

# NIGHTLIFE STUDIES: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

— FEATURE ARTICLE —

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## ABSTRACT

This article attempts to present a comprehensive, synthetic and critical epistemological review of the interdisciplinary field of Nightlife Studies from the late 19th century to the present, unveiling a fascinating interplay between an “alternative cultural approach”, a “community approach” and a “geographical turn” that arose in the mid- to late 2000s. In turn, the article sheds light on the strong commitment that many *nightologists* showed to the future of nightlife during the pandemic, emphasizing how fundamental nightlife is for community-building, multicultural understanding and socio-emotional well-being at individual and collective levels. In its final part, and more than presenting a new research agenda, the article argues for the need to adopt a “militant/activist socio-environmental approach” that allows shedding light on the old and new challenges and opportunities that exist on the road to promoting a greener, more resilient, inclusive and egalitarian nightlife.

KEYWORDS: Nightlife Studies, comprehensive, epistemological review

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## INTRODUCTION

The recent global coronavirus pandemic has unveiled the importance of the “nocturnal city” (Shaw 2018) for the social, cultural and economic life of many people across the globe (Shaw 2018; see also Chatterton and Hollands 2003, Laughey 2006 and Haslam 2015). COVID-19-related restrictions implemented at local, regional and national levels (such as lockdowns and night curfews) significantly affected the night-time leisure economy in many worldwide regions while stripping night lovers (mainly belonging to gender, ethnic and sexual orientation minorities) of one of their most important spaces for community building and socio-emotional well-being (Nofre 2023 and Malmquist et al. 2023). At the same time, this unprecedented scenario put nightlife-related professionals and food and beverage sector workers in check. Meanwhile, severe mobility restrictions hindered night shift jobs, highlighting the importance of invisible workers such as garbage collectors, transporters, emergency doctors and other professionals who dedicate their nights to guaranteeing the well-being and the smooth functioning of life in society (Leonard 1998 and Hochschild 2016). However, paradoxically, pandemic-related restrictions also addressed some negative impacts derived from the expansion of the night-time (leisure) economy in central urban areas of many cities occurred since the early 2000s, such as the reduction of waste, light and atmospheric and noise pollution (European Environment Agency 2020).

Be that as it may, three years after the onset of COVID-19, tens of millions of Europeans go out every week in the evening and night to dine, meet with friends, or even dance. In turn, millions more work during night-time hours in logistics centers, back-office centers, central markets, essential services and health care institutions. Many people in these groups take night-time public transport, ride-sharing vehicles or their own vehicles to get across the city. Meanwhile, informal workers (e.g. domestic workers, street food vendors, drug dealers and sex workers) also work during night-time hours, sometimes taking advantage of the liminal anonymity of the darkness.

The subject of this article is the work of a small group of academics on the nightlife of our cities and towns. The social and policy-enhancing impact of their work is often unknown to most academic and local institutions, and to citizens in general. Their work is of particular importance as they present fundamental empirical knowledge on the long road to achieving more inclusive, egalitarian, safe and sustainable nightlife. As will be seen in this article, many of these scholars are relatively young and increasingly diverse in terms of gender, sexual orientation and ethno-geographic background. They (i) offer brilliant, detailed explanations of how we dance, behave and relate to each other in nightlife environments according to social class, gender, sexual orientation, age and cultural and ethnic background; (ii) claim to prevent the tangible and intangible cultural heritage of nightlife from falling into oblivion; (iii) denounce all the processes of inequality and segregation, as well as the heteropatriarchal, racist and classist violence that still characterizes some nightlife scenes and spaces across the globe and (iv) allow the voice of those residents affected by the

unwanted presence of high concentrations of nightlife venues in the immediate vicinity of their homes to be considered in the public sphere of opinion. They are the so-called Nightlife Studies scholars, or in Rob Shaw's (2018) terminology, *nightologists*.

