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Invisible Denizens: What Possibilities are Left for Solidarity Amongst Migrant Night Workers in the Nocturnal City of London

by Iulius-Cezar Macarie

Abstract

The main theoretical contribution of this paper is to show that the transitional processes from circadian to post-circadian capitalist era have reduced capabilities for sociability of migrant night shift workers. It analyses the three main contributing factors to the corrosion of solidarity amongst migrant denizens: (a) the expansion of the working day into the night; (b) the major alterations of time over time, and the nurturing ground for these changes, (c) global cities, as the nurturing ground for occupational polarization.

Key words: night work, migrant solidarity, global cities, post-circadian capitalism, precarity.

In 18th century Britain, people were up and working during the night in cotton mills.[1] During Britain's industrialised capitalist era, British manufacturing workers worked night shifts, which were regimented in two- and three-rota systems. The night economy has constantly expanded since the late 19th century, with nocturnalisation in larger cities like London, Paris and Berlin contributing to an increase in nightlife in Europe.[2] At the turn of the 20th century, night work accelerated at an unprecedented speed because of the rapid development of services that were not part of the night economy before, argues Leon Kreitzman in the book 24-hour Society. For example, the expansion of call centres and information technologies have subsequently led to the growth of adjacent services open around-the-clock, such as petrol stations, night sandwich bars, and the classic kebab shops feeding the clubbers enjoying nightlife. This development has further shaped the growing need for and reliance on migrant night shifters. Unlike in the previous centuries, migrants have become the backbone of the 21st century global cities.

Due to the rapid development of the digital age, Sassen[3] argues that the Global City of the 21st century is a transnational space and an attractive hub for financial centres transferring the world's reserves in seconds beyond national borders. The 24-hour cities, like London, have become financial centres for corporations that transcend the national borders, thus attracting both foreign institutions to invest and migrant workers to travel to and to live and work in. Sassen adds that the global city has become the battleground for occupational discrepancy between white and blue collar workers. The investors and hedge fund executives are the high earners with excessive bonuses, whilst the workers providing the muscles to support the world's financial hub, the service industries, transport, police, and ambulance, work on shift-rota with low wages. These wages are in fact so low that they need to juggle two jobs at the same time to make ends meet. These, mostly British, night shift workers, are

1 In 24/7 and the End of Sleep, Johnathan Crary (2015) refers to the work of British Artist Joseph Wright of Derby who painted Cotton Mills by Night (around 1782) depicting night factory workers in rural area. The novelty in Wright's work comes from capturing on canvas "a radical reconceptualization of the relation between work and time: it is the idea that productive operations that do not stop, of profit-generating work that can function 24/7", p. 61.

2 Schlör Joachim (1998) Nights in the Big Cities: Paris, Berlin, London 1840-1930.

3 Sassen, S. (1999). Cracked Casings: Notes Towards an Analytics for Studying Transnational Processes. Sociology for the Twenty-First Century: Continuities and cutting edges, 187-206.

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Will Norman's[4] "graveyard shifters".

Norman's account is the only ethnographic study on night work in Britain. He reports that across all industries and services, 1.5 million British workers work night shifts in the UK – the equivalent of 8.3% of its total workforce. Though Norman's ethnographic study offers insight into the hardships of British graveyard shifters, it does not provide a complete picture of the social fabric of night shift work in global cities like London. In other words, the migrant workforce meets the "labour and skills needs" that the employers demand, but cannot be found among the domestic supply of labourers.[5] In short, millions of migrants are doing the "graveyard shift" in higher income countries and in the global cities in particular. Yet they seem invisible in the small and growing literature in the social sciences. It is even more puzzling that night shift work is a regular part of everyday life and the driving force behind London's rapidly expanding night economy. Still, the issues of precarity in the night economy are hardly debated in the Houses of Parliament, by the public or in the media. Moreover, the 24-hour services mentioned earlier rely on the food industry and London's markets, which have been catering to Londoners' incessant appetite for food and exotic fruits and vegetables for centuries.

