Nocturnal urban imaginaries : the rise and fall of Turin as a 24-hour party city

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EDITOR'S NOTE

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Introduction

1   Human activities after dark have been explored for their economic value (Shaw, 2010), for their political dimension (Acuto et al., 2021), as nightlife and dancing cultures (Gilbert & Pearson, 1999) and have also been increasingly subject to governance initiatives of late. Nighttime research has examined the night in relation to contemporary post-industrial urbanisation (Shaw, 2015 ; Yeo & Heng, 2014) and to the 24-hour city paradigm (Crary, 2013). Municipalities around the world have also shown interest in the adoption of night governance, with the appearance of 'night mayors' and night commissions (Seijas & Gelders, 2021). The main tendency has been to study the night in its strategic role, concerning contemporary urbanisation and capitalism. However, the night contains complex and ambivalent features, which cannot be fully commodified and governed, where popular music, for instance, works as a socialising instrument of pleasure and resistance (Petrilli, 2020 ; Stahl & Bottà, 2019).

2   On a collective level, celebration and socialisation at night are important aspects of urban life, representing the antidote to segregation, anonymity and greyness and reaffirming active inclusive citizenship. The night is a space for augmented socialisation and without it, urban culture is unthinkable. Without live music, performances, and events in public spaces at night, life in a city becomes difficult not only to live but also to justify. The night has also historically represented a stronghold where LGBTQ+ communities could enjoy experiences and manifest identities in safe environments (McCartan & Nash, 2022). Furthermore, a lively, sustainable, and safe night is an existential question for migrants and other marginalised groups (Brandellero et al., 2022).

3   The nighttime economy has also played a significant role in saving post-industrial cities from spatial shrinking and bankruptcy, providing jobs and leading to the regeneration and revitalization of whole districts (Bianchini, 1995). Moreover, it has provided images, which are nowadays used in a plethora of visual representations, ranging from corporate presentations to underground aesthetics. Nightlife has often been co-opted into creating an exploitable buzz for new housing projects and the touristification of urban life (Nofre et al., 2018 ; Sequera & Nofre, 2020). However, the development of the nighttime economy in the 1990s, as well as the more recent touristification of nightlife, are both accompanied by an increase in social concern related to anti-social behaviour such as disturbing the peace, violence, and vandalism (Hadfield, 2015), re-actualising the negative connotations of the night as a dangerous and risky place, especially for ethnic and sexual minorities (Brooks, 2008 ; Talbot & Böse, 2007). Therefore, the extraction of the night in its aesthetic dimension has been counterbalanced by policies, ranging from noise control to securitisation, from pandemic to energy crisis restrictions, which are undermining its existence.

4   To approach such complexity, we argue that the urban night can be best grasped as an imaginary (Lennon, 2015), that is, as a social entity tied to the symbolic dimension but at the same time embedded into individual and collective life ; therefore responding both to its own inner logic, but also articulating complex cultural and economic constellations of values, attitudes, and narratives (Davoudi et al., 2018). For this reason, nocturnal urban imaginaries are a powerful instrument to make sense of the way the night has been planned, experienced, and thought of in a post-industrial urban setting. Within this framework, we have chosen as a case study the nightlife of Turin (Italy) due

to its post-industrial aspirations : lived experiences of going out at night have been deeply affected by the above-mentioned 'oscillations' in terms of cultural and non-cultural governance, but also in terms of night scene gatherings and practices, that we gathered into distinct but not exclusive 'nocturnal urban imaginaries'. Turin exemplifies the destiny of several other industrial European cities that were deeply affected by global economic restructurings towards neoliberalism and which faced deindustrialisation. The consequent step towards a post-industrial city led by consumption, touristification, services and competition for talent was felt as necessary but its implementation has been fragmented and not always successful.

