

**Queer Nightlife as Social Infrastructure:
Nightlife Regulation Initiatives in New York and London**

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Abstract

Many cities are beginning to understand the value of night time economies. As municipal night time commissions and offices continue to grow in the United States and Europe, researchers and activists attempt to highlight vulnerable groups that have historically relied on nightlife for community building. Given these histories, are cities doing enough in highlighting and protecting LGBTQ+ (queer) nightlife, especially for people of color (POC), through these municipal nightlife commissions and offices? Using qualitative data and a multiple case study design focusing on New York and London, this research attempts to understand how night time commissions and offices in both cities address the vulnerability of queer POC nightlife through community outreach and/or research initiatives. Through interviews, field observations and analysis of policy initiatives, the framing of nightlife as culture or entertainment has an impact on structural financing mechanisms that ultimately commodify queer nightlife. However, these structures also reveal the social infrastructural network of nightlife collectives and opportunities that promote the creation of safe spaces.

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This paper is dedicated to the queer community in New York who work, play and thrive at night.

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Introduction

“Social infrastructure,” as defined by Eric Klinenberg, are public utilities and spaces that have the potential to reduce crime and inequality, foster social connections and improve networking amongst communities (Klinenberg, 2018). Public libraries are seen as the quintessential example of social infrastructure, where services and resources are offered in a space that allows for social interactions between the socially and economically vulnerable. Neoliberal policies have now blurred the lines between public and private. The social utility that was once encapsulated in public libraries has now morphed and adapted itself into a free market structure. The industrialist 9 to 5 work schedule has now expanded to all hours of the night. Where do the most vulnerable congregate and socialize at night when daytime social infrastructures are shuttered? For some communities today, the same qualities associated with social infrastructure can be applied to queer night venues, bars and clubs.

Cities are now understanding the public and private value of night time economies. As municipal night time commissions and offices continue to grow in the United States and Europe, researchers and activists attempt to highlight vulnerable groups that have historically relied on nightlife for community building. The LGBTQ+ community have historically utilized night bars and clubs as their social foundation since the Gay Liberation Movement in the seventies. LGBTQ+ people of color, especially Black and Hispanic gay men and trans women, have adopted night time events and spaces as their rightful space for leveraging and building community power (Nuñez, 2018).

Given these histories, are cities doing enough in highlighting and protecting LGBTQ+ (queer) nightlife, especially for people of color (POC), through these municipal nightlife commissions and offices? Public officials and scholars in cities like London are taking proactive steps in understanding their LGBTQ+ night time structure through “queer new urban agendas” (Campkin, 2018). Cities with rich, cultural histories in

nightlife, like New York, are just beginning to understand the complexity of their queer night time structures. Both cities are also home to party and DJ collectives that convene partygoers in spaces that prioritize the safety and wellbeing of queer POC. Although existing within the realm of private business and spaces, these collectives are providing important resources to partygoers, nightlife staff and venues. Are night time commissions and offices highlighting the work and networks of these collectives enough?

Using qualitative data and a multiple case study design focusing on New York and London, this research attempts to understand how night time commissions and offices in both cities address the vulnerability of queer POC nightlife through community outreach and/or research initiatives. Background research is introduced to situate the trend of nightlife regulation with contemporary city initiatives. The literature review includes research on planning for 24-hour cities, past restrictions on night time economies, and the historic significance of nightlife for LGBTQ+ and queer people of color. Through interviews, field observations and analysis of policy initiatives, the framing of nightlife as culture or entertainment has an impact on structural financing mechanisms that ultimately commodify queer nightlife. However, these structures also reveal the social infrastructural network of nightlife collectives and opportunities that promote the creation of safe spaces.

Regulating the Night: the 24-hour city and Nighttime Economy

The “nighttime economy” was a term and idea that existed within the realm of the urban entertainment industry after the 1960s. Many urban scholars have various names for this phenomenon: the “cultural economy” (Scott, 2000), “fun services” (Hannigan, 1998) or simply “urban entertainment” (Hollands & Chatterton, 2003, p. 363). In the United States, “fun services” grew 7 percent between 1960 and 1984 (Esping-Andersen, 2015) while “urban entertainment” became one of the fastest growing sectors in real estate; referred to as the “Las Vegasization of city downtowns” (Gottdiener, 1997, p. 256). The manifestations of the urban entertainment industry can be seen in the steady influx of urban entertainment destinations (UEDs) in downtown areas throughout the US and the UK (Chatterton, 2003, p. 20). These downtown areas bring together cinema, retail, eating and nightlife while drawing upon anchor tenants such as Warner Brothers, TGI Fridays, Starbucks, Hard Rock Cafes, Planet Hollywoods and Disney Stores (Chatterton, 2003, p. 20). The most illustrative examples include Times Square in New York or the Trocadero in London’s Piccadilly Circus. Many scholars have termed these new urban entertainment industries as urban “landscapes of consumption” (Wrigley, 1998); the urban iteration of the suburban shopping mall.

While much work and empirical evidence has been focused on these new “landscapes of consumption,” little attention has been paid to the contributions of the nighttime economy to these new landscapes. Despite the fact that much of the current urban entertainment industry is being fueled by the growth of nighttime activity, according to Chatterton and Hollands, very little work has analyzed the transformation of many cities and urban centers into “nightlife hotspots” (2003, p. 21). Chatterton and Holland argue that in order to situate the emergence of nightlife within the growing trend of urban entertainment, one must pay attention to the wider economic, political and socioeconomic changes characterized under the rubrics of Fordism, post-Fordism

and neo-Fordism (Chatterton, 2003, p. 21). The post-Fordist transition allowed for the proliferation of “flexible specialization and accumulation” and “globalization and corporatization” of economies and urban systems (Chatterton, 2003, p. 21). In other words, the move towards a service-based, cultural and “symbolic” economy (Lash & Urry, 2014).

This trend of a growing “cultural economy” dovetails into a new ongoing trend: the rise of the “creative class.” First termed by Richard Florida, the creative class is touted as a new elite class of urbanites that spur economic development and generation of urban capital. Florida argues that three factors are needed to cultivate the creative class and economic development: technology, talent and tolerance; or the 3T’s (Florida, 2003, p. 10). The third T, tolerance, is what allows for diversity in consumption and creativity for the creative class. This idea of “tolerance” in the urban landscape trickles down to the choices of urban entertainment, where cities and industries are trying their very best to diversify their choices of entertainment to serve the creative class. This idea of urban economic development to serve the creative class allows for the consumption and commodification of culture; a theme that ties in the ongoing trend of a service-based, cultural economy in urban entertainment with “tolerance” of new forms of cultural consumption. One can argue that one of these “new” forms of cultural consumption is nightlife.

The integration of emerging urban entertainment industries and the rise of the creative class has created a new trend of city policy and regulation that welcomes and formalizes a new type of economic and cultural consumption. This new system of regulation introduces the term “24-hour city” into the vocabulary of city officials and politicians (Melbin, 1978). In order to respond and capitalize on urban entertainment industries and the creative class, politicians and policy makers experiment with new ordinances to incentivize alcohol-related activity and increase establishment of nighttime entertainment (Roberts, Turner, Greenfield, & Osborn, 2006). The most recent evolution of these new models of urban entertainment and economic development is the creation of nightlife offices that exist within local city government (Codrea-Rado, 2017). In addition to New York and London, cities like Amsterdam, Berlin and Paris have established municipal offices that cater to the special needs of nightlife establishments. Each city or nightlife office establishes a vision for their city’s nightlife sector that varies

between cultural preservation and economic development, a theme this research will attempt to demonstrate.

Urban Entertainment and Nighttime Economy

New forms of specialized consumption and accumulation allowed the urban entertainment industry to focus on nighttime activity as a primary driver for capital and urban development. According to Chatterton, the current development of the nighttime economy can be theoretically situated with reference to wider economic and political changes characterized generally under the rubrics of Fordism, post-Fordism and neo-Fordism (2003, 21). Post-Fordist transition refers to changes in the production process, while also implying broader political and cultural transformations (Kumar, 1995). The post-Fordist transition is rooted in the “development of new types of small-scale, flexible, specialized, integrated and high-tech production units clustered in industrial districts” (Chatterton, 2003, p. 21). Responding to the inflexibility and saturation of national mass production markets, post-Fordism is characterized not only by more flexible production techniques, but also organization changes like the decentralization and globalization of capital, outsourcing and subcontracting, and changes in consumer preferences towards more individualized forms of global consumption (Kumar 1995). In other words, western capitalist economies since the 1970’s, faced with declining growth, sought new avenues of wealth generation. This led to an increase in service employment, especially business and financial services, and increasing activity in the “cultural economy,” which has grown rapidly to offset manufacturing loss (Chatterton, 2003, p. 22).

