



ANITA JÓRI, GUILLAUME ROBIN (EDS.)

# LIVING AT NIGHT

## IN TIMES OF PANDEMIC

NIGHT STUDIES AND CLUB CULTURE  
IN FRANCE AND GERMANY

[transcript] Popular Music

## From:

Anita Jóri, Guillaume Robin (eds.)

### Living at Night in Times of Pandemic

### Night Studies and Club Culture in France and Germany

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Club culture has become an ever-growing interdisciplinary research field in the social sciences. The contributors to this volume offer state of the art perspectives on night studies in France and Germany and the techno scene from a comparative and interdisciplinary perspective. They explore three main areas: scenes and communities; diversity and inclusion; and social and ecological challenges for a sustainable club culture during and after the COVID-19 pandemic.

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# 1 Introduction

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Anita Jári & Guillaume Robin

The pandemic, with its enforced lockdowns and curfews, has heightened the awareness of social significance of nightlife. The field of research of night studies, initially instigated by Will Straw, has garnered a rejuvenated interest within the specific backdrop of the health crisis that silenced a once vibrant night. The resurgence of clandestine raves during the periods of lockdown attested to the enduring vitality of electronic dance music scenes, especially when the very survival of clubs and festivals appeared in jeopardy.

The prolonged span of club closures and event cancellations due to health-mandated restrictions added to this precarious situation. In the wake of these circumstances, nightlife swiftly moved underground as governing bodies endeavoured to assert control on its activities. Beyond skirting health regulations, these underground Techno<sup>1</sup> parties underscored a collective plea: the assertion of a collective right to dancing and nightlife in a society suddenly bereft of “dancing festivities”, referred to as “*Tanzlustbarkeiten*” in the context of the German legal nomenclature.

In the process of reopening, clubs found themselves compelled to implement rigorous health protocols. These included hosting daytime parties, enforcing social distancing, requiring face masks on dance floors, reducing attendance numbers, imposing nighttime party restrictions and QR codes, and making health passes mandatory, among other measures. These regulations brought about a significant transformation in the landscape of “legal” parties, while clandestine gatherings allowed underground events to harken back to the pre-pandemic free party culture, unburdened by constraints. This shift can be compared with the changes witnessed during the 1990s free parties, where the distinction between “clubbers” and “ravers” became blurred as young individuals, faced with early closure times mandated by local regulations, migrated from city clubs to outdoor free parties. While this phenomenon was prominent in England and France, its presence was less pronounced in Germany due to less stringent club legislation. The Covid-19 pandemic and the

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1 In our introduction, the term *Techno* goes beyond the music genre. For us, it is a complex cultural phenomenon and similar to *Electronic Dance Music Cultures*. When we refer to the music genre specifically, we use term *techno*, without capitalisation. However, the other authors of this book might take different approaches and use different terminology.

late—quickly interrupted—reopening of the clubs starting in the summer of 2021, led to dire consequences for some venues, including Paris's *Dehors Brut* and Amsterdam's *De School*, which were facing bankruptcy or accusations of sexual misconduct and racism from the security team. Nightlife and club culture have come out from the health crisis more fragile than ever before, with gentrification, escalating cost of rents, and the pandemic's financial aftermath compelling certain clubs such as RSO (former Griessmühle) to migrate to the Berlin outskirts or increase their entrance fee by ten euros. From Tbilisi to Berlin, expressions of *resist-dance* have recently emerged, mirroring the 2018 protests against police actions at Bassiani club and the oppressive policies of the Georgian state, or raising awareness against the ascent of the German far-right ("*AfD Wegbassen*"). Within Techno cultures, a distinctive form of activism has arisen—one that is not tethered to political affiliations but is nevertheless keenly attuned to political issues and queer activism. Techno parties sometimes evolve into platforms for political protest, overtaking public spaces. Vibrant discussions stemming from events in Paris and Berlin signal the growing political and social awareness of the Techno scene. In 2021, an intense debate arose within the Parisian Techno community, following a highly questionable initiative of the party collective La Toilette. Their decision to organise a queer Techno event within a refugee camp in Vitry-sur-Sein, and to donate the event's proceeds to the United Migrants association, sparked an outcry among the players and the Techno community. Meanwhile in Berlin, the Revier Südost (RSO) club faced temporary closure due to allegations of homophobia and racism levied against its security personnel by Canadian contemporary dancer Nicholas Isaiah King Rose.

