TOURISM AND THE NIGHT
RETHINKING NOCTURNAL DESTINATIONS

Edited by
Andrew Smith and Adam Eldridge
Over recent decades, municipal authorities have promoted their cities as places boasting desirable night-time activities. Light festivals, museum lates, nightclubbing, and night markets extend the typical tourist experience into the night and have become a key part of the way some cities are branded. This anthology draws together research addressing the relationship between tourism and the night, facilitating a better understanding of nocturnal city destinations.

Tourism and the Night: Rethinking Nocturnal Destinations covers an array of different tourist activities taking place at night and a range of European cities. The challenges facing late-night workers, the relationship between tourists and residents, and the effects of local policies on the expansion of late-night entertainment are examined in the first part of the book. The latter part focuses on the significance of night-time events, addressing the rising popularity of light art festivals and established religious rituals. Ultimately, this ground-breaking collection of papers examines how the night has become an important setting for city tourism. This trend means there is a need to rethink the management of urban districts and destinations, but there are also important implications for our understanding and experiences of the urban night.

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INTRODUCTION

Tourism and the night: towards a broader understanding of nocturnal city destinations

Adam Eldridge and Andrew Smith

This special edition emerged out of a two-day symposium titled ‘Tourism and the Night’ which was held at the University of Westminster, London in the summer of 2017. Organised by the editors of this edition, and our colleague Ilaria Pappalepore, the symposium brought together scholars working at the interface of tourism and nightlife studies. Delegates from Australia, North America and across Europe attended the event, confirming our sense that the night is becoming increasingly important to the experience, study, management and representation of tourism. The papers presented were heavily oriented towards urban, Western contexts and the challenges and benefits of urban tourism at night. The policy interventions instigated by various cities were discussed with papers addressing a wide range of debates, practices, policies and theories. Case studies from Barcelona, Mashhad, Sydney, Lisbon, Toronto and Berlin, amongst others, demonstrated the breadth of research in this field and how the night and tourism intersect. The papers presented in this issue represent only some of the case studies examined over those two days, but they draw out some of the dominant themes; pilgrimage, lighting and light festivals, the rights of hospitality employees, gentrification, urban commodification, relations between tourists and locals, and the shifting ways that both nightlife and tourism are conceived.

The symposium had several points of departure. In particular, The Villes Europeennes Et Nuit Urbaine colloquium, held at the University Paul Valery, Montpellier, in 2016 was influential. This earlier colloquium had featured several papers on the aesthetics and politics of light festivals and illumination events. Importantly, these events were not discussed as simply tourist events that just happened to occur at night, nor were they read as merely an extension of already existing daytime tourism patterns. Instead, and echoing the extensive work of Edensor (2012, 2015), both the night and tourism were positioned as central to the ways the events were planned, managed and experienced. The ‘Touristified Everyday Life’ conference in the spring of 2017 at the Georg Simmel Centre for Metropolitan Studies in Berlin featured papers along a similar vein. Attention was drawn to the ways that concerns about local-tourist relations, gentrification, city branding, and everyday life were becoming especially critical at night. Debates about urban tourism and related themes of regeneration and gentrification were explored extensively, but the important question of what is it about the night that matters here was central. The issues of overtourism and touristification in Amsterdam, Berlin and Barcelona are well known, but what happens when those issues play out in the night? Is it simply a case of tourism extending into the night, or does the night in itself represent something different about the ways cities are experienced by tourists, and planned or represented by policy makers?

These events and our 2017 symposium coincided with several important policy interventions. Across much of the west, night-mayors have been recently installed in major urban centres to better manage and promote night-time uses (Roberts, 2016). Paris, London, Berlin, Zurich and many other western cities now have night-mayors, commissioners or tsars who, echoing our earlier point, do not simply extend the already existing policies of
the day into the night but rather raise questions about how the night poses new and unique (if not singular) challenges and opportunities. A series of reports have also been commissioned by these agents with tourism at night recognised as important in terms of how respective cities are branded and promoted (GLA, 2017; Stevens, 2016).

The point derived from these academic events and recent policy initiatives is that the night matters, and rather than thinking about tourism activity at night as a mere extension of the day, our symposium encouraged delegates to think about how existing discourses, policies and experiences of tourism are shaped in the night time. We wanted to explore how nightlife is developing in ways that echo some of the concerns tourism scholars have explored such as mobility, changing everyday lives, the use of public space and urban development. But we also wanted to remain mindful of how the discourses that have long structured our understanding of the night – such as risk, transgression and enchantment – intersect, overlap and challenge discourses of tourism. It is worth pausing on this point to explain the title of the symposium: Tourism and the Night. This was a deliberate choice and we avoided calling the symposium Tourism at Night for precisely the reasons discussed above. As the papers at the symposium and in this collection identify, some everyday tourism activities are indeed extending into the later hours, but the strategies we have for managing tourism might not always work after dark and the issues raised by tourism, especially in already dense neighbourhoods, might be not so much intensified, but actually quite different in the night. If the night poses unique challenges to the experience and management of tourism, how might tourism also be changing the ways we conceive of the night? For these reasons, Tourism and the Night sought to explore the disjunctures and points of interest between the two areas of inquiry.

