

A.2.2. European comparative perspective. Contrasting Approaches in Discourse

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1. Qualitative comparison: Meaning and contributions

The analysis of youth nightlife in several European contexts has made use of a qualitative strategy, developed in each environment under study, which complements and expands the references of the state of play in each case. In addition to completing the information, this type of analysis provides, above all, for the incorporation of features which are part of the collective imagination on the subject; features that, ultimately, cooperate in constructing the means to interpret the reality of this type of leisure, regardless of the statistical data which describe different formal aspects in this regard.

In other words, while a statistical review offers the distribution and evolution of different phenomena, a qualitative approach provides for the testing of other aspects, more closely related to the means of understanding, qualifying, constructing and analysing the phenomenon, starting from the social meanings integrated in the experiences and beliefs of the interviewees.

Therefore, this view gives us an insight into what may be called the frame of mind about youth nightlife in each context, showing the specific cultural references which define the state of play and which define, in some way or another, how one may position oneself, act and, ultimately, decide, for example, which predictors are the most relevant for statistical follow-up.

The analysed discourses highlight the references that define the experiences and interpretations of nightlife, which also allow for a relative comparison of those frames of mind between countries. This comparison, which is obviously also qualitative, is based both on the clichés underlined in each case –those which appear in certain environments and not in others– and on the common ones. From this standpoint, we are able to compare what we talk about when we speak of youth nightlife, in the analysed cases as a whole and in each one of them in particular. This contrast also provides for drawing some hypotheses on the common or different emerging topics implied in the discourses, regardless of whether they are an explicit part of the assertions stated in each analysed case; that is, latent understandings and the obvious: what is not said when we speak of youth nightlife, but what is part of it.

2. The method used: limits of information

Two types of classical research tools were used for the original qualitative analysis: semi-structured interviews to key interviewees and discussion groups. In general, the interviews were addressed to experts in the field, with different profiles, and the discussion groups were focused on young people. Hence, the former provide a specialised view originating in the world of adults related to the topic, while the groups offer a view, which is also specialised, of those who may be called the protagonists.

The result of this methodological organisation means that the collective imagination analysed is not the general collective imagination (which would reflect the frame of mind of the general population), but a general imagination specialised in this field from two positions: an adult one which is close to youth nightlife from a professional standpoint, and the position of the young people involved in different ways in nightlife settings and practices, who are also the protagonists.

In order to provide an adequate context for the comparison, we need to take into account the following conditions and limitations, as the case may be:

- As regards the selection of interviewees we should note that, even starting from a common criterion adopted by the workgroup, it is carried out in each country depending on who the most relevant agents are. The workgroup agreed on four general type profiles: the academic profile, the technical-political profile, the leisure industry-related profile, and

the nightlife user/participant/protagonist profile. The general agreement also considered the possibility of taking into account differences of a territorial, social or other nature that may be relevant in each context.

The final selection is autonomous and intentional in each country and, therefore, also different between countries. These differences become apparent both in the presence of one profile or another and in the number of approaches to each one of them.

The following table shows a comparison of the final interviewees, expressing the discursive configuration in each environment, in spite of the pre-established type positions.

TABLE 1. INTERVIEWEE PROFILE BY COUNTRY

METHOD	SPAIN	HUNGARY	ITALY	SWITZERLAND
Interviews	Academic Academic		Academic	
	Association technician Political advisory technician Government technician	Government technician	Political technician	Political technician
		Production of events industry	Industry	Production of events
		Protagonist	Protagonist	
Groups	Young students			Young organisers of events

As we may clearly see the academic profile is present both in Spain and in Italy, which can be expected to offer a higher general theoretical-analytical view on the subject, while it is lacking in Switzerland or Hungary. The technical profile is found in the four countries, although Spain includes a greater variety of approaches, both political and administrative (planning and management of youth policies) and associative.

The viewpoint of the leisure industry and/or production of events is lacking in Spain, while it is particularly obvious both in Hungary and in Switzerland, possibly reflecting a higher presence (or greater protagonism) in those countries of events (festivals) organised from specialised circuits, and not only the industry of consumption of general leisure.

Finally, all cases include the view of the protagonists, although with different formats: in Italy and Hungary by means of personal interviews, while in Spain and Switzerland in discussion groups. These groups are also different, as the Spanish ones focus on young participants in general, while in Switzerland the group comprises students who take part in the organisation of events.

