

SHAPING THE NIGHT: POLICIES AND STRATEGIES GOVERNING THE NIGHTTIME ECONOMY

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Purpose: The nighttime economy (NTE) has become a defining feature of urban development, shaping city dynamics and governance worldwide. As cities transition into 24-hour hubs, balancing economic growth with residents well-being presents governance challenges. This study examines the policies and governance frameworks influencing the NTE, highlighting key strategies used by cities to foster vibrant, inclusive and sustainable nightlife.

Methodology: This research employs a document-based analysis of twelve policy documents from global cities. The study identifies trends, challenges, and governance strategies including night mayor initiatives, extended public transport services and collaborative safety measures by systematically reviewing policy objectives, implementation strategies and outcomes.

Findings: The findings reveal that while cities aim to align economic benefits with community well-being, tensions persist over noise management, inclusivity, public safety and limited diversity in nighttime offerings. Strategies such as night mayor appointments, regulatory reforms and extended transport services have contributed to improvements, yet governance challenges remain, particularly in ensuring long-term policy effectiveness and adaptability.

Limitations: The research is limited by its reliance on secondary sources, the absence of primary data affects the depth of insights. Future studies needing to address these gaps through firsthand data collection and stakeholder interviews.

Originality: This paper underscores the necessity of integrated, multi-stakeholder approaches to nighttime governance; by synthesizing international policy efforts, it provides insights into best practices and challenges in governing the NTE, offering recommendations for policymakers seeking to balance urban vibrancy with sustainability and social equity.

Keywords: Nighttime economy, Night Governance, Nighttime policy, Nighttime regulations, 24-hour cities.

Category of the paper: Research paper.

1. Introduction

Over the last decades, the nighttime economy (NTE) has showed its importance as a critical element of urban development, affecting policy decisions and reshaping cities dynamics around the world. The concept of the 24-hour city, which gained popularity in the late 20th century, emphasizing the growing necessity for urban centers to accommodate economic, cultural and social activities that go beyond traditional business hours (Roberts, Eldridge, 2009; Seijas, Gelders, 2021). Today, cities are adopting a more tailored nighttime urban policies to manage this shift, addressing several challenges including public safety, transportation, noise management and inclusivity while promoting economic growth.

This paper examines nighttime economy policies, frameworks, strategies and initiatives in major global cities in which patterns, challenges and recommendations in governing the NTE are identified through an in-depth analysis of secondary data. These policies aspire to boost the vibrancy and sustainability of urban nightlife but also to minimize negative externalities such as noise pollution, public nuisance, crime, alcohol-related violence and disruptions to residential areas (Góis, 2014; Nofre et al., 2018). The role of a specific nighttime governance structures such as night mayors and advisory boards, has further demonstrated the necessity of collaborative approaches to balance stakeholder interests (Seijas, Gelders, 2021).

The effectiveness of these policies is still up for debate, despite notable progress, in fact, research shows that there are ongoing difficulties in coordinating the objectives of economic development with the residents' needs, especially regarding safety, accessibility and inclusivity (Brands, Schwanen, 2014; Schwanen et al., 2012). Furthermore, the capacity to evaluate the long-term effects of these strategies on urban growth is constrained by the absence of standardized frameworks and assessment methods.

The objective of this paper is to analyze policies and frameworks related to the NTE across various global cities, specifically it aims to identify patterns, trends, challenges and recommendations within the analyzed documents.

2. Literature review

The development of comprehensive night governance literature has been constantly driven by the recognition that cities don't simply shut down after dark but instead they transit into a different mode of operation with unique challenges and opportunities (Lovatt, O'Connor, 1995). The growing interest in the 24-hour city concept led to an increasing number of research on the complex relation between urban planning, nightlife activities and resident wellbeing (Mahmoud, Zmyslony, 2024), reflecting the pivotal role it plays in shaping our modern cities.