5   In the next section, the concept of the imaginary and its main applications in the social sciences are presented so that we can begin to investigate the under-researched topic of nocturnal urban imaginaries. This is followed by a section where we introduce the research from which this publication is derived, along with a description of its sample and how the empirical documentation was constructed. In the results section, the three nocturnal urban imaginaries that have emerged from the analysis are presented, reconstructing how these 'confetti', '24-hour party' and '*Notti Bianche*' imaginaries perform at the levels of local governance, available night destinations, such as clubs and bars, and night punters' experiences. Lastly, in the conclusion we summarise the results of this contribution, address some limitations, and offer some general take-away points about the night, understood both in its performing dimension and as a space to be safeguarded.

Theoretical framework

6   The imaginary should be first approached in terms of perception. In both Castoriadis (1997) and Lacan (1977) the imaginary works as an instrument to see and make sense of the world and of the self in terms of images, patterns, and forms, although Lacan sees it as an illusionary element and as a stage in the development of the ego. At a very general level, the imaginary builds upon consolidated ideas about imagination being 'a (creative) capacity to experience the world in a certain way, in the form of images,' (Lennon, 2015, p. 15). Lennon (2015) also emphasises imagination as a creative force able to weave together past, present, future and the elsewhere. The imaginary is therefore an affective texture, which allows us to perceive and make sense of the real. It cannot be simply dismissed as an illusionary category ; it rather constitutes how we are in the world in phenomenological terms.

7   Another concept related to the imaginary is representation. However, this relies on a semiotic or hermeneutic separation between the real and the represented ; it is a significant instrument when dealing with the arts for instance, and with the ideological dimension of the medial world (Hall, 1997 ; Timeto, 2015). We have chosen to employ the concept of the imaginary because, in its social and spatial dimension, it is more useful here in tracing the night through material infrastructure, affect and performance.

8   Spatial imaginaries are embedded into a sociological tradition, where the term imaginary is mostly used to refer to social entities and their being tied to a symbolic dimension, be it at the national level (Anderson, 2006), the ideological (Castoriadis, 1997) or the sociological (Mills, 2000). In planning and geographic research, spatial imaginaries are seen as the dynamic, strategic, and pervasive field where material

spatial change is made possible and finds its justification (Davoudi et al., 2018 ; Watkins, 2015). In this regard, performativity seems to be the most interesting element : spatial imaginaries are always able to manifest themselves into certain policies on one hand and into specific infrastructures on the other. Moreover, these policies and material infrastructures hit back in changing imaginaries and shifting meanings, values and imagining potential (Davoudi & Brooks, 2021 ; Davoudi et al., 2018).

9   It is also relevant to address the fact that not all spatial imaginaries have the same performative dimension and that for instance, the urban represents a powerful imaginary with a distinctive genealogy and traction (Lindner & Meissner, 2018 ; Suttles, 1984). The world population is continuously migrating and exponentially exposed to the urban and some scholars have adopted the notion of global or planetary urbanisation to address the pervasiveness of this specific scale and its imaginary (Birch & Wachter, 2011 ; Brenner & Schmid, 2017 ; Lancione & McFarlane, 2021).

10   However, the night mode has rarely been considered when discussing possible urban imaginaries and consequently nocturnal imaginaries are an under-researched topic. We understand the night as able to generate specific urban imaginaries with their own symbolic and material features. These imaginaries' importance has often been side-tracked or limited to their representational appeal, because due to the binary opposition between day and night, with its cultural constructs that depict the latter as a dangerous and unproductive negative pole, "night has additionally become a source of fascination and seduction" (Gallan & Gibson, 2011, p. 2510). From film noir to gothic music, from urban branding based on nightlife to cultural quarters, the night has been romanticised, acquiring an expendable fascination. Our objective is to look beyond the bidimensional and romanticised mystery of the night. The first objective of this article is to investigate the different types of nocturnal urban imaginaries related to a specific case study. Secondly, it aims to understand how these imaginaries perform at the level of local governance and policing ; nightlife on offer (type of avenues/events and their spatialisation) and the experiences (practices and affect) of night punters. Finally, studying the different imaginaries of the night allows us to shed light onto the city as a site of unequal development and injustice and where the public dimension is increasingly used as a site of value extraction for profit that is turning the urban night into a financialised and silenced entity. In this regard, Turin represents an interesting case worth examining more closely.

