

Review of: "A Study of the Urban Nightlife of Delhi and its Impact on Safety"

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The central argument of the paper is flawed and presumptive. Flexible working hours, digitization, foreign tourists, long working hours — do not necessarily result to vibrant night life. Even thirty years after liberalization the capital of India barely has a thriving night-life. Night life is not determined by active night-clubs, discotheques, five-star-hotels and isolated elite spaces, but through proliferation of inclusive public spaces that attract, sustain and encourage people to safely socialize in the later hours in the evening. Night life is a reflection of consumerist manifestations, socio-economic policies of the metropolis and imagination of urban development. Safety is a much-required criterion for citizens to come out of their respective homes and stay-out late at night, but if the infrastructural limitations of the city does not permit sustenance of night-life, safety alone cannot grantee night-life. If spaces of consumption, entertainment, dining along with public transport shuts down before mid-night, as it does in Delhi-NCR, it is impossible to expect people to be out there in the public spaces. 'Active night-life' is not produced in the corporate cubicles working round the clock or people partying hard till early morning in personal spaces. It is futile to cite crime-rate as a deterrent to night-life. Crime is also a consequence of desolated public spaces, which could be a direct consequence of an urban-policy to shut-down the public-urban-infrastructures way before the mid-night. Delhi does not have the socio-political and economic imagination and milieu for supporting a nocturnal life. Night-life is confined to secluded privileged corners. People commuting in private cars in-between spaces do not constitute 'night-life'. Safety alone cannot bring people out if malls, restaurants, markets, parks, theatres, metros, buses shut down by mid-night or much before the mid-night.

The examples in the section 2.1 of the paper are not irrelevant, but it is quite out-of-context to cite random examples of 24-hour cities. Because it cannot be compared with its counter-opposites. The paper then advances to make a rather simplistic claim. The factual data on crime-rate in Delhi-NCR. 2.2 makes a very obvious argument that more populated and busier spaces—such as wholesale markets that remain active throughout the night, down-town areas having more footfall around the midnight are safer public spaces. Barring Jama Masjid and certain markets of Old Delhi, even the ones that are cited in the paper—CP, India Gate and Nehru Place—do not remain active too long after mid-night. in fact Nehru Place (known for software and hardware shops and textile shops) is dead and dark by 9pm. CP, India Gate and Nehru Place—neither illustrates late-night activity nor they show any scope or provision or promise of emerging night-life. Nevertheless, to argue that these are relatively safer places because of higher footfall—is teleological.

The objectives stated in the introduction, the body of the paper and the conclusion are diverging in three different directions. It does not engage with the crucial question: why the government is adverse to promoting night-life in public

spaces? Is it because it implies more responsibilities and accountabilities on law and order? Why all the 24-7 cities are located in the Global North? It is certainly not a matter of coincidence that most vibrant, cosmopolitan and inclusive metropolis are located in developed countries. The author shows no concern or interest to probe into these deeper and essential questions instead makes some obvious claims and rushes into proposes night-life without taking other factors into consideration.