The term NTE revolves around a spectrum of activities that happen after conventional working hours typically from 6 pm until early morning (Son et al., 2023, p. 1) and it includes leisure, hospitality, entertainment and cultural events (Aghasafari et al., 2021) but it also includes the various transportation services varying from public transit, rideshares and private taxis operating at night (Abraham et al., 2019).

Initially, the concept of a night economy first saw the light in the UK in the 1970's but become popular in the 1990's with the same definition mainly used today to describe the activity, that being; every activity and business associated with evening entertainment, socializing and leisure; for example the nightlife venues such as bars, restaurants, clubs and pubs are all part of the night industry but also theaters, cinemas, casinos, hotels and music venues. These activities not only contribute to economic growth but also enhance urban vibrancy and social cohesion (Chatterton, Hollands, 2003, p. 25). Both locals and tourists visits and use goods and services provided by the NTE (Bianchini, 1995; Field, 2008) however, in many cases, disputes between residents and NTE stakeholders (visitors, business owners) arise but also multiple other externalities exist and must be addressed such as crime, noise pollution, congestion, trash (Shaw, 2014) these issues are becoming big challenges to the NTE and to local and municipal authorities. Managing these externalities and unavoidable conflicts are a central challenge of the nighttime governance.

3. The Concept of Night Governance

The night governance is a distinct field of urban management in general and policy in particular that took its roots from the changing dynamics of urban life in the late 20th and early 21st centuries. As cities becomes more and more concerned with the concept of the 24-hour city, or even more specific the Nighttime economy, the need for specialized and tailored governance policies for nighttime hours has become apparent (Gwiazdzinski, 2018). The conventional day-time governance approach is not sufficiently effective in managing the complexity of the nighttime reflected in meditating conflicts and ensuring the safety of individuals while supporting the economic development of the city (Talbot, 2004; Shaw, 2014).

Hadfield (2015) outlines the development of night governance literature, pointing out that it began with the management of nighttime entertainment districts, the focus of night governance has then shifted to include a wider range of social, cultural, and economic factors. Originally, the literature concentrated on crime prevention and public order. This change reflects the increasing understanding that the night is not only a time for control and regulation, but also a time for cultural expression and economic opportunity.

The concept of the Nighttime economy has played an important role in shaping the night governance approaches and is still doing so nowadays, in fact Roberts & Eldridge in their seminal book *Planning the Night-time City* (2009) define the activity of the NTE as the range of economic activities that occur between 6 pm and 6 am, including hospitality, entertainment, and shift work, It is crucial for effective night governance to balance the economic benefits of a vibrant nighttime economy with the needs and rights of residents, particularly in terms of noise control and public safety.

As the phenomenon evolves, the topic gets more and more attention not only from decision-makers in big cities around the world but also from scholars who researched every details of the activity, for instance; Seijas and Gelders (2021) highlight the emergence of the "night mayor" role in cities worldwide as a key development in night governance, this position, first established in Amsterdam in 2012, serves as a mediator between various stakeholders in the nighttime city, including businesses, residents, and city officials, this relatively new form of night governance institutionalized as the night mayor represents recognizes the unique challenges and opportunities of nighttime urban management and debatably offers a more tailored response to the nighttime issues.

Night governance and the Nighttime Economy encompass far more than just entertainment and the overwhelming economic agenda, take, for instance, the work of Kyba et al. 2020: in which they argue that the night is steadily becoming its own interdisciplinary research independent from the urban studies.

The topic of addressing public safety and security concerns is essential for an effective nighttime urban governance, in reality; residents perceptions of safety and security in the urban environment play a decisive role in determining how livable and appealing a city is around the clock; a call for action has been initiated by the NTE advisor for the city of Dublin following the results of the survey "Your Dublin your voice" in which 50% of females and 40% of males reported not feeling safe at night (Night-time economy strategy, Dublin, 2021), which in consequences can limit the interaction with the Nighttime economy, in fact, techniques like more police presence and the installation of surveillance systems (CCTV) can improve people's feelings of safety and overall satisfaction with the nighttime environment in their city and thus their willingness to engage in the nighttime activity, which is consistent with the findings of Brands et al. (2015), in which it was concluded that the visible presence of police officers have strong effects on experienced safety and their presence enhance the safety perception more than the presence of CCTV as they are viewed as "a friend of everybody".

