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The Night is Still Young: A Cross-Disciplinary Forum on Queer Nightlife Studies

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ABSTRACT

Since 2020, a wave of academic and trade books has brought unprecedented attention to queer nightlife. Whereas this special issue of *TSQ* advances queer nightlife as a site for continued study in sociology, this forum opens a conversation between ten leading scholars who have often carried out their work in distinct social science and humanities fields, including sociology, geography, ethnomusicology, performance studies, religion, and media studies. In a spirit of academic generosity, they become interlocutors who exchange stories, analytical frameworks, and investments with the goal that they might learn from each other; they bond over shared nightlife and research experiences, including ethnographic methods and attention to affect. This forum poses questions and insights that will enrich how future scholarship can build toward more rigorous, capacious, and imaginative queer methods – within and beyond sociology.

KEYWORDS

Queer nightlife; disciplinarity; ethnography; affect

Since 2020, a wave of academic and trade books has brought unprecedented attention to queer nightlife.[1] Whether responding to statistics of bar closures, changes in queer urban geographies, the tragedy at Pulse Nightclub, the fiftieth anniversary of the Stonewall riots, COVID lockdowns, developing archival efforts, or emergent party practices, research about queer nightlife thrives across different disciplinary fields. All of this scholarship models a belief that queer nightlife provides an essential site for thinking about and with LGBTQ+—and especially QTBIPOC—lives, communities, experiences, expressions, activisms, economics, and geographies.

Although this critical mass of research is new, scholarly attention to nightlife is not. Even before the 1969 Stonewall riots, which have been commemorated as the flashpoint of LGBTQ+ liberation, social scientists turned to gay bars to locate homosexuals and make sense of their identities and social patterns. This foundational work includes

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studies by sociologist Nancy Achilles (1964, 1967), psychologist Evelyn Hooker (1965, 1967), and anthropologist Esther Newton, whose doctoral field research became the influential book *Mother Camp* (1972). Although undertaken within the existing paradigms of social problems and sexual deviance, these analyses understood queer lives as benign human variations and nightlife as productive for queer people to constitute their identities and forge communities. Queer nightlife has always extended beyond bars, but these venues have been the most public, accessible, and institutionalized locations for queer nightlife; they have also been sites of bias and exclusion, past and present.

In the social sciences, researchers have continued to examine the ways sexuality and space become mutually constitutive. In the humanities, historical studies have understood nightlife as central to local queer scenes' formation across the twentieth century (see Boyd 2003; Chauncey 1994; Faderman and Timmons 2006; Heap 2009; Hurewitz 2007; Paulson and Simpson 1996; Scott 2023). Essential scholarship has also documented specific women's and lesbian's cultures that, too often, have been overshadowed by the hegemony of white male scenes and scholarship (see Adeyemi 2022; Cartier 2014; Enke 2007; Faderman 1991; Gieseking 2021; Kahn and Gozemba 1992; Kennedy and Davis 1993; Nestle 1987; Sullivan 2022; Thorpe 1996; Wolfe 1997; Woolner 2023). Trans, genderqueer, and nonbinary nightlife remains under-researched beyond attention to drag.

As the following discussion reveals, the social sciences and humanities converge at methods of ethnography and interviewing and on questions of affect. Grappling with the feelings, world-making practices, and social tensions on dance floors and in queer nightlife generally has been especially generative (see Adeyemi 2022; Adeyemi, Khubchandani, and Rivera-Servera 2021; Allen 2009; Amory 1996; Bollen 2001; Buckland 2001; Garcia-Mispireta 2023; Ghaziani 2024; Greene 2024; Hilderbrand 2023; Johnson 1998; Khubchandani 2020; Mattson 2023; Moore 2018; Rivera-Servera 2004; Román 2003; Siegel 2001). Notably, the politics of "joy" varies somewhat by discipline and entails more complexity than it initially might seem. Likewise, conditions of possibility – past, extant, or ever-nascent – surface as a recurrent framework across methods and disciplines. The participants in this forum each have their own vantage points, personal histories, and priorities, yet each contributes essential research and analytical insights to this developing area of study.

Whereas this special issue of *TSQ* advances queer nightlife as a site for continued study in sociology, this forum (conducted virtually via Google Docs from August to September 2024) opens a conversation between ten leading scholars who have often carried out their work in distinct social science and humanities fields, including sociology, geography, ethnomusicology, performance studies, religion, and media studies. Despite writing contemporaneously – and at times reading and building from each other's work – they had not all met nor been in direct dialogue until this forum, due to disciplinary silos. Here, in a spirit of academic generosity, they become interlocutors who exchange stories, analytical frameworks, and investments with the goal that they might learn from each other – and bond over shared nightlife and research experiences. Indeed, much of this intellectual work builds from lived practices of going out. This forum poses questions and insights that will enrich how future scholarship can build toward more rigorous, capacious, and imaginative queer methods – within and beyond sociology.

We are Witnessing a Wave of Scholarship on Queer Nightlife and Gay Bars Across Different Disciplines. What Inspired Your Work in This Field?

Ramón H. Rivera-Servera: Queer nightlife opened refuge to me very early on in life. As a working-class queer teenager in the late 1980s San Juan, Puerto Rico, there were highly limited options for encountering others, much less in public. (Remember this was the pre-internet and pre-GPS era). Exploring the risks entailed in reaching that precarious "safe harbor" became my embodied map of desire. The rituals of preparation, the navigational skills to transit to nightlife, and the relationships negotiated in the charged sensorial environments of clubs, bars, and cruising districts shaped my quotidian repertoires. Arriving at the university classroom as a student in 1991 and encountering the rise of performance and performativity as aesthetic and theoretical projects resonated with my experience and simply set the course for how I would draw on nightlife as a key resource and experience for understanding queer life.

Luis Manuel Garcia-Mispireta: I was a dancer and a raver well before I became a scholar – although it took years for me to realize that scholarship on queer nightlife was even possible. The 1990s rave scene saved me as a gay, brown teenager in an overwhelmingly white town; it helped me survive homophobic bullying at a Catholic high school. My local scene was made up of queers, goths, and stoners, and it was through this mix of subcultures that I entered into the broader landscape of queer nightlife as an adult. As much as my identity as a queer Latino kid shaped my experience of entering into the rave scene, it also shaped my experience of traversing the academy – especially in conservative, elitist Music departments. At first, I studied classical vocal performance, then I became a medieval musicologist (shoutout to the 13th-century motet nerds), and then, halfway through my MA in historical musicology, I wrote an essay about Toronto's rave scene for my ethnomusicology class. I was genuinely shocked to receive positive feedback and encouragement, and by the time I was applying to PhD programs, I was pitching a doctoral project on electronic music and rave/club cultures. Since then, I've remained committed to writing about electronic dance music, rave subcultures, and their oft-overlooked QTPOC communities.