One unique take on the post-Fordist transition is the idea of flexible accumulation, based on the assumption of increased flexibility to types of products, services and markets (Chatterton, 2003, p. 22; Harvey, 2014). Endless technological innovation and rapid turnover in production led firms to new ways to expand and exploit new markets. Therefore, there has been a shift towards investment in, and the marketing of, different types of products and services in the cultural economy. It would then make sense for “capitalists to turn towards the provision of very ephemeral services in consumption” (Harvey, 2014, p. 285). In terms of the production of urban entertainment, Lash and Urry point to the emergence of “reflexive accumulation,” in which the accumulation process is based around more knowledge and service-intensive activities and a concentration of

symbols and lifestyles, rather than just material goods (Lash & Urry, 2014).

Under this model, production is more knowledge-intensive and involves small-batch tasks undertaken within dense networks of vertically integrated units (Chatterton, 2003, p. 22). More capital and investment flow towards the production of goods and services that are more ephemeral (live concerts), disposable (fast food and alcohol), lifestyle-based ('premium' branding and branded venues) and virtual (social media and influencers) (Chatterton, 2003, p. 22). These new ephemeral and fast-moving models of goods and services are epitomized by entertainment, popular culture and nightlife activity. Chatterton states that these new models require constant replenishment and are a particularly effective tool for speeding up capital accumulation (2003, p. 22). Nightlife involves a temporal expansion of capital accumulation past the typical retail flight, encouraging late-night activities for pre-family adults, students and tourists (Chatterton, 2003, p. 22).

In its spatial manifestation, multifunctionality becomes the cornerstone of many leisure developments that follow this model of flexible accumulation in entertainment and nightlife. New spaces for profit-making, like urban entertainment destinations (UEDs), allow synergies between retail, media, real estate, sports, nightlife, eating and other pursuits. Many UEDs often combine theme bars and restaurants, cinemas, arcades cafes, retail stores, and licensed merchandise shops, generating entertainment hybrids (Chatterton, 2003, p. 23).

In this regard, branding and corporate power has become ever more important in the current urban entertainment economy. Chatterton states that highly branded, theme-centric and stylized elements have become the most obvious features of current entertainment and nightlife economies (Chatterton, 2003, p. 25). Concurring with the post-Fordist paradigm, stylized brands and themes fall within these highly aesthetic and ephemeral services that are catered to individualized forms of consumption (Chatterton, 2003, p. 27). More individualized forms of consumption led to the rise of spaces that catered to specific social identities in relation to gender, sexuality, ethnicity and youth culture. Yet, the most striking feature of this model of urban nightlife is its corporate structure. Even as urban entertainment becomes individualized for specific social identities, its operational structure is corporate in order to extract as much capital from the post-Fordist paradigm. Some examples of this centralization of corporate activity is

alcohol manufacturing, venue ownership and product distribution. Anheuser-Busch, the largest beer distributor in the world, owns microbreweries while also distributing beer to independent businesses, offering them special contracts to sell their beer. This system is more centralized in the UK, where most breweries distribute and also own affiliated pubs and restaurants.

The Cultural Economy and the Creative Class

This new highly individualized paradigm of production falls in line with another theory of urban development. Florida's creative capital theory argues that creativity and diversity are the basic drivers for innovation and regional and national growth (Florida, 2003, p. 3). Florida argues that in order for cities to compete with new urban centers of innovation, cities should allow regulations and policy that accommodate attraction of the "creative class," a class of highly educated and creative individuals (Florida, 2003, p. 8). According to Florida, the creative class is usually comprised of "creative professionals" whose function is to create "new meaningful forms" of capital and production.

This can include university professors, scientists and engineers, poets and artists, architects, novelists, entertainers and designers (Florida, 2003, p. 8). One of the main characteristics of the creative class, which falls in line with Chatterton's post-Fordist paradigm, is their moving away from traditional corporate communities to "creative centers" (Florida, 2003, p. 8), while also producing knowledge-intensive services within a dense network of other highly skilled and intelligent residents. These new "creative centers" tend to be the economic winners of our age, resulting in high concentrations of creative economic outcomes, in the form of innovation and high-tech industry growth. These centers also show signs of overall regional growth in employment and population. Florida lures economists and urbanists into understanding the complex desires and needs of this new creative class, hoping to attract "creative capital" for economic growth.

Specific characteristics in cities and their regulation are needed in order to attract the creative class. Florida describes the 3 Ts (technology, talent, and tolerance) as the three factors in cultivating the creative class. On top of these factors, Florida introduces different indexes that can be used to "measure" the creative capital of a city. Examples include the "diversity" index, the "melting pot" index, and the "gay" index (Florida, 2003, p. 10). Diversity and tolerance are the main characteristics that represent the choices of

the creative class as well.

The idea of flexible accumulation can also be applied to the consumption patterns of the creative class, where knowledge-intensive, individualized and culturally specific services can be considered attractive in producing creative capital. This means that alternatives in pleasure seeking and entertainment must be as diverse as the creative class that a city is trying to serve. This then creates a “cultural economy,” where the commodification of ephemeral services (like nightlife) begins to take place in order to accommodate the creative class.

These new consumption practices catered to highly skilled workers can create spaces of privileged consumption that can lead to exclusionary practices. San Francisco during the dot-com boom experienced an influx of highly skilled workers that clustered their consumption practices around likeminded communities focusing on individualized and ephemeral services for pleasure seeking, culture and entertainment (Centner, 2008). The dot-commers do not necessarily exercise their superiority in their exercise of privilege, but rather a combination of individuality and community allows them to “take space” and consume new modes of pleasure-seeking.

The 24-Hour City and Nightlife Regulation

Florida’s creative capital theory and the growth of flexible accumulation in production influenced a new form of municipal regulation. Urban policymakers, economists, capitalists and politicians, lured by the seemingly unlimited capital that urban nightlife produces, began to market nightlife as a cultural commodity while tethered to larger economic development schemes. The idea of the 24-hour city, born in the 1990s, began to take shape as an economic and theoretical concept. Sociologists, like Melbin, use the term “24-hour city” to introduce the effect of nocturnal activity in urban areas. Melbin describes social nighttime activity as a “new frontier,” comparing it to the American West a century ago (Melbin, 1978). Even earlier than Melbin, Jane Jacobs initiated and promoted the idea of an “active city,” with a large residential population and mixed-use developments with shops and attractions that attract people 24 hours a day (Jacobs, 1963; Roberts et al., 2006, p. 1106). Since then, the “24-hour city” has been used to describe the exciting social and economic opportunities that a nonstop city can provide. The most well-known marketing tactic is New York’s reputation

as “the city that never sleeps.” The new opportunities a city can provide at night can lure the rising creative class. Beginning at the turn of the twenty first century, municipalities began to experiment with policy, incentives and regulations to attract and contain urban nightlife as a conduit for economic and social growth.

One of the first examples of policy and development that was used to attract a specific type of urban entertainment was the urban entertainment destination (UEDs). Mentioned above, the most well-known UEDs are Times Square or Piccadilly Circus in London. In the Time Square case, the use of development corporations combatted “vice” and organized crime while attracting corporate anchor tenants to the “new 42nd Street,” the new UED. While specific mechanisms of zoning and licensing will be discussed in the next chapter, the development corporation model was the formal entity that marketed and attracted major retail and entertainment corporations through tax incentives and proximity of major transportation hubs (Ryder, 2004). The Times Square case was unique because they used the business improvement district (Times Square BID) model, in addition to the 42nd Street Development Corporation, compounding the magnitude of corporate clustering. We see that effect today with major corporate offices and retail companies anchoring the new Times Square, displacing the clustered adult entertainment industry that thrived in Times Square decades earlier (Ryder, 2004).

Another form of attracting urban entertainment and nightlife through city policy came in the form of less restrictive liquor licensing, especially in European cities. British cities were one of the first municipalities to experiment with more relaxed liquor licensing and hours after policymakers held the first “Twenty-four Hour City Conference” in Manchester in 1993 (Roberts et al., 2006, p. 1106). Urban researchers Roberts et al. analyzed and compared licensing reform in major European cities like London, Dublin, Copenhagen and Berlin. They found that while nightlife consumption increased and establishments prospered, “anti-social” behavior also proliferated, like public drunkenness and noise (Roberts et al., 2006, p. 1122), traditional “drinking behavior” did not change. Roberts argued that promoting a “continental ambience” of café culture and drinking behavior was a positive social outcome of cities reforming licensing acts (Roberts et al., 2006, p. 1122).