- The second condition is that, beyond profile differences, one may clearly note that the qualitative material is scarce and limited in size and in its possibilities to reflect the existing variety of positions on the subject, and/or the points of view from each of those positions. Therefore, the results obtained should be understood as a basic general outline, and are not intended to be comprehensive or even globally representative of each country studied.
- Finally, we should underline that the comparison of discourses was performed upon the report previously made by the experts of each country, and not upon original materials. Naturally, this is not a limitation in itself, but refers to a secondary meta-analysis approach, which implies that the perspective can only focus on the issues dealt with in each report.

The information collected is based upon the accounts produced at interviews and discussion groups. In the former case, the account is individual and reflexive of the social position represented by the interviewees; in the latter, the account is collective, constructed by the conversing group.

The dynamics followed in both techniques and in all countries included a semi-directional routine; i.e., the purpose was not to find an open, totally spontaneous account, but rather the conversations were led from a basic guide of common contents. In any event, this guide was no more than a general conversation structure that should not condition either what was said or the focus on the topics dealt with in each section, but should steer all interviews and groups towards certain relevant aspects.

The main topics of this basic structure are as follows:

- *Expectations*
The expectations relating to nightlife as the potentiality and representations that young people attribute to this vital space-time, as determined by the meanings associated to aspects such as relationships, life projects and related values.
- *Personal and group relationships*
Personal relationships feature distinct characteristics in the context of youth nightlife compared with spaces and times other than leisure. These means of relationship (in group, couple. . .) evolve with society.
- *Behavioural patterns*
Understood as the rituals and practices associated to youth nightlife and nightlife practices: spatial itineraries (and movement), timetables and times that organise the night, related expenditure . . .
- *Risks and problems*
Risks are those associated to behaviours related to consumption, violence, accidents, risky sexual relationships... which are present, one way or another, in varying degrees of intensity, and which characterise spaces and times of youth nightlife.
- *Policies*
Agents and regulatory authorities (both in the public and private sector) who directly or indirectly regulate youth nightlife and who, somehow, have changed and transformed the behavioural patterns of young people and their relationship with nightlife space and time.

3. Youth nightlife references

Youth night leisure or nightlife is clearly a synonym in every country studied of a specific leisure model focused and based on going out (of the home space) and on being in other public or private, open or closed places, where it is understood that the main activity (and the purpose, as we shall see) is relational in nature and which includes music, dancing, conversing... There is no reference whatsoever to other types of models or activities of a cultural (cinema, theatre...), recreational (games...) or sports nature, for example. Therefore, although not expressly defined as being obvious, youth nightlife involves going out, with groups and friends, at night (mainly at weekends).

This model, on the other hand, entails a high level of general alert, which is present in the discourses of the four countries and which is reflected in the great analytical content of the phenomenon and the express statement of the media and institutional coverage. This alert is related to different aspects, with possible cultural and socio-economic differences, and is also expressed from different approaches. In general, the alert involves a certain degree of concern about the associated risks (detailed below) in leisure settings and times, although there are no references to concerns other than those of a specific nature; i.e. what happens at that specific time, rather than possible problems in the vital projection of young people in the medium-long term. The overall tone of the discourses tends to underline highly positive components and meanings of the ramifications of youth nightlife, although there is indeed the weight of concern and alert.

Against this backdrop, the main (common and differential) references highlighted in the reports are as follows.

- *Meanings, expectations and values*

All accounts give absolute prominence to nightlife in relationship models and socialisation processes. Although some (scarce) differences are mentioned according to age, in all cases it is positively valued as covering the relational and affective needs of young people, as well as in the main processes of social learning.

The relational prominence of nightlife leads towards this goal the account of its main meanings and expectations, specifically apparent in the group relationship. The group is the main reference which is present in (and presides over) the discourses in all countries, and the third necessary association with the idea of youth nightlife.

Group is understood as existing personal relationships, intended to seek a meeting in a specific place and at a specific time, but also relationships to be created and discovered. The idea of meeting, also present in almost every discourse, also refers to the idea of developing networks of personal relationships. One goes out, is, speaks (although may be talking nonsense) with the group, shares (experiences lived or being lived at the time) with the group and, complementarily, one drinks, listens to music... which, in some discourses, are explicitly mentioned as excuses to specify going out and being.