Old Spitalfields market, for example, has been trading to grocers all over London for hundreds of years. It once belonged to the City of London's square mile, but it was relocated to a 31-acre site in East London, colloquially known as 'the marshes'. The City of London Corporation, its owner and manager, has adapted to market demands and transformed the Old Spitalfields into the New Spitalfields, a hub for exotic fruit and vegetable trade with an annual turnover of 650 tonnes of produce coming from and going to all corners of the world and supplying London's and UK's incessant appetite for fresh food. In the 100+ stands operating on the market site, there are over 1,000+ night shift workers muscling fruits and vegetables, night-in and night-out six nights a week all year-round. Hundreds of those night shift workers are migrants and come from places as far as the Far East and as close as continental Europe, for example from Romania, Bulgaria and Turkey. Within the broader concept of night economy expansion, this thesis investigates precisely this migrant segment inhabiting the social fabric of the night shift work.

This paper[6] seeks to clarify the concept of solidarity, which was previously employed to explain social cohesion. In so doing, the study testing the use of this concept in an effort to assess, formulate, and propose the opposite - that the corrosion of capabilities for sociability and solidarity is more prevalent amongst night workers. At this stage, I do not present results of my own research, but rather aim to stimulate further theoretical enquiries on the topic of corrosion of solidarity as opposed to social cohesion amongst the burdened class, otherwise called The Precariat.

For this purpose, I first examine past contributions explaining how the global transition from circadian to post-circadian capitalism have impacted on the subjectivities of migrant

4 Norman, W. (2011) Rough Nights: Th Growing Dangers of Working at Night. The Young Foundation.

5 Ruhs and Anderson, 2010, p.15

6 The content of this article is part of the author's PhD research: A Theoretical Proposition for Corrosion of Solidarity Amongst Migrant Night Shift Workers in Global Cities. The longer version of this article was written with the financial support of Centre for Policy Studies | Central European University, as part of the Working Paper Series 2017. The author is grateful for the permission given by the Centre for Policy Studies for further use in this shorter format. The longer version will be available at http://bit.ly/cpswps in the Spring issue.

night workers surviving precarity in global cities. Implicitly, I will explore the triadic relationship between intensification of labour, time regimentation and locality, which are crucial for understanding the transition from wealth accumulation to 'world-making' capitalism, while addressing the conditions, mechanisms and processes that have led to:

- The expansion of the working day into the night, which transformed capitalism from a circadian phase to a post-circadian capitalist age that disrespects the 24-hour rhythm – awake/sleep/relax;
- Major alterations over time to our perception of time and time regimentation, which have transformed the metropolitan workers' capabilities for sociability;
- The nocturnal, global city, providing the space and the expendable work force for the advancement of capitalism.

Having established the triadic relationship between night work, the special importance of time in making new spaces for capital, and the nurturing ground that global cities provide for 'occupational polarisation' and precariousness, this paper will proceed by demonstrating the ways in which the march of the post-circadian capitalism corrodes the character of night workers and therefore undermines the capabilities for sociability and solidarity among the precariat. In supporting this view, I invite scholars from globalisation studies focusing on different groups of people to this interdisciplinary discussion. These may be scholars dealing with The Precariat, migrants[7] living and working precariously in The Global City[8]; political economy anthropologists[9] explaining the precise conditions and mechanisms, and the capitalist moment whereby the global transformation, has been moving from 'abstract wealth' to 'world-making capitalism'. They also may be sociologists explaining the impact that the 'new economy' has on the 'corrosion of character' of workers[10] or psychologists such as Ron Roberts[11]. He establishes a radical basis for an understanding of the human wrongs carried out by the 'two bedfellows', Psychology and Capitalism, which manipulate the minds of people and implicitly move the human condition towards a 'future of an illusion' where humans are transformed into 'zombies', e.g. purely material objects commodified according to current political economic interests.

The paradox is that the armies of night workers, part of the 'migrant infantry of capitalism'[12] maintaining the global cities, live with respect to the demands of 24-hour societies and with disrespect to their own 24-hour physiological clock. They work precariously and experience the 4As (anomie, anxiety, anger, and alienation) due to exhaustion, sleeplessness, and isolation. In what follows, I provide a road map to the processes that have led to a transition from circadian to post-circadian capitalism.

7 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

8 Sassen, S. (2001). The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton University Press.

9 Graeber, D. (2012). Debt: The First 5,000 Years. Melville House; Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), 258-266.

10 Sennet, R. (1998). The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. WW Norton & Company, London.

11 Roberts, R. (2014). Psychology and Capitalism. London Zero Books.

12 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black, 113.