The text below attempts to present a comprehensive, synthetic and critical epistemological review of the interdisciplinary field of Nightlife Studies from the late 19th century to the present, unveiling a fascinating interplay between an "alternative cultural approach", a "community approach" and a "geographical turn" that arose in the mid-late 2000s. In turn, the article sheds light on the strong commitment that many *nightologists* showed to the future of nightlife during the pandemic period. They emphasized how fundamental nightlife is for community-building, multicultural understanding and socio-emotional well-being at both individual and collective level. Finally, this article argues for the need to adopt a "militant/activist socio-environmental approach" that sheds light on old and new challenges, and on opportunities to promote a greener, more resilient, inclusive and egalitarian nightlife.

The authors of this article make special mention of those they consider pioneers, but the paper will focus on the epistemological development of three well-defined periods in Nightlife Studies over the last four decades. (i) Spanning the early 1980s to late 2000s, the first period included the institutionalization of Nightlife Studies as a new independent research subfield and the so-called "big shake" in the late 2000s. This period closed with the rise of a fascinating interplay between an "alternative cultural approach", a "community approach" and a "geographical turn". (ii) From late 2000s to the outbreak of the current coronavirus pandemic in early 2020, the second period contained the most vibrant, exciting and flourishing years of Nightlife Studies. (iii) And from early 2020 to the time of writing, a third period has been characterized by an uncertain present and an unknown future. The third period poses extremely complex challenges for the future of the nightlife industry.

## MORE THAN A CENTURY OF BUILDING THE CRADLE

One might argue, without any risk of being wrong, that the volume of scholarly works about "daytime cities" outweighs the study of the "nocturnal city". As Rob Shaw points out in his indispensable book *The Nocturnal City*, "the majority of our research is diurnal" (2018:1). Despite this uncontested fact, the interdisciplinary sub-field of Nightlife Studies counts an institutionalized history of more than four decades, as we show in this section. However, pioneers deserve to be recognized. The first books about the night in our contemporary times<sup>1</sup> date back to the age of the industrial city when some journalists, writers and travelers depicted the urban nightscape of important and vibrant western cities such as Paris, London, New York and Barcelona, among many others (e.g. Delvau 1862, 1867; Sala 1862; Ritchie 1869; Coroleu 1887; Darzens and Willette 1889; Bembo 1912; Nevill 1926; de Wissant 1928; Shaw 1931). Beginning in the 1930s and increasing afterwards, a few historians and sociologists—mainly from the United States and the United Kingdom—began attending to the role (and multiple dark sides) of nightlife with respect to the reproduction of modern urban societies. These researchers recognized nightlife as a subject for scholarly analysis

(e.g. Cressey 1932; Ostrander 1972; Erenberg 1974, 1984, 1986; Marrus 1974; Morris 1980; Travis 1983).

### EARLY 1980S – EARLY 2010S: FROM SQUARE ONE TO THE SEEDS FOR AN EPISTEMOLOGICAL CHANGE

The institutionalization of Nightlife Studies as a research subfield began in the 1980s and was further consolidated in later years. At this point, the importance of nightlife in the construction of youth identities had already been mentioned by some subculturalist scholars from Birmingham's Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (e.g. Chambers 1975; Clarke et al. 1975; Jefferson 1975; McRobbie 1984). The early development of Nightlife Studies was primarily focused on four main research topics: (i) drug consumption, alcohol consumption and violence in western urban nightscapes of that time (e.g. Cospers, Okraku and Neumann 1987; Homel and Clark 1994; Winlow and Hall 2006; Hughes, Morleo and Bellis 2008); (ii) drunk-driving during and after night-time leisure practices in North America, United Kingdom and other anglophone countries (e.g. Cameron 1982; Massie, Campbell and Williams 1995; Keall, Frith and Patterson 2004); (iii) the night-time leisure economy as a main strategy and mechanism for the socioeconomic revitalization and urban regeneration of degraded central areas of the city (Bianchini 1990, 1995; Lovatt and O'Connor 1995); (iv) the complex, non-linear interplay (both positive and negative) between venue licensing, alcohol regulation, violence and crime (Block and Block 1995; Chatterton 2002; Talbot 2004; Hadfield and Measham 2009).

