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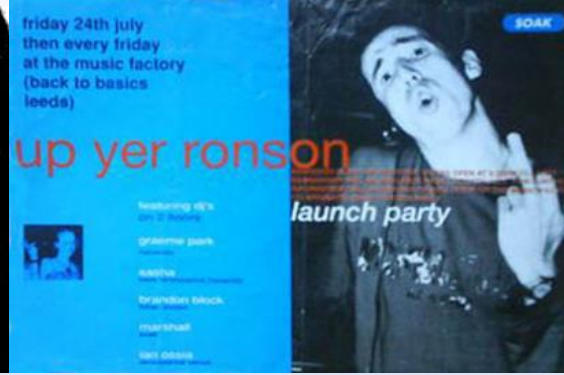
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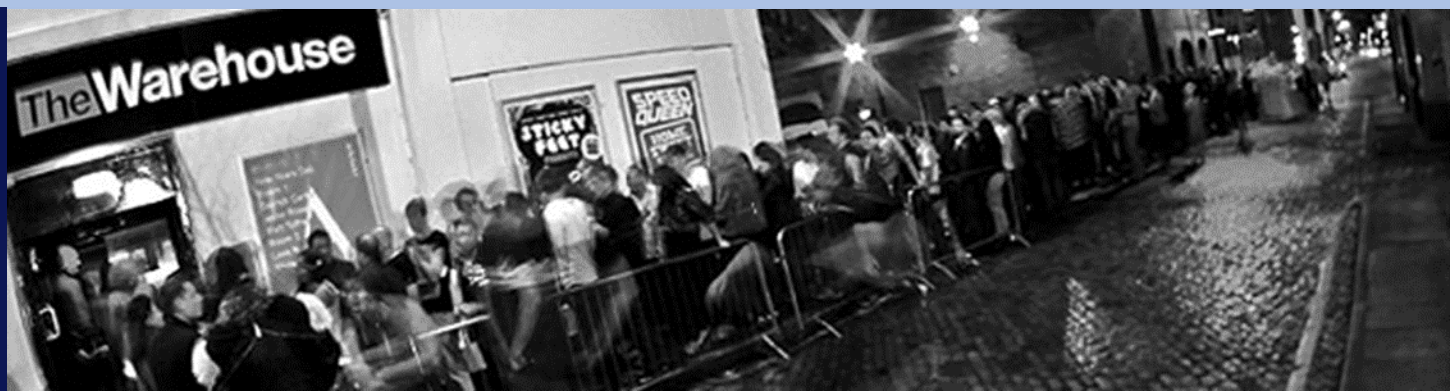


# *“We wanna be free to do what we wanna do”*

## The evolution of dance music spaces in Leeds

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"Back in the late 80s, UK cities just couldn't provide what young people wanted: all night shenanigans, no holds barred" (Sawyer, 2009, p.vii).

As the Police took the upper hand in foiling raves, people began to be disillusioned with the hassle "everyone became sick of it and by 1990/91 the heyday was over" (Gall, 2009, p.225).

'Militias' of police officers in riot gear with shields aloft and batons drawn were sent in to break up the party by force (Hook, 2009),

"The Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, section 63 (1)(b) outlawed outdoor parties...if there were more than 10 of you and you looked like you were waiting for a party, even if the land wasn't privately owned, you could be told to leave, and if you did not, or if you returned, you faced up to three months in prison" (Guest, 2009).