Kareem Khubchandani: I fell in love with nightlife while I was in college. I'd take buses for seven hours from middle-of-nowhere New York state just to go to clubs and parties in New York City. It was fun, but it also left me with the question, "*Why was I bonkers enough to travel* this far *just to have fun?*" And as I learned that I wasn't the only one with such predilections, I wanted to dive deeper into those questions. When I learned there were scholars *already* thinking critically about nightlife, it led me to grad school, which led me to parties in Bangalore and Chicago, which led me to drag, which led me to write *Ishtyle* (2020) and *Decolonize Drag* (2023) and co-edit *Queer Nightlife* (2021).

Amin Ghaziani: I had similar experiences as you, Ramón and Luis. My parents relocated from Karachi to Chicago when I was eight months old. Growing up, I was too burdened by being bullied for my brown skin to sort through my sexuality. Queerness felt atmospheric, omnipresent though impressionistic. One of the main reasons why I went to the University of Michigan for my undergraduate work was because I knew Ann Arbor had large queer communities – and I desperately wanted to figure things out. I went to my first gay bar less than a month after I moved into my dorm. It was Tuesday night, October 11, 1994–a date,

a place, and a moment I will always remember. Week after week I returned and eventually found my queerness in that sweaty sanctuary. And so, similar to what Kareem said, I suppose that I also fell in love with nightlife in college. *Nightlife, therefore we are*. That's how I describe it in my book *Long Live Queer Nightlife* (2024): we come together at night, therefore we are. Those echoes of Descartes highlight how the personal is political – and professional.

Marie Cartier: During my first semester of my graduate work in religious studies, I had a conversation with an old-school bar dyke who had experienced significant abuse during police raids at the bar she went to in the South. I realized her love for the lesbian bar bordered on talk that seemed religious. In any other context, we could see religious overtones, but because she was talking about gay bars, it did not seem like it could be "religious." So I wrote my first seminar paper on the possible religious practice of attending lesbian bars, and my professor wrote in the margin, "This could be a Master's thesis." And that's how it all started. I realized what a debt I owed to those spaces that stayed open – despite the rapes, harassment, beatings – and what I owed to those women who created those spaces. When I asked the woman mentioned above how she could stand to go back to the bar after being gang raped by police, she said, "That was my home. The only place I felt seen. . . No one was taking that away from me." I realized I had so little knowledge of what had happened in those earlier bars. I stood on her shoulders. In many ways, *Baby, You're My Religion* (2014) was a way to pay it forward.

Lucas Hilderbrand: In college and after in Minneapolis, dancing at gay bars became a weekend ritual for me. When I went to grad school in New York City, nightlife became even more ingrained as part of everyday life. I always went out with friends but was never gregarious enough to ingratiate myself into broader scenes or feel like nightlife constituted an actual community. But it did create a sense of possibility and, often, euphoric release. Then, when I became faculty, I found myself feeling the absence of nightlife – both the actual dancing and the sense of contact with something that felt enlivening. Around 2008, I started thinking about nightlife as a research focus as a vicarious substitute for living it. I realized then that no book existed on the history of gay bars with a national scope. What did exist were local histories, often pre-Stonewall, and foundational social science studies dating from the 1960s and 1970s that looked to gay bars as the lens to understand an emergent gay community with its own social norms. (Often the gay community was imagined in the singular, rather than with the diversity of the plural.) We didn't yet have a book that examined the period of gay bars' ubiquity or that reflected on its widely perceived role as our primary public institution and how it shaped our subcultures and intra-community politics. It seemed like such a book *should* exist, so I decided to write one. But I was also resisting the emerging rhetoric that gay bars were dying; in the cities where I lived, they weren't.

Greggor Mattson: My experience is very similar to yours, Lucas. For me, it started with the closure of my favorite gay bar here in Cleveland, Ohio. I just wanted to read a book about gay bars, but there weren't any, then. You always hear the advice to write the book you want to read, and I got to do that with *Who Needs Gay Bars?* (2023). So I started poking around to determine: was Cleveland part of a trend? There were no numbers, so I started cobbling together a dataset using the Damron guides and employed undergraduate research

assistants.[2] That prompted me to do some interviews with owners to figure out what the numbers meant. I was embarrassingly deep in it before I learned of your project (maybe even from Jack?), which you'd started before mine. I was so delighted when you got in touch when you were passing through Cleveland, and we got to have a drink at The Hawk. I was nervous because academics can be territorial about their research, but you were so open and enthusiastic and generous with your insights and your encouragement, and that meant a lot to me. Now we both get to live in a world where there are two books about gay bars on a national scope, and I'm grateful that yours does such a much better job with deep histories and the visual!

Hilderbrand: Greggor, thank you! I remember meeting for a beer in Cleveland in 2017. I was on a three-month research road trip to go to as many archives as I could explore, but part of what I learned along the way was who was doing this work, both as community-based archivists and as scholars. I wanted to do this forum for the same reasons: to connect with everyone, even if only virtually. But I will also say that you wrote a book I couldn't have because you're better at talking with people. I'm more comfortable with representations than people. That's why you're a sociologist, and I'm a humanist.

Theo Greene: I never thought that queer nightlife would be as central to my research as it became. When I started my research on gay neighborhoods, I initially viewed gay bars and nightclubs as symbolic anchors that signified the presence of a gay neighborhood, which, for my respondents, represented safety and a sense of community ownership. However, as my research shifted from the residential and institutional decline of gay cultural spaces to queer placemaking, I began to realize the importance of queer nightlife to the formation and preservation of gay neighborhoods, even as they materially disappeared. Not only did I witness various nightlife events move from one space to another as a gay bar closed, but I also saw how queer youth of color would take spatial practices associated with nightlife onto the streets, transforming sidewalks into catwalks and interrupting traffic flow with street dancing. The global response to the shooting at Pulse nightclub, however, became the point of no return. As I saw communities converge onto iconic gay neighborhoods and reactivate places that once existed within these communities, I realized that forms of place disruption and ephemeral placemaking that became central to my first book, *Not in MY Gayborhood!* (2024), took root from the longstanding histories of queer nightlife throughout the late-nineteenth and twentieth centuries. From that moment, I found the placemaking practices in queer nightlife inseparable from the local strategies of culturally preserving gay neighborhoods.