Additionally, the recurring spectre of public health concerns and the inherent risks associated with substances like GHB resurface whenever patrons fall victim to their effects. Notable instances include London's Fabric, Paris's *Dehors Brut*, and more recently, Berlin's SUICIDE, effectively intensifying the ongoing debate concerning the potential perils of drug usage within party environments.

The geopolitical context has also had a major impact on nightlife. The club closures have spawned new cultural dynamics between Berlin and Kyiv's scenes. Berlin clubbers, seeking nightlife during lockdown, frequented K41, leading to new connections between different communities. The outbreak of war in Ukraine has triggered a mass exodus, prompting Paris's and especially Berlin's nightlife sectors to mobilise in support of refugees, especially LGBT+ people and BIPOC from Ukraine.

Last but not least, since the clubs reopened, admission prices to clubs and festivals have risen by far more than the rate of inflation, shifting the focus from gender inclusion to social inclusion in a context of increasing gentrification of the scene and reduced social diversity. Since Covid, you can no longer party in Berlin for €10, as you did in the early 2010s, but for €25. Against this backdrop of the ferment and transformation of the post-covid scene, it seemed essential to bring together the contempo-

rary work of researchers and young scholars in order to sketch out the major trends in terms of research and avenues for reflection.

## 1 Current Research on Electronic Dance Music and Club Cultures

Research on electronic dance music cultures is far from being a recent endeavour. The first inquiries into Techno culture began during the late 1990s, following the ascension of the Techno movement as a facet of *youth culture*. This movement, originating from the underground club scenes of Chicago and Detroit, took root in England through free parties before gradually infiltrating France and spreading throughout post-reunification Germany in the 1990s. Initially, there emerged a corpus of popular works on the history of music which approached the Techno phenomenon through the prism of its players (DJs, club owners, party organisers), yet seldom from the vantage point of its audience. These original works have played a pivotal role in constructing a mythos that shrouds the genesis of Techno, elaborating narrative spans from the origins of Chicago's house music to the evolution of Detroit's techno, meticulously chronicled in Sicko's (1999) seminal work *Techno Rebels*. Each country cultivated its own myth of origins in its own way: France and the golden age of free parties in the face of police repression in the 1990s; the emergence of acid house in the UK and the Second Summer of Love in 1988 (Garnier, 2003) as an act of rebellion against Thatcherite Britain; the advent of raves and techno as a symbol of reunited German youth across the Rhine, as meticulously chronicled in Denk and von Thülen's (2014) *Der Klang der Familie*. In France, journalistic efforts have significantly contributed to understanding the Techno club scene, fostered by insiders and epitomised by electronic music publications like *Trax Magazine*, founded in 1997.

In academia, a seminal work on *club culture* (in German: *Clubkultur*) was written by British sociologist Sarah Thornton and built upon the foundation laid by the Birmingham School and the Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS). In her book *Club Cultures: Music, Media and Subcultural Capital*, Thornton (1995) introduced the core concept of *subcultural capital* by reinterpreting Bourdieu's concept of cultural capital. In Germany and France, research diverged due to the distinctive nature of the Techno phenomenon on either side of the Rhine. While the English and French governments responded to the free party phenomenon with police crackdowns and legal actions, Germany did not. The German context was favourable to the development of legal raves in public spaces (Love Parade, MayDay) and the many vacant spaces in the east of the city, which encouraged squatting and building occupation, made it easier to set up clubs in the early 1990s.

An academic discourse on Techno culture, primarily centred on the study of free parties, emerged in France in the late 1990s. It was initiated by the research

of the controversial<sup>2</sup> sociologist Michel Maffesoli and found expression in journals like *Cultures et Mouvement*, along with the establishment of sub-laboratories such as the CEAQ (*Centre d'Etudes sur l'Actuel et le Quotidien*) and GREMES (*Groupe de Recherche et d'Etude sur la Musique et la Socialité*), both dedicated to exploring the Techno phenomenon through the scope of free parties. Tessier (2003) encapsulates Maffesoli's impact on Techno studies, by summarising its academic contributions as follows:

A series of concepts, often tied to Maffesoli's theories and broader postmodern theories, have become associated with free parties: 'trance,' 'festive hedonism,' 'orgy,' 'tribe,' 'return to communitarianism,' or 'annihilation of the individual'—terms now frequently used to describe free parties, adopted not only by the press but also by sociologists. (p. 63)

Alongside this line of thought, research by Pourtau (2009), Mabillon-Bonfis (2004), and Kosmicki (2010) explored free parties as expressions of a “return to the time of tribes/a tribal era”.