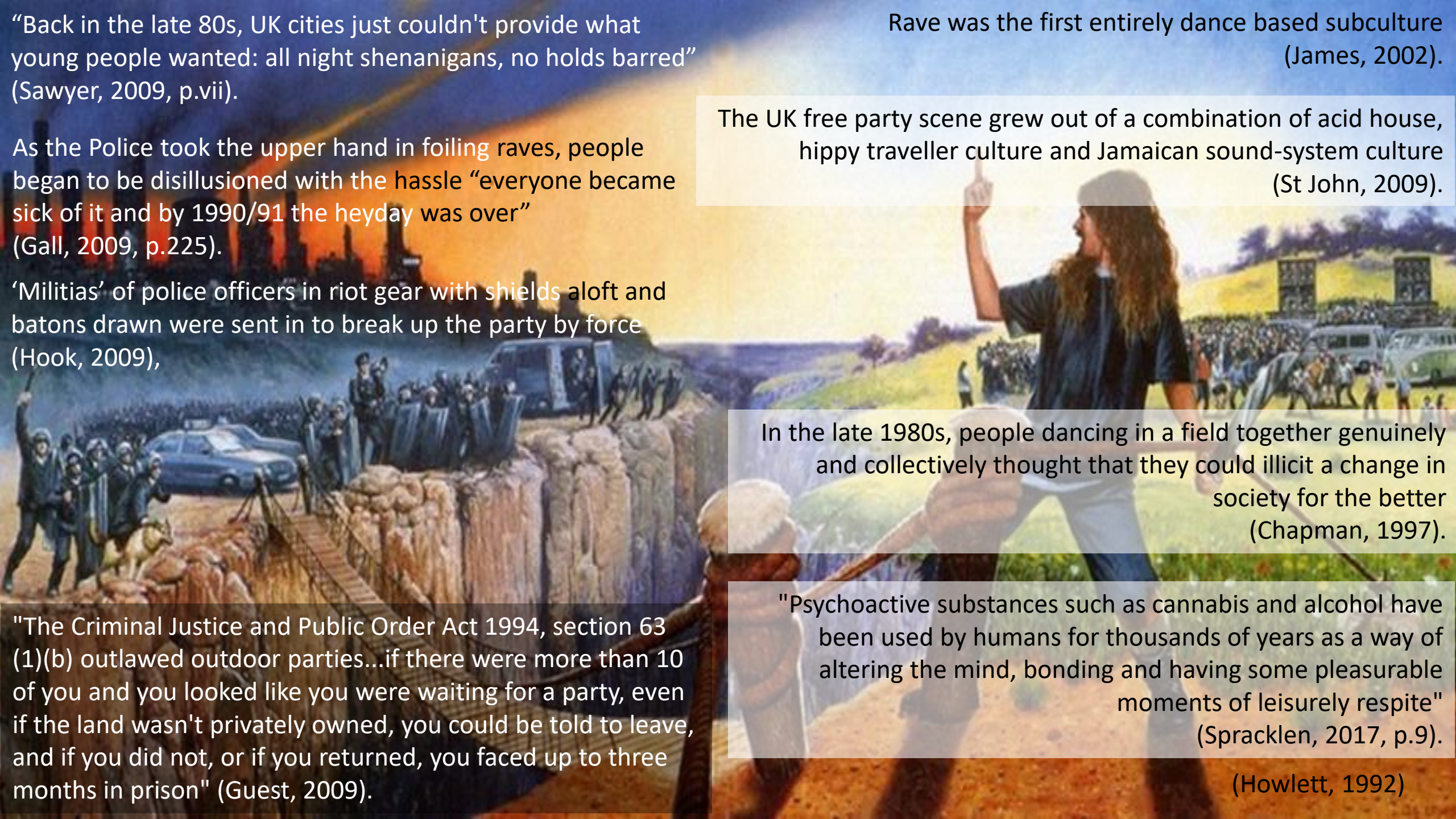
Rave was the first entirely dance based subculture (James, 2002).

The UK free party scene grew out of a combination of acid house, hippy traveller culture and Jamaican sound-system culture (St John, 2009).

In the late 1980s, people dancing in a field together genuinely and collectively thought that they could illicit a change in society for the better (Chapman, 1997).

"Psychoactive substances such as cannabis and alcohol have been used by humans for thousands of years as a way of altering the mind, bonding and having some pleasurable moments of leisurely respite" (Spracklen, 2017, p.9).

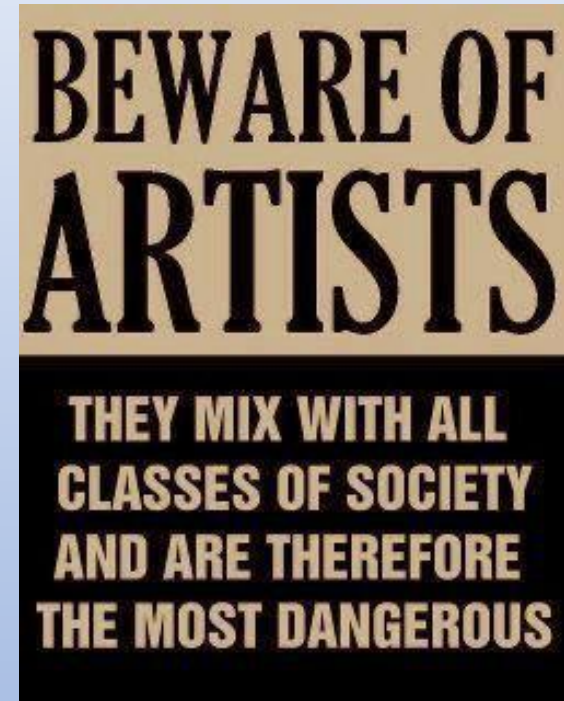
(Howlett, 1992)





# It's about social mixing and unity

- David Mancuso, the owner of New York's The Loft, said in *Maestro* (2003) "If you can mix the economical groups together, that's where you have social progress, that's very important to me".
- Acid house emerged...it was easy to dance to and white people embraced this music of black origin (Hook, 2009).
- The rave scene broke down racial barriers between white and black youth, and accepted the gay crowd into what was a liberally minded music scene (*The Agony and the Ecstasy*, 2017).
- The thuggish behaviour of drunk working-class lads was eroded by ecstasy (Phillips, 2009), even 'firms' of rival football hooligans began to meet and up and dance together instead of fight (Chester, 2011; Gall, 2009).
- Dance is a tangible expression of synchronicity and being a part of something greater than self, it is communal (*The Agony and the Ecstasy*, 2017).