Transition from Circadian to Post-Circadian Capitalism

Even a cursory examination of the contemporary work of scholars in the field of transnational spaces reveals that time – that is time zones, time regimentation and by implication changes in the perception of time – has been neglected by these scholars. Whilst this remains subject to further investigation, it is my contention that this is not the time to prove or disprove fully how this neglect has taken place. However, Standing[13] employs temporality as a tool in understanding the processes behind the global transformation and the ways in which they condition our lives. Beginning with the conditions that existed in agrarian and later created for an industrialised society and through to global market society geared towards service industries and consuming, he insists that this 'new time' or 'tertiary time' fits a 'tertiary society' (the flexible-labour society) mainly built from the precariat. Hence 'we need to find a way of looking at how we allocate time that is suitable to this people. The industrial or agrarian time does not fit their lives.' The days when time was spent in blocks of years spent at school, followed by the working life sliced into 10-12 hours shifts, after which we came home and socialized. And if we were lucky, we could retire early. Those days are behind us.

Historian E.P. Thomson chronicled that 'the nascent proletariat was disciplined by the clock'[14]. Moreover, sociologist George Simmel explained that the minds of metropolitans were controlled by a calculating order ruling their social relationships according to the new 'character of calculability'[15]. Up to this point, time regimentation meant that the old ways in which time was operating, e.g. the blocks of time, school, work, pension (if one was lucky), were replaced by the new terms of flexible and short-term work. There was no such thing as 'the long term' anymore.

Time regimentation has changed our perception of time. Sennett[16] explains how this happened as a result of the 'new economy'. His book on the consequences of the new economy on the character of people, seems more relevant now than it perhaps was at the end of the 20th century. Sennett celebrates the works of previous thinkers by pinpointing to where the new ways of organising time, particularly working time, was leading – i.e., to the flexible working time or "no long-term' of the 'new economy' era. By implication, being flexible means that as a worker or consultant you need to arrange your working life around others whom your work depends on. Further, he argues, parameters such as work-home, 9-5, weekdays and weekends, have been replaced with working from home, as-and-when-catching-employment, working by the piece, and not by long-term contract.

Weather a consultant or a low-skilled worker, everybody is expected to simultaneously fulfil the needs of the world-making/wealth-creating capitalism at very short notice and till further notice. In short, 'no long-term' and flexitime have been intruding the social, physical, emotional and psychological realms of our working lives and, by extension, our personal lives. Differences exist, however, in that a consultant may be able to buy solutions to escape the time-squeeze, but low-skilled workers merely survive and remain unable to keep up

13 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

14 Ibid, 115

15 Mitchell, T. (2002). Rule of experts: Egypt, techno-politics, modernity. University of California Press.

16 Sennet, R. (1998). The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. WW Norton & Company, London.

with the demands on all realms, and precisely their (in)capability of household management. Time is not a resource available to workers, in general, and night workers specifically, because they sleep through any time left during the day.

The capitalism has advanced considerably since the circadian age, which is considered to be the phase up to industrialization[17]. Post-industrialisation, ormore appropriately the post-circadian age, disrespects the physiological rhythm, the 24-hour body clock, in terms of how we spend our hours awake, when and how (little) we sleep and our leisure time. In short, in the circadian capitalist age regimenting the time meant that both society and production began operating around blocks of time. In contrast, 'post-circadian capitalism'[18] is this 'new time' or 'tertiary time' serving a 'tertiary society' (the flexible-labour society), which surpassed the agrarian and industrial society[19]. However, it appears that the transition from money capital making to 'world-making capitalism', or from circadian to post-circadian capitalism, has the 1688 Anglo-Dutch alliance engrained in its history. Don Kalb and David Graeber guide us through these developments, pinpointing the precise historical conditions that facilitated the advancement of a modern, 'creative destruction' that came into being as we experience it today.