In general, nighttime policies and regulations play a crucial role in managing the NTE by addressing the complex impacts on urban development and residents wellbeing, in fact effective policies ensure that the contribution of the NTE is positive to economic growth, vibrancy and labor market (employment opportunities), while mitigating the unavoidable externalities such as noise pollution, safety concerns and alcohol related issues. For instance, scholars have stressed the importance of integrating stakeholders perspective in the planning and management

of the NTE to balance the interests of nightlife businesses, residents and local communities and governments to foster inclusivity and sustainability (Roberts, Eldridge, 2009). Furthermore, tailored laws, regulations and policies can potentially improve residents quality of life by improving safety, transportation options resulting in promoting a more harmonious coexistence between nocturnal and daytime urban activities (Shaw, 2010).

Thematic areas in the literature on nighttime economy policies reveal a spectrum of interlinked concerns that influence governing and managing the city after dark, central themes include economic impact, safety and security, noise and environmental complaints and lastly transportation and mobility. Roberts, Eldridge (2009) emphasized the economic contributions of nighttime activities from hospitality to entertainment while the study of Brands & Schwanen (2014) shows the safety concerns as a critical focus for urban governance. The study by Roberts & Gornostaeva (2007) showed the many concerns British towns and city center are facing at night, they note that noise pollution was a major complaint specifically in densely populated areas like inner London causing conflicts between residents and visitors.

Furthermore, safety and security are the main historical concerns in nighttime economy as they directly impact residents quality of life and the viability of nighttime economy which can potentially result in an economical loss over the longer period. Considering this, recent research has emphasized how difficult it can be to put in place efficient safety measures in urban night areas.

The biggest milestone in the nighttime safety is the improved street lighting, in fact it was one of the very first step towards a safe and engaging night, building on earlier work by Painter (1996), more recent studies have provided valuable insights into the relationship between lighting and perceived safety.

Improved governance tactics have developed to meet the difficulties of metropolitan environments at night, building on Hadfield et al (2009) examination of nighttime economy governance, several scholars have documented the evolution of urban night governance strategies, for instance, Seijas & Gelders (2021) traced the emergence of the night mayor position, documenting how Amsterdam's appointment of their first night mayor in 2012 sparked a global movement with cities like London, Paris and New York following suit. The institutionalization of the night mayor position represented a shift toward more structured management of the NTE. Multiple studies argued that these roles have helped bridge the gap between municipal authorities and nightlife stakeholders and that night mayors could potentially be instrumental in mediating conflicts between residents, venue owners and local authorities.

The use of surveillance technologies in nighttime urban settings has grown increasingly sophisticated. While Welsh and Farrington (2009) highlighted the potential of CCTV in crime prevention, more recent work has explored the useful integration of smart technologies, for instance the work of Vogiatzaki et al. (2020) present a framework for integrating ICT-based

systems such as LED lighting and Ai-enabled surveillance to enhance safety urban public spaces.

Addressing safety concerns in the nighttime economy inevitably extends to considerations of transportation and mobility, in fact efficient and safe nighttime transportation is essential for supporting nighttime economies and ensuring a smooth access to nightlife activities

The offering of 24-hour public transportation has expanded in many global cities, the offering is becoming more and more present in the cities with well-established NTE, multiple cities across the world have introduced or expanded late night transit services such as the London's Night Tube which has seen its inauguration in 2016. In many different urban areas, the service of extended and improved public transportation has been investigated, Gössling (2013) looked at Copenhagen's shift to become a bike-friendly city, taking into account nighttime mobility, while it doesn't specifically address public transportation that runs around the clock, this study shows how sustainable transport strategies such as public transportation and cycling infrastructure, can support and even benefit urban mobility at all hours such approaches not only facilitate nighttime economic activities but also have the potential to reduce carbon emissions by offering alternatives to private vehicle use. Gössling's research highlights the need of complete urban mobility efforts in enabling sustainable nighttime offering, even if additional research is needed to determine the precise effects of 24-hour public transportation.