# Development of the Leeds scene

“In Leeds the rave scene was underground in Hyde Park basements and Chapeltown Blues Club after-parties, as the music got better, the crowds got bigger and clubbing moved to the centre” (Music in Leeds – Volume 1, 2015).



# Leeds

- Leeds' reputation for night-life has grown since the city's early 1990s branding as a '24 hour city' by Leeds City Council, who began to relax club licensing to encourage a stronger night-time economy in the city (Woodward, 2008).
- Former Leeds City Councillor Lorna Cohen is quoted in the documentary Music in Leeds - Volume 1 (2015) as saying "there was nothing...that forbid us from allowing these establishments to stay open as long as they wanted, providing of course they didn't serve alcohol. Leeds University got far more applications from students who wanted to come to Leeds because of what we were doing here than any other city university in the country".
- Mateos-Garcia and Bakhshi (2016) identified 47 areas in the UK, which were experiencing high economic growth through the creative industries in their locale, Leeds was one of the 47 areas.
- Creatives and entrepreneurs [working together](#) (and against each other), have given the city a reputation for night-life (Lynn, 2017).

# Nightclub commercialisation

- The relative ease by which large amounts of money - cash money could be made by those with the know-how, lead to a growth of dance music nights in commercial high street venues. The promoters and the DJs who performed, mostly came from the rave scene (Phillips, 2009).
- Bourdieu (1996) discusses opposition between art and money. Commercialisation of rave events by those stakeholders with financial interests lead to market fragmentation when the original event attendees didn't appreciate new audiences who may not have had the same values (Anderson, 2009).
- The focus shifted from inclusivity to exclusivity with the addition of door policies and dress codes.
- The birth of the 'superclub' further demonstrated the marketisation and commercial exploitation of rave culture.



# Challenges for venues

- Spracklen, Richter and Spracklen (2013) wrote about the corporatisation of urban centres in England, citing Leeds as a case study.
- Repopulating of city centres.
- Demographics – low number of 18-25 year olds in the UK.
- Drugs: Ecstasy 1980s £20-25 ... 2000s £3 (Phillips, 2009).
  - “You can’t spell Leeds without LSD and a couple of Es” (Beer, 2018).
- Drug usage, binge-drinking and their associated impacts both inside and outside of 'club' venues, problematised clubs for local authorities (Rief, 2009).
- Rising costs of alcohol, combined with rising tuition fees, lower student numbers and squeezes on personal disposable income have made people more discerning.
- Increasing costs – rates / DJ fees.