17 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

18 Beaumont, M. (2015). Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London. Verso Books.

19 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

The Birth of the Post-Circadian Capitalist Age

The specifics are new, and the important point is that they are not anticipated by Weber's 'abstract wealth'. Abstract wealth does not make news spaces of capital. Abstract wealth is not by itself world-making. Only capitalism is.[20]

For Kalb, a global systems anthropologist, the specifics of the capitalist 'moment' are immensely important. From the moment when the Dutch elite navy sponsored by the burghers of City of Amsterdam with some support from the English invaded the British Isles, the Dutch established the Bank of England and financed it for the next two hundred years.[21] An alliance was forged with a vast amount of wealth and state power, which has fostered the creation of world empires under the flagship of what is known today as Great Britain. Thus, new spaces of capital accumulation were formed and a new age of living with disrespect to the circadian time distribution awake/sleep/relax was changed forever, and imposed by the capitalists concerned with wealth accumulation onto workers across the globe, within and without the old core capital societies like the Dutch and the British.

The imposition of the transition from a circadian capitalist era upon the 'capitalist moment' of course does not imply that all the consequences of today's post-circadian capitalism are rooted in that moment. It also does not stand as the only explanation or imply that capitalism developed after 1688 as a result of

20 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), p. 262.

21 Kalb, citing Israel, J. I. (2003). The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its World Impact. Cambridge University Press.

that alliance. For our purposes, it is not necessary to consider every theory there on the evolution of modern capitalism as capitalist 'creative destruction'. However, we are interested how it was inherited in order to put this analysis on solid grounds.

Embedded in the Marxian thought, anthropological political economy describes society as divided into two spheres of production and consumption (or at best three: production, distribution, and exchange). Karl Marx uses modes of production (MoP) to analyse and describe the antagonistic relationship between those 'who command the labour of those who do not'[22], i.e. the 1% of capitalists commanding the 99% of workers (actual or potential) in the interest of multiply capital – creating money with money.

From a Marxian perspective, the stratified capitalist society is engaged in the creation of wealth and power through a surplus extracted to the detriment of the 'burdened class', leading an existence of survival. Surplus value is made by corporations by way of paying wage-labourers less 'than the value their labour generates'. Labour disciplining and fragmentation are tools of the capitalist system, affecting anyone living in this socially stratified society by means of production. These tools employed according to the capitalist ethos to divide capitalists from their workers, and the upper–middle class from immigrants or mainstream society from its peripheral population, with the latter being the force that keeps the flame of the global cities (e.g. London, New York) burning around-the-clock. Fragmentation or division is the salient feature of capitalism. Divisions exist between domestic and economic spheres, producers and the exploited, as well as makers and consumers. Consequently, owners of means of production are separated from workers; workers are alienated from the production and creation process; peripheral or societies (nurturing highly skilled professionals) are divided from core societies which select the professionals according to their market's needs. Ultimately, Marx viewed both the workers (exploited) and capitalists (exploiters) as alienated from their own humanity, with alienation occurring in a variety of forms.[23]

David Graeber[24] discusses the Possibilities for this alienation. He is an outspoken, public intellectual, activist, anthropologist, and "a lifelong hater of corporate smoke and mirrors, who coined the (Occupy Wall Street) movement's ingenious slogan, 'We are the 99%'"1 and who contrasts the capitalist with non-capitalist society. He argues that the latter focuses on the self-realisation of human beings, whereby the object of production is not the end result (e.g. wealth), rather the creation of social relations amongst people (55). Therefore, the onus is on actions and processes by which people shape one another (from poetry to planting onions) and they are: a) motivated by meanings (ideas) and b) proceed through a concrete medium (material). In contrast, the system of capitalist societies produces wealth and concomitantly alienates the workers from their labour. Capitalists produce and consume commodities, and not useful and meaningful products. Therefore, there is no need for corporations to provide creative activities so that workers socialise and invest in the workers' self-development, especially when technology is advancing so rapidly and can produce and make more profit for corporations vis-a-vis human costs.