11   Located in the northwest of the country, the city quickly developed into a primary industrial site after the unification of Italy in 1871, mostly thanks to the establishment and development of FIAT (*Fabbrica Italiana Auto Torino*) automobile company. In the post-war era, Turin was subject to mass migration from the south of the country. Together with the city's industrial background, this had the effect of increasing social and political tensions from the late 1960s onwards, involving political radicalism and terrorism at the end of the 1970s. In a similar way to other industrial cities in the Western world, the industrial crisis has also required Turin to move towards a post-industrial paradigm (Bottà, 2020). Attempts to showcase its culinary heritage (Bourlessas et al., 2022), its hosting of big events (Cenere & Vanolo, 2022) and its diversity in nighttime playscape (Crivello, 2011) have brought some results but have not been able to create a sustainable framework for the city to prosper.

Methods

12 The data collected for this article are part of the *"What is left of the night - The securitization of Turin's nightlife"* research funded by the University of Milano-Bicocca. We focus on one of the two case studies that made up the project, a history of nightlife in Turin from the point of view of those who have experienced it. These witness reports on the nightlife of Turin from the beginning of the 1990s to the pre-COVID era, are collected through semi-structured interviews with patrons with at least 15 years of experience of night venues, such as clubs and other spaces where live music is played, and evening facilities such as restaurants and wine bars.

13 The interviews were conducted in the winter of 2020-21 with eighteen participants, selected through a snowball sampling procedure. This non-probability sampling technique was chosen due to the high value of informal relational networks within the so-called world(s) of the night (Garcia, 2013). Participants are divided into three distinct age groups (35-39 ; 40-44 ; 45-50 years old), equally distributed by gender, while other variables such as sexual orientation, level of education and profession were monitored to increase the sample's heterogeneity (see Table 1). We decided to work with different age groups so that the narrative would not be too distanced via nostalgia. In addition, interviewing people with 15 or more years of experience allowed for the selection of research participants who were deeply familiar with the history of the nightlife in Turin. This direct knowledge was significantly diversified since interviewers' accounts reported different scenes : some have a subcultural past (and in a few cases a present) having frequented underground music (hip-hop, punk and tekno among others) spaces for sexual minorities, whereas others have frequented almost exclusively mainstream venues. This diversification is also due to their different roles, with a few of them having worked in the industry as organisers, staff, musicians, and photographers.

14 The interview outline consisted of three sections : the first about the interviewees' nocturnal biography ; the second about their assessment of the control strategies implemented by local administrators ; and the third investigating social representations of the night and nightlife. Due to the social distancing required by Covid-19 regulations in Italy, it was necessary to conduct the interviews by telephone or online, depending on the availability and preferences of each participant. They were all made aware of the research topics and asked to give written consent before the interview. Each interview was audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim, anonymised, and coded using a program for computer-assisted qualitative data analysis. The coding procedure took place using a data-driven modality : the codes were not deduced from a theory of reference but, for their identification and definition, taken from empirical material (Gibbs, 2007).

Table 1. Interviewees list

#N Name	Sex	Age	Degree	Profession
01 Leonardo	M	40/44	Upper secondary diploma	Employed
02 Andrea	M	40/44	Bachelor's degree	Self-employed

03 Agata	F	35/39	Master's degree	Employed
04 Francesca	F	35/39	Master's degree	Employed
05 Lorenzo	M	35/39	Bachelor's degree	Self-employed
06 Benny	M	40/44	Lower secondary diploma	Employed
07 Giuly	F	40/44	Upper secondary diploma	Employed
08 Arturo	M	45/50	Upper secondary diploma	Employed
09 Federica	F	40/44	Lower secondary diploma	Employed
10 Barbara	F	40/44	Master's degree	Employed
11 Gabriele	M	45/50	Lower secondary diploma	Self-employed
12 Giorgia	F	35/39	Master's degree	Employed
13 Irene	F	45/50	Master's degree	Self-employed
14 Sara	F	45/50	Upper secondary diploma	Employed
15 Nino	M	45/50	Upper secondary diploma	Employed
16 Clara	F	45/50	Master's degree	Employed
17 Pier	M	35/39	Lower secondary diploma	Unemployed
18 Davide	M	35/39	Bachelor's degree	Unemployed