The most recent, and less researched, trend of nightlife city policy is the proliferation of municipal “nightlife offices.” Mayors of cities like New York, London,

Berlin, Amsterdam and Paris appoint public officials commonly known as “night mayors” (Codrea-Rado, 2017). Most recently, the City Council of New York passed legislation to create an office of nightlife in the summer of 2017 in order to respond to the unique needs of bars, nightclubs and DIY venues (Codrea-Rado, 2017). While the bill is intended to help struggling music venues, it is no secret that an underlying intention of the office is to maintain the billion-dollar entertainment and nightlife industry that already exists. New York’s office of nightlife was modeled after Amsterdam’s nachtburgemeester, a similar office and position established in 2003 (Codrea-Rado, 2017). Amsterdam’s flagship project was the introduction of ten 24-hour venues in the western outskirts of the city that created a purpose-built nighttime district while alleviating the pressure on the city’s center (Codrea-Rado, 2017). London mayor Sadiq Khan established its first “night czar” in 2016 with a campaign to protect a number of LGBTQ+ venues from closing (Mayor of London, 2018). Similar to New York, London marketed its nightlife office as a champion for cultural spaces and struggling venues while promising to support a nighttime economy worth £26 billion, or \$34 billion (Codrea-Rado, 2017). Amy Lamé, London’s night czar, is promoting its office as a champion for “life at night,” refraining from using the word “nightlife,” in order to approach a more holistic approach that captures nighttime workers in the healthcare and transportation sectors (Codrea-Rado, 2017).

The creation of nightlife offices in North American and European cities seem to encapsulate the past theories of flexible accumulation and the creative capital. Instead of acting as passive vessels for nightlife and entertainment, city governments are starting to be more proactive in fostering their nighttime economies in order to promote more individualized and ephemeral services that attract the highly educated “creative class.” Even if disguising their intentions to preserve cultural spaces, this move in creating nightlife offices can be viewed as a larger economic trend in harnessing the billion-dollar nightlife industry for further accumulation of capital that benefit real estate investors and entertainment corporations.

Restriction and Exclusion of Social Spaces: Licensing, Dancing and Zoning

Not all forms of nightlife and entertainment were embraced during this new age of flexible accumulation, creative capital and the emergence of the cultural economy. Before the proliferation of nightlife as a formalized economy, a legal infrastructure of alcohol licensing, zoning and ordinances banning specific social activity stymied nightlife in certain cities. Alcohol licensing laws in the US and the UK date back to the fourteenth century, merely to regulate the price of beer (Talbot, 2007, p. 4). Scholars begin to connect the rise of alcohol licensing with the relationship between alcohol consumption and labor discipline (Talbot, 2007, p. 4). As the Industrial Revolution created new systems of labor and production, legislators and activists viewed certain activities, like drinking, as “counterproductive” for the modern-day laborer. Scholars also connect licensing of bars and inns with controlling working-class activities, framing leisurely drinking as undesirable side effects of a lazy and unproductive class of society. These systems of licensing led to authorities controlling social and cultural spaces of the low- and working-class (Talbot, 2007, p. 5).

The twentieth century experienced an evolution of regulation through the introduction of zoning in the US. Zoning ordinances were introduced in cities like New York and San Francisco to curb undesirable uses in adult entertainment and nightlife. Examples, such as the Times Square Rezoning in the 1980’s and a zoned urban entertainment district in San Francisco, allowed for market-driven corporate entertainment to thrive while eliminating important social spaces that minority communities used for nightlife and social connectivity (Mattson, 2015a; Ryder, 2004). New York was home to the most famous zoning regulation that prohibited dancing in social spaces in certain residential and commercial districts, commonly known as the cabaret law. According to Chevigny, cabaret regulation in 1920’s New York exemplified racial and class stratification, actively prohibiting jazz clubs that were increasing in

African-American neighborhoods (Chevigny, 2005; Ogren, 1995, p. 188). The cabaret law became the catch-all regulation that prohibited dancing in many spaces, effectively making any social space with music and dancing illegal in certain parts of the city.

The restriction and exclusion of specific social spaces connected to nightlife, music and identity begin to have a compounded effect on specific marginalized communities. The beneficial impact of building community and social capital is eliminated when these spaces are restricted or excluded, affecting low-income communities of color and LGBTQ+ communities in urban areas. For communities of color, nightclubs and bars serve as “extra-neighborhood space” that fills the void of neglected and disinvested urban neighborhoods and help cultivate social capital and leverage (Hunter, 2010). For LGBTQ+ communities, nightclubs and bars serve as an informal and invisible infrastructure of networking and safety (Betsky, 1997). The outlawing of sexual activity in certain spaces also tied to the exclusion of LGBTQ+ spaces, where various sexual and gendered identities cultivated and thrived in LGBTQ+ bars and clubs (Betsky, 1997; Chatterton, 2003; Hubbard, 2012).

Alcohol Licensing and the ‘Other’

Beginning in the seventeenth century, licensing for alcohol and bars became the prominent method of regulating the social spaces of low-income and working-class communities. In the UK, a series of Acts in the seventeenth century dictated where and when drinking could take place, ranging from restricting drinking in Inns to residents, banning entertainment on religious days and making drunkenness an offence (Dorn, 1983; Talbot, 2007, p. 4) During the Industrial Revolution, drinking and entertainment was seen as a barrier to a more longer work week and the intensification of work required by industrialization (Talbot, 2007, p. 4). The Temperance movement in the US also intensified the restriction of alcohol consumption, tying in religion as a social factor to limit this “social disease.” Temperance campaigners noted that state involvement in the sale and consumption of alcohol was also motivated by two conflicting interests: first, the revenue derived from taxes on liquor on the one hand combined the growing power of free-trade breweries, and second, the “social disease” that appeared to originate from alcohol on the other (Talbot, 2007, p. 4).

Many scholars have pointed to the hypocrisy in English licensing laws designed

to interfere with the social component of drinking while allowing the industry to grow in order to profit off its capital (Talbot, 2007, p.4). Therefore, the way that licensing law reflected such practices of inclusion and exclusion to control outlets of consumption and entertainment often coincided with the interests of the breweries and ensured cooperation and self-regulation (Talbot, 2007, p. 5). A conflict of interest existed within the state in so far as it expressed the needs of capitalist reproduction. The state is interested in both the taxation revenue gained from the production of liquor and the survival of the industry itself as a core lobby and part of the economy (Talbot, 2007, p. 4). Yet, it is also interested in preventing interference of drunkenness and entertainment with the working week. Talbot argues that licensing law in the UK never innovated to prohibit the consumption of alcohol so much as regulate the conditions of its use within what were perceived as acceptable outlets for supply (2007, p. 5; Dorn, 1983).

At the turn of the twentieth century, outcomes concerning the function of licensing laws therefore expressed themselves in contradictory ways. An argument that Talbot presents is the “successive colonization of the state and capital within popular culture and the corresponding marginalization of cultural forms not susceptible to commodification” (Talbot, 2007, p. 7). Talbot further argues: “on the one hand... entertainment has been subject to a process of disciplining within commercial boundaries, and on the other, has been marginalized if too clearly associated with the ‘other’” (Talbot, 2007, p. 7). In the twentieth century, the “other” becomes the transgressive cultures that become further marginalized by not assimilating themselves into widely “acceptable” forms of entertainment. These were considered women, young people, black and brown people, immigrants and sexual minorities.

These transgressive cultures, or the ‘other,’ become more visible during the various counterculture revolutions of the twentieth century. As more minority groups move to urbanized areas for refuge against many forms of discrimination, like the Great Migration in the US, these communities are forced by segregation to create enclaves and social spaces for themselves. While these spaces remain invisible to society at large, but highly visible to police authorities, these disinvested areas come safety “zones” for the respective communities (Talbot, 2007, p. 12). Talbot argues that the new nighttime economy is the “colonization of the counterculture,” where outlawed forms of minority entertainment are slowly being commodified by mainstream entertainment

(Talbot, 2007, p. 13).

UK licensing laws modified itself in order to accommodate this new attitude of post-Fordist culture commodification. The Licensing Act of 2003 in the UK followed the trend of neoliberal deregulation and the embrace of diverging forms of nightlife entertainment. The main aim of the legislation is to broadly encourage entertainment activity and prevent licensing authorities from creating conditions that curtail such activities to the detriment of 'cultural diversity' of the community (Talbot, 2006, p. 161). While having many factors, the legislation also aimed at preventing the imposition of "disproportionate standard conditions and routine inspection which has hindered the development of business and local economies without any positive gain for society" (Talbot, 2006, p. 161).

