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Some Reflections from and about Lisbon Nightlife

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Article abstract

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The Biosecuritization of the Tourist City: Some Reflections from and about Lisbon Nightlife

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Keywords

COVID-19, biosecuritization, pandemic politics, tourist city, Lisbon

Introduction

> *I'm waiting for the night to fall*
> *I know that it will save us all*
> *When everything's dark, keeps us from the stark*
> *Reality*
> ("Waiting for the Night", Depeche Mode, 2006).

The impact of COVID-19 on the world's economy points out a challenging recovery, especially for the tourism-related industries, which have been significantly affected by drastic border policies, and extensive lockdown periods. The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) estimates a global loss of US$ 935 billion in export revenues in 2020 alone, driving a loss in global GDP of -1.5% to -2.8%, and over 120 million direct tourism jobs at risk around the world (UNWTO 2020a). UNWTO World Tourism Barometer (March 2021) indicates an 85% plunge in international tourist arrivals to Europe (UNWTO 2021), while the third *European Travel Commission Quarterly Report 2020* confirms that Mediterranean destinations have been the European regions most affected by the pandemic crisis (ETC 2020). At global and national levels, such dramatic figures for the tourism industries demonstrate the failure to open cities to tourism in summer 2020 (also known as 'the lost summer').

There is no doubt that the successful recovery of the tourism industry at the local, national, and global levels is strictly related to the efficient contention and mitigation of the COVID-19 pandemic globally. Moreover, it is also related to the capacity of tour operators, governments, and other actors to build a solid trust among tourists. Thus, adequate *health*, *hygiene* and *safety* standards arise as key priorities for every country, according to the UNWTO's *Tbilisi Declaration: Actions for a Sustainable Recovery of Tourism* (September 17,

2020)[1]. The term 'sustainable' in the *Tbilisi Declaration* is, however, not incidental as the World Tourism Organization advocates making international travel *safe* again by also realigning the sector towards a more sustainable and inclusive future (UNWTO 2020b). In this sense, UNWTO report *Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism* provides both governments and businesses with a comprehensive set of measures designed to help them open tourism up again safely, seamlessly, and responsibly (UNWTO 2020c).

In line with this, several new technologies have been developed to enhance biosafety within the global travel industry (such as the European Digital COVID Certificate), underlining the need for biosecurity risk management in urban contexts (Ingram 2005, Herrick 2016, Melly and Hanrrahan 2020). The biosecuritization of urban tourist destinations (Garcia-Ruiz *et al.* 2021) emerges as indispensable for the short and mid-term survival and recovery of key economic sectors of world urban tourist destinations during and after the pandemic (United Nations 2020). In turn, the summer of 2020 allowed us to witness how the biosecuritization of urban tourist destinations applies to many European cities, especially in southern Europe, where the expansion of urban tourism and its related activities and industries (i.e., short-term rentals, hospitality, and nightlife industry) became 'life-jackets' for overcoming the social and economic impacts carried over from the last Great Recession (2008-2014) (Benítez-Aurioles 2020, Perles-Ribes *et al.* 2020,; Sequera and Nofre 2020).

What does the Biosecuritization of the Tourist City Really Mean?

The set of sanitary measures against COVID-19, such as mobility restrictions, lockdowns, and nighttime curfews that have been approved during the current pandemic, have shown us how central (i) tourism, hospitality, and nightlife industries are in southern European economies, and (ii) how important culture, arts, entertainment, and leisure are for the social life and wellbeing of many young and adult people in Europe (e.g., Laughey 2006, Hannam and Roy 2013, Behr *et al.* 2014, Haslam 2015, van der Hoeven and Hitters 2019, Nofre 2021). However, in the COVID-19 most impacted world regions, the instauration of the so-called 'pandemic politics' (Dionne and Turkmen 2020), or, in other words, the biosecuritization of the city, pose enormous challenges for the local tourism, hospitality, and nightlife industries. Among many challenges, we might point out (i) the likely tension between a dramatic digitalization of the tourism industry and the slow adjustment of the different typologies of tourism consumers to such a radical change, with special emphasis on tourists with very low cultural skills; (ii) the slow adjustment of the tourism, hospitality and nightlife industries to accommodate new consumption trends after the pandemic crisis; (iii) the maintenance of some of the restrictive COVID-19 related measures (both sanitary and not sanitary) that could jeopardize the survival of some sub-sectors such as, for example, the nightlife industry; and (iv) the implementation of new models of governance of the 'touristy city' facing the increasing

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1 See full declaration at: https://www.unwto.org/actions-for-a-sustainable-recovery-of-tourism

biosecuritization of urban tourist destinations across the globe (e.g., Nofre *et al.* 2020, Vargas 2020, Chebli and Ben Said 2020, Malhotra 2021).

