

Berlin



Frankfurt

Stadtnacht: Mapping German Nightlife

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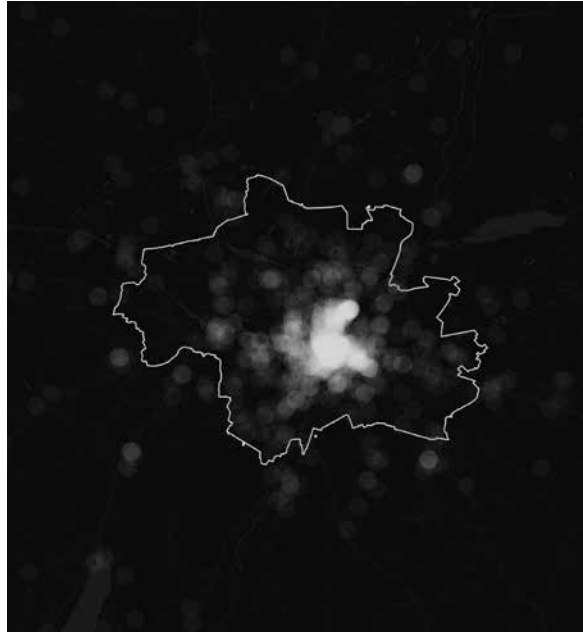
As part of a project on nighttime economies, Hamburg-based urban planners mapped the spatial distribution of nightlife premises in thirteen German cities. While in Anglo-American countries, and especially Great Britain, detailed consideration of a “nighttime economy” has become a key component of urban policy and its development, this phenomenon is quite new to Germany. Thus far, the night and the spatio-economic implications of nightlife have played only a minor role in German discourse around urbanity, in discussions of the so-called creative city or in the elaboration of a distinctly European urbanism (the latter often designated using the German term Europäische Stadt). Likewise, while German-language urban studies (and the social sciences more generally) have long been concerned with the ways in which cities organize and manage various dimensions of time,¹ this concern has, until recently, had little effect on actual practices of urban development practices in Germany. Only now, against the background of discussions over the role of the so-called “cultural economy” in urban development, and given the increased importance of place-branding to regional tourist economies, have the economic and cultural dimensions of nightlife—arguably the signifier par excellence of urbanity—come

to attract attention.² However, unlike those engaged in nighttime entertainment and commerce, local authorities and urban planners know very little about the patterns of the Nachtökonomie and the ways in which bars, clubs, and other nightlife venues operate.

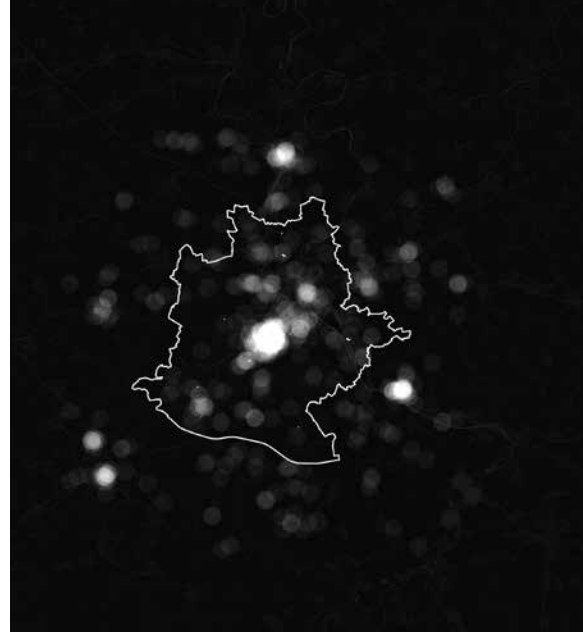
The maps provided here grew out of the project Stadtnacht: Management der Urbanen Nachtökonomie³ Through a variety of initiatives, we hope to meet the growing demand for knowledge about the night, foster discussions of urban nightlife, and outline recommendations for those engaged in urban planning and city marketing.

Besides three in-depth case studies of the nighttime in Munich, Cologne, and Mannheim, and a broader exploration of regimes of governance directed at the night, our project maps the spatial distribution of nightlife premises in 13 German cities. This analysis draws on entries in a popular online directory tagged as nightlife-related and fall within relevant categories like cinemas, theatres, and event locations.⁴ The requirements for the mappings were twofold. One the one hand, the visualizations allowed us to identify hot spots of nightlife activity in each city on different map scales. At the same time, we wanted the maps to be suitable for comparing the distribution patterns of nightlife activities among the different cities.