Talbot argues that this new kind of legislation was created to introduce a kind of "cultural engineering" that related to what kind of nightlife is desired by the state. The Licensing Act of 2003 brought harsher punishments to licensed establishments. Establishments were criminally responsible for permitting disorderly conduct on their premises, which can include public drunkenness and loud noise (Talbot, 2006, p. 161). The Act also gave more power to police authorities in closing establishments in order to prevent more "disorder," allowing police to define disorder at their discretion (Talbot, 2006, p. 162). Talbot performed a case study in a neighborhood in London studying the effects of the Licensing Act, stating that the Act promoted a family-friendly café style nightlife with responsible drinking while actively suppressing different variations of nightlife based on differentiations of race and class (Talbot, 2006, p. 168).

Nightlife and Entertainment through Zoning

While the UK focused on engineering a specific type of entertainment and nightlife through licensing statutes, the US applied various zoning techniques to garner similar results. During the Prohibition era in the US, the 1926 New York City Cabaret law was one example that controlled where and how entertainment and music venues were allowed to operate. Originally with the intent to control speakeasies during Prohibition, the ordinance evolved as a regulating agent that designated certain places as "cabarets" if the establishment sold food and drink or employed more than three musicians playing instruments (Chevigny, 2005, p. 56). The law was later broadly

applied and made it illegal for any establishment that hosted musical entertainment, singing, dancing or any form of amusement without a license (Correal, 2017). The ordinance took extra power when combined with zoning restrictions that limited licensed cabarets to certain parts of the city (Ogren, 1995, p. 189). During the 1960s, city officials required that performers and establishment owners be fingerprinted and carry a “cabaret card” in order to not get fined (Correal, 2017). Many legal scholars pointed to the racialized aspect of this ordinance. Since many large establishments, like hotels and theaters, were exempt from the cabaret law, Chevigny argues that the law was largely directed at the black music and dance venues that were increasing during and after the Harlem Renaissance (Chevigny, 2005, pp. 56–57). The law was less enforced when Chevigny sued the city and musicians were allowed to play without a license, arguing that musical performance is freedom of speech under the First Amendment (Correal, 2017). The law was later revived in the 1990s under Mayor Giuliani to shut down dance clubs that were proliferating during the rise of rave culture (Correal, 2017), attacking another form of entertainment where young LGBTQ+ communities thrived (Musto, 2017).

Since the 1920s, zoning became a tool in New York City to regulate public safety and quality of life. Entertainment and nightlife establishments were largely categorized as a nuisance to residents, which gave city authorities greater discretion to zone out specific entertainment uses deemed unsafe or socially unacceptable by the general public. Many scholars pointed out that nightlife is often sexualized, therefore easily regulated by authorities (Hubbard, 2012). An example is the 1995 Zoning Resolution in New York restricting adult entertainment establishments. The New York City Council approved a series of amendments in 1995 to the zoning resolution that restricted adult entertainment establishments to only certain manufacturing and high-density commercial districts in the city while also requiring establishments to be at least 500 feet from a place of worship, a school, or another adult establishment that previously existed (Berger, 1996). Coupled with a special purpose district that was being proposed for Times Square in 1982, the zoning resolution dramatically decreased the establishment of adult use bookstores, theaters and peepshows in the Times Square area (Ryder, 2004). The relationship between real estate interest in Times Square in becoming an UED by the 42nd Street Development Corporation and the decrease

of adult entertainment establishments demonstrate the city's motives in promoting a specific type of corporate entertainment that reflects Chatterton's theory of post-Fordist capital consumption. Many sociologists argue that the decimation of adult entertainment establishments in Times Square and other parts of New York also eliminated an underlying social network of LGBTQ+ men of color. Delany argues that queer men of color often used adult use bookstores and theaters to congregate and network without the fear of discrimination in public spaces (Delany, 1999). Given that Times Square was a transportation hub, many queer men from predominately minority neighborhoods would travel to adult use establishments in Times Square because of convenience as well (Delany, 1999).

San Francisco also experimented with zoning as a method to curtail entertainment targeted at LGBTQ+ communities. Polk Gulch, or Polk Street, was one of the city's oldest LGBTQ+ neighborhoods, with bars being described as extremely heterogeneous in the 1990s, catering to gay men, transgender women, Asian men, male sex workers and older working class men (Mattson, 2015a, p. 3). As gentrification ravished San Francisco in the early 2000s, real estate developers transformed Polk Gulch to Polk Street and opened numerous clubs catered to younger straight crowds. Gentrification brought displacement to many of the older LGBTQ+ venues in addition to reports by residents complaining about the new, louder bars (Mattson, 2015a, p. 6). In 2013, city supervisors unanimously banned new bars from opening at on lower Polk Street, creating the Polk Street Alcohol Restricted Use District. This gave the Land Use and Economic Development Committee increased powers over new alcohol licensing and imposed stricter policing for existing clubs (Mattson, 2015a, p. 6). Mattson argues that naturally occurring bar districts are amenities for "subcultural" communities (Mattson, 2015a, p. 2). The imposed restrictions on Polk Street not only officially displaced the LGBTQ+ community's amenities but cemented the mainstream corporate nightlife that exists there today. Mattson calls this the "containment of Las Vegas" (Mattson, 2015a, p. 6).

The Significance of Nightlife as Social Space

Urban scholars and sociologists have conducted research demonstrating the significance of nightlife for minority communities in urbanized areas in the US and

other European cities. On a theoretical level, Betsky states that bars and nightclubs become part of the “invisible network” that queer men and women actively use and spread throughout the city (Betsky, 1997, p. 143). This invisible network is activated by the fairly old act of cruising, which dates back to the seventeenth century. Cruising is the act of following specific routes in public, and sometimes private, spaces for fleeting sexual encounters. Betsky argues that cruising is the earliest form of subverting and appropriating space into “queer space” (1997, p. 142). A main element of queer space is its ephemerality or invisibility, existing in spaces when its needed or not (Betsky, 1997, p. 142). Bars, nightclubs, stores and hotels become conduits for queer space, acting as connecting nodes to the invisible queer network of paths and routes (Betsky, 1997, p. 143). During the LGBT Liberation movement in the 1970s, the continual reconstruction of queer space extended to the neighborhood and public space (Betsky, 1997, p. 172). According to Betsky, unlike neighborhoods that kept themselves together by acting out rituals of family based around the church, school or playground, queer neighborhoods like the Castro or Greenwich Village reenacted the idea of community through connections that had a sexual base, revolving around bars, clubs and event spaces (Betsky, 1997, p. 173). These spaces in nightlife provided more than fleeting encounters, they were the spaces where historic meetings and revolutions occurred in the LGBT Liberation movement. The most famous example of nightlife spaces is the Stonewall Inn in Greenwich Village in New York, which is now designated as a national landmark for its role in catalyzing the LGBT movement (New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission, 2015).

Urban nightlife holds an important role for communities of color as well. Hunter argues that bars and nightclubs that serve black communities serve as “extra neighborhood spaces” that defy spatial locality and mitigate the effects of spatial and social isolation (Hunter, 2010, p. 182). While conducting observations and research in Chicago nightclubs, Hunter argues that communities living in urban minority neighborhoods lacking social public and commercial space often turn to nightclubs and bars to enhance their social leverage. Using Brigg’s theory of social capital and its conceptualizations through social leverage and social support, Hunter continues to argue that nightclubs serve as social spaces where low-income people of color can cultivate networks of social support that otherwise would not happen during their

day-to-day work or daytime activities (Bourdieu, 1989; Hunter, 2010; Varady, 2005). Where African American communities in urban areas around the nation experience daily discrimination and segregation through work and school, nightclubs are spaces that are recreated to their own liking. Oppression from systemic racism and classism is subverted in nightlife spaces, where repressed communities are allowed to freely network and build relationships (Hunter, 2010, p. 168).

Hunter takes their research a step further and observes nightclubs that serve LGBTQ+ communities of color. Hunter concludes that the ideas of social leverage and support are more amplified than their heterosexual counterparts because of the compounded discrimination and oppression that minority LGBTQ+ people experience (Hunter, 2010, p. 181). Hunter includes examples of individuals networking for employment opportunities, sexual relationships and cultural sharing that would not occur in the daily lives of the subjects he was interviewing. Hunter also explains how nightclubs for people of color (LGBTQ+ or not) “defy spatial locality” by bringing communities together from various neighborhoods, usually because there are so few in the first place. The lack of spaces for black lesbian women, for example, is questioned and implies further research for Hunter. This introduces an important idea: how nightlife creates connections between space and racial, sexual and/or cultural identity.

Vulnerability of LGBTQ+ Space in Nightlife

As foreshadowed by Hunter's research, the lack of diversity in LGBTQ+ nightlife reveals a paradox within the nighttime economy. On one hand, cities and local governments are attempting to capture the nighttime market and benefit from its revenue. On the other hand, while mainstream LGBTQ+ spaces are thriving, many spaces for queer people of color are diminishing. If local governments are actively incentivizing nightlife activity, and past research demonstrate the importance of nightlife for communities of color and the LGBTQ+ community, why aren't these spaces thriving as well? One reason could be the "homonormativity" of queer nightlife, as defined by Mattson's research (Mattson, 2015b). Homonormativity reflects the market strategies of mainstream urban entertainment, where it is increasingly "family-friendly" and white.