The term 'biosecuritization' is relatively novel in Social Sciences. However, Erik Baekkeskov (2022) points out that "since about 1990, public health scholars and agencies have been increasingly concerned with general biosecurity linked to numerous disease threats, both natural and man-made". In particular, New York's 9/11 in 2001, the anthrax mailings to several offices in the US Congress in late 2001, and the outbreak of SARS pandemic (2002-2004) led to the World Health Organization and many national public health agencies to reinforce their biorisk preparedness and response tools, which were intended to reduce "the likelihood of a given population becoming infected" (Donaldson 2008, p.1556). Being that population-related, biosecurity emerges as a complex arena intersected by governmentality and biology; questions of risk, uncertainty, and indeterminacy; circulation and mobility; and geopolitical concerns with the interaction between nation-states, processes of globalization, post-colonialism, and modes of inequality (Barker *et al.* 2013).

For the purposes of this article, we define *urban biosecuritization* as a set of legislative responses (in the form of laws, norms, regulations, resolutions, and decrees) and public-led strategies that can quickly be activated in order to minimize biosecurity risks in urban contexts, especially in times of a pandemic, as those implemented in most worldwide cities since the outbreak of COVID-19. Certainly, such an enormous institutional effort to keep our cities as *COVID-free urban tourist destinations* demands the avoidance of any potential threat that may jeopardize the recovery of the local economy of the 'tourist city'. However, such a *zealous* governance of the 'tourist city' during the pandemic has severe consequences not only in the hospitality and leisure industries but also for particular local communities. This is the case of Portugal, whose economy was highly dependent on tourism until the outbreak of COVID-19. In this sense, we must note that the tourism industry represented 15.4% of Portugal's gross domestic product in 2019 (Government of Portugal 2020), the hospitality industry generated around 2% of the national GDP in 2019 (AHRESP 2017, p.13), and both (tourism and hospitality) employed 320,800 individuals in the same year (PORDATA 2021).

Moreover, Portugal's nightlife industry generated 2 billion euros annually, representing 1% of Portugal's gross domestic product in 2019[2], and employed (both directly and indirectly) 140,000 individuals in 2019[3]. This data shows that tourism, hospitality, and nightlife industries were not marginal within the nation's GDP structure. Nevertheless, after two years of the COVID-19 pandemic outbreak, they are the most affected economic activities by the range of pandemic-related restrictions that have been implemented since March 2020. According to the Portuguese Institute of Statistics, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on tourism, hospitality, and commercial nightlife industries has been tremendous. Overnight stays of non-residents in the country dropped by -70.1% in 2020 (INE 2021a), the national tourism industry

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2 See: «Manifesto Juntos Pela Noite». Available at: http://juntospelanoite.pt/
3 Ib.

only generated revenues of € 8 billion in 2020, which represents a -57% year-on-year decrease (Ib.), and circa 60% of venues had been forced to close permanently at the time of writing (September 2021), according to Mr. José Gouveia, President of the Portuguese Discotheques National Association (Malheiros 2021).

Objectives

This article takes Lisbon (Portugal) as a case study to examine its biosecuritization strategies resulting from the current pandemic. We review here the implementation of restrictive COVID-19 related measures adopted to prevent and reduce the spread of the coronavirus and its (in)direct consequences to culture, economy, and wellbeing. Thus, the first part of the article examines the first strategy carried out by national and local administrations to preserve Lisbon as a COVID-free urban destination. We examine how this first strategy was primarily based on strengthening the repressive, punitive, criminalizing policies against suburban working-class youths ('the perilous') within the scope of guaranteeing a COVID-free city for tourists ('the untouchables'). In the second part of the article, we examine the (in)governance of the urban night of Lisbon during the current pandemic. In the last section, we argue how the range of pandemic-related restrictions, lockdowns, and nighttime curfews have shown us how central culture, arts, entertainment, and are for the cultural and social life of many young and adult people in Europe but also, especially for their socio-emotional wellbeing.