**City tourism and the urban night**

The study of tourism is fairly well established in the United Kingdom and covers a broad and disparate body of scholarship. Scholars at the University of Westminster, including Robert Maitland (2010), Ilaria Pappalepore (2010), Johannes Novy (2018) and Andrew Smith (2016) have researched tourism in cities, focusing on the creative city, events and festivals, (new) urban tourism and ‘off-the-beaten-track’ tourism (Maitland & Newman, 2014). Themes such as regeneration, gentrification, the use and management of public urban spaces, and critical reflections on the tourist-resident or host–guest binary run through this work. Emily Falconer’s work with Edensor (Edensor & Falconer, 2012) and her single-authored work on gender, tourism and emotions (Falconer, 2013) represent another strength and strand of the University’s work on tourism. These bodies of research draw upon a range and constantly evolving set of ideas and research methods, with the work of urban scholars (Judd & Fainstein, 1999; Hannigan, 1998; Zukin, 1989), and critical work around rebranding, regeneration, the commercialisation of urban sites, and emotions informing the ways tourism is conceived (Colomb, 2013).

The study of the night is perhaps more fragmented, drawing on criminology (Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, & Winlow, 2003), sociology, cultural studies, and geography (Nofre & Eldridge, 2018; Shaw, 2018), planning (Roberts & Eldridge, 2009), and the health sciences. If it were at all possible to speak of ‘night studies’ we could point to a wide range of topics from licensing (Hadfield, 2006) and alcohol and drug use (Measham, 2006) to youth culture, debates about morality (Hubbard & Colosi, 2015), critical work on theories of the night and its historical and cultural specificities (Koslofsky, 2011; Williams, 2008), and debates about changing patterns of time-use (Crary, 2013). Research into affects, ambiances and emotions associated with the night have also been examined (Brands, Schwanen, & Van Aalst, 2015; Hubbard, 2016) while another body of work explores lighting in relation
to planning and urban design, as well as the effects of lighting on human and non-human animals (Meier, Hasenöhr, Krause, & Pottharst, 2014; Sloane, Slater, & Entwistle, 2016). There is a further strand of night studies which emphasises issues around security and the politics of securitising cities at night (Brands, Schwanen, & Van Aalst, 2016), while another body of work focuses on the commercialisation and commodification of existing urban spaces after dark (Chatterton & Hollands, 2003; Malet Calvo, Nofre, & Geraldes, 2017).

Differences in subject, language, key texts and theories exist across and within both fields of inquiry, but where tourism and night studies overlap is the shared interest in how spaces are lived, experienced, managed, and, just as importantly, enjoyed. These and other points of connection became evident over the course of our symposium. A dedicated attempt to analyse tourism and the night indicates not only the ways these bodies of scholarship sometimes differ in approach and focus but also the points at which they meet and land on similar questions. The papers in this edition thus represent different strands of thinking about the night and tourism, and the myriad ways they generate new perspectives when considered together.

Night-time tourism

By way of introducing the papers, it is worth first providing an overview of the established and changing patterns of activities that typify night-time tourism. Just as studies of the urban night have overly fixated on traditional (hedonistic) nightlife, studies of tourism at night have also tended to focus on established night-time activities: drinking, eating, theatre, and other forms of entertainment. There has been some attention dedicated to the rising popularity of night markets, particularly in Asia (Hsieh & Chang, 2006; Lee, Chang, Hou, & Lin, 2008), and there is a substantial body of work on other activities associated with the night and tourism, such as alcop tourism and sex-tourism (Bell, 2008; Pinke-Sziva, Smith, Olt, & Berezvai, 2019; Sanders, 2017; Thurnell-Read, 2012). Since the 1990s there has also been academic recognition of tourist-oriented occasions such as hen and stag parties, music events, and other festivals typically occurring in the night (Smith, 2016). While their impact on cities has been documented, how cities are increasingly targeting tourists by emphasising their late-night offer has been less well examined. Wider, ‘everyday’ tourism activity at night has also been neglected in academic analyses.