Mattson's theory of homonormativity in LGBTQ+ space goes beyond nightlife. Hunter and Blair discuss the lack and active suppression of queer space for people of color as rooted in urban segregation and systemic racism. Mentioned above, Hunter's conceptualization of social leverage is amplified in nightlife spaces for people of color (POC), yet social leverage is increasingly limited if there are no spaces for queer POC; an issue that came up in this research (Hunter, 2010). Blair argues that systemic racism in queer life goes beyond nightclubs, existing at the scale of the neighborhood (Blair, 2016).

Homonormativity in LGBTQ+ Nightlife

The term "homonormativity" was coined in Mattson's research of "gay placemaking" in San Francisco (Mattson, 2015b). By observing nightlife market trends in three gay neighborhoods in San Francisco (the Castro, Polk Street and SoMa) from 1999 to 2012, Mattson argues that gentrification and displacement of older gay bars reflected a trend of mainstream acceptance of white, privileged gay men (Mattson,

2015b, p. 3156). While gay neighborhoods like Polk Street and SoMa were drastically reduced by size and number of options for queer nightlife, the Castro expanded because new and existing bar owners embraced mainstream “gay culture” that catered to white gay men. This resulted in the closure of many well-known black, Latino and Asian gay and trans nightclubs in the Castro and Polk Street (Mattson, 2015b, p. 3154). This research revealed specific tactics that bar owners adopted in order to continue to thrive and operate, including exclusionary practices in dress codes and door policies (Mattson, 2015b, p. 3154). A paradox is presented, where gay bar owners try to attract a more privileged demographic in order to extract more capital and avoid displacement. Mattson states that this homonormative cultural shift says more about mainstream culture than gay culture. Mattson writes: “The convergence between mainstream acceptance of gays and gay cosmopolitanism has opened ‘post-gay’ possibilities for the privileged...at the cost of further isolating sexual dissidents, the poor and racial minorities” (Mattson, 2015b, p. 3156). This new freedom in gay lifestyle has given white men more access to nightlife scenes, at the expense of “lost” gay places that served less-privileged gays (Mattson, 2015b, p. 3156). The explosion of the nighttime economy has only exasperated this ongoing trend in the fight for LGBTQ+ space in nightlife.

Homonormativity at the Neighborhood Scale

This trend of homonormativity has been replicated on the neighborhood scale as well, with one scholar describing gay neighborhoods as “gay white ghettos” (Blair, 2016). Using social media and nightclub branding, Blair argues that gay neighborhoods are actively reproducing systems of racial segregation and homonormativity (Blair, 2016, p. 288). Using Boystown, a gay neighborhood in the northside of Chicago, as a case study, Blair employs theories of social production of space to understand how practices in digital and lived spaces concurrently reinforce racist, classist and transphobic notions of place and belonging (Blair, 2016, p. 288). Specifically, Blair found that residents of Boystown collectively criminalized poor queer black and brown youth through digital interactions and “on the ground” efforts (Blair, 2016, p. 288). The “on the ground” efforts included branding of nightclubs to attract a specific (white) clientele and neighborhood policing by residents. These collective efforts actively excluded and segregated queer POC from interacting with one another in one of the only gay neighborhoods in Chicago.

Andersson's research on emerging queer spaces in London also follow the mainstream trend of homonormativity. Andersson argues that new entrepreneurial approaches to queer nightlife and commercial market interests have led to the "homogenization of gay culture," which leads to few alternatives for trans and queer POC in London (Andersson, 2008). To echo Hunter's research in the importance of nightlife as social space for queer POC, the lack of nightlife spaces for queer POC only eliminates their chances for social support and leverage. Black queer spaces for all genders have become less available as they exist outside of the marketable "homogenization" of gay culture. This scarcity is compounded when gay neighborhoods and nightlife hotspots are actively suppressing queer POC from partaking in their neighborhood's brand of community building.

Methodology

Multiple Case Study Design

This research seeks to understand the paradox between the nighttime economy and the diminishment of queer nightlife for people of color. This paradox is explored by understanding the role local government plays in nightlife regulation while protecting queer nightlife in general. A multiple case study design focusing on New York and London is used to compare nightlife ordinances and framing of nightlife as a cultural and/or economic generator. A multiple case study design is used because it follows a “theoretical replication” where individual case studies are conducted then compared and analyzed (Yin, 1984, p. 44). New York and London are case studies for this research because of their proactive stances in protecting queer nightlife while still attempting to harness the economic impact of their nighttime economies. London was one of the first cities to establish a Night Time Commission under Mayor Sadiq Khan in 2016, campaigning to protect a number of LGBTQ venues from closure (Codrea-Rado, 2017). Amy Lamé, London’s appointed “night czar,” was a prominent LGBTQ+ performer and advocate for the protection of queer nightlife. New York recently established its own Office of Nightlife under the Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment in 2017, yet no policies or initiatives are established yet. New York is proactive in protecting queer nightlife through city and state historic preservation designations of culturally significant LGBTQ+ sites, which includes nightclubs.

I applied semi-standardized and unstandardized interviews and participant observations at prominent queer nightclubs and bars as methods for each case study. I also collected additional quantitative and qualitative data through publicly available reports, meeting minutes and meeting videos of public hearings.

Qualitative Methods: Interviews

I contacted prominent policymakers, urban planners, nightlife establishments, researchers and activists in New York and London to discuss their role in protecting

queer nightlife and policies or methods for community outreach. I conducted semi-standardized interviews, as defined by Berg, for public officials and researchers to provide premeditated questions and responses for public officials (Berg, 2012). I conducted unstandardized interviews with nightlife establishment owners and activists to allow fluidity in conversation and more candid responses.

Due to recent privacy laws in the UK, the identities and positions of the subjects contacted in London cannot be shared or disclosed. The London subjects are similar in status within city government and queer nightlife activism as the New York subjects. I contacted four subjects via email and social media in New York. Due to lack of responses, only two interviews are included in this research; one for each city. I interviewed a prominent policy advisor and researcher in London using the semi-standardized structure. I also interviewed Oscar Nuñez in New York using the unstandardized structure. I conducted the interviews in person. A list of questions that were asked can be found in the appendix.

Ethnographic Methods: Participant Observations

I collected ethnographic data using participant and field observation as defined by Berg (Berg, 2012). “Bargoing,” an ethnographic approach introduced by Mattson, was also utilized. Similar to a bar crawl, bargoing allows for researchers and sociologists to visit several bars and clubs in one night and observe the space and their participants (Mattson, 2015a, p. 3). Field observations are applied to understand how nightlife patrons interact with each other and their spaces. Comparing observations from New York and London allowed for further understanding in cultural approaches and usage of queer nightlife. Special attention is paid to differences in race, gender and age in selected nightlife spaces. Attention is also paid to the interactions between bar staff, security and patrons as well.

I observed three venues in London then compared them with a similar venue in New York. The venues are chosen according to their geographic boundaries and demographic of LGBTQ+ community that they serve. Central Station is a bar and operates a bed and breakfast on the upper floors of the building. Located near Kings Cross Station in the borough of Islington, Central Station operates on a quiet residential street and is considered a historic LGBTQ+ site. Dalston Superstore is a

queer-friendly café by day and club at night with two levels for dancing. Operating on a busy commercial street in the gentrifying borough of Hackney, the venue caters to a younger mix of the LGBTQ+ community. The Eagle London is a nightclub that hosts the popular “Horse Meat Disco” parties every Sunday. The Eagle is also in a quiet residential neighborhood in the borough of Lambeth that caters to a mix of younger and older gay men. Various venues are also briefly observed but not in detail as the first three. They include GAY Late in Soho and The Cause in the borough of Haringey. A field observation protocol that was used for each venue can be found in the appendix.

Publicly Available Reports, Meeting Minutes and Public Hearing Videos

I analyzed various public material and policies from New York and London to provide as much context and information. Since public officials are not interviewed, heavy emphasis is placed on meeting minutes and policy initiatives/reports from municipal offices that focused on nightlife. The Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment in New York and the Night Time Commission in London both released reports in January 2019 presenting their research findings and opportunities for their city’s nighttime economies. Meeting minutes from the Night Time Commission in London are collected; specific meeting minutes are collected when LGBTQ+ sites and nightlife were discussed. The Office of Nightlife in New York conducted a series of public hearings for each borough titled “The Listening Tour.” Ariel Palitz was present to answer questions as well as representatives from various city agencies, including City Planning, Cultural Affairs, Small Business Services, NYPD, NYS Liquor Licensing Authority and Environment Protection. I was present in the Manhattan leg of the tour in November 2018 and utilized the public hearing videos that were archived and made available online to the public on the Office of Nightlife’s website.