Kemi Adeyemi: I was partying a lot.

Jack Gieseking: I was not partying a lot anymore. I was very middle-aged and preferred house parties, but every time anyone wanted me to talk about my first book, *A Queer New York* (2021), everyone asked me about lesbian bars. It was 2020, there were an all-time low of sixteen lesbian bars in the U.S., and *The Lesbian Bar Project* (*LBP*) launched as a docuseries between Jagermeister and lesbian bars to bring attention to their dwindling.[3] I love the work and financial and social contributions of the LBP to the very few existing, self-titled lesbian bars. But I was deeply frustrated that there was so much attention on bars as the only lesbian-queer space, especially during those first pandemic years when social media use intensified, and this idealization spread. And this also infuriated me because

lesbian bars have historically been majority white spaces and focusing just on these social spaces obscured the actual complexity and range of what we've come to call queer nightlife. I am always thinking with Kemi Adeyemi's (2022) and Nikki Lane's (2015, 2019) current ethnographic work and Cookie Woolner's historic research (Woolner 2023) about how Black queer women's and gender non-conforming spaces are often parties, whether club or bar takeovers, weekday happy hours, or traveling parties, salons, or house blowouts, and we see the same patterns in Latinx women and trans spaces. All of that – and the even more limited work on Asian and Indigenous lesbian, bisexual, queer, Two-Spirit, intersex, trans, gender non-conforming, and sapphic spaces. I filled an entire yellow notepad with my frustration and anger and realized I was actually mesmerized by a question: *why the hell were we so obsessed with lesbian bars?* I started writing – and now recording a podcast with *Sinister Wisdom* – called *Where Shall We Meet to Fund the Revolution?: Dyke Bars* for the End Times*, which will launch in 2025. The book is a reckoning with lezbiqueertrans nightlife in these really broad ways across bars, clubs, and all types of parties, salons, fetes, shindigs, BBQs, and gatherings, and across geographies and historic periods too.

Hilderbrand: Jack, I appreciate your comment about the preoccupation with bars. I think this indexes their historical centrality as visible and public community institutions, but bars have only ever been one form among many that queer nightlife takes. Although I've written on bars specifically, I think we need to understand these as porous, promiscuous venues that intersect with many places, parties, and histories. And some places that technically weren't bars were understood as bars or influenced what happened in them.

Mattson: Porous and promiscuous research is now how I will define myself!

What Methods Make Your Work Possible, and What Does Your Research Reveal or Help Us Understand Anew?

Cartier: I hope my work makes a valid case for seeing that bars served as alternative church spaces for people pre-Stonewall, and still serve that function for many today. Everything happened in the bars for decades. I interviewed ninety-two women (and ten men), and what I found overwhelmingly was that the gay bar had to serve so many functions. When I met the bartender of the Lost and Found in Chicago, she told me matter-of-factly in a husky cigarette voice, "Well, I married people here back in the '60s. Some of them are still married today." Then she asked, "Do you want to see the paper I used in the ceremony?" I almost jumped over the bar! She showed me a mimeographed sheet quoting *Corinthians*, "The greatest of these is love." At the time, that was exactly what I needed to get my committee to sign off on the research. It had been religious in the gay bars. My work was based on ethnographic testimony, and subsequent research bore out the importance of the physical structures – the existence of actual spaces where gay people could go and see that each other existed. In many cases, the bar was a substitute community center, church space, reception hall, therapy office, etc. When I asked this bartender why she did these ceremonies, she said, "Well, I was like the captain of the ship. Who else was gonna do it?" I was so naive as to the reality of this history! I asked her, "Where was the reception?" She laughed, "You don't get it, kid, do ya? It all had to happen here. Everything."

Ghaziani: I hear parallels between Marie's reply and, Jack and Lucas, both of your earlier remarks about there being "so much attention on bars" and a "preoccupation with bars," respectively. Some of this is attributable to how we study nightlife. I'm thinking about the use of bar listings in travel guides as our data. This has been a methodological feature of the literature in urban sexualities and urban sociology for decades. While imperfect, like all data, tracking changes in these listings can establish statistical trends, like the numbers we have seen circulating in recent years about the closure of gay bars around the world. That said, counting bars will offer us conclusions only about bars, while leaving unexamined other nightlife forms that are harder to count and quantify. The episodic and ephemeral nature of club nights, a set of roving queer parties popping up in cities around the world and which are my muse in my new book, enables rough approximations that are vulnerable to a variety of validity challenges. Although I can't establish a causal relationship between these nightlife forms, I can reasonably argue that bar closures *encouraged* club nights to increase in greater visibility and variety. Expressing the association in this way suggests a relationship without fixing or reducing its complexity. While my inability to count club nights might pose a potential constraint, it also presents an opportunity for what I call a methodology of messy moments. Knowledge creation in creative industries and cultural markets, like nightlife, does not always fit the standard account of knowing as countable and commensurable, or orderly for that matter. Shifting the analytic focus from fixed and emplaced bars to episodic and event-based parties requires that we expand our knowledge about knowledge itself. The feminist researcher Donna Haraway offers useful advice: "The only way to find a larger vision is to be somewhere in particular" (Haraway 1988:590). Studying queer nightlife involves a process of counting what we can, interviewing people to learn their stories, and participating ethnographically in the scenes we want to better understand.

Mattson: I'm mostly an in-depth interviewer, so my work has mostly involved letting people tell their stories and getting out of their way. But I had to include much more of myself to give the reader the context they need to know when or if I'm a reliable narrator, and for that I took inspiration from gender, sexuality, and feminist studies, and anthropology. They do situated reflexivity better than sociology does or has done. But I also put on a database-generating hat to track the trends, as Amin describes, just to get a baseline for what I was hearing about and to have some context on the particular stories people were telling me.

Rivera-Servera: Performance ethnography anchors my approach to queer nightlife. I use ethnographic methods to write cultural histories of the recent past and the present. As it has been developed in my home field of performance studies, ethnography is attuned to the embodied and aesthetic registers of performance. As such, it opens an opportunity to expand and collectivize the vantage point from which our interpretation of queer sociology advances. Much of my work focuses on aesthetic experimentation in art and life (with special focus on how communities deploy movement, dance, and gesture), and it so happens that much of the art experimentation I turned to from the 1980s to the present intersected significantly with queer nightlife.