The 1990s, however, were also a turning point for the development of Nightlife Studies as they moved away from the so-called social and cultural approach. A particular academic moment and four seminal works are fundamental to explaining such an epistemological transition. Paul Willis' *Common Culture* (1990) notes how central nightlife is to the construction of youth identities in postmodern societies. And Sarah Thornton's *Club Cultures* (1996) introduced the term "club cultures" as a lens for youth identity in the era of postmodernity. Thornton paved the way for deeper research on youth subcultures, nightlife consumption and socio-spatial segregation, which would become a central topic for many *nightologists* in later years (Feixa and Nofre, 2012). The third seminal work is Ben Malbon's *Clubbing: Dancing, Ecstasy and Vitality*, which explores "the sociospatial-temporal and bodily-emotional practices which constitute the clubbing experience" (1999: 3). Malbon's book became fundamental for clubbing-related research in later years. Last but not least, the fourth seminal work that we should mention is Paul Chatterton and Robert Hollands' *Urban Nightscapes: Youth Cultures, Pleasure Spaces, and Corporate Power* (2003). The authors carry out a sensational depiction of the expansion and extreme commodification of the night-time leisure economy in central areas of the post-industrial city, noting both positive (revitalization of degraded central areas of the city) and negative (marginalization of low-income groups, episodes of violence against outsiders, gentrification, spatial displacement of traditional leisure spaces and practices at evening and night and loss of cultural heritage) impacts at spatial, social and cultural levels.

These four seminal works mentioned above must be put into relation with a younger generation of scholars, especially since the 2000s. This generation comprised an increased presence of women and non-white/non-western scholars, giving Nightlife Studies a tremendous shake. As happens in most academic renewal processes, there are always pioneers who open the way to new lines of research. Undoubtedly, their boldness should be mentioned and recognized. This is the case, for example, of Celeste Fraser Delgado and José Esteban Muñoz, who edited the brilliant anthology *Everynight Life in Latin/o America* (1997). This magnificent work explores the history and potential function of dance in social struggle in both North and South America, and it constitutes a valuable reference in the study of the Latin nightlife scene, especially in the United States. Interestingly, this anthology exemplifies how this progressive generation of scholars broke with the dominant male-centered, western-centered, class-based nightlife scholarship and policy. This approach to the night was firmly based on the interplay between the criminalistic or regulatory perspective (the night as a synonym of sin, immorality, and disorder) and the neoliberal economic perspective (that views the night as space-time for profits and yields).

As an example of the emergence of this paradigm in Nightlife Studies, one should mention academic input from Southern and Eastern Europe (Foucault 2000; Blázquez and Morera 2002; Brewster and Broughton 2006; Sánchez-Fuarros 2008; Llanos 2015) and from the Global South and Global East (Chongyi 2007; Farrer 2008; Chew 2009). This work challenged the British interpretation of nightlife as a catalyst for the revitalization of degraded urban areas. And it explicitly recognized that the night and the 'nocturnalization of daily life' (Koslofsky 2011, Shaw 2018), are not concepts that exclusively belong to the western world (Ginesi 2013; Buchakjian 2015; de Góis 2015; Song, Pan and Chen 2016; Čengić and Martin-Díaz 2018; Sánchez-García 2018).