So far, Graeber's distinction focuses on the

22 Graeber, D. (2012). Debt: The First 5,000 Years. Melville House, p. 345.

23 Roberts, R. (2014). Psychology and Capitalism. London Zero Books

24 Graeber, D. (2007). Possibilities: Essays on Hierarchy, Rebellion and Desire. AK Press.

way capitalists and non-capitalists see their interests vis-à-vis the human condition. In Possibilities Graeber[25] also delves into the growth of capital through expansion. For our purposes is not necessary to consider all aspects of Graeber's thought on capital accumulation. Rather, we need to narrow down his eloquent and extensive writings to the most pertinent points to frame this proposition, namely that the advancement of capitalism has been accelerating through the expansion from around 17th century or since Don Kalb's 'capitalist moment'. Graber sees 'capital (a)s a living entity, which constantly seeks to expand – expansion is the key to survival for capitalist firms.' Capitalism, Graeber says, 'is not a state of mind but a matter of objective structures, which allow wealth and power to be translated into abstract forms in which they can be endlessly expanded and reproduced.' In Debt, Graeber[26] challenges familiar thinking on modern capitalism. As he eloquently chronicles, it goes before 'the rise of factories (with their workers) and wage labour', and the wealth accumulated though the surplus value extracted from workers' labour minus wages[27]. Graeber says modern capitalism, or the 'new economy'[28] and more pertinently 'world-making capitalism'[29] is a 'financial apparatus … - central banks, bond markets, short-selling, brokerage houses, speculative bubbles, securization, annuities', 'a system that demands constant, endless growth', which 'from our baseline date of 1700 … the dawn of modern capitalism … that pump(s) more and more labour out of just about everyone with whom it comes in contact …'[30]. To Kalb[31], 1688 is the precise capitalist moment when abstract wealth capitalism[32] permutated into 'world-making' capitalism, with the specific property of creating new spaces for capital.

A closer analysis of this moment reveals that the transition from the Weberian type of 'abstract wealth'[33] to 'world-making'[34] capitalism facilitated the creation of a 'creative destruction'[35] type of capitalism. It is no longer just a system for sending vast amounts of money to the core, but a 'world-making capitalism', backed by a powerful combination of money capital and state power. This capitalism functions under certain conditions of 'social, institutional, and geographic power relations'[36] in order to create the new spaces of capital endlessly[37]. The mechanisms described by Harvey[38] as facilitating/aiding the new conditions that Kalb insists that makes the difference

25 Ibid.
26 Graeber, D. (2012). Debt: The First 5,000 Years. Melville House.
27 Ibid., p. 345.
28 Sennet, R. (1998). The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. WW Norton & Company, London.
29 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), 258-266.
30 Graeber, D. (2012). Debt: The First 5,000 Years. Melville House. p. 346.
31 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), 258-266.
32 Friedman, J. (1978). Crises in Theory and Transformations of the World Economy.
33 Friedman, J. (1978). Crises in Theory and Transformations of the World Economy.
34 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), 258-266.
35 Harvey, D. (1999). The Limits of Capital. New York: Verso Books.
36 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), p. 260.
37 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), 258-266.
38 Harvey, D. (1999). The Limits of Capital. New York: Verso Books.

between the two types of capitalism are commodification, multiplication or intensification of labour power. The 'precise conditions by which those large amounts of money capital return to the core over a protracted period'[39] , i.e. time regimentation as one mechanism behind the expansion of incessant production in the night spaces in order to create new spaces for capital, explain, in part, what pushes workers into precarity in this age of 'post- circadian capitalism' [40].

So far, we have analysed the two critical components in the analysis of the transition from circadian to post-circadian capitalism, intensification of labour and time regimentation. Next we turn to the third, the global city as the nurturing ground for creating new spaces for capital accumulation into the night. London is the 'global city' located in Europe, which makes it unique. And as far as Sassen is concerned, it is the very location where the 'place-bound labour market for talent [meets] low-wage workers'. Further, she argues that sites like London (and New York) offer the cross-border spaces for recapturing the financial sub-culture, on the one hand, and the needed economic geography of place, on the other. Both are 'involved in globalisation [that] allows us to recapture people, workers, communities, and more specifically, the many different work cultures, besides the corporate culture, involved in the work of globalisation'.

39 Kalb, D. (2013). Financialization and the Capitalist Moment: Marx versus Weber in the Anthropology of Global Systems. American Ethnologist, 40(2), 258-266.

40 Beaumont, M. (2015). Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London. Verso Books.

The Increase of Night Work in the Post-Circadian 24-Hour City

Who Are the Migrant Night Workers? Who Needs Them?