Adeyemi: *Feels Right* (2022) is an ethnography of how black queer people, particularly women, navigate their "right to the city" through the adroit management of what I call the

racialized territorialization of feeling in Chicago. I am interested in how black queer people configure rights as, say, legislative but also – and perhaps more importantly, given how minoritarian access to governance is so constrained – affective. What access do we have to the kinds of joy, comfort, safety, etc. that we supposedly get from participating in the pleasure economies that neoliberal transformations are seen to encourage? My book looks to the dance floor as a site where struggles for the right to the city and the right to good feeling within it are staged. We find that the possibilities of feeling good, let alone feeling joy (a term that imho overwhelms studies of black queer life with too much nonspecificity), often feel just beyond reach. I offer a framework of feeling right, which does not always resolve in good feelings, as something that might help us as researchers think more granularly about what happens in the meantime: struggles to sync up with other dancers, hating on the DJ, hating on the promoter, decisions about when to get on and off the dance floor, bad feelings toward DJs and promoters. These small-scale interactions can tell us a lot about larger-scale processes of doing politics that, I think, are overlooked when we think about black (queer) political agency.

Garcia-Mispireta: I would describe myself as an ethnographer of popular music, but what that means methodologically has been shifting for me. Initially, my training in ethnomusicology and cultural anthropology focused almost exclusively on solo research projects with long timescales (e.g., ten months at one fieldwork site). Typically, fieldwork involved participant observation at rave/club events, cultivating networks of trust very gradually, using those networks to solicit off-site interviews, and finally qualitative data analysis that included cultural artifacts (recordings, music videos, fan discourse), field notes, and interview transcripts. These are the methods that undergird my first monograph, *Together, Somehow* (2023), which studied stranger-intimacy at rave events across three sites: Paris, Berlin, and Chicago. For my newest research project, "From the Bottoms Up," which focuses on grassroots organizing in queer rave collectives, I am adopting more participatory and collaborative methods, such as working with community members as co-researchers (inspired by Participatory Action Research frameworks), running a facilitated group consultation with queer nightlife organizers, and then publishing a collaboratively written 'zine as a publicly accessible research report (2024). Across all of my projects, however, musicological methods remain important to me, since I'm committed to describing what music does for/with affect in all of these contexts.

Khubchandani: Being a drag queen is central to how I experience, interpret, and write about nightlife. Being an icon in the space means that people *come up to me* to tell me about their experiences. My drag gave people permission to theorize femininity in our interviews. So even though the spaces I participated in and write about are highly masculinized, they privilege cis-masculinity, I'm able to think critically about the role of women, femininity, and transness in them because of my own performances.

Hilderbrand: My training and teaching are in the humanities-based discipline of cinema and media studies, and I wrote a historical book. But I think of myself as doing cultural studies. So my approach was always multidisciplinary and meant reading across different fields to find my way. This also meant that I often read early social science studies as now-historical documents, changing their genre; this was how I engaged Esther Newton's *Mother Camp* (1972) and numerous other texts. I think statistics about the prevalence of venues,

their differentiated scenes, and their closings are useful, but I'm also a sucker for peculiar bar ads and anecdotal details that express what numbers cannot. My position was that none of these elements could tell the story on their own; instead, I tried to embrace too-much-ness. My book *The Bars Are Ours* (2023) was built on research in archives and reading the local and national gay press. I tried to listen to what I found and let these findings determine which cities and bars developed into case studies. What I've found, again and again, is that everything I know from my own experience of nightlife has prior histories, and the various forms of activism and political critique that we've seen in recent decades has been debated before – perhaps with different nuances. There are also gaps in the archives, inevitably. I try to flesh these out with conversations and with examples from my own experiences. I strive to negotiate between the documented and the subjective. Bars have never been utopias, but they were what we had. Recognizing this allows us to understand the human imperfections we always encounter. I've come to recognize that people often feel like they're inventing something new when they go out, but oftentimes these nightlife practices and parties build upon or reimagine what came before. Everything has a history.

Gieseking: I'm still drawing on my research from my first book: 1,400 pages of focus group transcripts with women and trans and gender non-conforming people who came out between 1983-2008, and a year of archival research at the Lesbian Herstory Archives. For the book on dyke bars*, I've dug deep into the Gale Archives of Sexuality and Gender online, working on some exciting text analyses and data visualizations to look for patterns in the data, and then I built my own archive of journalist coverage of lesbian bars, queer parties, and related spaces since the 2000s, e.g. when Gale materials start to trickle out, and online sources grow. Then there are the thousands of dykes who have shared their stories of these spaces over the years, and they have certainly fueled my thinking, too.

Greene: I echo the importance of ethnography to my research. However, I do want to pivot a bit and focus on my positionality as an ethnographer, which deeply informs my approach to studying queer nightlife. Much of the research I found on gay neighborhoods in sociology focused on white gay male researchers who often used their erotic capital to navigate networks within gay spaces. However, as a gay Black man navigating white queer spaces, I have often faced forms of racial discrimination at gay bars, not only from staff but also from other patrons. Often frustrated by others' indifference to my experiences, I decided to leverage my "low erotic capital" to understand how desire structured social interactions within queer institutions. This strategy proved particularly useful as my research shifted to queer place-making. As I began observing what sociologist Ruben Buford May refers to as integrated segregation in various gay bars in Washington, DC, and Chicago (2014:8), I realized that many cultural practices by BIPOC queer patrons that folks identified as disruptive, such as dancing atop tables and chairs in a crowded bar or protest block parties in the middle of a busy intersection, represented vital strategies of challenging invisibility and discrimination within these spaces. I recognized my responsibility of translating these practices by BIPOC queer communities as constructive forces, often operating to reinforce the value and persistence of place-based queer cultures. Moreover, as I mentioned in my previous answer, my research has taught me to rethink the very meaning of queer nightlife. I have discovered that queer nightlife is not limited to the traditional gay bars and nightclubs lining a queer urban district. Queer nightlife exists in dilapidated factory buildings, after-hour restaurants, and fancy hotel ballrooms. I have witnessed the revival of "closed" gay bars in existing spaces,

where the production of queer nightlife shifts from one queer subculture to another. I have delighted in observing queer youth of color create queer nightlife on street corners and parking lots. I now appreciate how queer nightlife is neither singular nor stable, and I see that instability as a good thing.

How Do You Engage Both Structural Critique and the Possibilities of Affect, Joy, and/or World-Making in Your Work? How Do We Avoid Reductive Understandings of What Nightlife Produces for Its Publics?