The accounts in Italy (particularly as regards males) and Spain also expressly mention the emotional and sexual component among the aspects to look for and share: the opportunity, which may or may not be achieved, of a sexual encounter and romance, by means of flirting or hooking up.

Particularly interesting is the idea, also common, of the identity-qualifying meaning attributed to nightlife. And this is so from the viewpoint that the approach of how nightlife contributes towards the development of the identity of young people is limited to the identity as a "young" person (social), while it seems to be considered a certain, more authentic, but also particular and exceptional identity. Nightlife is understood to be youth territory, and therefore, what is lived and shared in that space-time contributes to define what is and how a young person should be. Also mentioned is how it involves a process of generational segregation (it is not a territory for minors or adults) and, as a young space-time, it requires that who is (young), participates, generating processes of inclusion and exclusion between young people as well.

On the other hand, it is understood that the identity developed in nightlife is a more authentic identity that allows one to be oneself, which seems to imply that it is in this vital context where we may identify how one truly is, allowing one to express and demonstrate how one is out of the daily constraints of standardised settings. The account mentions, for example, the possibility to show aspects of one's personality which are not tolerated or tolerable in other settings. One understands that this refers to the lack of inhibition, for example, or to the possibility of exhibiting personal features that may be penalised or disapproved of in formal everyday environments (homosexuality, for example). Obviously, all this is associated to permissiveness and the limits in group rules.

The most interesting feature of this exceptional (although reiterated) identity-building projection is the fact that it is conceived as quite natural that the true -young- individual and collective identity is structured out of the common and formal social channels (from that idea of segregation) and exists in an intermittent fashion throughout the general vital process. Identity is spoken of in the context of the alienation of nightlife from the adult world (as a projection of the general world) and its rules. The expectation of leisure is the breaking of the rules and frontiers that characterise that general standardised world and, therefore, the autonomy and independence from it. Hence, the exceptional character (suspension) sought and involved in nightlife requires the break with daily responsibilities, with routines, with daily settings (that is why one has to go out and change) and represents an exhaust valve. Consequently, the idea of nightlife is the idea to create a different world, without the rules one does not like, and even a life different to the daily life that one does not like. In leisure, enjoyment also means to break the bad spirits, or what is the same, forgetting (suspending) daily businesses which lead to dissatisfaction.

It is no coincidence that, from this point of view, the approach to nightlife in the development of the life project is scarce and limited in the accounts. This issue is mentioned only in Italy and Switzerland, and only from the viewpoint of how the participation in social nightlife settings may contribute towards a professional and vital development related with the nightlife industry itself; i. e., a life project that is perpetuated as alien to that general standardised adult world.

Obviously all the accounts, within the framework of group issues and identity, also deem relevant the meaning of nightlife in terms of socialisation. They refer to socialisation based on sharing experiences and learning the rules and limits specific and inherent in this particular context. Nightlife contributes to establishing which are the rules of group behaviour (what is and is not tolerable in its development and operation), the rules of behaviour in the settings and contexts (what the group admits and expects), the rules of behaviour as regards consumptions (alcohol and other drugs, but also other objects and services such as those related to one's personal image and the selection of settings, places or music). The associated values are those of friendship and those shared in the group, including the value of the commitment associated to these spaces. The idea is that it is within the group where experimentation is conceived, and that the group itself marks the references (what happens with the said experimentation) and the limits that are tolerable (for example, with excesses). It is also taken for granted that the group is extremely demanding internally, and that the possibility and capability of controlling rules is efficient between peers.

These being the main references in the expectations and meanings of nightlife, the following sections contribute towards strengthening some of the generic ideas expressed. It is worth noting that these learning and socialisation components include

few references to the potential age differences between young people. There are only some references in Spain and Italy to the age differences as regards the size of the groups, the spaces and the consumption patterns, and to the greater presence of the learning component the younger the person.