I also analyzed additional reports and studies that focused on LGBTQ+ nightlife in London. The University College of London’s Urban Laboratory conducted a research project titled “LGBTQ+ Cultural Infrastructure in London: Night Venues, 2006-Present” in July 2017. Key findings from the research project was used to inform Mayor Khan’s Cultural Infrastructure Plan. I also briefly analyzed The Cultural Infrastructure Plan, released in March 2019.

Initiatives in Place: Nightlife in New York and London

New York: Nightlife as Economic Generator

The Office of Nightlife in New York, through the Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, positions and frames nightlife as an economic generator for capital and tax revenue. In January 2019, the Office released a report titled "NYC's Nightlife Economy: Impact, Assets, and Opportunities." The report is the first of its kind for the city, where the economic impact of nightlife was clearly delineated by numbers and data. Since the report primarily focused on economic impact, there was no focus on cultural impact or initiatives for policy. The report defined and analyzed five subsectors that were selected as the main contributors to New York's nighttime economy: food service, bars, arts, venues and sports and recreation (The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, 2019, p. 3). According to the report, nightlife in NYC has a \$35 billion economic impact and yielded \$697 million in tax revenue for the city in 2016 (2019, p. 3). The report identified three themes as opportunities for the future: improve and streamline the regulatory environment, address quality of life and public safety issues, and promote economic development and cultural retention (2019, p. 63). The report does extensive data and economic analyses for each subsector and identifies various perspectives and assets in nightlife. There is no mention of protecting or promoting queer nightlife as a cultural asset except for mentioning "cultural retention" briefly at the end of the report.

The economic impact report and public hearings held by the Office of Nightlife show the city's dedication in protecting residents' quality of life. Under a section titled "Consumers," the report highlighted the demographic makeup of the typical nightlife consumer in NYC. Information for surveys included where and when they frequent nightlife establishments, the types of establishments, means of transportation, and reasons why they go out. Surveys show that noise, affordability, and safety

concerns were main issues for nightlife consumers (The Mayor's Office of Media and Entertainment, 2019, p. 51). These concerns were also highlighted in the Office of Nightlife's Listening Tour in 2018, a series of public hearings held throughout the city. At the Manhattan leg of the tour, held at The Town Hall in Midtown Manhattan, an overwhelming number of residents cited noise and quality of life issues as their main complaints. Many residents residing in the Lower East Side and the East Village stated that bars and clubs were the main drivers of displacement and gentrification in their neighborhoods. Many residents, under the "Neighborhoods United" coalition, cited issues with noise, rowdy patrons on the street, public drunkenness and urination. Many residents feared that the Office was created to cater to the interests of nightlife businesses and establishments, allowing them to proliferate and cause further chaos and displacement since the establishments were not catering to the existing communities. Ariel Palitz, executive director of the Office of Nightlife, responded to their concerns by announcing a "community liaison" position that can work specifically with these quality of life issues related to nightlife. Each Community District can elect a community liaison to represent the residents of the district. No further details or responsibilities were explained, but residents seemed interested and satisfied with the response. Palitz also announced that the Office of Nightlife will provide conflict mediation services through a third-party company that can help resolve disputes between nightlife operators and residents.

Residents and coalition leaders that represented women and other gender minorities mentioned safety concerns during the hearing. A representative from a women-led task force that focused on programming on harassment against women, noted that the Office of Nightlife should take a stronger stance on non-harassment policies and training for establishments. Another representative from a gay men's health group noted the possibility for the Office to collaborate with public health officials to provide free STI testing at queer sex parties and clubs. Palitz generally agreed with these recommendations and stated that safety for women and LGBTQ+ in nightlife is a top priority for the office. These were the only instances when minorities in nightlife were mentioned.

The report and public hearings also demonstrate the city's dedication in creating a more relaxed regulatory environment for nightlife establishments. A section titled

“Nightlife Professionals: Owners and Operators” highlighted the types of establishments, locations, patrons and liquor licensing that currently exist in NYC. The section shows that 69% of nightlife owners or operators manage restaurants, 60% manage bars and 24% manage nightclubs (The Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, 2019, p. 53). This shows that the majority of nightlife operators manage businesses that cater to serving alcohol and food, with less spaces catering to dancing and/or cultural events. Nightlife operators stated that costs of running businesses and regulatory red tape are their main challenges (2019, p. 55), which was echoed in the Listening Tour as well. Many bar and restaurant owners asked questions regarding the difficulty of the liquor licensing process and compliance with inspections and fines. Palitz, a former bar owner, responded by ensuring that the Office of Nightlife would serve as a “one-stop-shop,” or an ombudsman office, for nightlife businesses that need to navigate the various city agencies that are involved with nightlife. Many nightlife operators, which were visibly the majority of attendees in the public hearing, cheered and applauded after the response. The opportunities presented in the report also highlight the priority status that nightlife operators hold. Improving and streamlining the regulatory environment is the report’s first stated goal, with the Office of Nightlife’s future status as a “clearinghouse for regulatory information” stated as one of the objectives (The Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, 2019, p. 63).

The city’s stated opportunities and objectives demonstrate their position in protecting nightlife as a prized economic generator for wealth and tax revenue. By positioning the Office of Nightlife as a “clearinghouse for regulatory information,” the city wants to create a relaxed, neoliberal environment for private nightlife businesses to flourish. The Office’s goal with provide conflict resolution services only further removes nightlife operators from directly engaging with residents on issues related to noise and quality of public space. While the Office is creating an easy-to-navigate environment for private businesses, no goals or objectives were stated relating to protecting LGBTQ+ nightlife. In fact, “LGBTQ+” was only mentioned once in their economic impact report as through a consumer perspective, stating the “LGBTQ’s community contributions in shaping NYC’s nightlife over many years” (The Mayor’s Office of Media and Entertainment, 2019, p. 44).

London: Nightlife as Cultural Generator

The London Night Time Commission frames their nighttime economy as a cultural and economic generator, offering a holistic perspective that affects businesses, transportation, culture, city policy and health. Around the same time that NYC's report was released, the Night Time Commission released their report titled "Think Night: London Neighbourhoods from 6pm to 6am." Going beyond an economic impact report, London's report focuses on the comprehensive social impact on Londoners by the nighttime economy. The report focused on five areas for recommendations: supporting boroughs and city policy, creating diverse centers at night, health and wellbeing, supporting nighttime workers, and promoting diversity in nighttime patrons. The report heavily focused on policymaking as the main driver for promoting and protecting their nighttime economy. The Commission introduced a "Night Test," an initiative that requires all new city policies to "rate their impact on London's culture, sociability, wellbeing and economy at night" (London Night Time Commission, 2019, p. 10). The Commission also integrated ongoing city initiatives and plans, including the Mayor's new London Plan and the Cultural Infrastructure Plan, demonstrating consistency and horizontal integration with plans from various city agencies. At the heart of the Night Time Commission's plan is the idea that policies and initiatives start at the borough level, which require boroughs to produce their own Night Time Strategies that tailor to their specific needs. This initiative also connects back to the Mayor's new London Plan, which now requires boroughs to produce their own visions and guidance for their nighttime economies (London Night Time Commission, 2019, p. 11). Boroughs represent a smaller unit of local government in London which can be more effective in collecting a variety of diverse opinions.

Through community outreach and research, the Commission identified safety and displacement of prominent cultural sites as main issues. In addition to the Night Time Commission, Mayor Sadiq Khan appointed Amy Lamé as the city's "night czar." Lamé serves as the public-facing, community outreach representative of the Commission, while the representatives of the Commission focus on policy making and research. In a meeting between the Commission and Lamé, the night czar introduced the creation of a Women's Night Safety Charter and a LGBTQ+ Venues Charter in order to enhance policy making and funding centered around protecting women's safety and LGBTQ+

nightlife venues (Mayor of London, 2018, p. 4). Through the implementation of “night surgeries,” a series of organized night tours around specific industries, Lamé has stated that the Commission should assume a prominent role in “protecting venues and culture at risk” (Mayor of London, 2018, p. 4).