Ghaziani: I have lost count of the number of studies I have read about suffering and social problems, bigotry and bias, discrimination and inequality. Those arguments are accurate – and absolutely essential for guiding us toward a more just social world – and yet, having fun and feeling joy is what sustains us while we grapple with the tough stuff. Stef M. Shuster and Laurel Westbrook call this a joy deficit (Shuster and Westbrook 2024). When we singularly focus on what makes life miserable, all the social harms and collective trauma, then the things that make it pleasurable vanish from view. Sociology is a problem-centered discipline, and so I suppose this approach makes some sense – although, like Eve Tuck, I also worry that we fetishize people's pain and brokenness (Tuck 2009). Negative experiences are only part of the picture, never its whole. And that's why I think we need to insist on joy – not as naively disconnected from a world in which there is suffering and systemic bias but as a salve to that suffering. Anything but trivial or reductive, joy is life-enhancing and deeply political. When we go out and have fun with our friends, important things are happening. Those moments – these moments of thinking together – create a shared emotional energy that promotes group pride and communal attachments. Joy brings us closer together, and as it does, we model positive relationships with each other. Joy can also bloom into a broader politics that can move us "beyond romances of the negative and toiling in the present." That's how José Esteban Muñoz describes it. "We must dream," he says, "and enact new and better pleasures" (Muñoz 2009:1). To recognize the power and potentiality of joy, we need to shift from deficit and adopt asset-based frameworks in our work.

Garcia-Mispireta: Affect is a crucial throughline to all of *Together, Somehow*, but only some of that is joyful or directed toward world-making. A substantial section of the introduction is devoted to exploring "queer dancefloor utopianism," but also to preparing the reader for the contradictions and fissures explored in the rest of the book. I was interested in describing "stranger-intimacy" at rave and club events, accounting for how the affective experience of the dancefloor enabled surprising moments of intimacy with strangers – but at what cost? I wanted to account for how the seemingly easy stranger-sociability of these parties relied on a strategically-vague form of togetherness ("liquidarity", or fluid, volatile solidarity) that is deeply ambivalent for marginalized partygoers. In fact, affective politics can be mobilized to silence us, in the way that "positive vibes only" and "you're ruining the vibe" can scold us when we report harassment on the dancefloor or complain about inequitable access to these spaces. At the same time, I devote an entire chapter to theorizing how music can drive affective convergence and a "thickening" sense of collectivity on the dancefloor. Perhaps most relevant to this question, the epilogue reflects on the Orlando Pulse massacre of 2016, queer intimate publics (à la Berlant 2008), and the mess of

conflicting affects that us QTPOC folks experience in queer nightlife spaces – which are often sites of both succor and victimization. We go to feel free, but we rarely feel right (thanks to Kemi for that extremely apt phrasing). The cruel-but-unsurprising irony is that the people most in need of liberatory experiences are also the most likely to encounter oppression in those same spaces. My new project, on community organizing in queer rave collectives, is more engaged with discourses of world-making, albeit in the context of crisis and rupture: thus far, my research has been capturing some of the affective aftershocks of the pandemic and its devastating impact on queer nightlife, i.e. isolation, anger, determination, grief, exhaustion, pain, oblivion. There is so much good and important community-building work happening through queer nightlife, but queer joy "on the dancefloor" still remains embedded in an everyday affective landscape that is crushing for many of us.

Rivera-Servera: While in most of my work I tend to move in the direction of affect as a key to the embodied practices I focus, I do so with a strict materialist lens. That is, I work to learn from my interlocutors and their practices how they navigate their infrastructural and politico-economic contexts to make their queer life possible. In *Performing Queer Latinidad* (2012) I contend with the politics of migration, urban renewal economics (and their concomitant policies of social management), and the rise in circulation of Latinx commercial global culture to pursue the micro-sociologies of embodied exchange in performance spaces, nightlife establishments, and activist practices. The affects shaping and being generated in queer public spaces and practices became both records of larger structural pressures on the experience of my interlocutors as well as agentive resources cultivated and shared in the exercise of collective emergence.

Mattson: I love the turn toward queer joy, and I found it important to talk about negative experiences and affects in the book: boredom, ambivalence, addiction, discrimination, trauma, harm. Ambivalence ended up being the framework I settled on over joy, with gratitude to Claire Forstie for her work on that affect (2021). What I wanted to show is how varied gay bars are, how one place can be absolutely world-defining for some while excluding others, or the site of tremendous joy could also simultaneously contain pain. And to talk about how possibility, or hope, is one of the things that brings us queers out, even if we confront a lot of disappointment along the way.

Gieseking: Looking back, I was in a very deserved feminist killjoy state about who was left out – BIPOC people, non-urban geographies, and places that weren't bars/parties – and I am also inherently and deeply a joyous person. For me, it's always about a turn-that-frown-upside-down mentality – and, in this case, turn-that-geography upside down. The more I wrote and researched, I saw how there was some larger kind of recognition and shared experience in the dyke bar*, a space that helps dykes become recognizable to one another, and even more than feminist bookstores, LGBTQ centers, softball or footie games, etc. That's really exciting! And fascinating! So trying to wrestle with that – why we're obsessed with these spaces for a century – became deeply fun and energizing.

Hilderbrand: I've tried to embrace the multiplicities and contradictions of nightlife pasts rather than smooth them out, because I think that's what makes them fascinating. The past is more complex than a reductive thesis statement. There's virtually always a dialectic of liberation and oppression in these histories. My historical research persistently demonstrated that bars were overwhelmingly white and male in terms of who they sought to serve,

and those structural conditions and biases cannot be overlooked or excused. These facts shaped the cultures and politics that developed within these spaces and who was enfranchised by them, so we have to contend with them. Yet only focusing on critique without acknowledging what nightlife affords in terms of sensations and human connections fails to understand why people go out and what it makes feel possible. I've tried to write a history that feels *lived* by incorporating anecdotes, quips, details, sounds, smells, and textures of these spaces and moments of social encounter. But I also work to communicate that there is no singular experience of the past.

Cartier: Recently my wife created a podcast called *DykeDive*, which she bills as, "Dr. Cartier takes a deep dive into dyke dives." This project is full of joy. We already have thirteen episodes and are now working on our next season. This fall I'm interviewing the owners of the new Los Angeles lesbian bar RubyFruit. This is a far cry from the bars of my research and even the bars I used to attend. There has started to be a slow but steady resurgence of spaces for lesbians, sapphic, and queer women to create and expand that community. It is, joyously, working. Today there are people creating spaces in a much different way than was possible "back in the day." It is important that we have both accounts of our history and new spaces for today and a possible future.