Results

15   The main nocturnal urban imaginaries that emerged from the analysis of the empirical material are presented in the following section. Their salient features are summarised in Table 2.

#1 Confetti imaginary

16   The first nocturnal urban imaginary of Turin can be best grasped as confetti (Wynn, 2015) : the city's night is polycentric, scattered around in a variety of temporary or consolidated venues to be explored in rhabdomantist fashion.

17   Until the early 1990s, Turin nightlife was still strongly linked to the city's industrial past and, as a result, there were only a few venues open until late and few people roaming the city at night, as our interviewee (11_) Gabriele stated : 'I was driving down Corso Vittorio [a major street in the centre] and there were maximum three cars around at 2 :00 a.m.'. Several elements led to the transition from a fully functioning industrial city led by production, to a post-industrial model where the night began to

play a role outside the 'workers' rest' imaginary. Surely deindustrialisation as experienced by the automobile industry and its articulation as a cultural change towards consumption played a role, together with the so-called *riflusso* (term used to describe the political and social disengagement that characterised Italian society in the late 1970s and early 1980s). What is certain is that this change towards 'going out' was not favoured by specific policies in this field, since there was no night-related urban governance and local politicians were not interested in promoting the nighttime economy (Crivello, 2011).

18   The main result of this *laissez-faire* governance was that the nighttime economy developed without any precise order or logic, both in terms of type of premises and spatial dimension. No one kind of venue dominated the night ecosystem, it offered instead a wide range of disparate and heterogeneous night attractions. There were 'upscale discos for kids in white shirts' (13_Irene) and more working-class discos, with 'sketchy people that you had to look out for' (02_Andrea). Alternative clubs hosted indie band gigs and performances by underground DJs, while ARCI (*Associazione Ricreativa Culturale Italiana*, a left-wing non-profit cultural association) cultural centres organised exhibitions, live shows and offered food and game evenings. Moreover, the city had a rich ecosystem of 'non-premises' : permanent squats and temporary raves were scattered in the many empty and abandoned buildings and open spaces left by the industry's demise. On a spatial level, venues were scattered throughout the city, confetti style, with no differences between the city centre and peripheries :

> In the past, clubs were really scattered all over the place, it was quite normal...we had Torinosette [a local news magazine], you went through the news with your friends, and you said : 'Where do we go tonight ? Let's find out what's going on'. So, it was cool to go and explore, visit different districts depending on which club you wanted to visit, or just out of curiosity (02_Andrea)

19   Within the framework of a very diverse and expanded night scene, we found, however, two main nightlife districts : the Murazzi Po riversides and the former industrial conurbation of Docks Dora. Within these areas, it is possible to observe the impact of the above-mentioned lack of interest by local politicians in nighttime issues surrounding how the nighttime economy is monitored and controlled. Interviewees recall the presence of law enforcement only in the areas surrounding Murazzi (mainly the very central Piazza Vittorio), but with very few interventions on the site itself, which is remembered as 'a no man's land, even tolerated somewhat I think by the police' (08_Arturo). Even in the other main night hotspot, Docks Dora, 'they never did inspections' (08_Arturo) and therefore the premises owners had to organise a self-financed surveillance service.