Another excellent example of the emergence of such a new social and cultural approach to the study of nightlife—especially since the late 2000s and early 2010s—is found in works that explored how marginalized peoples experience the night in a repressive and punitive neoliberal urban context (Boogaarts 2008; Hunter 2010; Messer 2010; Steil 2011). This experience is connected with the emergence of complex spatial, social, cultural and community impacts resulting from the expansion of the night-time leisure economy into central areas of the post-industrial city. This experience of the night is often linked to gentrification, which ushers in the displacement of local communities and the marginalization of low-class (often racialized) actors of the local night. Interestingly, some authors note that marginalization and (even violent) repression of marginal actors of the local night (such as street dealers, street drugs consumers, aged sex workers and night wanderers with low purchasing power) and especially of racialized youth of urban peripheries, have been a central characteristic of the night in the current neoliberal urban era (Chatterton and Hollands 2003; Talbot 2004; Shildrick and MacDonald 2006; Talbot and Böse 2007). Also, in line with this, we should mention brilliant works by authors such as Martina Böse (2005), David Grazian (2009) and Shelly Ronen (2010), who have denounced commercial nightlife for its tendencies to exacerbate inequalities that are intrinsic to the neoliberal city.

## FROM THE EARLY 2010S TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

The focus on inequalities, marginalization and repression was central in the development of Nightlife Studies over the past decade, up until the 2020 outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic (e.g. May 2014; Iturriaga 2015; Søgaaard 2017; Kosnick 2018; Sedano 2019). Many recent authors have widely demonstrated that the boom of commercial night clubbing in central areas of post-industrial cities is very linked to the arrival of neoliberal urban forces such as gentrification and touristification (e.g. Hae 2011; Mattson 2015; Campkin and Marshall 2018; Bottà 2019; Eldridge 2019; dos Santos and de Andrade 2019). These forces involve dramatic changes to the spatial, social and cultural fabric of the nocturnal city, while simultaneously tending to criminalize so-called “new deviant leisure”, or in other words, “activities that through their adherence to cultural values inscribed by consumer capitalism, have the potential to result in harm” (Smith and Raymen 2018: 63). The criminalistic perspective situates commercial and underground clubbing contexts as synonymous with violence and drug-fueled leisure (e.g. Allaste and Lagerspetz 2002; Kavanaugh and Anderson 2008; Hunt, Moloney and Evans 2010; Demant 2013; Carlini and Sánchez 2018). Such an approach to clubbing scenes reflects “the struggle between middle-class moralism and popular demand” in the field of nightlife consumption in the post-industrial city (Springhall 1999: 9). However, the criminalistic perspective regarding clubbing scenes found growing contestation among authors who, since the late 1990s, underlined how central both underground clubbing and self-organized night parties are for the construction of alternative, non-normative youth (and adult) identities (e.g. Malbon 1998; Pini 2001; St John 2009; Henriques 2010; Rief 2011; Rodgers 2018).

This particular critical cultural and social consideration of clubbing was rooted in research conducted in rave cultures, which can be defined as self-organized, informal, unlicensed parties often celebrated in (sometimes abandoned) buildings, old factories and warehouses. The term “rave” has its origins in the wild bohemian parties of the 1950s that belonged to London Soho’s beatnik set (Nash 2017). But the expansion of what we know today as raves initially originated in Thatcher’s Britain and later extended through Europe in the 1990s (John 2015). At that time, some scholars rapidly associated raves with the drug-fueled hedonism of post-modern youth (Redhead 1993; Knutagard 1996; Reynolds 1999). However, interestingly, other authors such as Fritz pointed out that raves emerged as “a revolutionary political movement . . . to create a new community model” defying the neoliberal urban world since the 1980s (1999: 216; see also Luckman 2001 and John 2004). There is no doubt that raves, free-parties or Temporary Autonomous Zones “historically referred to grassroots organized, anti-establishment and unlicensed all-night dance parties, featuring electronically produced dance music, such as techno, house, trance and drum and bass” (Anderson and Kavanaugh 2007: 499). At the same time, raves were also “a vital part of the lives of many people” (Takahashi and Olaveson 2003: 72). However, a direct connection between rave culture and radical politicization of youth still seems tenuous at least three decades after the birth of raves.