A creative and innovative mobility solutions are seeing the light to address nighttime transportation challenges, recent research have explored the potential of what is known as micromobility services (e-scooters, bike-sharing) in supporting nighttime economies, their research suggests that these services can complement traditional public transport, particularly for short distance trips within nightlife districts, but require careful regulation to ensure safety and minimize conflicts with other road users, that said, the research by Plyushteva (2021) shows that much more efforts remain to be done by the urban authorities and transport planners in order to make nocturnal mobility inclusive in particular to shift and night workers.

While improving nighttime transit and mobility is necessary for a thriving NTE, these measures can introduce new challenges to policy makers, such a noise pollution. In some cases, unmanaged noise from transit hubs and cars can have an impact on residents quality of life, adding another dimension for nighttime governance to address.

Well in fact, the biggest challenge in urban night governance remains the need for balance between the vibrancy of the night and the residents wellbeing, the negative externalities observed like noise pollution, crime, congestion, trash, and conflicts between patrons and residents create social costs (Shaw, 2014; Chatterton, Hollands, 2002)

Ottoz et al. (2018) and recent studies researched noise control policies to explore more subtle approaches to urban noise management, for instance Asdrubali & Alessandro (2018) examines how smart cities address public issues such as noise pollution via ICT-based solutions.

New technologies are being used in noise control measures, for instance the paper by Bello et al. (2019) explored the use of sensor networks and machine learning algorithms for real time monitoring and forecasting of urban noise levels, their work highlights the important potential for scientific and data driven based approach to noise management that can inform more targeted and effective interventions which can potentially results in better management approaches.

4. Methodology

This study employs a document-based analysis to examine the policies, strategies and frameworks surrounding the nighttime economy (NTE) across major global cities. The goal is to identify common trends, challenges and contradictions in the governance of the NTE.

A total of twelve key policy documents were selected for analysis, representing diverse urban contexts across Europe, North America and Australia, these documents were obtained from official governments portals, municipal reports, academic publications and international organizations specializing in urban planning and nighttime economies. The inclusion criteria for document selection were:

1. Relevance to the NTE and its associated sector such as safety, transportation, urban planning and cultural development.
2. Accessibility.
3. Focus on urban nightlife policies.

A systematic review of each document was used to extract relevant data, the information was then categorized into five key dimensions to facilitate a structured comparison:

- Policy objective.
- Implementation strategies.
- Findings.
- Challenges.
- Recommendations.

5. Results

The results of this study are presented in Table 1. This document-based analysis of diverse reports on Nighttime Economy (NTE) policies, regulations and strategies across global cities reveals several common trends, patterns and observations. For instance, a consistent priority across cities is the desire to create vibrant, inclusive and sustainable nighttime economies,

the reports from London, Sydney, New York and Ireland highlight the focus to balance cultural, social and economic needs while fostering community engagement. Likewise, enhancing safety and ensuring accessibility for diverse population are a common objectives in most analyzed policies and strategies.

Furthermore, several cities in order to achieve their NTE goals have adapted similar strategies such as the appointment of night mayors or equivalent role (Night Czar in London and Nightlife mayor in New York) which is a recurring governance strategy aimed at coordinating efforts and ensuring representation of nighttime interests in policymaking.

Another common approach found in the strategies used is expanding public transportation services to cover late night hours especially from midnight to 6am, few examples of how cities aim to support nighttime accessibility and safety is London's Night Tube, New York's extended transit hours and mobility improvements in Dublin.