Conversely, in Germany, the post-reunification period saw the reappropriation of vacant spaces in East Berlin, nurturing a vibrant and permissive party culture that gave rise to a nocturnal topography. With minimal repressive measures, Techno clubs and raves flourished in Germany, particularly in Berlin. Unlike in the UK and France, where free parties remained underground and fraught with legal battles, in Germany, the Techno scene evolved on a more legal basis, subsequently adopting a more commercialised nature, as shown by the Love Parade. Among the early studies spotlighting the Techno movement as a manifestation of youth culture (Meyer, 1999) is the work of Hitzler and Pfadenhauer (2001), which emerged in Germany, at the same time as pop music studies and the “PTV” sociological thought of the early 2000s. This concept of *post-traditionnelle Vergemeinschaftung* (post-traditional communitarianisation) denotes novel, more fluid forms of social belonging. Contributions from this sociological perspective complement Will Straw's (McGill University) notion of *scenes*, highlighting the crucial role of *night studies*. Straw defines a *scene* as a differentiated model of musical circulation in urban spaces, intrinsically tied to the visibility of cultural life within cities. Drawing from these influences, German Techno research showcases a wider array of approaches and themes. Techno cultures have been studied from the angle of dance theory (Klein, 2004), scene ethnography (Schwanhäußer, 2010), or even night economy (Kühn, 2017). A revival of research into nightlife and Techno cultures began in 2015, facilitated by the networks of researchers in night studies, and reached its peak after the pandemic. The development of urban sociology (Garcia-Ruiz et al., 2021), ethnomusicology (Garcia-

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2 Quinon, M., Saint-Martin, A. (2015). *Le maffesolisme, une «sociologie» en roue libre. Démonstration par l'absurde*. 2015. Accessed: 01.11.2023.



Mispireta, 2023), gender studies (Trott, 2020), aesthetics (Kolioulis & Rietveld, 2018), community ethnography (Jóri, 2022), body anthropology (Robin, 2021) urban geography (Gwiazdzinski et al., 2020) is evidence of this recent academic craze.

In the public sphere, the preservation of party venues and urban nightlife has become a significant electoral issue, with some cities appointing nightlife mayors (Amsterdam, London) or deputy-mayors in charge of the governance of nightlife. In cities like Berlin, clubs have intensified their advocacy efforts towards authorities, aided by lobbying organisations like the Clubcommission, in cooperation with the Berlin Senate. The creation of transdisciplinary networks of night studies researchers, such as The Urban Night, the NITE conference in Leiden (Night Spaces: Migration Culture and Integration in Europe [2022]) and yearly events like the International Conference on Night Studies (ICNS) and the *Stadt nach Acht* conference in Berlin demonstrate that club culture has burgeoned into a broad interdisciplinary research domain, situated at the crossroads of various social science fields has burgeoned into a domain of cooperation between nightlife stakeholders (Jóri & Lücke, 2020; Damm & Drevenstedt, 2020).

## 2 Outline of the Book

The idea of this book grew out of a Franco-German conference entitled *Vivre la nuit en temps de pandémie/Living at night in times of pandemic* organised as an initiative of the Université Paris-Cité with the support of the *Deutsch-Französische Hochschule* (DFH-UFA) and the Universität der Künste Berlin. The conference was held on 30 September 2022 at the *Gaité Lyrique*, a cultural venue in Paris dedicated to contemporary music. It brought together about fifteen experienced and emerging researchers working in the field of night studies in France, Germany and Switzerland as well as players of the scene for a round-table discussion. The aim of the academic discussion panels was to provide an overview and better understanding of the field of night studies and of electronic scenes through a Franco-German lens, bridging disciplines like cultural history, gender studies, ethnology, ethnomusicology, body anthropology, geography and urban sociology.