### *A RESEARCH SUB-FIELD THAT COUNTS WITH AN OFFICIAL INTERNATIONAL NETWORK*

The 2010s have been terrific regarding the quality and number of works dealing with nightlife-related issues, not only in European cities but across the globe. It also witnessed the foundation of some independent research groups on the urban night in both the Global North and the Global South, as well as the creation of the first International Night Studies Network in 2019.<sup>2</sup> This represents the latest step on the road to the institutionalization of Nightlife Studies as an independent research subfield.

This latter process has three fundamental facts. Firstly, in 2012 the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada granted the project “The Urban Night” to William Straw from McGill University. Although the project was initially based in Canada, Straw and his team have increasingly been collaborating with scholars and networks based in other countries, mainly from the Global South. Two years after “The Urban Night” started, a group of young scholars from different Portuguese institutions created LXNIGHTS, the first European group researching the urban night. Moreover, we must underline the Stadt Nach Acht Conference (NIGHTS Conference) held in Berlin since 2016.<sup>3</sup> This annual event has gathered a blend of academics and practitioners. It has been organized by Club Commission Berlin in cooperation with the European network NEWNet, which aims to promote an attractive and more sustainable nightlife culture at international levels.

Interestingly, not long after the first Stadt Nach Acht Conference in November 2016, some attendees met again in London in July 2017 to participate in the Tourism and the Night Symposium, organized by Adam Eldridge and Andrew Smith, both from the University of Westminster. One year later, Anna Plyushteva (at that time, from the Cosmopolis Centre for Urban Research at Vrije Universiteit Brussel) organized the International Conference on the Urban Night: Governance, Diversity, Mobility. It was held at the Research Centre for Social Studies at Sofia University in June 2018. These successive scientific meetings sparked H2020 and ERC grant proposals over these past five years (e.g. PARTYEURPE, JIRUN, EURONIGHTS, NIGHT-WE) and boosted new collaborations like edited books, co-authored publications and meetings. The first International Night Studies Network was created in late 2019, and its coordination committee has chaired the annual International Conference on Night Studies<sup>4</sup>. The first four editions of the conference in 2020, 2021, 2022 and 2023 have enriched our picture of the sub-field of Nightlife Studies during the current pandemic times.

### **NIGHTLIFE STUDIES UNDER PANDEMIC TIMES: AN UNCERTAIN PRESENT AND AN UNKNOWN FUTURE**

As in many other fields of Social Sciences, pandemic-related restrictions have affected the work plans of most of the researchers belonging to the sub-field of Nightlife Studies. They had an enormous impact on researchers’ abilities to conduct nightlife-related ethnographies, especially where curfews and lockdowns were implemented. As Stellmach et al. argue, “a long-term participant observation approach may not be feasible in periods of acute public

health crisis, but the anthropological method is flexible and adaptable” (2018: 3). DeHart points out the need to explore new “analytical and methodological strategies for addressing the current contingencies of research (im)mobility as well as illuminating important elements of our shifting global reality” (2020).

