

International Congress *Noz Breizh*

« Celebrating the night: three years of the *Noz Breizh Chair* »

March 27th, April 24th and May 15th, 2025, Université de Brest, France

The nocturnal dimension of the city is inherent to our urban practices. The night, or nocturnal temporality (when natural light disappears), represents a space-time rich in a wide variety of uses. Uses linked to leisure, work, urban watch services (police stations, medical emergencies, pharmacies...), but also likely to reflect social and financial precarity (homeless populations). Night-time work may be an unwanted choice, the result of a constraint or an imposed schedule. As evidence of the extent to which representations, experiences and ways of inhabiting the night are multiple, studies on the night and nocturnal temporality are increasingly numerous and cover a varied range of disciplines. In the French context, this great diversity of themes mobilizes disciplinary fields ranging from the human and social sciences (economics, sociology, psychology, geography, urban planning, architecture, tourism studies), to the natural sciences (biology, ecology, biodiversity and light pollution). Research is also carried out in the studies and practices of information, communication and knowledge, particularly so as to understand feelings of insecurity at night, artificial light modelling and virtual reality.

Nocturnal temporality is also a political project on the agenda of city governance at several levels. This can take various forms, such as the establishment of a Mayor or Tzar of the Night (particularly for tourist districts), the creation of a Night Council, the drafting of a Nightlife Charter or the setting up of a Time Office to articulate different urban times, including nocturnal temporality (Seijas and Gelders 2020; 2021; Bonfiglioli, 1997).

Nocturnal temporality also needs to be considered in relation to other issues, starting with public health. For example, thinking about nocturnal temporality enables us to examine the consumption of alcoholic beverages and illicit substances at night. The aim may be to prevent road accidents or violence caused by excessive alcohol consumption, but also to provide support for users after the party. Among the French examples, the nationwide Bars-bars association has been able to establish a dialogue between economic players, city managers and night owls, in order to address the festive time at night from a different- and not just security-based - approach (Guèrin, 2017; Spanu and Mokhnachi, 2018; Wagner A. C., Freyssinet-Dominjon J., 2004). Other initiatives pursued are concerned with enabling access to festive options without discrimination, notably by combating the sexual and sexist violence that certain groups of the population may suffer more acutely at night. These initiatives have come from feminist associations, associations for populations in precarious situations or with disabilities, and from the LGBT+ community, etc.).

At the level of city departments, nocturnal temporality is taken into account through time-focused policies and the regulation of noise pollution at night, in the context of respect for nocturnal tranquility. This can be handled by the public lighting department or by tourism, as part of their efforts to increase tourism and night-time activities (festivals, night-time leisure activities). Over the last decade, however urban ecology departments have become increasingly concerned with the need to ensure ecological continuity during the night, so that nocturnal species can move around at night and not remain confined to a single territory because artificial light creates impassable barriers for some of them, or disorients their migratory routes.

Less visible within "Night Studies" is work carried out by associations which also needs to be given greater prominence – the work of associations for the protection of nocturnal biodiversity and the starry sky (associations of naturalists, amateur astronomers, the International Dark-Sky Association). For several decades now, these associations have been warning of the growing impacts of artificial light at night, in particular light pollution and its harmful effects on ecosystems as a whole (Kyba et al., 2017; Gaston et al., 2015).

In addition, analysis of the appropriation of public spaces at night shows that certain populations identified as undesirable will be dislodged from these spaces during the day, while their presence will be permitted or tolerated at night due to less social control. It is also worth noting that the night favors the mobility of certain populations:

for example, people who don't live in the hypercenters venture out at night to the “beaux quartiers” or central neighborhoods to explore the city by night and enjoy the festive atmosphere. However, certain minoritized populations, such as homeless women, incur far more risks and difficulties in being safe and inhabiting the night (Maurin, 2017).

Last but not least, the associative and private players involved in the festive nightlife scene have already been looking into the environmental impact of party-related activities. Examples include the virtual roundtables organized in 2020 on the party of tomorrow (Gwiazdzinski, 2020), or the studies carried out by Vivelab for the city of Montreal on the festive footprint. By taking an interest in the modes of travel used during festivals, as well as better control of what are perceived as nuisances by the local population – be they noise, light or olfactory – conflicts vis-à-vis tourists/festival-goers can be anticipated (Nofre et al., 2018).

The aim of this international colloquium is to give visibility to the research programs carried out during the three-year life of the *Noz Breizh* Chair (finalized or still in progress). In addition, it will welcome proposals for papers or “posters” on three main themes:

- night as a political project,
- night as a social project,
- night or darkness as a common and/or resource.

It will also focus on experimental methodologies exploring the contribution of participatory research to approaches dealing with lighting sobriety. Proposals (in French, Spanish, English or Portuguese) must include first and last name, title, a 250-word abstract + bibliography and a brief biographical note.

Calendar

- Submission of abstracts (250 words): by February 10, 2025
- Notification of acceptance of abstracts: February 14, 2025
- Submission of long abstracts (600 words): by February 24, 2025
- Conference registration: by March 14, 2025
- Conference dates: March 27, April 24, May 15, 2025

 **Sending abstracts by e-mail :** chairenozbreizh@univ-brest.fr

 **Link for abstract submissions :** <https://nozbreizh2025.sciencesconf.org>

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Practical informations

- Format – Hybrid online and face-to-face
- Publication of proceedings online (ISBN UBO) leading to publication in scientific journals
- Registration fees: 50€ (participation in the three-date online or face-to-face conference program)
- Free for :
 - Members of the *Noz Breizh* Chair,
 - Members of partner laboratories (Géoarchitecture, LP3C, Lab-STICC, Labers)
 - Students

Scientific Committee

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