The Franco-German colloquium on night studies held at the *Gaité Lyrique* encompassed a number of key takeaways. The event started with a keynote speech by Michel Massmünster, entitled “Enthralled by the Night: Assembling the Night, the City, and the Person”. Massmünster eloquently explored the dynamic interplay between the urban night and our emotions, revealing how this transformative time is conducive to unexpected experiences and self-reinvention. He emphasised that the night is not a static entity, but a malleable canvas shaped by diverse perceptions and activities, both calming and energising. Through ethnographic lenses, he highlighted the intricate historical and contemporary combination of elements that con-

stitute the urban night. The panels at the colloquium were structured around three focal points, the first two of which will be the main focus of this book: 1) Scenes and communities: This axis delved into the intricate fabric of scenes and communities within the nocturnal landscape, examining their evolution, dynamics and significance in shaping urban subcultures. 2) Gender, diversity and inclusion: This axis critically engaged with issues of gender and diversity within nightlife spaces. Discussions centred on the creation of inclusive and safer environments, addressing the complexities of representation, and exploring ways to create safer spaces and foster greater diversity and equity within the night scene. 3) Nightlife governance and self-governance during and after the pandemic: This strand explored the challenges posed by the pandemic to nightlife governance, highlighting how clubs and communities navigated unprecedented circumstances and adapted to ensure safety while preserving the spirit of nightlife. The talks proceedings were followed by a cultural programme that included a captivating reading-performance, “Poetronica”, by Anne-Laure Jaegle. This was set to a live composition by Thais, featuring extracts from Anne-Laure Jaegle’s novel *Demande à la Nuit*. The programme also featured a live set by emerging Parisian artist Gorbé and a talk by artist Max Eulitz, titled “Notes on 41”. Eulitz highlighted his exploration of Kyiv’s techno scene and its intersection with monuments, by delving into the development of the enigmatic techno club named 41 or K41 and its connection to the aftermath of the Maidan protests. His discussion shed light on new forms of monuments and the concept of safe(r) spaces in a country at war.

Through multifaceted discussions, the colloquium offered an enriching understanding of night studies, probing into the myriad dimensions of urban nights, their socio-cultural intersections and their evolving roles within contemporary societies. The day was concluded by a panel discussion featuring key figures in the nightlife scene, including the DJ and artist Jennifer Cardini; Frédéric Hocquard, deputy-mayor in charge of nightlife at the Mairie de Paris; Lutz Leichsenring, spokesperson for the Clubcommission Berlin; IXPE, founder of the queer Discoquette Collective; and Tommy Vaudecrane, the president of Technopol. The aim was to address pertinent contemporary issues surrounding nightlife and club culture in post-pandemic France and Germany. The debate was sparked by humorous and challenging memes about the Techno scene, serving as a starting point to delve into the discussion. Not all contributions held at the symposium could be included in this volume, but it has been enriched with other innovative articles and interviews. These additions to this collective work will help to shed light on topics addressed during the colloquium, such as the imperatives of ecological transition and a more sustainable nightlife, and the modes of resilience which developed within the Berlin Techno community during the COVID-19 pandemic. By exploring a variety of perspectives and experiences, this collective work is meant to offer a comprehensive understanding of today’s electronic nightlife and culture.

## 2.1 Scenes and Communities

According to Straw (1991) a *music community* presumes the existence of a group whose population is rather stable because of the wide range of sociological variables. On the other hand, a *music scene* is “the relationship between different musical practices unfolding within a given geographical space” (Straw, 1991, p. 373). Therefore, it is a cultural space where a range of musical practices coexist: the participants interact with each other through a variety of processes of differentiation, and a belonging to a particular scene is not necessarily based on class, ethnicity or gender, but as these categories may intersect.

The concept of music scene was originally used in journalistic and everyday contexts, but since the 1990s it has become popular in academic research too. Peterson and Bennett (2004) highlighted the opposition between the global music industry, where music is created for profit-oriented mass markets, and specific music scenes, the aim of which is not to make profits. Music scenes may therefore be responsible for the development of the so-called “DIY industry”, which has developed thanks to volunteers, smaller collectives and “fans-turned-entrepreneurs” (Peterson & Bennett, 2004). In the field of electronic dance music culture, the DIY industry refers to those collectives which organise events without any financial support from commercial organisations and whose ways of organisation are often (without negative connotation) unprofessional—their protagonists have, for instance, never studied professional event management and try to solve problems in their own individual ways (e.g., getting help from friends volunteering at the bar or at the entrance). McRobbie (2002) also states that the dance/rave culture has strongly influenced shaping and contouring, the energising and entrepreneurial character of the new culture industries. The level of self-generated economic activity that “dance-party-rave” (McRobbie, 2002) organisations entailed, served as a model for many creative activities.