TABLE 2. FUNDAMENTAL TOPICS IN THE ACCOUNTS ON EXPECTATIONS, BY COUNTRY

SPAIN	ITALY	SWITZERLAND	HUNGARY
Group= relationships (going out, drinking, hooking up, knowing, being...)	Group, ROMANCE, SEXUALITY (male) EMOTIONS The activities (music), spaces... are excuses	Meeting friends or other people Talking, sharing, nonsense talking, regardless of the listener Difficulty to systematise the "obvious" Sharing experiences, networks...	Group, meeting and socialisation. Development of the network of personal relationships
Identity: being young, growing up	"Being oneself", different to who you are when you have to be in controlled contexts (rules). Tolerance towards other behaviours Youth territory	Identity = youth territory (young people and night coupling) Generational segregation/ inclusion and exclusion processes	
	LIFE PROJECT: alien to the work and study (emotional) project WORK IN THE NIGHT SECTOR	LIFE PROJECT: learning organisation of events (young talents in the organisation of festivals)	
Autonomy/ independence (no control): break with the adult world	No adult control		
Exceptionality without responsibility: Breaking with routines Temporal dualisation Enjoyment: no bad spirits, forgetting sorrows	Breaking with routines, exhaust valve of daily roles "Suspension" Relationships and discharge of daily life the "other life" (for those who do not enjoy it)	Being out of home	
Experimentation and socialisation: learning limits and patterns/telling and sharing experiences	Socialisation, sharing values and experiences. The values are those of the group and friendship: testing the limits Learning acceptable limits in the group Social skills	Socialisation = meeting Corporal experimentation Learning the group rhythm (and management) Poorly understood commitment values	Learning rules: leadership and ways of going out well and being well in the contexts. Control between peers: great internal heterodemand
AGES: the older the age group, the greater consumption and space and group changes	Age conditions the context and guides. The younger the age group, the more the learning of limits exists		

• Personal relationships

Going a little deeper in the shaping of personal relationships, as we already mentioned there is a greater profusion of concepts and arguments in the Italian and Spanish accounts. They mention, for example, relational differences based on the size of the groups (the younger the age group, the larger the group), the development of internal roles within the groups and the existence of equal and democratic relationships. We mentioned above the idea of the emotional and sexual component in these accounts, which also considers the possibility of differentiating between more massive or more intimate relationships. More intimate relationships are understood to seek differential spaces, but, particularly at weekends, the expectation of a relationship is more general and massive. Primary groups seek a meeting (connection) with other groups or people, in order to expand relationship options and to amplify the vibrant feeling of being part of a shared whole. This more massive image is much more evident in the Swiss account, although it is not alien to that of the other countries.

The accounts unavoidably include the use of communication technologies (ICT). They are far from being used specifically for nightlife, and are not even its main space. Nevertheless, all accounts underline their contribution towards achieving the objectives of nightlife, from different standpoints. Firstly, because of their connective role, making it easier to meet and know spaces, settings and the tastes of friends and acquaintances. They allow events, images and trends to be shared immediately.

On the other hand, they also contribute towards an absolute and immediate exhibition of anything that is happening and is being lived, helping in its recreation, but also in the circulation of the most controversial and negative aspects that may be associated with these practices.

TABLE 3. MAIN TOPICS IN THE ACCOUNTS OF PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS, BY COUNTRY

SPAIN	ITALY	SWITZERLAND	HUNGARY
The younger the age, the larger the group Equitable and democratic relationships Roles within the group	During the week, going out is a more intimate activity; at weekends, it is more a group activity. The type of relationships intended also conditions the space (more intimate/ more massive)	Relationships with the vibration of being part of the atmosphere: a massive party environment Connecting and expanding options	
Own group and link to other groups	I		
ICT is not nightlife-specific, but contribute towards: Hanging out Exhibiting everything Knowing and sharing new things quickly	CT (telephone y social networks). Immediately sharing (images and photographs) Exhibiting one's image New ways of creating groups and networks	ICT: circulation and organisation of great events. Spread of general fears and suspicions	ICT: speed in knowing trends and friends' habits and tastes (fashions) Decrease in the depth of relationships and increase in communication through images

• Spaces and times

Along with the relational component, the space-time component is one of the most relevant in the implicit definition in all the discourses on leisure. Indeed, time and space define and frame youth nightlife and make up the supporting environment for their development, as well as the setting for the most controversial activities made explicit.

The accounts regarding leisure spaces and times are preceded in each country by some specific arguments. For instance in Spain the discourse on the exceptional nature and the phenomenon of temporal dualisation in young people's life is intensified. In Italy, interviewees insist on the idea of a youth territory, characterised by the idea of how the selection of spaces involves a certain

cultural distinction between some groups and others, depending on where and with whom they are shared. In Hungary, they also mention this idea of distinction, but from a more generic point of view that stresses the creation of brands or more or less desirable or popular spaces. In the case of Switzerland, the discourse is particularly vehement as regards the idea of how space is the main flashpoint in the conceptualisation and experience of youth nightlife, from the idea of the fight for the space and the negative overexposure and media labelling. In sum, these approaches, more or less present in the different discourses, place this space-time component at the core of the nightlife model.