20   Probably due to these increase in venues and events, their distribution throughout the entire municipality and the lack of law enforcement control, a key aspect in interviewees' accounts is what Irene described as their 'via Crucis, [because] you could go to at least four or five clubs per night', that is, moving around from one part of the city to the other in an aimless manner. Thanks to their 'wandering from club to club' (11_Gabriele), the Research participants recall very chaotic experiences characterised by excitement, experimentation, and discovery. They often encountered something new ; this could be new places, new sounds, new drugs, but most importantly people, because there was a lot of mixing between night tribes, with central spots (such as Giancarlo in Murazzi) working as aggregators.

#2 24-hour party imaginary

21 The 24-hour party imaginary is that of a city that never goes to sleep and every night there is a concert or a party to enjoy, as expressed by the Madchester anthem '24 Hour Party People' by the Happy Mondays. In 1999 Turin was selected as the host city for the 2006 Winter Olympic Games and on Labour Day a police raid tore apart *Askatasuna*, the most important social and political squat in Turin. These events are not directly related to the nighttime economy, but they show the changes that the city was grappling with, which are intertwined with this second nighttime imaginary. At the same time, the Olympic Games were a turning point whereby the city became 'not as dark as it used to be' (14_Sara), and one which was finally leaving behind its industrial past to become an international city of culture and tourism. On the other hand, the raid against *Askatasuna* is just one of several that struck the city's politicised spaces since – as (13_) Irene summarised – 'there was a desire to tidy up, to make Turin a little sleeker'.

22 Within this framework, it is not surprising that nighttime urban governance was less detached than in previous times and was seeking more control over what happens at night, especially in the most 'problematic' contexts. This does not only refer to the evicted squat mentioned above or to raves that have been pushed out to the countryside. Every single venue in *Docks Dora* closed due to the complaints of neighbourhood residents and other public order issues. *Docks Dora*'s reputation as a noisy and unsafe area was dissonant with the attempt to create a tourist city, marketable in connection to the Winter Olympics bid. Moreover, the urban renewal of Barriera and the possible implementation of the *Docks Dora* area for other than nocturnal use also affected its fate as it was subject to NIMBY (not in my backyard) initiatives : 'They built apartment buildings and [new] people decided to petition etc. against degradation' (09_Federica).

23 Concomitant to these strategies of redevelopment, two interesting phenomena related to mobility occurred. In 2002, a new penalty point driving licence was introduced together with an alcohol limit of 0,5 g/l creating a 'great fear of being stopped at night' (01_Leonardo). Moreover, the 2008 financial crisis and a concomitant reform also brought a considerable rise in taxi fares (Bentivogli, 2008). The demise of Docks Dora and the legislative and fiscal changes targeting car mobility had the consequence of clustering Turin's nightlife in its city centre and above all in the Murazzi district (Crivello, 2011).

24 'Suddenly Turin... was alive, it was alive ! Then after the Olympics, it really detonated, like a bomb', (06_) Benny's statement sums up well a common sentiment of the interviewees, who remember very positively and with great fondness the period of the Olympics and the following years. Research participants highlight a busy atmosphere where there was always something to do – for (08_) Arturo 'after the Olympics the events really exploded [...] you would go out all the time from Monday to Sunday'. Turin in this period felt like, and was, a city that never went to sleep, where every night there was a concert or a party to enjoy. As (10_) Barbara's quote made it clear : 'it felt like the night never ended'.

25 A strong pride toward their city is evident in the interviewees' accounts, and is one of the distinguishing features of this period. This is due to the following reasons : the variety and quality of the nightlife on offer, since not only local and underground artists were playing as in the past, but also the most famous performers came to town ;

the city ceased to occupy a marginal position within the global nightlife scene and party tourists began to visit Turin and specifically Murazzi, thanks to their electronic dance music programme :

> in those years, when you travelled around... to Berlin, to other places with clubs... and everybody came to Turin ! There were a lot of foreigners who came here to have fun, really a lot ! In fact, there were some great DJs who came, Carl Cox was there, Derrick May came. [...] One night I was playing volleyball with friends at the Pellerina and at the same time Lou Reed was playing [at the Traffic Festival] (07_Giuly)