Our main indicator of nocturnal activities is their accumulation as sites. The



Munich

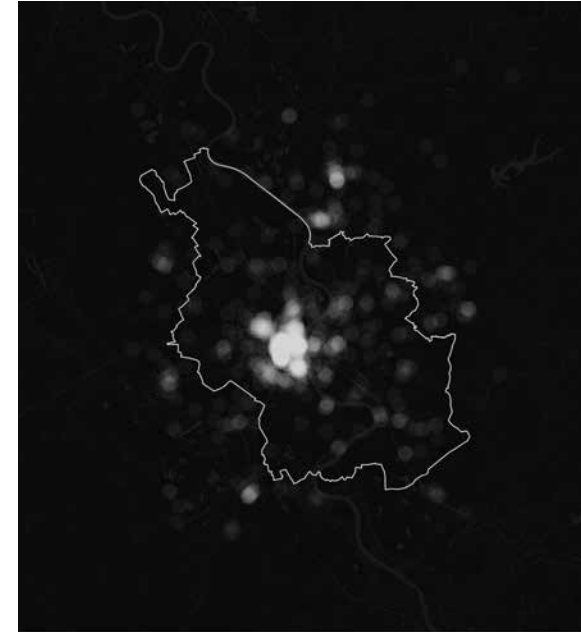


Stuttgart

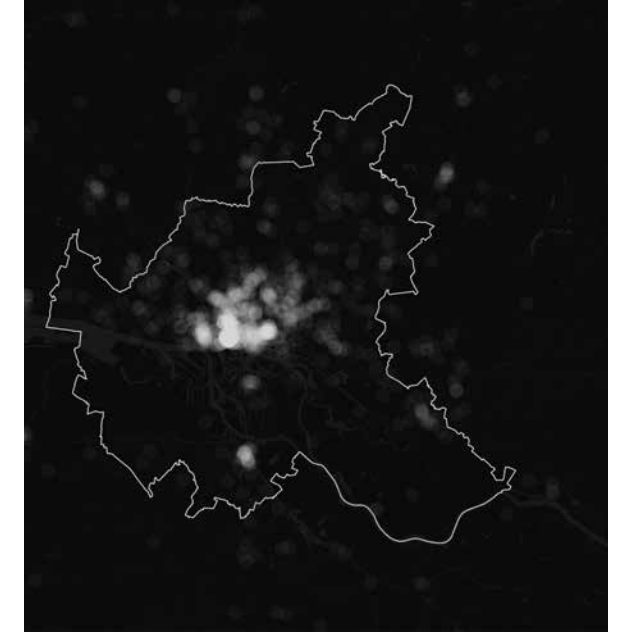
maps do not provide any spatio-temporal coordinates for specific venues, nor information about the popularity of specific sites. Nevertheless, even these fuzzy data have proven effective in showing the clustering of nightlife and allowing us to identify similarities and differences among cities. Our research provides visual representations of the number of nighttime events per site over a specific period of time, using datasets from location-based services. After extracting the data, the entries were mapped using static dot density maps. This approach is limited both by the rarity of such datasets and by legal restrictions on their use. However, even this simple approach has proven helpful in rendering the night city “visible,” enabling us to grasp cities as spatio-temporal phenomena.

Just like retail commerce, recreational nightlife seems to prefer urban locations in general. Taking a closer look at the data mappings, we find that those bars and clubs grouped within the “nightlife” category are typically not located on high streets, but in adjacent areas and quarters close to the central business district. As is the case

elsewhere in Europe, this is particularly true for more alternative venues, due to the need for less expensive commercial space⁵. There also seems to be a preference, on the part of those opening nightlife venues, for locations along transit lines or inner-city traffic arteries, and amidst dense, mixed-use surroundings where sensitivity to noise is low. Some of our maps also underscore—or at least suggest—the capacity of recreational nightlife to function as an urban catalyst or driver of urban transformation processes for areas with formerly low rental prices or vacant urban structures⁶, even though the cause-and-effect relationships between nightlife, social practice, and urban transformation are complex. This raises questions not simply about whether evening and nighttime venues are able to bring specific features to a neighbourhood, but whether they also trigger broader processes of gentrification under special circumstances. Music-related premises in particular, and clubs serving distinct target groups and scenes, seem to be functioning as pioneers of place-making activity in specific areas. They are not so dependent on already existing commercial



Köln



Hamburg

surroundings, since their target audiences are drawn to such areas for one specific place and purpose.

NOTES

1 See, for example, Dietrich Henckel and Matthias Eberling, eds., *Raumzeitpolitik* (Opladen: Leske Budrich, 2002); Dietrich Henckel, Elke Pahl-Weber, und Benjamin Herkommer, eds., *Time, Space, Places* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2007); and Dietrich Henckel, ed., *Space-time Design of the Public City* (New York: Springer, 2013).

2 Thomas Krüger and Jakob F. Schmid, *Stadtnacht – Management der Urbanen Nachtökonomie* (Hamburg: HafenCity Universität Hamburg, 2015). More information on this work can be found at www.stadtnacht.de.

3 english: *The City After Eight p.m.: Management of the Urban Nighttime Economy*

4 Jakob F. Schmid and Patrick Stotz, *Stadtnacht – Map tiles: Stamen Design CC BY 3.0. – Base Map: OpenStreetMap CC BY SA, 2014.*

5 Marion Roberts and Adam Eldridge, *Planning the Night-time City* (London: Routledge, 2009).

6 Philipp Oswalt, Klaus Overmeyer and Philipp

Misselwitz, eds., *Urban Catalyst: The Power of Temporary Use* (Berlin: DOM publishers, 2013).