Methods

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic meant a challenge of an enormous magnitude to the ethnographic work that we have carried out during the last years. Acknowledging the imposed limits, we adapted our data collection to keep the methodological and ethical standards while conducting a fully committed ethnography during the pandemic. We performed this study paying special attention to our health and security, and that of our informants. In addition, we had to adapt the conduct of our ethnography to the changing pandemic situation and to the changing set of constraints.. In this sense, we embraced the outstanding insights proposed by the anthropology of medicine and frequently found on public health-related ethnography in/of pandemics such as HIV/AIDS and Ebola (e.g., Farmer 1996, Hewlett and Hewlett 2007, Stellmack *et al.* 2018, Keck *et al.* 2019). As Stellmack *et al.* (2018 p. 3) argue, "a long-term participant observation approach may not be feasible in periods of an acute public health crisis, but the anthropological method is flexible and adaptable." Thus, our *emergency ethnography* has therefore been based on what DeHart (2020) points out about the need of exploring new "analytical and methodological strategies for addressing the current contingencies of research (im)mobility as well as illuminating important elements of our shifting global reality."

The *emergency ethnography* carried out by the authors[4] of this article comes to complete the in-depth ethnography of 'the night' conducted in Bairro Alto and Cais do Sodré (see below Figure 1) from January 2010 to March 2020. The Government of Portugal declared the first State of Emergency and ruled on the lockdown of nightlife on March 18th 2020, what meant a radical *interruption* of our fieldwork, and the need to embrace an on-line ethnography (Hine 2015) and a document research, with special focus on legal and ruling documents.
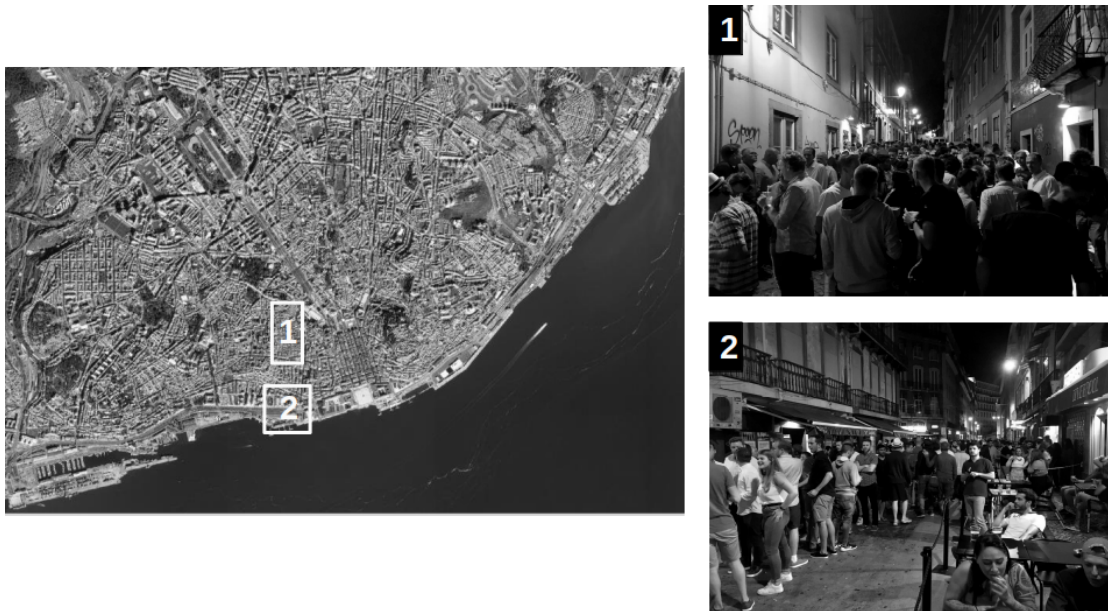

Figure 1. The picture on the left: location of case study areas, Bairro Alto (1) and Cais do Sodré (2), Lisbon. Pictures (pre-pandemic) on the right: (1) Erasmus Corner in Bairro Alto in September 2019; and (2) Pink Street in Cais do Sodré in September 2019. Source: Picture on the left taken from Google Earth in 2019. Photographs 1 and 2 were taken by the lead author in September 2019.

In this paper we pay special attention to the evolution on the *ad hoc* policy making regarding COVID-19 at both local and national level. In doing so, we evaluate how these decisions were translated into legislation affecting local tourism, hospitality, and nightlife industries as well as the presence of certain people on the nocturnal leisure areas of Lisbon. We present here our *legal documental analysis* (Bens and Vetter 2018), a sociopolitical review that grasps the interactions or causation relations that were (no)negotiated and imposed vertically in context of the first COVID-19 outbreak. The critical analysis of the consecutive decrees, in combination with the para-fact described below, allowed us to identify the

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4 This study is part of the research conducted by the LXNIGHTS Research Group, a very active interdisciplinary group focusing on nightlife and nightlife industries. For more information ad publications, check https://lxnights.hypotheses.org

asymmetries on the governance between the difference industries as well as on the different forms of biopolitical control over the (racialized) young people of the lower class suburbs and the (mostly white) tourists consuming in the city center.

