

International Congress Noz Breizh

"Celebrating the night: three years of the Noz Breizh chair"

March 20th, April 24th & 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. These uses are 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, resulting from a constraint or an imposed schedule. Reflecting the extent to which representations, experiences and ways of inhabiting the night are multiple, studies on the night and nocturnal temporality are increasing and involving a broadening range of disciplines. In the French context, this great diversity of themes mobilizes disciplinary fields ranging from human and social sciences (economics, sociology, psychology, geography, urban planning, architecture, tourism studies), to natural sciences (biology, ecology, biodiversity and light pollution). Research is also carried out in STEM and communication studies, 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 touristic 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, an approach driven by 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 partygoers. Among 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 aim to improve the accessibility 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, most notably among feminist associations, associations for populations in precarious situations or with disabilities, and from the LGBTQ+ 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 with due respect for nocturnal tranquility. This can be handled by the public lighting department or by tourism, as part of 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 due to artificial light creating impassable barriers for some of them, or disorienting their migratory routes.

Less visible within "Night Studies", the work carried out by non profit organizations to protect nocturnal biodiversity and starry skies also needs to be given greater prominence—be they naturalists' organizations, amateur astronomers, or the International Dark-Sky Association. For several decades now, these associations have been warning about the growing impacts of artificial light at night, in particular light pollution and its harmful effects on whole ecosystems (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 hyper-central areas may 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 transportation used during festivals and by better controlling what can be perceived as nuisances by the local population - be it noise, light, odors... - 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 20, 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 fee: 50€ (participation in the three-days conference program, online or face-to-face)
- Free for :
 - Members of the Noz Breizh Chair,
 - Members of partner laboratories (Géoarchitecture, LP3C, Lab-STICC, Labers)
 - Students

Scientific Committee

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