26 All these changes translate into interviewees' practices and affect. Firstly, they no longer moved around at night, since the new alcohol limit dissuaded people from driving towards the city limits : 'Over my dead body ! I got my driving licence removed because of Hiroshima [a peripheral gig venue]' (10_Barbara). Secondly, they became much more interested in curated events, organised by specific promoters, where a famous DJ/band would be playing : 'Every week you could go to a club with 300 people and hear a DJ from Berlin, New York and so on' (02_Andrea). Altogether this means that people stayed more in their own bubble compared to the previous imaginary, they encountered different scenes less often and mobility/random exploring became less central at night. However, when compared to the past, nighttime leisure is no longer a marginal affair for creatures of the night, but it is becoming increasingly popular and mainstream.

#3 Notti bianche imaginary

27 *Notti bianche*, the Italian translation of white nights, was first conceived in reference to cultural events held at night in Berlin as *Lange Nacht der Museen* (see : https://www.lange-nacht-der-museen.de/ueber-uns) and in Paris as *Nuit Blanche* (Evans, 2012) for instance. In Turin, the first events with this name were organised during the Winter Olympics.

> 'Cool situations and places...look, once upon a time Turin had a lot to offer in that regard [...] until they closed the Murazzi... since then, Turin has had fewer and fewer possibilities' (02_Andrea)

28 This imaginary began in 2012 when most venues in the Murazzi district closed due to different investigations related to noise disturbance, building regulations and licences (Crivello, 2018). Despite attempts - which proved futile - to reverse this decision through a petition and a demonstration, 2012 was a 'tipping point' for Turin's nightlife, giving way to a series of closures that continued throughout the decade. This process became more severe after the 2017 Piazza San Carlo stampede, where during a screening of the UEFA Champions League Final, panic erupted among the crowd ; three people died and more than 1500 were injured (Petrilli, 2022). Safety in public places became one of the main topics of the city's political agenda and night urban governance strongly increased its control over what was happening after working hours, not targeting only the most problematic contexts as in the past.

29 In 2012 another event marked the city's nighttime history, at least symbolically. In the Royal Palace square the first edition of *Unconventional Dinner - Cena in Bianco* took place, a public dinner where everything is strictly white and where 'everyone brings everything from home : table, chairs, food, ceramic dishware, glassware' (http://www.cenainbiancounconventionaldinner.it). This event can be seen as an evolution of

the White Nights organised during the Olympic year, since both represent a contraction of the night's temporal boundaries, making it less and less a frontier territory and increasingly something tame and attractive, even for a 'daytime' public. None of the research participants ever mention or talk about either 'notti bianche' or 'cene in bianco', demonstrating the extraneousness of this genre of initiatives from people of the nights' experience and interests. With its emphasis on culinary aspects, White Dinner makes it a forerunner of a central development of the period : after the demise of the last nightlife districts, followed by the closing of many other clubs around the city, the after-work activities of Turin's inhabitants are now concentrated in the so-called '*movida* districts' such as Quadrilatero, San Salvario and Vanchiglia, where the main activities are food and beverage consumption in wine bars, restaurants, trattorias, tapas bars and so on (Perucca & Tessarin, 2022). This is why, for (06_) Benny : '*minchia* [vulgar exclamation, similar to holy shit], everything looks like a restaurant nowadays.'

30   Due to the rise of the *movida* districts, the escalation in security measures affected both night- and evening-time economies. Law enforcement controls in night venues increased exponentially due to problems such as noise, opening hours and capacity, or from (04_) Francesca's point of view : '[due to] the most absurd security regulations'. New strategies were implemented such as – amongst others – the municipal ordinances that limit takeaway alcohol consumption or regulate terraces' opening hours, and an inter-force law enforcement squad patrolling the San Salvario district. Educational activities by street artists inspired by Parisians' *Pierrots de la nuit* and innovative surveillance technologies for noise nuisance were also introduced (Petrilli & Stefanizzi, 2022).