In order to contextualize this socio-historical situation, and continuing with this critical ethnography (Carespecken 1996), we also consulted official statistical databases[5] concerning the three industries ahead mentioned. This data was just consulted using the frequency engines available on the different sites, as researchers had no access to the microdata. These *para-facts* were used here to provide a wilder context to the reader, while framing the situation of these industries before the pandemic and during the ongoing times.

Since the adoption of the emergency ethnography and continuing with the contextualization and illustrating the mediated public opinion, we conducted a systematic media clipping, covering national and local media (*circa* 300 articles in daily press, TV, and on-line mediums). Content analysis of these materials (Reason and García 2007) was carried out with three major categories in mind: (i) media *watchdog* role facing legislation; (ii) depiction of industries affected by the lockdowns and sanitary measures, and (ii) portrait of (often racialized) suburban youngsters and foreign visitors and their leisure practices on nocturnal times. This concomitant *research step* complements our sociopolitical analysis, while reviewing the agenda setting during the whole process. The different positions adopted by the media are included here in order to complete the description of the social context.

Next section examines how national and local administrations opted by strengthening the repressive, punitive, and criminalizing policies against youths from the working-class suburbs of Lisbon to preserve the city center as a COVID-free urban destination.

Building up a COVID-Free Tourist City: 'The Untouchables' and 'The Perilous'

Some days before the declaration of the State of Emergency in Portugal (Presidential Decree No. 14-A/2020, of March 18), the Portuguese government approved the Decree-Law No. 10-A/2020 of March 13, which declared the nationwide lockdown of nightlife venues, severe restrictions for restaurants and bars, and the suspension of all recreational, leisure, entertainment, cultural, and artistic activities. Gatherings in public spaces were also restricted to a maximum of five non-cohabiting people. On May 2, 2020, with the end of the last extension of the State of Emergency, Portugal passed to the State of Calamity, which included a three-phase deconfinement plan running until early June (Council of Ministers Resolution, No. 33-C/2020, of April 30).

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5 Data bases used in this research:
(a) Tourism Statistics Database, from Portugal's National Statistics Institute (INE 2021b, 2021b); (b) Tourism Satellite Account for Portugal, provided by the Government of Portugal (2020); (c) "Employed population: Total and by sector of economic activity. Accommodation, hospitality and similar", provided by PORDATA – Database for Contemporary Portugal (PORDATA 2021).

However, since early May 2020, COVID-19 transmission increased in Lisbon Metropolitan Area especially amid its working-class suburbs. To avoid uncontrolled transmission between local residents of the suburbs and tourists – who would arrive at the beginning of the first summer of the 'new normality' –, the Portuguese government declared compulsory home confinement for the whole Lisbon Metropolitan Area, although the city center – or, in other words, 'the Tourist City' – remained unaffected (Council of Ministers Resolution, No. 40-A / 2020). Because of the high social and spatial segregation amid Lisbon's central areas and its suburbs working-class (Malheiros and Vala 2004, Raposo 2006, Pato and Pereira 2016), it would not be risky to affirm that such an institutional decision had a clear racial and class bias. The Lisbon City Council decision (no. 77/P/2020, of June 9) reinforced this class-based segregation. The cancellation of the city's popular festivities, which were scheduled for the month of June, was also included in this decision. The text also ordered compulsory closure of grocery stores in the whole city at 4 pm and traditional bars (which are highly frequented by lifelong elderly residents) at 7 pm. However, the decision did not include tourism-oriented *Fado restaurants*, which are very frequented by both tourists and the local middle and upper-middle classes. According to Decision no. 77/P/2020, of June 9, they were allowed to stay open until midnight, although *Fado* houses and *Fado* restaurants, like many other tourism-oriented hospitality venues, often remained open after midnight without police intervention, as we witnessed during our fieldwork. This situation highlighted a double ruling, with zealously strict police patrols controlling the compliance with the COVID-19 restrictions on grocery stores and local-frequented bars vs. an army of "untouchables" ignoring the same restrictions with no police supervision.