In this respect it also seems that the models mentioned in the accounts may include some differences between countries, although not enough as to describe in depth differences that are very likely to exist in the most characteristic practices and ways in each of the social and cultural contexts they represent. In the cases of Switzerland and Hungary special attention is paid to the development of events and parties organised both by private promoters and, for example, by student associations as a means to raise funds for other purposes. With regard to this type of formats of parties or events, the account mentions the idea of prices and the increasing cost, as well as the potential more or less guaranteed accessibility to certain spaces, or to the changes in settings depending on the given trend.

Meanwhile, in Italy and Spain there seems to be a greater variety in discourse as regards meeting, in public or private spaces, in or outdoors, but in less organised and formalised contexts, which does not avoid the aspects of fashion or economic distinction. In the case of Spain, the reference to binge drinking *botellón* is paradigmatic as a model of hanging out/meeting/consuming which materialises as a massive concentration, outdoors in public spaces, where attendees provide themselves with drinks and music. This model appears in the discourses as something consolidated and recognised, needing no explanation whatsoever, and which, therefore, is not described or mentioned any further as regards its implications in terms of relationships, consumptions, behaviours, etc. In fact, the references deal with the arguments on other issues covered, such as its role as a starting point for the subsequent itinerary of going out, particularly among younger people, whereby it is a meeting point with one's own group and with other groups and/or people, and where they start –and in some cases they also finish– consuming alcohol or other beverages, basically for economic reasons (for saving). Other countries mention concentrations and noise, but there are no references to a specific model such as this.

In spite of the lack of references on owned and/or self-managed spaces, and what this also means in terms of policies, in Spain they also mention a model –which may not be widespread but which exists in some territories with different names– of places with different features that young people use as nightlife meeting places (*lonjas*). This type of place meets a double purpose of being one's own and private space, which users organise, but not with the aim of making money.

In relation to the space-time component, all cases also make explicit the idea of the nightlife itinerary; i.e., the movement during the night hours, which follows specific sequences between settings (and probably some activities) as the night progresses. Italian and Hungarian discourses mention the need of movement arising from the uncomfotability of massive concentrations, which force the attendees to move quickly from one place to another (and which also condition the models of consumption). The idea of comfort does not explicitly appear in Italian and Spanish accounts, possibly because of that implicit difference referred to above in organised or not organised settings, which provides for the emergence, for example in Spain, of the idea of appropriation of the (public) space, beyond the idea of who uses or shares it at other times.

In general, the initial stages of the itinerary are specified in meeting points, where people talk and drink alcohol. In Hungary, this first stage even includes some other activity of cultural leisure (theatre, cinema. . .). From then on, movements are diversified in parties, dancing, discotheques. . . variables between countries and groups of young people, also covering different timetables that may run until the following morning. References are made to the deferral of the starting time.

Indeed, the transit through the itineraries (starting at one place, with specific purposes and then going on to other places) expresses in all cases the implicit differences by age and, partly, by gender. These transits define types of relationships, moments and pace, which are understood to be more specific, especially at the beginning, for minors and girls (planning to meet in order to get prepared and dressed, for example) and, in the end, for males and those who have fewer responsibilities and, therefore, may stretch the leisure time out more.

As regards the group, they also mention the importance of spaces which are recognisable among peers, as places where there is no need to prepare meeting up and which have a certain identity or existing brand for those who share it.

There are also common references to the implications of the laws related to the consumption of tobacco in the itineraries, the pace and the spaces, specific of smokers, referring to a greater use of open environments, and in many cases involving higher levels of tension due to the disturbances caused to the neighbourhood.