During the coronavirus pandemic, Nightlife Studies continued an impressive amount and quality of production. We must mention a couple of publications that are meant to be central to the development of Nightlife Studies worldwide in the forthcoming years. The first is the collection *Transforming Urban Nightlife and the Development of Smart Public Spaces*, edited by Hisham Abusaada, Abeer Elshater and Dennis Rodwell (2021). This collection counts a very wide geographical diversity of case studies (e.g. Paris in France, Tehran in Iran, Alexandria and Cairo in Egypt and Lucknow in India, among others). It provides well-grounded empirical insights about the positive impact of transforming nocturnal public spaces into arenas for more meaningful experiences. This should encourage a greater sense of identity and community through enhancing cultural and social life in the public space at evening and night hours. The other publication that deserves our attention and admiration is *Queer Nightlife* (2021) by Kemi Adeyemi, Kareem Khubchandani and Ramon Rivera-Servera. The book focuses on formal (bars and nightclubs) and informal (house parties) nightlife settings that make possible non-normative expressions of intimacy. It also underlines how risky commercial nightlife can be for queer and trans people considering growing homophobic and transphobic violence. The book gathers scholars and artists in a brilliant and engaging way, giving voice directly to queer and trans people (both white and non-white). The study of LGBTQI+ nightlife spaces and their importance for belonging, emancipation and identity within heteronormative, capitalist, urban settings worldwide has also seen recent relevant growth (Gorman 2020; Khubchandani 2020; Rodríguez 2020; Eeckhout, Herreman and Dhoest 2021; Lee 2021). We also must mention the relevant number of empirical works published during the pandemic times on sexual violence in nightlife settings. They inform us about the resurgence of (hetero)patriarchal violence in times characterized by radical (and absolutely necessary) voices, discourses and grammars that work for the emancipation and liberation of women, gender minorities and sexual minorities (Bulovec and Eman 2020; Jensen 2020; Quigg et al. 2020, 2021; Vaadal 2020, 2022).

Concerned with the recent and worrying rise of sexual violence in nightlife settings, many Nightlife Studies scholars have, over the past three years, focused their works on the interplay between regulation, policing, security and safety in the nocturnal city. This will continue to be an interesting topic once the pandemic restrictions have been lifted definitively. The reaffirmation of the ideal of the 24-hour city and the increasing importance of private security personnel in regulating the nocturnal city are examples of this scholarship (Nofre et al. 2020 and Wadds 2020). It strengthens the importance of nightlife settings as time-spaces where cultural values and market imperatives are negotiated in ways that are sometimes conflictual, sometimes beneficial for the community (Drevenstet 2020 and Carah et al. 2021). Conflictual tensions arising in nightlife settings remind us of



the significant increase of alcohol and drug consumption per capita during youth leisure practices in the evening and night, especially in European countries during the years prior to the pandemic (Brunn, Brunner and Mütsch 2021 and Edland-Gryt 2021).

These past three years have known a growth of works taking the social and cultural approach to nightlife. Alternative epistemological approaches that look beyond the interplay between the criminalistic/regulatory perspective and the neoliberal economicist perspective—touched upon in the first part of this article—proved fruitful in areas such as southeastern European countries, Muslim countries, India and Indonesia (e.g. Olt et al. 2019; Khubchandani 2020; Khorsand, Khayredin and Alalhesabi 2021; Salman et al. 2021). This parallels the acceleration of works offering new historical approaches to the emergence and development of nightlife in the late industrial world, especially in western contexts (e.g. Binas-Preisendörfer 2020; Bird 2020; Jones 2020; Phillips and Pögün-Zander 2020; Winn 2020).

Nightlife Studies has recently experienced a stretch of Golden Years despite the global outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020. Naturally, this includes scholarship that assessed the impact pandemic-related restrictions had on the nightlife industry at local and global levels (e.g. Nofre and Garcia-Ruiz 2023). Two topics of special controversy were the prohibition of outdoor gatherings at night and the question of the dancefloor's high probability of contagion. However, the scientific evidence is still very recent and not definitive (Nofre et al. 2023). More particularly, a scholarly discourse criminalizing the night without any scientific base or with very weak methodology arose from fields like Epidemiology and Computational Biology, dominating public opinion even at the global level (e.g. Murillo-Llorente and Pérez-Bermejo 2020; Cheepsattayakorn, Cheepsattayakorn and Siriwanarangsun 2021). This epidemiological look on the night as a time-space of high contagion is radically opposed to other works offering a much more social look on the night in times of COVID-19. In this sense, a growing number of scholars have argued that nightlife (both formal and informal) can enhance community building and resilience, innovation, sustainability, socioemotional well-being and mutual psychological support under current harsh times (Karampampas 2020 and Borges 2021). These authors speak about the tangible and intangible dimensions of the economic, social and cultural values of nightlife; they study the extreme importance of night-time leisure practices for many adolescents, teenagers, young adults and adults who suffered psychoemotionally from the lockdown and closure of nightlife venues (Anderson and Knee 2021 and Nofre 2023).