Adeyemi: Not to be too glib but I think joy frameworks can get exhausting. Okay, we feel good and joy on the dance floor. Queer nightlife will save us. And then we wake up in the morning and have to go to work, or care for people, or feel fucked up, or hate everyone, or go to school, or reckon last night's good feelings with everything that happens in the day. I really like queer nightlife scholarship that doesn't look to consolidated feeling as an endpoint but rather looks at the queer nightlife space as one in which people work out their deepest, darkest likes and hates – and where we certainly feel good but we just as often lose hope that it will ever happen again. Taking queer nightlife seriously as an affectively complex place helps us be less naive in our thinking about how something like a queer politics, however it takes shape in your field site, emerges in conversation with otherwise formal political spheres.

Hilderbrand: In my work, I've tried to foreground ambivalence, but, Kemi, you really cut to the heart of what's happening in these spaces and parties.

Greene: I echo Kemi's criticism about joy frameworks in scholarly research. I agree that queer nightlife reflects spaces where patrons are navigating the complexities of their lived experience, whether it be joy, ambivalence, and anger. However, my research also reflects how LGBTQ participants elaborate and mobilize queer nightlife as vital expressions of urban citizenship. Black queer communities use dance and ballroom culture as forms of protest to challenge the discriminatory practices of a popular gay bar. I have witnessed queer youth voguing on the sidewalk to defend their rightful belonging to spaces within iconic gay neighborhoods. While traditional sociological scholarship has long dismissed these exercises as "deviant" or "disruptive" to the normative production of space, I legitimize these practices as vital to mobilizing local communities when they feel their visions of community under threat. In some ways, these practices can prove as effective as canvasing for petitions or traditional forms of protesting. The expressions of queer nightlife, especially those reproduced in public spaces and outside traditionally queer institutions, have ironically proven central in preserving the very queer spaces that have long excluded

them. Even in cases where they might feel accepted within mainstream queer spaces, I see how BIPOC queer folk would still defend these spaces and areas as safe spaces to explore their gender and sexual identities.

Cartier: Gay bars from their infancy had to be everything. Simply everything. For the community I studied, they were the place you met someone, had sex with someone in the restroom, married that person (maybe), broke up with that person, and then told someone about the breakup – at the same bar you met your former partner. Everything. I think the idea of "queer joy" is not a continuous state. Joy is in moments. Joy is dancing in a crowd under the disco ball until dawn, which I did one night in San Francisco, until a few friends and I watched the sunrise from the Golden Gate bridge – all at the height of the AIDS epidemic. Joy and fear and rage and love. It's all still there today. I think queer joy means recognizing the absolute wonder of being there in the center of your own community, having a heart to heart, or sex in a restroom (guilty of both), or dancing with a crowd without any single partner, or finally getting that slow dance. But these are moments. It's never queer joy without a background of queer rage or sadness. It is exhausting, I agree, and impossible to live completely as joy. What's important is to recognize the disco ball when its reflection shines on you.

Khubchandani: I've had a very good time in queer nightlife spaces: meeting lovers, feeling fancy, drooling over DJs' transitions, being told I'm hot as fuck. I've also had some of the worst experiences at parties, bars, and clubs: being called a terrorist, feeling the ugliest I've ever felt, fighting tall white men for a square foot of space to dance, finding my body was available for touch in ways that I wasn't ready for or open to. *Ishtyle* iteratively argues how nightlife spaces become disciplinary spaces precisely because they are bound to global structures of discipline and subjugation – capitalism, colonialism, casteism, nationalism, racism, gentrification, etc. That can result in a killjoy project. But I loved going out, and I still like going out, and I don't want my critique to foreclose the possibility of pleasure that can come from going out. So I try to write in a way that acknowledges the pervasiveness of structural violence, but still evidences the glimmers of pleasure that invite us to the party and that keep us returning to it.

What Kinds of Generational Tensions and Possibilities Do You See in Queer Nightlife and in Its Study? What Kinds of Mentorship Shaped You or Do You Practice, Beyond and/or within Academia?

Cartier: To be honest I think the generational tension, across the board, is one of technology versus the desire for face-to-face interaction. I am in a coffee shop now as I write this, and co-working is the new gathering. Many folks want to be in a community – but each in their own world and wearing headphones, together. The possibilities for queer gaming are endless and have been a nightlife activity for me and others. However, I gravitate toward in-person connection. In many queer spaces today, the lesbian scene might be more dinner-oriented, which is great but makes it is difficult to mingle. Old-school bars provided ways to mingle: pool, dancing, karaoke, pinball. It's almost impossible to infiltrate someone's dinner party, whereas it's easy to meet each other across the dance floor. The reality is most of my students don't go to gay bars and live a much less raucous life than I did, or do. Their stories

are different, but their stories are being made now – and I value that. It's important to weave our histories together and know that we truly do matter to each other; we do love each other. I try to mentor based on the saying by theologian Nelle Morton who said that hope comes from "a great ear at the heart of the universe – at the heart of our common life," and that comes alive when we learn to "*hear one another into speech*" (Morton 1985).

Adeyemi: Marie, a quick aside that I love the rhetorical framing of *Baby, You're My Religion* and the many different kinds of (sapphic) devotion the phrase indexes.Theo and Amin, I'm wondering what something seemingly concrete like the gayborhood – which is physically built into the neighborhood but has extremely modular meanings and implications – might mean for gen z, gen alpha, gen beta. What do you know or imagine are the dynamics of space, sexuality, race, class, and culture that shape forthcoming sexual cultures?

Greene: I have found Black Lives Matter and the COVID-pandemic illuminating in terms of intergenerational tensions occurring in queer nightlife. I see that the flag-bearers of revising the history of Stonewall have come from BIPOC queer youth, many of whom experience the "spark" of the modern gay rights movement through history courses in high school. I particularly love how these youths mobilized the Stonewall riots to critique their invisibility and disrespect at the hands of other patrons within these spaces. Rather than expressing certain levels of ambivalence about their history (as many scholars suggest in a post-gay era), they have not only educated their "queer elders" about the centerpiece of our modern movement, but they have invoked that spirit to demand their place at the table. However, aside from these moments, I have also gained an appreciation for the intergenerational exchanges that have taken place at my field sites. With my current research in Portland, Maine, the closure of a popular gay nightclub among LGBTQ youth in the Old Port resulted in an influx of queer youth into Blackstones, the town's only remaining LGBTQ club. While the transition proved difficult at first, especially as it pertained to questions of touching and consent, older generations have adapted to the presence and place-making practices of the younger groups and vice versa. It has been fun watching the youth teach their older counterparts about *RuPaul's Drag Race* and *Pose* while the older generations share their experiences about life during the AIDS crisis on World AIDS Day. Drag shows now showcase different styles that reflect different generations of the art form. I love playing music (as the resident DJ), and I get as many requests for "Aquarius" or Diana Ross from the youth as I do for Doja Cat or Cardi B by the bar's "founding patrons." While many divides still exist generationally, I have also realized the generative power these cross-generational interactions can have on the community.