On June 10, 2020, Portugal's National Day (and only one day after the Lisbon City Council approved the segregationist compulsory home confinement), Lisbon Tourism Association, a domestic lobby that counts on the Lisbon City Council as a partner, launched a promotional video entitled "Lisbon woke up," announcing "to anyone who wants to hear that it is ready to welcome visitors". The Lisbon Tourism Association Executive Director, Paula Oliveira, stated that "[...] after the closure caused by COVID-19, the city announces to anyone who wants to hear that it is ready to welcome visitors […]. This video reflects the joy of Lisbon at being able to open its doors again safely, finally reactivating tourism" (*Público* 2020). This promotional video represents, in fact, the starting point for a new tourism branding campaign portraying Lisbon as a COVID-free urban tourist destination. In fact, Luís Araújo, the President of the Portuguese National Tourist Authority (*Turismo de Portugal, I.P.*), had already stated a month and a half earlier that the country needed to work towards "building trust" as he hoped for a return to tourism growth by differentiating tourist activities that comply with hygiene and cleaning requirements (Marques Pereira 2020). Such a marketing action carried out by the city's tourism lobby had positive results despite the pandemic situation at the beginning of the summer of 2020. The city received hundreds of tourists daily from July 2020 to September 2020. According to data from the National Institute of Statistics of Portugal, about 740,000 tourists spent at least one night in some tourist accommodation establishments in the Lisbon metropolitan area from June 2020 to September 2020 (INE 2021a).

Doubtlessly, such an enormous institutional effort to keep Lisbon as a *COVID-free city* demanded avoiding any potential threat that might jeopardize the recovery of urban tourism. For that very same reason, an extremely punitive *institutional-civic front* (Aramayona and Nofre 2021), with intense participation from television outlets and newspapers, emerged in the public opinion sphere by criminalizing the young people (especially from the suburbs working-class), accusing them of acting against the main national interest – i.e., not public health but the national economic recovery. Media started reporting how suburban working-class young people continued to drink on their *ghetto* streets and that police violence might, therefore, in some way be justified (e.g., Lusa 2020a, Rainho 2020). Also, as part of this punitive *institutional-civic front*, the Portuguese government reinforced the confinement of Lisbon working-class suburbs, including those located in its metropolitan area (Council of Ministers Resolution, No. 45-B / 2020, of June 22). Furthermore, article 5.B.6 of this resolution stated that, in the Metropolitan Area of Lisbon, the consumption of alcoholic beverages in public space was prohibited, with the exception of restaurant terraces. This meant that one of the most popular socialization practices in the working-class suburbs of Lisbon (drinking a beer on the street with friends) got prohibited.

Figure 2. COVID-19 related street ad, by Lisbon City Council. June 2020. Source: Lisbon City Council, official Twitter account. Twit posted on: 26/06/2020.

However, bad housing conditions in working-class suburbs of Lisbon (Carmo et al. 2015, Malheiros et al. 2016, Mendes 2020), together with pandemic mental stress among the younger population, involved growing breaches of compulsory home confinement in the working-class suburbs of Lisbon (e.g., Sapo.pt 2020). In parallel with it, the expansion of illegal

parties in domestic spaces at late night hours, and gatherings of dozens drinking in several belvederes and viewpoints of the city center such as in Miradouro de Santa Catarina, Miradouro de São Pedro Alcântara, Miradouro do Torel, Miradouro da Nossa Senhora de Graça, or Miradouro de Santo Estêvão, led Lisbon City Council to flood the city with street ads claiming "Do you know who else does not miss an illegal party? This virus" (see Figure 2 above). However, such a punitive message seemed not to affect tourists, visitors, and Erasmus students temporarily living in the city (see Figure 3 below).

Figure 3. A Lisbon's night during the pandemic summer of 2020, in September 2020: Diario das Notícias Street in the historical neighborhood of Bairro Alto (left), and *Pink* Street in the former harbor quarter of Cais do Sodré (right). Source: Photographs taken by the first author, September 2020.

Our observational fieldwork in the city's two most iconic nightlife zones, Bairro Alto and Cais do Sodré (e.g., Nofre 2013; Nofre et al. 2017, 2019), allowed us to see hundreds of tourists drinking beers and *XL caipirinhas* in the middle of the street at evening and nighttime hours, without wearing any masks to cover their mouths and noses, without applying any hand sanitizers, nor respecting any physical distance among their peers; in other words, without respecting the national legislation and local plan against COVID-19. Furthermore, the private company Erasmus Life Lisbon (ELL) continued to run its nightlife activities in the city center's public spaces. On September 8, ELL organized the Welcome Pub Crawl from 8 pm at Bairro Alto's Erasmus Corner. On September 18, ELL organized another pub crawl (Traffic Light Pub Crawl) beginning in the same place. In addition, the success of ELL's Secret Rooftop Session held on September 8 led to ELL organizing seven more of such parties (September 11, 16, 17, 19, 23, 24, and 26) ongoing until midnight on the rooftop terraces of Noobai and Level Eight,

two lounge-clubs in the city center. However, the aforementioned punitive institutional-civic front kept its silence. Thus, tourists remain (and will remain) 'the untouchables' of the tourist city, while suburban working-class youth, who were 'the forgotten' in pre-pandemic times, are now 'the perilous' in the biosecuritized tourist city, being directly or indirectly called as health hazards, or unconscious virus spreaders, by extension elder killers.