TABLE 4. MAIN TOPICS IN THE ACCOUNTS ON SPACES AND TIMES, BY COUNTRY

SPAIN	ITALY	SWITZERLAND	HUNGARY
Vital temporal dualisation	“Cultural” distinction: decision on where, depending on who, what music... Youth territory	Space as flashpoint: dispute for space	Space as a brand and definition of itineraries
		The model is the party: small and large events Search for beautiful and visually impacting spaces	Organised spaces Outdoor and indoor spaces (tobacco)
		Increasing cost and accessibility	Change in places and spaces: brand and fashion
Space-time itineraries. Sequences and relative variety	Movement. Depending on the time, day of the week, sex and age.	Concentration and lack of comfort: obligation to go quickly (you cannot stay too long) Problem of closing times, conditions annoyance for lack of options	Quick pace for lack of comfort. Changing places
Public and private spaces (sometimes including homes) Public space that becomes owned (appropriation) Own places (smoking law)	Ordinary and trendy (specific) commercial spaces	Different spaces, different relationships and pace Particularly private spaces (problems with closing times)	Diverse spaces to drink, dance or mixed Fashionable parties: tourism Diversified spaces according to ages and styles (even in the same place) Spaces for the most intimate people where they meet without arranging a date
Different movements depending on the time of the day, season. Difference depending on the age: later in the day or more at night	Timetables depend on responsibilities (the older, the greater control)		Delay in the times of going out and starting parties
Friday and Saturday and... Sunday to rest	Going out on weekdays in addition to weekends.	Going out according to the event organised during the week. Different roles for leisure spaces	The weekend is special, particularly for those who do not meet during the week The most common
Pace: Meeting (drinking), public spaces, clubs	Girls and younger people start at home. Meeting (drinking) Scheduled pace throughout the night		What is done every hour, including cultural leisure
CRISIS: fewer occasions to go out or lower cost (lower quality beverages)	CRISIS AND EVOLUTION: no change in the days to go out, but in the way of managing the occasion (lower cost)	(CRISIS?) HIGHER COST	

In all cases, nightlife is circumscribed to the weekend, particularly Friday and Saturday night, with differences between countries. Nevertheless, it is worth noting the reference, absent in Italy and Spain, to going out on weekdays (especially in groups), mainly regarding the existence of events or parties which are made explicit in the cases of Hungary and Switzerland.

Finally, as regards the space and time constraints, we should highlight that, although Switzerland mentions the increasing cost of nightlife, the economic component is much higher in the Spanish and Italian accounts, where the economic crisis emerges as a feature to be taken into account in the analysis. In both cases, the crisis has a greater influence on how the night out is organised and managed rather than on an increase or decrease. This means that people go out as always, but they spend less, which in some cases involves a decrease in certain quality standards (for example, in beverages or the ways of consuming alcohol).

- **Patterns of behaviour: Linked to times, spaces and risks**

As regards the behavioural patterns, interviewees specifically mention the consumption of alcohol and other drugs. It is true that the very structure of the interviews highlighted this issue, although, regardless of this, it is present in many of the arguments used, both in the reason and excuses to go out as well as in the analysis of risks.

In general, the consumption of alcohol is deemed inherent to going out, in all cases, while the consumption of other drugs is recognised as something exceptional in some way or not necessary, regardless of its real extension. It is also generally understood that, among the relative rules, at night a certain degree of freedom and tolerance is acknowledged as regards these consumptions which, somehow, are also magnified by those who underline the negative aspects of nightlife.

This consumption is understood, in a collateral and residual way in the discourses, as part of the economy of the consumption of nightlife, controlled and promoted by club owners and/or promoters, conditioning and modelling, in some way, the forms adopted by the rhythm of the night.

TABLE 5. MAIN TOPICS IN THE ACCOUNTS ON BEHAVIOURAL PATTERNS, BY COUNTRY

SPAIN	ITALY	SWITZERLAND	HUNGARY
		Consumption in general: behaviour of promoters as if addressing a “cash machine”	Varying alcohol consumption rituals: before or after arriving at the place of destination, when meeting ... Depending on ages and generation (fashion)
Consumption: substances Other consumptions: economic conditions Conditions and commercial modelling	Alcohol above all Commercial adaptation of values	Control from event organisers Focus only on vandalism and the consumption of drugs. Economy of night and freedom associated to spaces	Certain relationship with the consumption of drugs, but this is not “natural”

- **Risks and disturbances (scandals)**

The main risks associated to the nightlife space-time deal with the consumption of substances. The Italian account, and above all the Swiss account, blatantly underline the excessive presence of the risk component in the general collective imagination, amplified by the media. Criminalisation and stigmatisation are explicitly mentioned, creating a rather bad reputation both for spaces and for the leisure model itself, and reducing its components to the most problematic and controversial aspects. Meanwhile, young people (at least most of them) are understood to place themselves in this setting from the position of accepting and acknowledging the risk, but with the ability to manage it with responsibility.