Peterson and Bennett (2004) differentiate between three types of scenes: 1) *local*; 2) *translocal*; and 3) *virtual*. 1) They define a *local* scene as a social activity that takes place in a delineated space and over a specific span of time and where the scene members mainly meet face-to-face. Even though a local scene has the same main characteristics than a *global scene*, it is always specific and has its own patterns and characteristics—mostly embedded in the local context, such as governmental decisions, politics, musical traditions, etc. 2) Peterson and Bennett (2004) state that *translocal* scenes are those self-conscious local music scenes—focussing on a particular kind of music—that are in regular contact with similar local scenes in distant places. Their links are based on the exchange of recordings, bands, fans and fanzines. The members of translocal scenes meet partly face-to-face, partly virtually. 3) Finally, *virtual* scenes meet and communicate mostly online, which enables fans around the world to come together and contribute to the development of these scenes. While

they may do so, these scene members do not generally meet face-to-face (Peterson & Bennett, 2004).

But how and to what extent have these communities and scenes been redefined/changed by/during the pandemic? The pandemic has profoundly impacted not only the psychological well-being of individuals but also electronic music scenes and communities. Their members were deprived of their right to dance and enjoy night pleasures for almost two years. The first focus of this book is to capture the sociological and subcultural contours of these communities and scenes.

It was only logical that the first contribution should take us back to the origins of techno music, and more specifically to Detroit, where collectives such as Underground Resistance have had a lasting impact on the musical landscape right up to the present day. This collective book begins with an article by **Frédéric Trottier-Pistien** on cultural transfers and reciprocal influences between the Detroit and Berlin techno scenes. Trottier-Pistien's chapter explores the connection influenced by shared techno music. While Detroit artists provided the soundtrack for Berlin's techno culture and inspired Berlin labels and clubs like Tresor, Berlin artists did mastering work for Detroit and tried in return to revitalise the electronic music scene of the "Motor City". This relationship evolved through efforts to promote electronic music and govern nightlife, as Detroit, unlike Berlin, struggled to gain official recognition for its techno scene. Despite sharing a desire for futuristic expressions, the two cities differ significantly in their social and urban contexts. As a global cultural metropolis, Berlin surpasses Detroit in terms of clubs and techno-related nightlife activities. The failure of Dimitri Hegemann's project—the owner of the Tresor club in Berlin—to establish a techno club in Detroit highlights the limitations of his endeavour, reflecting tensions around cultural reappropriation and gentrification. Trottier-Pistien's paper illustrates the differences between Detroit's and Berlin's techno scenes, which can be explained by persisting social, racial and economic disparities in Detroit. Thus, despite its musical and cultural diversity, Detroit remains steeped in a mythologised Western culture which does not fit with the complex reality of a post-industrial city where African Americans feel socially abandoned. While Hegemann seems to pursue a strategy based on the economic and urban homogenisation of musical performances, local players like the Underground Resistance remain sceptical and prefer an independent approach with a stronger focus on social justice.

**Diana Weis's** contribution brings our attention to a current phenomenon. By taking a critical approach, she focuses on high fashion's tradition of borrowing and appropriating aesthetic codes from subcultural scenes, including the Techno scene, especially from Berlin. By analysing and contextualising the aesthetic similarities between collections of the Parisian fashion house Balenciaga and the dress-code at Berlin's most famous techno club Berghain, Weis's questions, whether the concept of *subcultural capital* (Thornton, 1995) needs to be updated to keep up with the realities

of today's multi-faceted and digitalised information society. Both worlds, that of French high fashion and of Berlin underground-techno, are examined as separate, yet overlapping spheres on producing meaning.

**Sophia Abidi** delves into Berlin's electronic music and clubbing scenes, analysing their intricate relationship with subcultures and communities. She emphasises how music preferences, fashion choices, and drug consumption intertwine to shape distinct identities within the Berlin techno scene. Abidi highlights Berlin's diversity, showcasing various scenes from techno events to queer parties. She underscores how music acts as a binding force, connecting people across demographics. Fashion is explored as a visual symbol of subcultural affiliation, with the techno look and alternative styles standing out. Abidi's work chapter also explores the coexistence of hedonism and risk behaviour tied to drug use in clubbing settings. Abidi draws attention to Berlin's unique "toilet culture", where drug consumption fosters communal interactions. The article concludes by highlighting the impact of these scenes on urban life, fostering personal growth, and social connections through shared arts and leisure activities. Overall, Abidi's work highlights the multidimensional facets of Berlin's music and clubbing scenes and their pivotal role in shaping urban subcultures. She demonstrates these scenes' permeability by showcasing their ability to reinvent themselves, to join forces and overcome their differences through the organization of larger-scale rallying events such as the Whole queer festival.