Despite the organization of evening rooftop parties for tourists and Erasmus students, and also despite that the streets of Bairro Alto and Cais do Sodré were crowded of people belonging to these two groups during the evening and nighttime hours over the last months of our observational fieldwork (July 2020 – September 2020), discotheques and clubs remained lockdowned. However, very few decided to transform their activity into improvised restaurants serving meals outdoors at evening hours (e.g., Lux Frágil).

Check(mate?) to Lisbon's Nightlife Industry

As described in the previous section, tourists and Erasmus students enjoyed the pandemic Lisbon's nights drinking in the middle of the crowded streets of Bairro Alto and Cais do Sodré, while the police were punishing the youths of the working-class suburban neighborhoods of the city. In fact, the eagerness to reopen the city should come as no surprise. According to the *Strategic Plan for Tourism in the Lisbon Region 2020-2014*, the nightlife is the primary reason to visit the city for a significant 18% of tourists and visitors (p. 112). Facing that, it is striking that clubs and discotheque were not allowed to re-open despite the city's opening to tourists and visitors during the pandemic summer of 2020. However, one of the reasons would have to do with the negative impacts derived from the expansion of tourism-oriented nighttime leisure economy over the past years that have undermined community livability and the coexistence between partygoers (most of them tourists and international students) and city residents (e.g., Nofre *et al.* 2017, 2019, 2020).

Figure 4. A comparison between nocturnal scenes before (September 2019) and during the COVID-19 pandemic (June 2020) on the world-famous Pink Street in the Cais do Sodré

neighborhood is one of the most important nightlife areas of the city. Source: The photograph on the left was taken by the first author. The third author took the photograph on the right.

In this sense, to the eyes of some representatives of the punitive institutional-civic front (e.g., TV and press), restrictive COVID-19 related measures have 'fixed' what politicians have not been able to do for the last ten years. In other words, severe restrictions on tourism, hospitality, mobility, and leisure have *de facto* become the most efficient solution to several of the problems driven by the touristification of Lisbon's nightlife ongoing throughout the last decade (i.e., Nofre *et al.* 2019, 2020) (see Figure 4 above). As Portuguese journalist, Catarina Nunes wrote,

> Airbnb tourists have disappeared from the building where I live. […] The silence and peace in the building extend to the outside. Goodbye to people in front of the house drinking and screaming, street musicians playing with amplifiers, gang brawls, drug dealers, raids and sirens of police cars, ambulances, and firefighters [...] which even double-glazed windows cannot resist. Goodbye to the vibrations of my house's walls and floor produced by the sound of dozens of bars and clubs surrounding me […]. (Nunes 2020).

However, (i) the maintenance of the nightlife industry's lockdown without any kind of hope to reopen in the short-term and mid-term; (ii) the continuous criminalization of nightlife by the punitive institutional-civic front arguing that nightlife is the biggest threat to the socioeconomic recovery of urban tourist destinations during/after COVID-19, and (iii) the institutional vision about 'the night' as the most dangerous context for potential COVID-19 contagion (despite nightlife venues having been entirely shuttered for over a year), raises certain questions about the long-term state vision about the future of leisure in the 'tourist city' (and beyond). In fact, regarding this last point, it would be worthy to say here that the fact of placing 'the night' as the main responsible of uncontrolled coronavirus transmission in Portugal would be scientifically baseless according to prior data on mobility during nighttime hours. For example, a few days before the nighttime curfew was implemented in Portugal in November 2019 (Decree No. 8/2020, of November 8), nearby 90% of Portuguese declared that, during the pandemic, they used to be at home during nighttime hours, from 10:00 pm to 05:00 am (PSE 2020). Therefore, it would not be unfair to suggest that sanitary reasons would not be the only cause justifying such a relevant restriction on the fundamental individual rights of the Portuguese people.