The debate is also understood to be static, and does not change even though the circumstances may do so, in spite of the fact that the higher or lower probability of problems may be conditioned by social and environmental issues. For example, the availability of spaces versus concentration or the economic ability to facilitate the choice of the objects to be consumed (quality), and even the social changes relating to the elements of inter-generational authority and self-control.

Among the risks highlighted, the consumption of alcohol receives absolute prominence, with little more being made explicit other than that the fact that, according to the discourse of the young people involved, its consumption is controlled by the group rules, it is part of the ritual and can be relaxed. The adult discourse is deemed to magnify and generalise this issue, just like residual consumptions of other drugs that, as the case may be, may generate anti-social behaviours (Hungary), in spite of contributing towards some of the rhythms and itineraries (depending on the socio-demographic features such as age, gender, economic availability. . .).

Only the Italian case makes a specific reference to the increase of the consumption of cocaine and multi-drug consumption, and the decrease in the use of illegal drugs in public spaces because of police controls.

The risks related to sexuality or violence arise in a residual way and are only mentioned. They exist to the extent that consumptions generate higher turmoil, and they refer to the later night hours.

Obviously, the core of the debate, especially mentioned in Spain (binge drinking botellón) and Hungary, yet present in all cases, is the controversy relating to the occupation of public spaces and the disturbances generated in the neighbourhood, particularly due to the noise.

In some cases, interviewees mention the incidence of exceptional catastrophic events, which are scarcely relevant in the general discourse.

TABLE 6. MAIN TOPICS IN THE ACCOUNTS ON RISKS, BY COUNTRY

SPAIN	ITALY	SWITZERLAND	HUNGARY
	Criminalisation from the media	Stigmatisation and criminalisation at the core of the discourse on young people and the night. Bad reputation of spaces Redundancy and reduction of risks and problems. Insistence of the media Young people place themselves in a space of risk, pleasure, participation and responsibility	
The risk increases for changing social and environmental reasons: lower authority of formal spaces, spatial concentration and spatial and age segregation Greater permissiveness in adults to certain behavioural patterns		The debate is closed to risky practices: IT IS STATIC, it does not change Expanded risk due to the lack of available spaces	
Risk of deterioration of the conditions of consumption due to the crisis (alcohol on tap)		Risk due to cost and availability	Risks due to crowding
CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL AND DRUGS SELF-MANAGED BY GROUP RULES (learning) Different alcohol by gender High and widespread consumption from an adult perception	CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL. Drugs by functionality. Increase of cocaine Consumption at home due to police controls Multi- and poly-drug consumption Gender, age, ethnic differences ... Control by peers (rules)	Poor image in terms of binge and intoxication. Problems controlled by on-site non-profit organisations. Widespread worry According to young people: Consumption of alcohol as part of the ritual, controlled and relaxed. The extreme character portrayed is not real	The ways of consuming should not be different from those allowed by the group (betrayal) Binge for financial reasons Asocial behaviours arising from the consumption of unknown drugs
Sexuality: lack of control of problems	Underestimated		Sexuality with no control: males who go beyond the limits
Driving (oneself or with others)			
Violence arising from the consumption of narcotic drugs, in the late hours of the night			Violence: theft
High perception of risk: objective knowledge of risks			Knowledge of the risks. "I am in control" discourse.
Noise Different assessment between neighbours or parents (according to roles)			Noise and disturbance. Being outdoors (tobacco)

The general discourse on policies, however, appeals to the lack of feasible alternatives focused not only on nightlife criminalisation. Expressed in different ways, the relative policy is deemed to be based in an underassessment of nightlife as a type of culture, understanding that culture (high culture) is something else, based on the stress of negative aspects (residual or ancillary, according to the accounts).

In fact, in Hungary interviewees state to be unaware of the existence of night-time policies, so that, in all cases, the said policies are limited to repressive and restrictive issues, aimed at interfering with the natural rhythm of night. These are regulations and controls, both in relation to the consumption of substances and club opening times and conditions and, in general, to the health and safety conditions of the spaces.