## 2.2 Diversity and Inclusion

As journalists and academics (Farrugia, 2012; Rodgers, 2010) began to discuss extensively the issues around the male-dominated electronic dance music scenes in the early 2010s, local organisations also responded to these questions. In Berlin, for example, many panel discussions, festivals and events were dedicated to such topics, leading to increased awareness about them. The most important outcome of these events is the creation of awareness (Jóri, 2020). Members of the scene became more aware of these issues, and promoters started to invite more non-male DJs and producers to their events.

The issue of a male-dominated scene is not a recent one. The existing historical writings of electronic dance music cultures almost completely ignore the existence of non-male musicians, fans and other protagonists of this scene, even though quite a few of them played important parts in its early development. Authors like Rodgers (2010) and Merrich (2021) are today trying to fill the gaps in these early writings.

The industry of music technology has also been socially constructed as typically male since the beginning of the 20th century (Farrugia, 2012), therefore, electronic dance music scenes, especially their production side, also developed as male-centric spaces. This phenomenon is similar to the one found in other popular music genres and in the mainstream music industry (Jóri, 2020).

Sarah Thornton was already writing in the mid-1990s about the differences between female and male subcultural capital. According to her, male members of electronic dance music scenes created their own subcultural capital by collecting records and forming their own network of scene members. Via these connections they could easily get access to spaces that were important for their career developments within the scene. Moreover, because their collection of records spanned years, they became more aware of the actual developing streams of music genres, and therefore got better opportunities to play at different clubs.

The results of the first female:pressure survey, FACTS (2013) also proved discouraging: In the line-ups of the examined festivals less than 10% of the artists were female, and the same low percentage was found in labels' record-releasing statistics (Jóri, 2020). These numbers generated a lot of discussion in the media and within the Techno scene. Female:pressure has continued to conduct this survey. The numbers from the last FACT survey (2022) highlight the changes happening today: 26.9% of all acts were female, 59.1% were male, 1.3% were non-binary, and 9.1% were mixed.

But diversity and inclusion are not only about gender balance. More research needs to be done to better understand who the actors taking part in nightlife economies are. Knowing the background of the musicians in lineups is not enough. We should also pay attention to the other protagonists, such as clubgoers, promoters, bar keepers, bouncers, etc. What social background do they have? And how truly diverse are these scenes?

Already underway since the 2010s, the drive for greater ethnic and gender inclusion in nightlife events, in particular BIPOC and FLINTA+ people, has intensified since the pandemic. The second part of the book looks at the ways in which nightlife can also be a place of inclusion for a more diverse, queer audience, and how awareness-raising initiatives can contribute to this.

**Ines Liotard's** research explores the interplay between techno music and queer theory within the context of the Parisian nightlife scene. The central hypothesis posits that techno parties provide a space for the dissemination and appropriation of queer ideas, reshaping both the techno and queer landscapes. Liotard examines the evolution of techno music and queer theory in France, highlighting how the importation of techno culture and queer theory from the US shaped their hybridisation in the Parisian context. Liotard's argument revolves around the interconnectedness of techno music and queer theory's receptions, tracing how these two domains arrived in France at the same time. She underscores the multifaceted appropriations of queer theory among partygoers, ranging from academic engagement to activist and ordinary appropriations. Through ethnographic investigation, Liotard identifies three levels of queer political commitment within the techno scene: activism, unstructured engagement with LGBT+ rights, and self-assertion through transgressive practices. This diversity in commitment leads to varying understandings and redefinitions of the term *queer*. The results of Liotard's

research highlight the complexity of the relationship between queer theory and techno culture. Techno parties act as conduits for queer theory dissemination, and the multiplicity of queer definitions reflects the differentiated appropriations of theory among individual partygoers and event organisers.