Multiple documents recommended a public-private partnerships and collaborations with law enforcements, local councils and cultural institutions, these efforts are central to a successful NTE governance and are evident in the European Purple Flag Accreditation, London's strategy and New York's nightlife policies.

The main challenges facing nighttime economies center around three critical areas, first is noise management creating tension between venues and residents; second, public safety concerns particularly related to alcohol consumption and violence and third, economic and social inclusivity issues including high operational costs and limited diversity in activities. These challenges are consistently reported across different cities and require balanced as well as multi-stakeholder solutions.

Cities and businesses frequently encounter outdated or restrictive licensing systems, which is often criticized as a barrier to a dynamic NTE, as a result cities like London and Dublin work on modernizing their licensing frameworks to encourage more diverse and safe nighttime offerings. The need for flexible and adaptive regulatory approaches is highlighted in multiple reports, from New York's mediation efforts to the evolving guidelines in the European Purple Flag Accreditation. Additionally, there is a strong focus on integrating cultural activities into NTE strategies, encouraging non-alcohol based events and fostering a diverse range of cultural experiences is a shared goal in many cities such as Dublin and Montgomery County. Moreover, reports from Sydney and London stress the importance of protecting cultural assets and venues, emphasizing cultural diversity as a key element for successful nighttime economies. The World Economic Forum's report emphasize the significant revenue generated by nighttime activities, indicating that NTEs are big contributors to employment and is essential drivers of urban economies.

Lastly, a worth mentioning trend towards data-driven decision making in the NTE management, cities like London and regions with the Purple Flag Accreditation emphasize the use of assessments and monitoring to inform policy changes.

Table 1.*Results of the analysis of Nighttime Economy reports, policies and regulations*

Document title	Key policy objective	Implementation strategies	Findings	Challenges	Recommendations
A report by the Night-time Economy taskforce of Ireland (Ireland 2021)	Develop a vibrant, inclusive and sustainable nighttime economy in Ireland particularly after the challenges of Covid-19.	Extend licensing hours, foster public-private collaboration, enhance public spaces and introduce pilot initiatives for new cultural and non-alcohol based nighttime activities.	The sector faces regulatory challenges, limited diversity in activities, public safety concerns and outdated infrastructure.	Noise management, achieving inclusivity, balancing residential and business interests and adapting to post Covid recovery needs.	Modernize regulations, improve public transport and safety, encourage cultural diversity and support nighttime advisors in local areas.
A vision for London as a 24-hour City (Policy vision 2017)	24-hours city with main objectives: Promote culture and leisure for all ages and interests Extend opening hours of and access to services Ensure safety, diversity, and inclusivity for residents, visitors, and nighttime workers Work closely with boroughs and police to create a balanced and sustainable evening and nighttime offer.	Appointment of Night Czar. Expanding nighttime transport: Night Tube (24-hour transport). Foster partnerships between stakeholders. Support diverse cultural activities. Introduce flexible licensing.	London's nighttime economy is vital but faces challenges like rising business costs, residential conflicts and limited inclusivity.	Ongoing challenges in managing noise and safety, addressing inequality, retaining cultural assets and adapting to changing demographics and technologies.	Create strategic policies, ensure inclusivity in planning, protect cultural venues, promote worker rights, enhance accessibility and sustainability in the nighttime economy.
New York City's Office of Nightlife	Support nightlife businesses, ensure inclusivity, and address noise and transport challenges.	Nightlife Advisory Board extended public transport hours, mediation for noise complaints. Appointment of a Nightlife mayor to support cultural institutions and safety.	Balancing residential and commercial interests, addressing safety and noise complaints.	Persistent noise complaints and accessibility disparities, preservation of cultural venues.	Introduce advanced noise control systems and collaborate with transport agencies for better service.

Cont. table 1.