Ghaziani: A lot of young people I met told me that they find the gayborhood limiting (as in expensive and culturally gay, whereas other areas of the city are more affordable and queer) and exclusive (by catering to cis white gay men). This partially accounts for why queer parties – like the ones I studied in London and the ones you, Kemi, analyzed in Chicago – happen beyond the gayborhood and attract a distinct demographic. The sexual cultures of these gatherings are quite unlike gay bars. But with dwindling numbers of bars in the limelight, we overlook these and other nightlife forms – and thus under-theorize the cultural variability and vitality of nightlife as a larger field and how participating in different scenes can vary by generational cohorts.

Adeyemi: Ramón, not to be too sentimental but *Performing Queer Latinidad* (Rivera-Servera 2012) was an extremely important model for how queer nightlife scholars can create grounded connections between specific physical, affective, and sonic movements and larger historical, political economic processes. When I read the book, it felt like 1-of-1. I'm wondering if it felt that way for you too as you were writing it, writing a field into existence, and I'm wondering what it felt like to then train people like me and Kareem.

Rivera-Servera: Interestingly, the opportunity to teach and learn with others like Kareem and Kemi about queer nightlife in the performance studies classroom occurred at a time when I was, to be honest, exhausted by the exercise of my own nightlife scene. I had just relocated to Chicago and was not socially oriented to the new social maps of a queer nightlife that was dispersed across the city and echoed the segregated frameworks of Chicago across race, economy, and gender. The focused laboratory of the graduate classroom reanimated nightlife for me and my understanding of both its traps and possibilities. The dialogs I established with Kemi (who contributed significantly to the editorial process of *Performing Queer Latinidad*) and Kareem (whose incorporation of a drag practice-based methodology to nightlife beautifully deepened the performance studies approach), were instrumental to my own thinking. Other students like Eddie Gamboa, Jonathan Magat, Enzo Vázquez Toral, and José Alvarez Colón brought different contexts and approaches to the work and deepened the relevance of politico-economic considerations alongside aesthetic ones in very significant ways. The scholarly work we advance often emerges from conditions of cultivated isolation, but I am fortunate that the classroom offered a critically important form of company that both advanced a generational refresh and new critical optics for the work in the field. To some extent, our co-edited volume, *Queer Nightlife* (2021), similarly seeks to mine that collective ethos by staging a multi-generational group of scholars to approach queer nightlife from interdisciplinary and expanded geographic frameworks.

Hilderbrand: José Esteban Muñoz made thinking about queer nightlife seem conceivable to me – more so in his life and mentorship, even, than in his writings. But almost every chapter of my book was indebted to people who've given us foundational work: Newton (1972), Read (1980), Rubin (1991, 1998), Chauncey (1994), Johnson (1998, 2008), Lawrence (2003, 2016), Hanhardt (2013), and, yes, Ramón (Rivera-Servera, 2004, 2012) and Amin (Ghaziani 2014, 2019), among many others. When I first conceived my book, I imagined Muñoz and Hanhardt would be my readers, and to some extent I wrote to them at first.

What Unique Contribution(s) Do You See Your Discipline Making the Interdisciplinary Scholarship on Queer Nightlife? What Do You Hope Your Work Makes Possible for Future Scholars, within And/Or Beyond Your Discipline?

Gieseking: Oh geesh, what a question! I just hope we keep legitimating actual queer-trans lives and spaces as places of study in the academy. Grad students are doing such cool work on sober spaces, mutual aid for handling overdoses in clubs, and more. They need to see

more advanced scholars doing this work. And, ha, more likely doing the work of going out at night too. Plus, given the pandemic, these spaces really showed us how much we need these spaces. At the same time, I feel deeply connected to all of you and all the people who do this work, even when we don't get to see one another or speak that often. Your work keeps me going. And the people who go out keep us all going, so they get the most love from me.

Garcia-Mispireta: Honestly, my unique contribution is dragging my exhausted carcass across the doctoral finish line and getting a monograph out into the world, all the while doing so from a discipline (ethno/musicology) that has been dismissive of popular culture, electronic music, and especially *anything* founded by QTPOC folks (c.f., how long it took for any musicologist to write seriously about disco). My first monograph was already trying to speak in multiple registers to multiple audiences (academic, popular, industry professionals), and I'm hoping to do more of this for my newest project by diversifying the formats and venues of research outputs (e.g., open-source 'zines as community-facing research reports, methodological whitepapers, shareable "explainer" content for social media, video essays). I think that I can answer the second question more directly: I want the next generation of researchers to know that *this work is possible*. Some of the most gratifying encounters I've had since publishing *Together, Somehow* have been with students developing their own queer nightlife projects and taking both validation and reassurance from the fact that a project like mine managed to survive the academy. Did I *thrive* in the academy, though? That's another story that requires more page-space and substantial sedation.

Adeyemi: My lifelong fight is to rid ourselves of the notion that our work has to be unique, as that framework often feeds into the academic rat race without actually encouraging interesting thinking (because, it turns out, interesting thinking is rarely rewarded in our fields, simply producing a lot and completing massive amounts of service secures our positions). We can certainly be interesting or innovative or creative or what have you, but we should all ultimately be doing the exact same work, which is describing the machinations of power, ever-shifting as they may be: how elites work to attain and hold onto power while everyone else strives to make lives worth living, and does so while being trained to be ideologically committed to protecting the (capital) power of those very elites. This is why I worry about queer nightlife studies idealizing joy and good feeling; even passively or implicitly, we often suggest that, throughout the struggles of the dance floor, joy is somewhere, out there and the queers will find and feel it if they party long enough. I'd like to think that, instead of organizing around a particular feeling or sensibility, queer nightlife studies, across disciplines, can and should contribute to broader efforts to unionize labor power for radical transformation, to train readers in understanding the short- and long-term effects of hyperlocal economic/zoning decisions, to describe how the possibilities of pleasure are shaped by decisions people make and that pleasure is not just some free floating thing out available for anyone to grab at any moment, and to give readers tools for creating connections between what happens on their local dance floor and the decisions that shape how nearby institutions govern their lives.