Through strategic research partnerships, the Commission is being proactive in addressing factors of the nighttime economy that displace LGBTQ+ nightlife. As part of implementation of the Mayor’s Cultural Infrastructure Plan, UCL’s Urban Laboratory started a research initiative that collected data on LGBTQ+ venue closures from 2006 to the present (2017). Data from this research project will be used to identify culturally significant LGBTQ+ nightlife venues, assess the trends of opening and closures of these venues and identify opportunities and challenges. Key findings of the report include the number of venues that closed since 2006 and the changing landscape of LGBTQ+ venues catering to women and BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) or POC communities. Since 2006, the number of LGBTQ+ venues in London has fallen from 125 to 53, a net loss of 58% (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p. 6). Of the venues that closed, 30% continued to operate as a non-LGBTQ specific venue. An important finding related to QTPOC (queer, trans and intersex people of color) nightlife is that events catered to this demographic are held at a range of venues that are non-LGBTQ+ specific (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p. 9). The report states: “Solely examining LGBTQ+ venues, limited to established premises, would have excluded a variety of non-venue-specific LGBTQ+ nightlife events, therefore potentially misrepresenting the overall provision of spaces and scenes, and the provision for specific groups within the LGBTQ+ community” (Campkin & Marshall, 2017, p. 9). This finding has important ramifications if the implementation of the Cultural Infrastructure Plan protects and funds established premises that do not serve the majority of QTPOC.

By integrating research on LGBTQ+ nightlife venue closures and investment in cultural infrastructure, London’s Night Time Commission is framing culture at the local level as the driving impetus for their nighttime economy. These initiatives compound the opportunities for capital investment by the city. The Commission’s “Think Night” report already calls for the development of Night Time Enterprise Zones that boroughs can create at their discretion (London Night Time Commission, 2019, p. 13). This initiative demonstrates the Commission’s commitment to identify and prioritize nighttime

economies at the most local level possible while maintaining public oversight. The Night Time Enterprise Zones are modeled after the Mayor's Cultural Enterprise Zones, which identifies zones to direct capital funding for cultural development and infrastructure (Greater London Authority, 2019, p. 54). The introduction of an open source "Cultural Infrastructure Map" will provide locations of current cultural sites for additional investment and serve as a database to crowdsource culturally significant places and venues (Greater London Authority, 2019, p. 52). Nightlife venues that were identified and analyzed in UCL's LGBTQ+ Cultural Infrastructure Report will be included in the city's Cultural Infrastructure Map and database, which can prioritize them for investment and city funding.

The Framing of Nightlife: Culture vs. Entertainment

The difference in which New York and London frame their nighttime economies creates a dichotomy in their stated objectives and potential funding sources. I would like to name these two models of framing nightlife as "culture" and "entertainment," existing within systems of "hard infrastructure" and "soft infrastructure." The differences between these models rely on how the nighttime commission thinks their patrons consume nightlife. London believes its residents and visitors consume nightlife as a part of culture, bestowing financial responsibility to government funding and public money. This creates a system of funding hard infrastructure, where the commission focuses on physical venues and spaces. New York believes its residents and visitors consume nightlife as a part of entertainment, leaving financial responsibility to businesses and the private market. This creates a system of soft infrastructure, where the commission focuses on providing programs and services for nightlife that isn't tied to a specific place.

This dichotomy harks back to the idea of the "cultural economy" introduced earlier. Framing nightlife as either culture or entertainment does not mask the fact that incentivizing and regulating nightlife is simply an economic development scheme to help attract a specific type of urban dweller, i.e. "the creative class." Yet, this framing differentiates how inclusive decision-making practices can be adopted to decide whom the nighttime economy will ultimately serve.

Findings: Commodification, Safety, and the Collective Model

New York and London exist within different systems of government and culture, yet common themes can be extracted from the interviews, observations and policy initiatives mentioned above. The development and commodification of a specific type of queer nightlife was a pattern that existed in both cities, even if framed as culture or entertainment. Safety or security was another theme that connected both cities yet had contrasting findings. The proliferation of DJ/artist collectives in championing queer nightlife for POC was another thread between the cities that demonstrate promise for more inclusive nightlife spaces and resources. These findings can complement or stymie ongoing policy efforts for nightlife regulation in New York and London.

The Commodification of Queer Nightlife

The ongoing trend of capturing and incentivizing the cultural economy is a theme that connects back to the rise of the night time economy. This theme is also echoed in the methods that New York and London decide to protect and regulate queer nightlife. Using the framing of culture and entertainment, both cities are incentivizing queer nightlife to grow while ignoring a demographic that might need it the most. In London, the structure of funneling public investment to specific venues strengthen a network of LGBTQ+ night venues that cater to a general demographic of white gay men. This system of targeting specific venues have ramifications for the venues that are not targeted. Field observations in London and research from UCL's Urban Lab demonstrate that queer POC aren't utilizing the venues that the city is targeting. This same system of favoring specific LGBTQ+ venues is replicated as a free market version in New York. In this instance, the market decides which LGBTQ+ venues are deemed worthy of the nighttime economy. It is clear through the limited resources of collectives and the proliferation of nightlife for white gay men that the market is favoring profitable

queer nightlife spaces with high liquidity in the cultural economy.

Mattson's theory of homonormativity reinforces the trend of the nighttime economy favoring spaces for "privileged gay men" while ignoring racial minorities within the LGBTQ+ community. By commodifying queer nightlife either through culture or entertainment, a social and economic value are now placed on these spaces. Historic and current trends demonstrate that the highest social and economic value will be placed on queer spaces with the most power and privilege. This will continue the trend of declining investment in spaces of "social support and leverage" for POC as described by Hunter. In its place, multipurpose venues and collectives like Papi Juice attempt to fill the void of dedicated spaces for queer POC.

Safe Spaces and Security

Safety and security emerged as an important factor that had contrasting results for both cities. While London focused on increasing overall security for LGBTQ+ venues, collectives in New York focused on the type of security instead. Acknowledging the history of policing black and brown bodies, collectives created spaces with less authoritative presence that catered to the well-being of queer POC. Yet, London's approach of targeting spaces for resources in security might be beneficial for New York. As Nuñez mentioned, the responsibility to inform staff and security of non-harassment policies and de-escalation tactics usually fall on the collectives or event operators. Nuñez stated that the Office of Nightlife should take a more defined stance on promoting well-trained security staff for all vulnerable populations at all venues. The LGBTQ+ Venues Charter, championed by Lamé, recently partnered with an organization to hire safety monitors at identified venues. Following the London model might at least relieve collectives in New York from assuming responsibility.

Through systems of hard and soft infrastructure, the encouragement of safe spaces was an important theme that emerged in both cities. London's system of hard infrastructure created a top-down approach to safety and security, resulting in rigid and authoritative policing of queer space. New York's system of soft infrastructure created a bottom-up approach, resulting in a culture of self-policing and a nonviolent system of safety. An example is the adoption of non-harassment policies encouraged by collectives. Similar to security training, enforcement of non-harassment policies also

falls within the purview of the event promoter or collective. Only recently have venues in New York have permanently adopted similar policies to uphold the values of inclusivity and safety. Venues like Nowadays and Mood Ring often have signs with a list of rules that must be read out loud by staff before patrons can enter the space.

The Collective Model

The framing of queer nightlife as culture or entertainment in both cities highlights an important player in nightlife: the collective. The collective model becomes particularly important in New York because they serve as the informal convener of queer POC nightlife when the city or private market is not involved. DJ or artist collectives already exist and are both popular in London and New York. Resis'dance in London is a collective of female and non-binary DJs and party organizers that aim to challenge gender norms in the party and political scene. Papi Juice, Discwoman and Ragga in New York typically fill the void of providing event and parties for queer and trans POC. Discwoman holds equipment workshops and trainings for DJs diversify the male dominated DJ scene (Kaplan, 2019). Papi Juice and Ragga hold panels and events at institutions to broaden the conversation around nightlife and identities around race, sex and culture.

The idea of collectives in nightlife in order to create inclusive spaces is not new. Nuñez alluded to 1980's ballroom culture in Harlem, where gay black men and trans women formed "houses" and battled each other in dancing and runway categories for prizes. These houses reflected the ideals and aesthetics of the individuals which then became marketed through nightlife with parties and events. Present day collectives follow this model and become the informal infrastructure of nightlife for racial and gender minorities in New York.

The collective model is important because it triggers the systems of social support and leverage by recreating spaces for queer POC to socialize while feeling protected. Yet these groups should not act as regulator and provider at the same time. As New York continues to frame its nightlife as entertainment and upkeep profitable queer spaces, the responsibility of collectives to shape nightlife for queer POC become even more important. Similar to the theme of safety, the social infrastructure of queer POC nightlife in New York is viewed as bottom-up and therefore limited with funding and

resources. As London has done with LGBTQ+ night venues, nightlife collectives in New York should be targeted for funding or investment.