## FINAL REMARKS

This article has attempted to present a comprehensive, synthetic and critical epistemological review of the interdisciplinary field of Nightlife Studies from the late 19th century to the present. Notably, the part that covers the mid- to late 2000s up to the coronavirus outbreak three years ago has provided a good overview of new epistemological trends. These trends signal the simultaneous emergence of an “alternative cultural approach”, a “community approach” and a “geographical turn” in Nightlife Studies. Interestingly, this triple turn

emerged in the mid-2000s as a result of a progressive entry into the academy of a new, younger generation of scholars. They included a greater presence of women, non-white and non-western scholars who rapidly began to break with the dominant male-centered, western-centered, class-based academic and policy approach to nightlife. Finally, the article has shed light on the strong commitment that many *nightologists* showed to the future of nightlife during the pandemic period, emphasizing how fundamental nightlife is for community-building, multicultural understanding and socio-emotional well-being at both individual and collective levels.

The number of exciting topics that currently characterize the interdisciplinary field of Nightlife Studies is enormous. Given the limited space allotted to this final section, their enumeration would even merit an entire article. However, more than presenting a new research agenda, this final section aims at calling for adopting a “militant/activist socio-environmental approach” as a response to the growing challenges posed by the climate emergency, which may seriously affect our nightlife practices. The climate emergency and the coronavirus pandemic have revealed the lack of environmental resilience in the plans of nightlife businesses and in the different tools of nightlife governance (Nofre and Garcia-Ruiz 2023). As the authors argue:

[Despite the fact that] some nightlife entrepreneurs have started to deploy a significant number of initiatives for the ‘green’ transformation of their businesses, public support through EU Next Generation Funds lacks in 37% of EU countries, leading the nightlife industry into a future of complex uncertainty in at least 10 of the 27 EU countries. Interestingly, the fact that private actors have started to make moves to adapt their businesses and venues to Europe’s ecological urban transition should directly challenge the scientific community in terms of establishing the ‘greening’ of the nightlife industry as a new topic in our interdisciplinary research agenda. . . . This line of action emerges as very interesting for the scientific community, as it would allow [both researchers and governments] to monitor of the adaptation of the nightlife industry to Europe’s ecological urban transition as well as to assess (quantitatively and qualitatively) the fulfilment of the objectives set for the implementation of low carbon cities in our continent. (Nofre and Garcia-Ruiz 2023: 10)

At the intersection between the current uncertain scenario and an unknown future, a robust, well-grounded knowledge is necessary for reflecting on our future nights. What role should the nocturnal city have in the successful achievement of Sustainable Development Goals? Being aware that practically all the Nightlife Studies scholars love the night and their work (which, in many cases, is part of a very personal lifestyle), the urgent need arises to adopt a “militant/activist socio-environmental approach”. *Nightologists* could contribute to promoting greener, more resilient, more inclusive and egalitarian nights. This “eco-militant/activist approach” in the interdisciplinary field of Nightlife Studies should not make us forget the (growing) existence of a wide range of inequalities and injustices that continue to characterize a large part of the nightlife scenes and spaces of our cities.

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## NOTES

- 1 Here, we want to note the well-grounded research carried out by historians, anthropologists and archaeologists about the night in Classical Antiquity. See Gonlin and Nowell (2018) and Ker and Wessels (2020).
- 2 For further information on the network, please visit: <<https://nightologists.hypotheses.org/>>.
- 3 For further information, please visit: <[https://lxnights.hypotheses.org](https://lxnights.hypotheses.org/)>.
- 4 For further information on the annual editions of the conference (including all proceedings books published for each annual edition of the conference), please visit: <<https://icnslx.com>>.

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