Ghaziani: The idea of being unique is a compelling piece of an argument, and so it makes sense that researchers want to focus on it. But Kemi, I think you're right: emphasizing what

makes our work unique can feed into an unhealthy academic culture that prioritizes silos. Uniqueness is not a cornerstone of my arguments. Instead, I think about club nights as *uniquely influential* and *uniquely revelatory* in capturing how urban sexualities and nightlife are both changing. That shift from a noun (unique) to an adjective (uniquely) articulates the intellectual context that motivates my work without foreclosing other conversations and connections--whether that's between a local dance floor and nearby institutions, as Kemi said, or between the social sciences and the humanities in our mutual commitments to elevating the significance of queer nightlife.

Khubchandani: In writing about house parties, nightclubs, sporadic parties, bars, and drag shows, I'm hoping we can get past the singular form of nightlife as *the club*. Also, by writing about how transnational workers use nightlife spaces amidst their navigation of global displacements, I'm hoping we *see* how work and escape matter to each other. There's just so much work happening in the nightclub. I resonate with Kemi's comments on labor, and I also want to uplift our training in performance studies and performance ethnography, in particular, that attunes us to observe how bodies are working at all times, through effort and stylization and gesture and movement. *As* a nightlife worker – hosting, dragging, curating, emceeing – it's so clear to me that nightlife is indeed work. Also, by acknowledging how nightlife spaces participate in structures of systemic violence, I hope we can get beyond the "safe space" discourse of nightlife to instead understand them as productively risky spaces!

Mattson: I hope that more people write their own stories. The number one critique I get is that none of the thirty-nine chapters in the book focus on the bar most important to the speaker. Go write that story! Give us the context to understand why you felt the way that you did and use empathy to give us a sense of what others were feeling around you. Queer maximalism is the way forward.

Cartier: I, so, agree with this statement. I interviewed more than 100 people for my book, with many ancillary interviews as well, and I can't count the number of times someone has said, "I can't believe you did this book without interviewing X." I do hope it encourages more storytelling.

Hilderbrand: Because my book strove for a national scale, there were many histories I didn't have time, space, or insights to include. My primary hope is that there will continue to be historical work, within and beyond the humanities. A lot of scholarship disregards historiography – whether methodologically or ideologically – in ways that frustrate me. I've also found in my research travels that there are numerous community-based local queer history and archive projects, but these are largely happening outside academic contexts. We need to be in conversation with community-based efforts, we need to learn from what archives have collected, and we need to think capaciously beyond singular disciplinary frames.

Cartier: Religion has been used to punish gay people and to restrict access to civil rights, and it is still being used that way today. So I wanted to show that gay people are not necessarily anti-religious. The striving for community, the urge to connect, to protect your own, to care for each other, to practice "faith by works" was an essential part of bar culture, and still is. I wanted my community to see that we have a "religious" or spiritual history that goes beyond major religions and was creatively formed in the gritty real estate of the pre-

Stonewall bar. I created a process theology to explain this, which I call "thee-logy," which means naming friendship (thee) and logo (word of god) as the word of the friend. And having it become analogous to religious experience. Rather than theo-God as the only "word of god" we can understand that friendship in the lesbian bar bordered on religious experience for many of those exiled from all other spaces.

Rivera-Servera: As a scholar of queer performance who remains equally interested and committed to the work that advances in formal arts platforms as well as other quotidian sites of queer expression, I hope for more scholarship that mines the intersections between queer nightlife and queer art. Scholars like Rodríguez (2014), Johnson (1998, 2008), Chambers-Letson (2018), the late Muñoz (2009), Khubchandani (2020), Adeyemi (2022) and others have done incredibly important work in this direction. It is not just about recognizing nightlife as key to the sociology of queer art, but to track the ways in which queer aesthetics have been cultivated within each of these worlds and carried back and forth across them.

Khubchandani: Ramón, this resonates so much for me! Chicago's queer nightlife is where I was given permission to dress in ways that felt sexy and adventurous. My entire art practice – it's taken more than a decade to call myself an artist – has developed out of performing at nightclubs and parties. My new research interests in visual art, textile, fashion, porn were all incubated in queer nightlife spaces.

Greene: I would like to flip the script here and consider how the interdisciplinary investigations of queer nightlife can transform Sociology. In recent years, sociologists have called on a necessary reframing of marginalized communities – one that draws on assets framing to investigate the sense of agency of marginalized communities in addressing social and structural inequality. Similarly, interdisciplinary investigations of queer nightlife challenge how we think of the place, community, and world-making. Too often, scholars have forced the lives of queer populations, especially BIPOC queer communities, into heteronormative frameworks of culture, community, and politics, which have obscured longstanding practices that have sustained these otherwise vibrant communities. I think originating our line of inquiry in spaces like queer nightlife can allow us to create frameworks that not only center and legitimate these experiences but can also help us better understand the richness of mainstream society more generally.

Ghaziani: From the house parties, bars, drag shows, and popups that we study have come field-defining insights. In sociology, this includes thinking about the sensory aspects of cities, as Georg Simmel might say. Nightlife facilitates protest and political organizing, cultivates support networks, provides mating markets, reproduces inequality, showcases economic displays of power and status, structures urban governance, and organizes creative industries. I see many patterns in this body of work, like the ones that Theo mentioned. I would add another: while sociologists have a lot to say about nightlife in general, we have remained largely silent about its specifically queer expressions. Sociology is the systematic study of social life, and our foundational insight is that human beings are not islands unto ourselves but social creatures. This should invite broad and inclusive approaches. For future scholars, I would reiterate what I say in the final pages of my book: Knowledge creation is collective and cumulative, with incremental advances and an occasional revolutionary burst. Let's reach across the aisle, both

to those in our own fields and to more distant disciplines. Embrace an ethos of intellectual generosity. When we do these things, when we reject point-scoring critique in favor of kindness and co-presence – exactly like we did in this cross-disciplinary conversation – we have the chance to truly change the world.

Notes

1. For trade books and reporting see Thomas (2011, 2024) Lin (2021), and Burton (2023).
2. First published as *Bob Damron's Address Book* in the mid 1960s, the Damron travel guides listed gay male and gay friendly venues nationally in annual editions. They were the longest running and most comprehensive listings of gay venues; they ceased print publication in 2019. The digital mapping project *Mapping the Gay Guides* geolocates each listed location for the years 1965–85: https://www.mappingthegayguides.org/. See also Knopp and Brown (2021).
3. The Lesbian Bar Project. "The Lesbian Bar Project." TLBP, 2024. https://www.lesbianbarproject.com.

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