As noted above, conceptually, we avoided thinking of the night as simply an otherwise empty time and space into which tourism has started to expand. There has nonetheless been an extension of traditional daytime tourism activities into the night. Museums, galleries, and other attractions (even zoos) are staying open later, in some instances all night. Later opening hours for cultural institutions have been introduced in many cities to satisfy multiple policy agendas. For example, hours are often extended to make cities feel safer and as ways of encouraging families into the city at night. Late opening facilitates tourism in several ways: it extends opportunities for conventional city tourists seeking to make the most of short stays. Extending opening beyond normal working hours also provides new ways for citizens to consume their own cities as tourists. In some parts of the world, late-night opening is an established practice, but it is spreading via the widespread introduction of initiatives like ‘museum lates’ (Evans, 2012).

Adopting late-night opening in other contexts is a temporal form of globalisation, one in which different schedules, routines and rhythms are diffused globally while overlapping and sometimes competing at the local level. The ultimate global metropolis is the 24-hour city – a status which renders variations in daylight hours across the world less relevant. New York has long sold itself as ‘the city that never sleeps’, and this is an attraction for night owls that enjoy the novelty of shopping or dining in the middle of the night. There is probably a
less enthusiastic set of consumers who also use these services: 24-hour opening is welcomed by long haul tourists struggling to adapt to new time zones.

As several authors have pointed out, however, this extension of daytime activity into the night – and the extension of daytime tourism into the night – is perhaps contributing to an erosion of the traditional distinction between day and night. Indeed, authors such as Sandhu (2007) see the very idea of night time in global cities like London as a rather old fashioned concept, and one which is rapidly waning. It is notable that, in one of the few early studies into the emergence of the ‘24 hour city’ Kreitzman’s ‘The 24 Hour Society’ (1999) was one of the first accounts of this sense that the night and day were blurring and tourism played a key role here. Kreitzman regarded the tourist almost as the prototype of the new 24-hour citizen, one who expected to eat, shop, or be entertained at the hour of their own choosing, irrespective of the traditional Monday–Friday, 9.00 am–5.00 pm, of the industrial, modern city. This portentous conception of the new, 24-hour citizen reappeared some years later to justify 24-hour alcohol licensing in England and Wales. The former British Prime Minister Tony Blair spoke of confused tourists, fresh from a night at the theatre, unable to secure a drink due to Britain’s formerly restrictive licensing hours (Roberts & Eldridge, 2009). If the figure of the tourist, free from work and quotidian concerns becomes the model 24-hour citizen, it is not only the tourist from elsewhere who benefits, of course, but also residents who might now increasingly consume the museums, theatres, bars and retail opportunities afforded to them in response to the tourist market.

In other instances, however, it is not so much the dissolving of the night and day that drives tourism, but that the night itself is the core attraction. Despite concerns about the gradual erosion of night time, the night still offers unique dimensions that can provide distinctive tourism experiences. Examples include star gazing and various forms of astro-tourism (Ingle, 2010) which are based on the visual appeal of the night sky. For obvious reasons, the stars are best observed from undeveloped zones – particularly ‘dark sky reserves’ – but several urban areas offer astro-tourism where star gazing can be combined with astronomical culture and history. Various cities also offer nocturnal wildlife tours and a range of dark tours (e.g. ghost tours) which operate at night. The night is intrinsically associated with sleep, but this dimension of the night has also now been commodified in recent years. To provide an added dimension, some attractions offer the opportunity for guests to sleep on the premises overnight: including museums, toy shops and burial sites. In most instances, these opportunities are provided during dedicated events, but some attractions have installed more permanent accommodation. For example, visitors can now stay overnight within London Zoo in themed Indian style accommodation next to the Lion enclosure. The Zoo also offers a Bed Bugs experience, where brave visitors can stay overnight in the Bug House to learn more about the creepy crawlies kept there. London Zoo’s new focus on the night is representative of the wider ‘nocturnalisation’ (Koslofsky, 2011) of tourism in the U.K. capital. The Visit London website now includes ‘the top ten things to do at night’, a list that includes bat walks in the Royal Parks, star gazing at the Royal Observatory and sleepovers at various National Museums. Rather than merely comprising night time events, or representing an extension of tourism into the night, these attractions reconfigure the night as event. Added to this, we must, of course, recognise the various ways the night continues to be framed by narratives of transgression, freedom and the loosening of everyday restrictions. The bars and clubs of Berlin, Ibiza or London benefit greatly from discourses which reinstate the distinction between the day as work and the quotidian, and the night as risk, pleasure, and adventure.

A final dimension of tourism at night beyond the obvious involvement of tourists in the nightlife and entertainment sectors is the emergence of what Shaw (2018) has termed the