**Xan egger**, **neo seefried** and **Mascha Naumann** critically examine the current situation of Berlin's club culture in terms of *diversity*, *awareness* and *inclusion*. They explain these three key notions, the opportunities they create in the context of subcultural and queer realities and thus definitions for practice-related action. They discuss these definitions within the heterogeneous queer communities and negotiate them in an emancipating way. Their chapter seeks answers to the following questions: How can we transform spaces sustainably, mitigating not only exclusion but also the challenges posed by multiple forms of marginalization? How do we create diversity not only in representative line-ups and bookings, but for all club workers within the economic structures of clubs? How can we create resistant and yet open places that challenge social, (hetero)normative and capitalist conditions? What are the potentials of the fluid concepts of identity, queer body politics and pleasure positive spaces not only for also to disrupt the hegemonic society as a whole.

**Diana Raiselis's** chapter focuses on the newly-created "awareness teams" in Berlin, and the queer feminist concepts they are based on. While awareness as a practice has existed in Berlin and German club culture for nearly a decade, according to Raiselis, it has gained particular visibility since 2020, as the Covid-19 pandemic started. Raiselis refers to *awareness* as a feminist and activist practice that attends to the crossing of interpersonal boundaries, with an additional focus on harm reduction and safer use. Many Berlin club cultural spaces seek to imagine and enact other ways of being together, and awareness work, as it coalesces, is one means of envisioning a social structure built on care rather than prohibition and policing. Preceded by a brief background and summary of previous research findings, this chapter documents how one queer-feminist Berlin club cultural collective sees the political and practical project of awareness, implements it in event contexts, and understands the challenges and tensions that arise. Raiselis's research seeks to illustrate how Berlin club culture actors develop awareness teams and navigate their design and implementation, in order to understand how innovations in club culture might yield more broadly applicable forms of social organisation.

### 2.3 Perspectives: Social and Ecological Challenges for a Sustainable Club Culture

This collective book is enriched by an appendix consisting of less academic formats and featuring the insights of artist **Max Eulitz** into Kyiv's "sleepless nights" where Berlin techno fans partied during the lockdown and before the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war. Based on a collection of essays, *Notes on 41*, which Eulitz published

in 2021, just days before the full-scale invasion of Ukraine, is an illustration of the circumstances surrounding the creation of the K41 nightclub and of its structural challenges. In June 2023, the author went back to Kyiv to understand the current social upheavals triggered by the war. The essay is the outcome of this visit and also a reflection on the author's previous publication.

**Edna Hernández González's** contribution offers an opportunity to challenge the notion of the right to the night as a human prerogative. Her article addresses the dual challenge of managing nighttime spaces for both human enjoyment and environmental preservation. It explores the possible conflicts arising from the need for artificial lighting in urban nightlife and its negative effects on nature and human well-being. The issue of artificial lighting at night and light pollution is analysed as a source of conflicts with non-humans living at night and a potential threat to nocturnal biodiversity. The concept of the *right to the night*, which echoes Lefebvre's idea of the *right to the city*, encompasses more than just the right to festivities; it also encompasses the right to a quiet night, darkness and a starry sky. In this regard, it's impossible to read the author's article without contemplating the disparity in light intensity that sets apart Paris, often referred to as the *Ville Lumière*, from Berlin at night, where tourists are always surprised by its dark streets and the faint glow of its street lights. This contrast arises because traditional perceptions of the night are deeply embedded in social imagery and representations. The chapter emphasises the necessity, from a cross-disciplinary standpoint that involves all stakeholders, including communities most vulnerable to the risks posed by poorly lit streets (such as women and LGBT+ communities), to collectively address the environmental implications of nighttime pollution. It reveals the complexities of balancing nightlife activities and ecological preservation and highlights the societal and cognitive challenges associated with reducing light pollution, as well as the potential for resistance due to safety concerns. This endeavour should also encompass the inclusion of non-human elements in this reflection.

**Guillaume Robin**, one of the co-editors of this book, presents a study of the Berlin techno community with a migration background, and the modes of resilience it developed in the face of the Covid-induced process of desocialisation. It outlines the revival of free parties and micro-festivals prospects for more accessible post-pandemic nights. The pandemic has not only had a negative impact on the vitality of scenes and communities: it has paradoxically created a sort of pull effect, a lineup turn-over in the electronic music scene and led to the emergence of young artists and queer FLINTA and POC collectives for whom the pandemic has had a springboard effect.

The final interview with **Katharina Wolf**, project coordinator at Clubtopia, an initiative discussing the prospects, challenges and catalysts for a sustainable development of club culture, invites us to think about ways of reducing the carbon foot-



print in a nightlife sector that certainly generates a great deal of well-being and collective happiness, but also negative effects for the planet.

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