31   For the interviewers, the situation did not seem serious/problematic at the beginning of the reported period, because there were still many alternatives in the city. Nevertheless, as time went by, more and more venues were forced to close or reduce what they could offer due to the changes in urban governance ; even historic underground venues adapted to survive controls and fines and had to 'totally zero out their program, going from being cult venues to venues of nothing' (01_Leonardo). Among the various cases cited by research participants, there is the area surrounding Valentino Park where within a few years most of the clubs closed : Rotonda in 2014, Cacao in 2017, Chalet in 2018, and Rush Club in 2019. The disco bar composed of Fluido and Club Gamma closed in 2019, while Imbarchino closed in 2016 and reopened in 2019. The local crisis of the live music and clubbing scene became evident, so much so that for (15_) Nino it is as if 'they have closed everything down now'.

> There is not much of an alternative anymore, there used to be this kind of vent....
> and I miss that stuff like air. Today you find yourself in cocktail bars and what do
> you do... everyone is complaining like me. (09_Federica)

32   As Federica's quote hints , this period witnessed a radical change in interviewees' practices and affect. The fall in nighttime entertainment together with the increase in evening attractions means that 'in the last ten years, we can say that *aperitivo* has won [over dancing], without any doubt' (16_Clara). Regardless of the age of the research participants, they all complain about going out mostly in evening-type venues and consequently how their social life is more boring and self-enclosed compared to the past. Night practices are increasingly limited to regulated precincts. Turin's nightlife, famous even abroad, is a distant memory too, and the city continues to attract party tourists only for large festivals such as Kappa FuturFestival or Club to Club, consequently, research participants travel more often. Enjoying other cities' nights

forces them to 'also see the differences' (12_Giorgia) compared to Turin, it exposes its limits and its 'provincialism' (05_Lorenzo), increasing their frustration and disappointment toward their city.

Table 2. The three types of nocturnal night imaginaries and their main features

	Confetti	24h party	*Notti bianche*
Governance	Laissez-faire	Attention towards 'problematic' settings.	Securisation and control
Policing	Absent	Attention towards curbing 'drinking and driving'	Active
Offer	Heterogeneous	International and curated	Evening-centred
Space	Scattered around the city	Clustering in the centre	Precincts and terraces
Mobility	*Via crucis*	Limited to the city centre	Limited to the *movida* districts
Affect	Excitement, experimentation, and sense of novelty	Fondness, busy atmosphere, pride	Frustration, complaints, and disappointment

Conclusions

33 In recent decades, the urban night scene has been increasingly subject to academic research, planning projects and governance initiatives. In all these fields the night has often been romanticised, reproducing a simplistic and binary understanding of nocturnal phenomena, useful to make it marketable. To overcome this easy representation of the urban night, we decided to work with the notion of the imaginary, in its spatial, social, and performative dimensions. Nocturnal urban imaginaries are powerful instruments to make sense of the way the night has been planned, experienced, and thought of in an urban post-industrial setting.

34 The three different types of nocturnal urban imaginaries we identified are strongly bound up with the diurnal city's history. The rise of the confetti imaginary is articulated within the city's industrial crisis and within the attempt to move the city's paradigm of development towards the post-industrial. Moreover, it profits out of industrial shrinking and the availability of disused warehouses and other sites of Fordist production. The city's night at this stage is polycentric, scattered around in a variety of temporary or consolidated venues to be explored in rhabdomantist fashion. The 24-hour party imaginary represents, on one hand, a kind of recognition by the city of what happens at night, on the other it is an attempt to mobilise and exploit the new and growing nighttime market, according to the post-industrial logic of redevelopment. Control over nightlife increases by concentrating the latter in the city

centre and tackling the most 'problematic' contexts. This is a central step because, alongside the positive narrative about nightlife, it is possible to observe the emergence of the securitarian vision that will mark the third and final imaginary. The *Notti bianche* imaginary is one of an urban night that is increasingly domesticated, losing the positive features that had been its hallmark and concentrated in precincts. Put another way, the city has failed in its metamorphosis towards a post-industrial night city.