The vision of 'the night as a virus' has its most visible expression at the beginning of the pandemic summer of 2020. Since late May 2020, the number of gatherings and informal parties at outdoor and domestic spaces during nighttime hours grew significantly across the city, as mentioned in the previous section. As a response to such an (in)governance of 'the night' during the pandemic, on June 18, 2020, a hundred nightlife venues' workers and owners gathered in the Lisbon city center and rallied under the motto "The silence of the night... looking for respect and answers". Two days after, on June 20, 2020, some hospitality and nightlife businesses owners of Bairro Alto (the most iconic nightlife spot in the city) complained

of the absence of tourists or Portuguese visitors on the streets. They pointed out that there was "much fear of entry in the venues" and demanded that the terraces had to be reopened (Lusa 2020b). A few days after, on June 23, 2020, Ana Jacinto, the general secretary of the Portuguese Hospitality Sector Association (*Associação da Hotelaria, Restauração e Similares de Portugal*, in original), stated that the restrictive measures in the Lisbon Metropolitan Area and the limitation of opening hours would not contribute to reducing the number of gatherings during nighttime hours as youths would continue to hang out and meet with their friends (Lusa 2020c). On July 2, 2020, Lisbon City Council required the national government to allow the re-opening of the sector by transforming nightlife venues into restaurants and/or coffee/pastry shops. However, the Lisbon Mayor (Mr. Fernando Medina) and his Socialist Party voted against the re-opening of the nightlife industry in spite of the proposal to do it under the application of COVID-19 related measures (Observador 2020). However, it was not only until one month later, on July 31, that the national government decided to re-opening the nightlife industry with very severe restrictions, imposing the reconversion of discotheques and clubs into daytime restaurants and/or coffee/pastry shops (Resolution of the Council of Ministers n.° 55-A/2020, of July 31). The partial reopening of the nightlife sector during the second half of the pandemic summer of 2020 did not imply the recovery of hundreds of unemployed DJs, bartenders, artists, and bouncers.[6] A few months later, the national nightlife industry was lockdowned again by the second State of Emergency (Decree n°8/2020, of November 9), and, at the time of writing, nightlife still remains lockdowned although the country has reopened its borders to international travelers in an attempt to safeguard tourism in the second pandemic summer. In fact, the article 18.2.b. of such a Decree shows the punitive nature of nightlife's lockdown, since it situates dancing in a nightlife venue as the most dangerous activity during the pandemic: "Dancefloors are not permitted (…) and must remain unusable or, alternatively occupied with tables intended for customers".

The prohibition of dancing is of special importance for the purposes of the second part of this article. In fact, it allows us to shed light on the potential reasons for the permanent negative to fully reopen the national nightlife industry. In a general view, the prohibition of dancing is not a novel topic within the scholarly community. Many authors have studied the prohibition of dancing and its institutional vision as a cultural, social, and political dangerous activity in early modernity (e.g., Ruel Robins 2013, Filmer 1999) and in our contemporary times. In this sense, despite the prohibition of male-male dancing in New York City until the mid-1970s (Lawrence 2011), the punitive and repressive policing against non-normative dancing in Europe had its most visible expression in the zealous policing against *raves* and electronic music informal parties. In fact, the prohibition of dancing in Europe (including the UK) has been often 'camouflaged' through restrictive nightlife policies intending to shorten opening hours

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6 Here it is important to point out that a very significant number of door staff, bartenders, and DJs were working in precarious conditions (i.e., without employment contracts). This is the reason why many of them could not apply to simplified «lay-off» schemes for workers affected by the temporary partial or complete closure of their companies due to COVID-19 pandemic.

of venues as well as to eradicate alternative forms of non-commercial forms of nightlife such as, for example, "temporary autonomous zones" in UK and France (e.g., John 2015, Groundeau and Dourthe 2020), 'Ruta del Bakalao' in the 1990s' in Spain (Costa 2016), and anti-capitalist LGTBQI+ nights in Barcelona (Nofre 2015). However, the prohibition of dancing because of sanitary reasons due to a pandemic crisis is novel, and the scientific evidence is still very recent and not definitive (Nagata et al. 2020, Takaya *et al.* 2020; Murillo-Llorente and Pérez-Bermejo 2020, Cheepsattayakorn *et al.* 2021). Surprisingly, the tone of these works clashes with excellent results obtained with different *in situ* experiments – which have been conducted in some nightlife venues in partnership with prestigious research centers – in some European cities such as in Barcelona (Esparch 2020, Pérez 2021), Biddinghuizen in The Netherlands (DW 2021), Manchester (Otter 2021), and Liverpool (BBC News 2021). Therefore, the permanent negative to reopen the nightlife industry (even with restrictive COVID-19 related measures) seems to be scientifically baseless and shows us a clear divergence between the qualitative importance of the nightlife industry for many young and adult people in Portugal (and beyond) and the (in)governance of the 'nocturnal touristy city' during the pandemic.