Sydney's Lockout Laws (2014-2020)	Reduce alcohol-related violence through restricted late night trading hours to have significant impact on crime.	Lockout restrictions on entry and alcohol sales, reduced operating hours, enhanced police presence.	Initial reductions in violence but significant economic losses for nightlife businesses and a reduction in cultural vibrancy.	Economic downturn for nightlife venues; public backlash against restrictive measures. Long-term impact debated.	Develop balanced approaches combining harm reduction and business support mechanisms.
European Purple Flag Accreditation (established in 2006)	Establish standards for safety, diversity, and vibrancy in nightlife districts.	5 frameworks: Wellbeing, movement, appeal, place and policy envelope. Conduct assessments with local councils, businesses and law enforcement. Provide training and guidelines to achieve and maintain accreditation.	Cities with the purple flag accreditation have relatively enhanced safety, diverse nighttime economy, improved urban design and positive reputation.	Limited adoption of accreditation outside Europe. Limited budgets for cities to implement improvements required to achieve or maintain the accreditation. Difficulty in gathering reliable data to monitor the impact of the accreditation on safety, business growth and cultural diversity.	Expand Purple Flag standards internationally and develop partnerships for broader recognition. Use data driven approaches to address urban challenges Regularly review accreditation criteria to adapt to evolving urban needs Enhance public awareness and participation in urban safety and design initiatives.
World Economic Forum 2024: Rethinking 24-hour Cities: Night-Time Strategies to Address Urban Challenges	To develop and enhance 24-hour cities by effectively managing and growing NTE while ensuring safety, accessibility and economic benefits	Appointing Night Mayors or other consultative bodies Creating nighttime governance networks Establishing dedicated night work facilities Repurposing infrastructure for night use Adapting public spaces with lighting and extended hours	NTE generate significant revenue NTE support substantial employment One-third of London's workforce (1,6 million people) works evening or night shifts	Safety Limited mobility Digital commerce affecting traditional business areas Lack of reliable services during the night	Create more inclusive and safe public spaces Improve nighttime transportation options Design urban strategies specifically for NTE management Implement data-driven decision making for NTE development Establish dedicated facilities and services for nighttime workers

Cont. table 1.

Dublin's Nighttime economy strategy	3 Pillars of the Dublin's Nighttime Economy strategy: 1. Mobility and transport 2. Cultural activity 3. Safety.	Appointment of Dublin city's Nighttime Economy advisor to enhance and enrich the city's vibrant, diverse and inclusive communities.	Economic and cultural importance of Dublin's NTE (ranked 4 th in summer nightlife spending in 2024) Safety concerns: perception of safety declined Barriers to nighttime activities: high costs and inadequate transport Transportation challenges: need improved public transit between midnight and 6am.	To establish a Pioneering Nighttime economy steering group, to oversee the cultural events coordination and lastly to propose innovative solutions.	36 recommendations on licensing, transport, safety enhancements, cultural initiatives, community engagement and sustainability.
Manifesto for Nighttime Economy (UK)	An inclusive thriving urban setting, that attracts every sector of the population, caters for every interest, attractive to all income groups, accessible at all hours and safe.	Appointing a Nighttime Economy minister. Creating a NTE strategy board (consultative body)	A great night economy is unlikely to happen and will never be sustained by accident, it must be planned. A thriving NTE is a result of partnerships, investments and planning.	Binge drinking, crime, inadequate public transportation options. Licensing which in the NTE is reactive tool, while in the day economy is a planning tool.	Long list of recommendations including appointing a minister for the NTE and create a NTE strategy board, involving local authorities in strategic planning, placemaking (identifying late night zones), licensing process, best practices and reduced VAT rate.

Cont. table 1.