35   The scope of our paper is therefore limited to the case study under scrutiny here and to its timeline and we are unable to determine if these specific imaginaries reflect a common path of development for the industrial city in general. Moreover, we are unable to determine what a possible future for Turin's night is going to be under the current difficult economic and geopolitical circumstances. Nonetheless, our work confirms that nocturnal urban imaginaries in Turin cannot be considered just as illusionary or merely symbolic categories, since their impact on the interviewees' accounts is remarkable.

36   Future research on the night should consider that imaginaries are performative, firstly in their being eventful and joyful expressions of nocturnal desire and aspirations, in creating spatial and temporal arenas of celebration and in safeguarding each night in its unfolding. Secondly, they articulate and respond to the continuous process of urbanisation in its material, financial and social dimensions ; nocturnal urban imaginaries are not subsets of urban imaginaries, they offer complementary and sometimes alternative modes of experiencing the city, therefore enriching, and sometimes subverting daytime urban life. This makes the night problematic and unable to be fully subjected to the logics of daytime capitalism.

37   By linking the limited night studies' literature about Turin with narratives of Turin nightlife from the 1990s to the pre-Covid period, it was possible to reconstruct how these imaginaries perform at three levels : local governance, range of night attractions and night punters' experiences (see Table 2). If the first two points have already been mentioned in the previous paragraph, here it is necessary to highlight the impact of the above-mentioned security escalation on interviewees' direct experiences. We moved from the emotional territory of the 1990s which was characterised by excitement, experimentation, and a sense of novelty, to that of the late 2010s defined by frustration, complaints, and disappointment. As mentioned in the introduction, celebration and socialisation at night have important positive effects on people and urban life, so this research advises more judicious management of nightlife phenomena, where the focus on safety goes hand in hand with its promotion and safeguarding. Turning the clocks backwards into evening times is not enough, because darkness and its imaginaries rise nevertheless, every night.

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ABSTRACTS

Nocturnal urban imaginaries are a powerful instrument to examine how the night has been planned, experienced, and thought of in post-industrial urban settings. Through these imaginaries, we tackle Turin's shift from one company town to post-industrial city and its implication for the night and its activities.

Thanks to a qualitative analysis of interviews with a data-driven modality we make sense of the way night punters approach going out. We identify three imaginaries that we call 'confetti', '24-hour party' and '*Notti Bianche*', looking beyond the bidimensional and romanticised mystery of the night. Moreover, we examine how these imaginaries perform at the level of local governance and policing ; nightlife on offer (type of venues/events and their spatialisation) ; and the experiences (practices and affect) of night punters.

We argue that domesticating, regulating, and overseeing nightlife has a detrimental and constraining impact on the way people engage with and enjoy the night, curbing its potential to serve as a realm of joy, escapism, and excitement.

Os imaginários urbanos noturnos são um instrumento poderoso para examinar a forma como a noite tem sido planeada, vivida e pensada em ambientes urbanos pós-industriais. Através destes imaginários, abordamos a mudança de Turim de uma cidade empresarial para uma cidade pós-industrial e as suas implicações para a noite e as suas actividades.

Recorrendo a uma análise qualitativa de entrevistas com uma modalidade baseada em dados, damos sentido à forma como os apostadores noturnos abordam as suas saídas. Identificamos três imaginários a que chamamos 'confettis', 'festa de 24 horas' e '*Notti Bianche*', indo para além do mistério bidimensional e romantizado da noite. Além disso, examinamos a forma como estes imaginários funcionam ao nível da governação local e do policiamento ; da oferta nocturna (tipo de avenidas/eventos e sua espacialização) ; e das experiências (práticas e afectos) dos frequentadores da noite.

Argumentamos que domesticar, regular e supervisionar a vida nocturna tem um impacto prejudicial e constrangedor na forma como as pessoas se envolvem e desfrutam da noite, refreando o seu potencial para servir como um reino de alegria, escapismo e excitação.

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