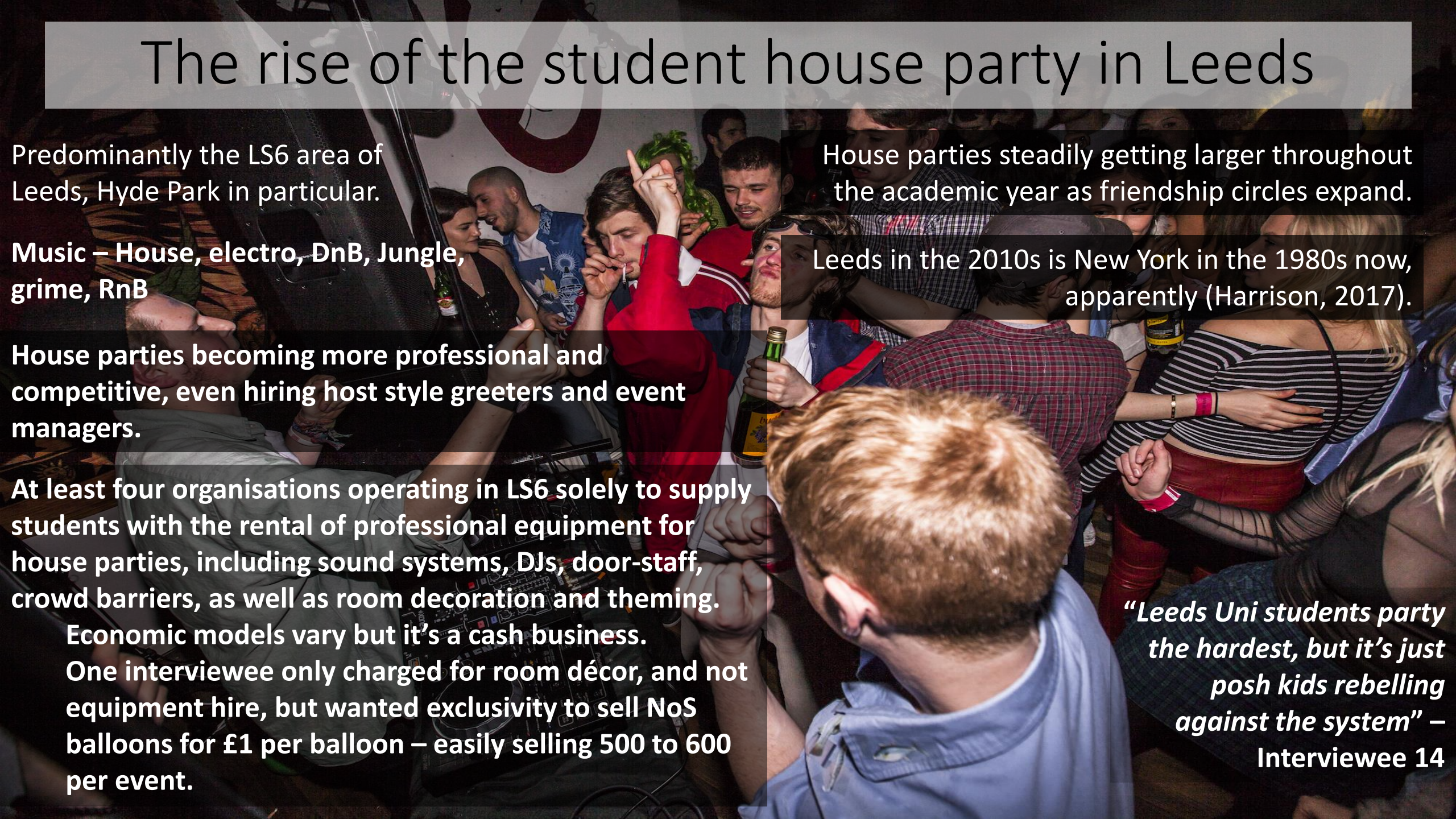


# Going underground

- People sought alternative leisure spaces, and Leeds obliged by having an abundance of disused buildings, including old mills and warehouses.
- Haslam (2001) discusses historically before the 1970s that shops, cafes, pubs and tea rooms would often be utilised to create a dancing environment, when purpose-built nightclub spaces were much less commonplace.
- "A DIY attitude that prioritizes communal support, autonomy and self-sufficiency over metrics such as popularity and capital" (Amin, 2017) are what drives the underground DIY club scene.
- A number of the promoters I have interviewed who have been active in the past 20 years began with parties in basements, warehouses and cafes.



# The rise of the student house party in Leeds



Predominantly the LS6 area of Leeds, Hyde Park in particular.

**Music – House, electro, DnB, Jungle, grime, RnB**

**House parties becoming more professional and competitive, even hiring host style greeters and event managers.**

**At least four organisations operating in LS6 solely to supply students with the rental of professional equipment for house parties, including sound systems, DJs, door-staff, crowd barriers, as well as room decoration and theming.**

**Economic models vary but it's a cash business.**

**One interviewee only charged for room décor, and not equipment hire, but wanted exclusivity to sell NoS balloons for £1 per balloon – easily selling 500 to 600 per event.**

House parties steadily getting larger throughout the academic year as friendship circles expand.

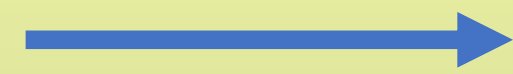
Leeds in the 2010s is New York in the 1980s now, apparently (Harrison, 2017).

*“Leeds Uni students party the hardest, but it's just posh kids rebelling against the system” – Interviewee 14*



# Etymology

*RAVE*



Disco (1980s)

“Disco”



Nightclub (1990s)

“Club night”



Club (2000s)



*RAVE*

Venue (2010s)

“Event”





# Where we seem to be dancing

Dancing in a field illegally (1980s)

Dancing in hangars and tents legally (1990s)

Dancing in nightclubs legally (1990s)

Dancing in alternative spaces illegally (2000s)

Dancing in alternative spaces legally (2010s)

Dancing at home (2010s)

*“Just what is it that you want to do?*

*We wanna be free*

*We wanna be free to do what we wanna do*

*And we wanna get loaded*

*And we wanna have a good time*

*That's what we're gonna do*

*(No way baby let's go)*

*We're gonna have a good time*

*We're gonna have a party”*

*(The Wild Angels, 1966)*

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