Policing the Nighttime Economy (UK)	Explore the relationship between NTE dynamics and law enforcement, it offers insights into strategies for managing violence, disorder and public safety effectively.	Public-private partnerships Crime mapping Self-regulation schemes Multi-agency approaches.	Violence and disorder are strongly linked to alcohol driven NTE. Clustering of licensed premises intensifies crime hotspots. Well managed venues and collaborative partnerships reduce disorder and improve safety.	Binge drinking culture Regulatory gaps Limited resources for proactive policing Balancing urban regeneration goals with community safety needs.	1. Partnerships: enhanced collaboration between police and stakeholders 2. Regulatory strategies: more solid licensing and monitoring. 3. Proactive policing 4. Cultural change: address binge drinking with education and harm reduction campaigns 5. Urban planning.
NSW 24-hour Economy Strategy	To Establish globally recognized 24-hour precincts that support thriving businesses, flourishing communities and engaging cultural experiences across New South Wales.	Five Pillars including regulatory frameworks, precinct development, worker support, safety, mobility access and inclusion and lastly authentic storytelling.	Expanding beyond leisure-based economy; addressing noise complaints and worker safety.	Growth in nighttime economy employment; promotion of vibrant, inclusive 24-hour precincts.	1.Regulatory Framework: simplify regulations. 2.Precint Development: create vibrant precincts 3.Work force collaboration: support nighttime workers through research and strategy 4. Safety and mobility: improve transportation and accessibility 5. Cultural promotion: to highlight local storytelling.
A review and strategy report for Braddon's night-time economy	Enhance harmony and vibrancy in Braddon's nighttime economy through planning and zoning reforms.	Introduce a Nighttime activity overlay (NTAO) with zoning adjustments and community engagement.	Mixed-use zoning causes noise, safety and participant conflicts. Nighttime activities lack diversity.	Noise conflicts, safety concerns, lack of activity diversity and integration of strategic and statutory planning.	Adapt NTAOs to guide zoning for activity clustering, regulate alcohol sales, improve safety and diversity nighttime offerings.

Cont. table 1.

Nighttime Economy Task Force Implementation Summary (Montgomery County)	Improve nightlife offerings in Montgomery county’s urban centers to meet community needs.	Extend venues hours, revise zoning laws, enhance transportation and activate public spaces.	High noise levels, safety concerns within residents, limited public amenities and a lack of diversity in nighttime activities.	Safety Resistance to noise ordinance changes Balancing diverse stakeholder needs.	Introduction of urban noise areas, improve transportation, support small businesses and enhance pedestrian and bike access.
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6. Limitation and further studies

This research is detailed in examining secondary sources, but it does have some limitations. Because the results are dependent particularly on the examined documents’ quality, scope and focus, the evidence may not cover whole nights economy policies of changing urban contexts because the analysis is document heavy. The absence of primary data collection often limits the extent to which insights can be verified or contextualized by the firsthand accounts or perspectives of direct stakeholders. Variations in methodologies, reporting standards and regional priorities within the documents reviewed create challenges in synthesizing and comparing findings between case studies. Future studies must move into those areas, particularly research related to how nighttime economy policies are formulated and efficiently integrated into actual practice. This could be achieved through interviews with decision-making authorities such as night mayors, policymakers and other stakeholders to understand the implementation process and expected outcomes.

7. Summary

The evolution of nighttime governance reflects a shift from reactive control measures to proactive strategies that integrate cultural, economic and social objectives. Historically focused on managing crime and disorder, contemporary NTE policies now emphasize the economic and cultural potential of nightlife, recognizing its value in urban development. The Night Mayors position, as well as the European Purple Flag accreditation, symbolizes the growing tendency toward custom-tailored governance and standardized frameworks focused on inclusivity, safety and cultural diversity.

As advised earlier, future research should focus on developing standardized metrics to evaluate the long-term impacts of NTE policies with an emphasis on balancing economic growth with social wellbeing. Also, future studies should explore the role of emerging

technologies in nighttime governance such as smart city solutions for safety and noise management and how they can be integrated with community-based approaches for more sustainable and inclusive urban nightscapes. Further research should also examine the use of social media and digital tools by the nighttime officials (night mayors and equivalent positions) to understand their role in real-time monitoring of urban nightlife. These efforts will contribute to a more vibrant, safe, sustainable and inclusive nighttime economies benefiting communities and cities worldwide.

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