Culture vs. Entertainment in Queer Nightlife

Queer Nightlife as Cultural Infrastructure in London

This dichotomy of culture vs. entertainment and systems of hard and soft infrastructure is echoed in the way that queer nightlife, specifically for POC, operate in London. Field observations revealed how security became a major indicator of “hard infrastructure” for the preservation and protection of LGBTQ+ night venues. Four out of five venues that were observed in London had heavy presence of security personnel that would check for identification and pat down/frisk patrons for restricted items. Of the four venues, three venues had personnel that would ask patrons if they were aware that they are entering a gay bar. Security personnel even asked me if I identified as gay and asked if I knew of nearby gay bars and clubs. It seemed that this interrogation was a security tactic to weed out random or hostile patrons from entering the venue. The extra questioning and frisking resulted in long queues and wait times to enter the venues. A security guard at GAY Late in Soho was particularly aggressive and ejected patrons from the queue if they did not cooperate with questioning.

The policy advisor and researcher whom I interviewed in London, who will be referred to as Mark, referenced the extra security protocol as a result from the research on LGBTQ+ venue closures and the city’s plan to further protect them. Mark helped with UCL’s LGBTQ+ Cultural Infrastructure study and noted that further data and evidence on closures helped formalize a network of LGBTQ+ night venues. According to Mark, night czar Amy Lamé helped coordinate meetings with venue owners that were identified through the research to initiate the LGBTQ+ Venues Charter. The charter formalized a network of LGBTQ+ identified venues to discuss specific needs that the venues had. One need was to create more formalized security that was sensitive to LGBTQ+ venues’ targeted demographic. Through the field observations, it was clear that certain venues desired a demographic that not only identified as LGBTQ+ but also

had knowledge of other LGBTQ+ venues and nightlife.

This example of extra security can be considered hard infrastructure because of the specific funneling of funds and services to LGBTQ+ venues through the charter and local government. The city government, through Amy Lamé, coordinated meetings to identify and facilitate the specific, physical needs of LGBTQ+ venues. Borough governments can mitigate displacement of culturally significant sites by applying special protections on licensing and ownership for venues. Mark specified how specific venues, like Dalston Superstore in Hackney, receive additional protection in their licensing by operating past the 2am curfew. Another example is The Joiners Arms, a LGBTQ+ bar that was threatening to close in 2014, until a group of community activists stepped in and attempted to utilize a local government law to activate extra protection on the venue. The Asset of Community Value clause in the Local Government Act of 2011 allows communities to identify and buy community assets in their neighborhood, allowing them to collectively own a space or asset. The Friends of the Joiners Arms formed with the intent to utilize the Local Government Act and collectively buy the space as a community asset (Garraway, 2018, p. 32).

The framing of queer nightlife as cultural infrastructure limits funding to specific venues, which indirectly affects queer POC nightlife patrons and their choices. Through field observations, I concluded that most queer POC were not congregating at venues like Dalston Superstore, the Eagle London or GAY Late. Echoing the research from UCL, I concluded that more queer POC were attending parties or events at non-LGBTQ+ identified venues. One instance was a queer POC party hosted at The Cause in the northern borough of Haringey. The Cause is not advertised as an LGBTQ+ venue on social media or Google Maps, existing outside the formal network of Lamé's Venues Charter. Instead, The Cause hosts a variety of parties and events catering to the diverse black and brown communities in northern London. This was reflected in the party that I observed at The Cause. A large majority of the crowd were POC of various gender identities. Other places that were observed had a majority of white, gay men.

Queer Nightlife as Entertainment in New York

The framing of nightlife as entertainment in New York imposes a system of services, or soft infrastructure, that also has an underlying effect on queer POC. Field

observations and an interview with Oscar Nuñez of the queer POC collective Papi Juice demonstrate the reliance of queer nightlife on collectives and events rather than physical venues or spaces. Similar to London, the issue of security was brought up during the interview with Nuñez. Nuñez mentioned that the responsibility of creating a safe and inclusive environment in their parties usually falls on the collective, or event organizer, rather than the venue. Papi Juice takes the initiative with informally training security guards to familiarize them with gender non-conforming nightlife patrons when checking for identification that doesn't match the person's gender identity. They also encourage methods of nonviolent de-escalation techniques in case of altercations. This idea of setting expectations between event organizers (collectives) and venue staff/security is now an unofficial rule amongst queer, female and non-binary nightlife collectives in New York. According to Nuñez, this responsibility should be shared with the venues and not rely on the limited resources of the collectives. Nuñez stated that venues like Nowadays and Elsewhere in Bushwick, have recently introduced no-harassment policies that are heavily enforced if patrons show signs of racism, transphobia, homophobia, misogyny or unwanted sexual conduct.

This example of security highlights the system of soft infrastructure that exists in New York's nightlife. The system of funding nightlife as entertainment falls on the private market and businesses, which generally mean that most establishments are interested in maximizing profits through a diverse array of parties and events. In order to keep costs low, the responsibility of organizing parties and safe spaces fall on the collectives, who already have limited resources and labor. Although this system calls for more time and resources, it does create queer nightlife spaces that feel inclusive and less restrictive. Compared to the harsh questioning experienced in London, observed spaces in New York are more aware of the hostility that security personnel can create. Venues like Mood Ring and Nowadays in Brooklyn had security and staff that were calm and took time to explain the venue's non-harassment policies. Nuñez made a good point about being transparent with staff and security about Papi Juice's intentions with its parties. Nuñez stated that racial and sexual minorities already have a complicated past with authoritative figures in public space, they don't want to recreate those systems of oppression through security in their events.

Similar to London, LGBTQ+ identified venues usually cater to a general

demographic of white gay men, while queer POC tend to gather at events at non-LGBTQ+ identified venues that host queer parties. Similar to Nowadays and Elsewhere, Secret Project Robot in Bushwick advertises itself as an event space for art exhibitions, music events, and parties. Many events for queer POC, including Papi Juice parties, were held at these venues. Many permanent LGBTQ+ venues for POC have closed in the recent years, including Club Langston in 2018. Pieces however, a gay bar in Greenwich Village, attracts large crowds of gay men given its relatively tight space. Simply identifying as a gay bar in a historic LGBTQ+ neighborhood is enough for the space to thrive. Although an LGBTQ+ identified venue won't receive additional funding from the city, their profitability as a cultural commodity is attractive to the private market. Framing New York's LGBTQ+ nightlife as entertainment then follows a model similar to London's cultural framing, where public or private investment are funneled to the queer spaces that are most profitable. In both cases, the most profitable are LGBTQ+ marketed venues that cater to the general public. This can leave limited funding and resources to multifunctional venues that cater to minority LGBTQ+ patrons.

Conclusion and Next Steps

The trend of marketing and commodifying queer nightlife will most likely continue and stymie the existence of queer nightlife space catering to the wellbeing of people of color. Yet, findings relating to social infrastructure surrounding collectives and the enforcement of safe spaces reveal key opportunities for city government. The existing collective model of promoting safe and inclusive night spaces can be scaled up on a citywide policy level. Instead of incentivizing development for private businesses at night, nightlife offices should focus on enforcing non-harassment regulations for all night venues, instead of collectives or venues enforcing regulations themselves. Nightlife offices can help create incentives for night venues that participate in security and staff training focusing on queer, trans and non-binary partygoers. Enforcing these kinds of programming can democratize life at night and ease the burden of struggling venues that cater to queer people of color.

By borrowing ideas from London's perspective of "nightlife as culture," New York's Office of Nightlife can leverage funding from the Department of Cultural Affairs and combine programming that can target party collectives. This idea is important because it is targeting a structure of nightlife and social infrastructure that already exists, functions well, and serves a vulnerable demographic in nightlife. The Department of Cultural Affairs already has a "Cultural Development Fund" that issues grants to neighborhood-based organizations that represent "New York's cultural breadth" (New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, n.d.). Given the arguments stated above, nightlife should be viewed as a component of a city's culture, as London does with its Night Time Commission and Cultural Infrastructure Plan.

The findings mentioned above reveal larger implications for inclusive nightlife development in cities like New York and London. While cities like San Francisco, Washington DC, Paris and Berlin continue to plan for 24-hour cities, special attention must be paid to the framing of nightlife for each city. Framing nightlife as culture or entertainment can trigger funding mechanisms that values physical infrastructure

instead of social infrastructure. It seems that a hybrid model of nightlife as culture and business is needed, where uplifting socially vulnerable night venues and their networks might be the right balance. Although local economies and politics always play a factor, nightlife offices should plan to uplift the locally defined social infrastructure of a city.

Nightlife tends to mean economic development for city planning, but the social value and consumption of nightlife reveal a deeper meaning for communities. Similar to London, decision-making on the definition of nightlife must be as holistic and participatory as possible, allowing opportunities for vulnerable communities that depend on the night to define it themselves. Cities with dedicated night time commissions or offices now have the opportunity to redefine nightlife for their communities, instead of relying on corporate structures of urban entertainment.

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