TABLE 7. MAIN TOPICS IN THE ACCOUNTS ON POLICIES, BY COUNTRY

SPAIN	ITALY	SWITZERLAND	HUNGARY
Repressive and restrictive approach	Crisis of the Italian night due to the poor image and the stress on negative aspects. Regulating policies in leisure spaces: interference	Distance between the “high culture” and the concept of the culture of night (downgraded) and not promoted as real culture	Unknown night policies
Control: consumptions (tobacco, alcohol)/ automotive/closing times/use of public spaces/crowding	Control: traffic laws Health and safety conditions in spaces and clubs Police controls	Police control and action. “Young people’s ideas of good practice differ from the concepts and accounts managed by adults”. Actions relating to health and safety (control) in spite of the moral panic promoted by the media	Actions of control (consumption of alcohol)
“Alternative” policies: setting up specific spaces (more transport and emergencies) Policies on health conditions and safety (including consumption of substances)	Policies on health and safety conditions (agent support on site) in crowding	Expansion of the cultural role of promoted public spaces (state funded venues) Scarcity in rural areas	Search for alternative spaces so as not to cause disturbance Transport policies
Reduction of “youth policies” (a vague generic concept between educational, participative ideas...)			Experiences of participative spaces with lower consumptions of alcohol Leisure spaces and programs which offer something more than alcohol
Need of policies that foster the participation of young people Distance between young people and institutional structures	Proposal of potential actions intended to empower free time and leisure by means of participation and development of entertainment from creativity	Need to include policies on night as full-fledged cultural policies Distance between young people and institutional structures	Need to work with socialising entities in the spaces where young people move
Alternatives based more on the idea of not disturbing (re-editing spaces) than on the prevention of risks	Little experience with self-managed own spaces	Difficulties to find spaces to organise events	

Some alternative actions are recognised in some contexts (in Spain they refer to disappeared or decimated youth policies) intended to promote alternative spaces, subsidies for and the creation of cultural spaces and/or of logistic support and infrastructures aimed at reducing risks (health support entities, alternative transport, emergencies...).

In general, these alternatives are understood more as non-disturbance actions than real policies to promote the participation and empowerment of youth cultural forms and, particularly, of nightlife leisure. All accounts refer to the need to expand this participation factor, though taking into account the difficulty of creating a link between young people and the institutional entities they mistrust.

4. Between what is common and what is different

In spite of the apparent continuum in many discourse references, we are unable to establish clear, descriptive differences in the specific materialisations of the nightlife models existing in the different environments studied. Some of the mentioned elements may target the said differences which, in sum, would also point to cultural and social differences between countries.

It is evident that the most theoretical and formalised discourse is found in the accounts from Spain and Italy, partly due to the interviewees profiles which, in any event, may express a greater presence of the academic representatives in national discourses. Socio-demographic differences are taken into account a little more in these two countries than in the rest, above all as regards the pace and models of consumption, while more reference is made in Switzerland and Hungary to internal territorial differences.

In the case of Hungary, interviewees mentioned a differential aspect (which is also present in Spain but is not underlined in the discourse), namely leisure tourism, expressing the interference and bad image it has in some instances.

As we also already mentioned, there seems to be an important difference in the Swiss and Hungarian cases as opposed to Spain and Italy, in the relevance of organised events in contrast to more informal activities. The Hungarian case even mentions some references to the space of formal culture when going out, which is lacking in the discourse of the other countries.

Finally, and apart from what is stated explicitly, we should highlight at least two invisible aspects in the accounts.

Firstly, it is noteworthy that the generalisation of nightlife and identity and socialising components seem to leave offstage, also in the accounts, any model of leisure other than going out. Obviously, the described model corresponds to the most widespread trend which generates the greatest anxiety, at least in the adult world, and which presides over the media images on the subject. There are, however, new growing trends, at least in Spain, which tell of the need to invest leisure time in doing nothing and resting. At least from the point of view of the future evolution of these trends, or of those of the most technological and home-made leisure, we miss a reference to a certain dynamic or transformation in the means and ways of organising leisure time and space, even at night, which would entail new ways of socialisation and identity, and which would focus more on individualisation and less on the frequency of going out.

Secondly, we noticed that the idea of autonomy and self-management/organisation of nightlife does not cogently consider the consumerist feature monitored by the adult world (in the economic case). There is extensive literature on this topic, on the relevance of the consumption constraint factor in shaping the means and ways to articulate leisure, particularly at night. This constraint is all the more relevant when the model refers more to organised events and the use of commercially-operated premises and, in any event, makes us question, at least, the idea of independence and autonomy underlying the highlighted expectations and meanings, and leads us to a certain perceptive and discursive contradiction in this regard.