of working-class areas by the middle classes in urban areas in the UK (particularly London). Primarily it referred to this process in terms of housing, but also generally the transformation of neighbourhoods (i.e. schools, shops, leisure provision), and only more recently entertainment and nightlife (see Ley, 1996).
5 See http://assembly.state.ny.us/leg/?cl=5&a=4.
6 See http://192.75.156.68/DBLaws/Statutes/English/90112_e.htm.

3
Regulating nightlife: profit, fun and (dis)order

1 Part of this chapter appears in the Journal *Entertainment Law* (see Chatterton, 2002a).
2 While the legal age is 21 in most of the USA, twenty-nine states have reduced the legal age for drinking alcohol.
3 See ‘Blair to propose 48-hour shutdown for rowdy pubs in summit on lawlessness’, *Guardian,* 3 July 2000:12; ‘Police win powers to shut down thug bars’, *Observer,* 2 July 2000:5; ‘Colonising the night’, *Guardian,* 12 September 2000:5; and ‘Straw to target drink-related crime’, *Guardian,* 18 July 2000:6.

4
Consuming nightlife: youth cultural identities, transitions and lifestyle divisions

1 See Dennis Potter’s *Lipstick on Your Collar* for a filmic representation of this transformation in the UK; also see Edwards (2000) and Chaney (1996) for discussions of the rise of ‘consumer society’.

5
Pleasure, profit and youth in the corporate playground: branding and gentrification in mainstream nightlife

1 For more information see: http://www.hooters.com/companyinfo/media/; http://www.firkinpubs.com; http://www.daveandbusters.com; http://www.primerestaurants.com/whois.htm; http: / /www. primefranchise.poweredbyego.com/Student.PDF.
2 The Essex man and girl stereotype refers to the county of Essex near London in the UK, and stems from popular opinion and jokes associated with a group of young, upwardly mobile people who lived there and have since benefited from the economic boom of the 1980s in the south-east. This group spent their newfound money on ostentatious consumer goods and going out. The ‘ladettes’ phenomenon in the UK refers to those women who, again according to popular images, mimicked and

outcompeted men in excessive drinking and overt shows of sexuality during a night out.

6
Selling nightlife in studentland

1 In the USA, the Greek system of fraternities and sororities is a distinctive element of American college life, a particularly pervasive structure reverberating throughout the life of students. Many of the frat and sorority houses are huge and elaborate, occupying thirty-bedroom detached houses employing full-time cooks, cleaners and house-moms, networked computer rooms and private weekend retreats. The Greek system, of course, has received much criticism for holding wild parties, encouraging excessive drinking and dangerous initiation ceremonies. However, certain rituals in the Greek community, such as hazing, are being outlawed as they involve practices such as 'paddling', public stunts, physical and psychological shocks and the forced use of excessive alcohol, which has in some cases led to the death of rushees. Further, 'the fraternities have traditionally had an image of macho attitudes, drunkenness and intolerance…and discrimination against black, Jewish and other groups of students' (Silver and Silver, 1997:52). This closed world of tradition and ritual, then, can be a divisive as well as an integrating element on campus. The Greek community is structured around three councils: the National Panhellenic Conference (NPC) of social sororities for women, the National Interfraternity Council of Fraternities (NIC) for men, and the National Pan-Hellenic Conference (NPHC) of historically African-American fraternities and sororities. Each council contains several national chapters, all of which are represented by Greek letters such as (Delta Theta Sigma) or **B** (Pi Beta Phi). Joining the Greek system entails life-long membership of a particular chapter and adherence to its principles such as leadership, scholarship and philanthropy.

2 While students are constructed by the media, businesses and the university itself, they also define, generate and circulate self-images through niche and micro-media such as fliers, posters, zines, campus newspapers and websites. Many are acutely aware of their own and others' specific subcultural 'student' identity (Hollands, 1995). Many also actively resist being labelled as a 'typical student', as this is regarded as insulting to their own individual take on constructing the experience, and is reserved for someone less experienced at playing the game.

3 These graphs were constructed from time diaries completed by fifty students at Bristol University in the UK and at UW Madison in the USA.

7
Sexing the mainstream: young women and gay cultures in the night

1 For more information see: http://www.hooters.com/companyinfo/media/; http://www.ahwatukee.com/afn/community/articles/010110a.html.

8
Residual youth nightlife: community, tradition and social exclusion

1 While we recognise that there are a range of other, especially older, social age groups that inhabit residual nightlife spaces, our focus in this chapter is specifically on young adults. Furthermore, we are aware that while some may argue that such residual youth groupings, activities and spaces do not technically constitute 'nightlife' *per se,* we would argue in fact that there is a close relationship between the gentrifying commercial main-stream and attempts to incorporate, accommodate and/or sanitise the city of such groups and residual activity.
2 It is important to note that half of Afro-American households are in effect middle class (Oswald, 2001) and that some of the upward trends regarding crime, poverty and teenage birth rates began to reverse in the 1990s. This has two important implications. First, overall figures in fact downplay the desperate plight of the very poorest black youth and their families. And second, we should not assume that black cultures of the street equate to all black youth. Middle-class black youth cultures are very different from their poorer counterparts and may indeed be more comparable with mainstream white American youth cultures.

9
'You've gotta fight for your right to party': alternative nightlife on the margins

1 Section 6 of the Criminal Law Act 1977 in the UK provides squatters with some minimum legal rights.
2 In the late 1980s, rough estimates suggest that the Netherlands had nearly 45,000 squatted settlements, while London had 31,000 squatters and West Berlin had 5,000 (Corr, 1999).

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