However, a potential explanation about the permanent lockdown of the nightlife industry during the pandemic might find out through a detailed analysis of how the Portuguese government addresses the future of nightlife according to *Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan* (April 22, 2021). In the document, there is neither reference to 'nightlife' nor 'hospitality' in the whole document, while 'tourism' only appears indirectly in the *Employment + Digital 20215 – Training program in digital technologies* (p. 177). In turn, 'leisure' also only appears indirectly through the *National Strategy for the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2021-2025* that aims at promoting inclusion through sport, culture, and leisure (p.104). However, tourism, nightlife, accommodation, hospitality, and culture (artistic and recreational activities) were the most referenced in the comments on public consultation (p. 241). In particular, the plan foresees nine sectors of priority to improve their social, economic, and territorial resilience. The only sector related to the purpose of this article appearing in *Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan* is culture (pp. 103-105). The document highlights the brutal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural and creative sectors and remarks that both sectors are a pillar of the EU economy in the future. However, when it presents recovery proposals in the field of culture, there is no word on creative culture but the promotion of national cultural heritage and its digitalization. In fact, the absence of the nightlife sector in *Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan* is surprising, having in mind the existence of *The Global Nighttime Recovery Plan*, a collaborative, practical guide for worldwide cities to re-open their nightlife during and after the current pandemic.[7] Therefore whether nightlife was the main reason to visit Portugal for 18% of tourists before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic (*Strategic Plan for Tourism in the Lisbon Region 2020-2014*), and *Portugal's Recovery and Resilience Plan*

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7 See: https://www.nighttime.org/recoveryplan/

recognizes the brutal impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the cultural and creative sectors, one should wonder about the ultimate reason that has led to the Portuguese Government to invisibilize the national nightlife industry in the national recovery plan. Such significant absences are arising as totally incomprehensible in a country where tourism, hospitality, and nightlife industries are not marginal in the national GDP structure.

Conclusions

The biosecuritization of urban tourist destinations due to the adoption of restrictive COVID-19 related sanitary measures poses a challenge of unprecedented magnitude, especially not only for both tourism and hospitality industries, but especially for the nightlife industry in Europe but far beyond. As shown in this article, 'pandemic politics' and its adoption as the most crucial device for population governmentality (Foucault 2007) in Lisbon (Portugal) have exacerbated the punitive criminalization of 'the night' carried out by the so-called media-institutional-civic front (Aramayona and Nofre 2021), which has been campaigning against nightlife as a synonym of vice, sin, immorality, and a 'perilous agent' for Portugal's socioeconomic recovery since the end of the first deconfinement plan in early June 2020 up to the time of writing.

On a broader view, restrictions, lockdowns, and nighttime curfews have shown us how central culture, arts, entertainment, and leisure are for not only the cultural and social life of many young and adult people in Europe (see previous section 2) but also, especially for their socio-emotional wellbeing (Nofre 2021). Much literature shows that participating in various cultural and leisure activities within the community has positive impacts related to individual health, life satisfaction, and happiness (Cushman and Laidler 1990, Han and Patterson 2007, Brajša-Žganec *et al.* 2011, Shin and You 2013, Brown *et al.* 2015), and also contributes to encouraging participation of individuals in community life by fostering social cohesion, community identity and multicultural understanding (Donnelly and Coakley 2002, Young 2006, Roberts 2006, Rispal and Boncler 2010, Throsby and Zednik 2014). As Nofre (2021) has recently argued, nightlife in our contemporary societies has been (still is, and will be) a source of socio-emotional wellbeing, community building, and multicultural understanding. In this sense, the (in)governance of the night in Portugal (and far beyond) during the pandemic and the forced closing of the "third places" (Oldenburg 1989) – that is, cafés, bars, taverns, and other tiny places frequented by locals at evening and nighttime hours– may lead to the eradication of an effective source of social and emotional wellbeing, community building, and mutual psychological support, especially in the current harsh, uncertain, turbulent times. In sum, the biosecuritization of the "tourist city" does not only represent a profound re-configuration of its urban, social and economic fabric, but also it might bring enormous negative impacts at the social and mental health levels for most of its residents, especially adolescents, teenagers, and youngsters. Certainly, this is a new cutting-edge topic that deserves much more scholarly attention in the next years.

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