Employer demand for migrant workers has become a key feature of labour markets in high income countries. Employers' calls for more migrant workers are typically expressed in terms of 'labour and skill needs' that cannot be met from within the domestic labour force.[41]

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) includes night shifts in the normal course of shift work. The working regulations recommend the length of night shifts to be seven hours, starting between 6pm and 12am, but no less than 3 hours and no more than 8 hours within a 24-hour period in a 17-week rolling period[42]. The night workers performing 'hazardous or heavy physical or mental strains' have an 'absolute limit' of 8 hour shifts[43]. Descriptions based on the UK's Labour Force Survey (LFS) data have limitations in that they underestimate the number of migrant workers. However, relying on what is available, the Migrant Observatory reported 6.6 million foreign-born workers in the UK labour market in 2014.[44] Thirty-six per cent of these were working as employees and 48% as self-employed and lived in London. Of the low-skilled work sectors, the industries with the highest intake of foreign-born migrants were food manufacturing (38%), residential and domestic work (32%), and make-up factories (29%). From 1999 to 2009 the number of

41 Anderson, B., & Ruhs, M. (Eds.). (2010). Who needs migrant workers? Labour Shortages, Immigration, and Public Policy.Oxford: Oxford University Press, p. 15.

42 Unite the Union (2013). Shift Work and Night Work: A Health and Safety Issue for Unite Members

43 Ibid., p. 16.

44 Migration Observatory Briefing (2015). COMPAS, University of Oxford.

UK-nationals working nights has decreased from 10% to 8.3% (ONS-2, 2011).

Will Norman (2011) shows in his ethnographic study that nearly 1.5M British males and females are working on various night shift patterns: permanent nights, rotating night shifts – (early/late/night) and continental shifts nights and days (LFS, July 2008). His respondents refused to give exact details as they were either working a second job at night or informally. Undoubtedly, if all people working day shifts declared their second jobs during the evenings and nights, it is estimated that these figures could double. Gaps and limitations in the data increase when one attempts to offer an overview of the migrant population on night shifts. tThe Labour Force Survey does not include students living in residents' halls, many of whom are migrants themselves working to pay the high UK tuition fees. Therefore, there are no conclusive figures on the number of migrant night workers in the UK, but he following trends illustrate that the need for migrant night workers in the US and Japan has been growing for many decades. For example in the US, 'which in many ways leads the way into the 24 hour world', the number of people working on 'alternative shifts' in the evenings or nights increased from 7 million in 1987 to 15 million in 2008. In 2005, there were nearly 250,000 night workers in New York City alone, which represented 7% of the city's 3.3 million workers. Sharman and Sharman[45] published these findings in Nightshifts NYC in 2008 and argued that the fabric of modern society has changed since Melbin's study 25 years ago. Rather recent research in Japan shows that the number of night workers among Japanese employees rose from 13.3% in 1997 to 21.8% in 2012[46].

Moreover, evenings or unsociable hours of working and night-time work have been part of many industries and services, such as the computer sector, transport, communication, fire brigades, police, the army, and hospitals. Industrialisation (and the heavy mechanical and chemical processes) and artificial lighting have contributed to an increase of the night life or 'nocturnalization' of the emerging nocturnal cities. Furthermore, in view of international competition in manufacturing, night work complemented the round-the-clock shift system to 'maintain the long operating hours ... and the same level of capital utilisation of machinery'. The production systems of the late 20th century added night shifts to the already established two- and three-shift systems, mainly in manufacturing. The expansion of the global economy at the start of the 21st century brought something new. It increased the need to work night shifts in sectors that were never part of the night economy of global cities. . Particularly noteworthy are information and knowledge centres, banking, stock trading and call centres, some of which are open 24/7 and 365 days a year and have consequently pushed for expansion of other services such as supermarkets, petrol stations and night bus networks. The aggressive expansion of food store chains in the US and the UK is a useful illustration. Since 1978, the working hours in 82% of 6,599 'Seven-11' food stores had been extended beyond the 7am to 11pm, thus extending through the night.[47] In Britain, just before Christmas of 1998, the Tesco supermarket chain surprised its competitors by opening selected stores throughout the night.

45 Sharman, R. L., & Sharman, C. H. (2008). Nightshift NYC. Univ of California Press.

46 Kubo, T. (2014). Estimate of the number of night shift workers in Japan. Journal of UOEH, 36(4), 273-276.

47 Sharman, R. L., & Sharman, C. H. (2008). Nightshift NYC. Univ of California Press.

The increased use of night work has stretched the possibilities and resources of night works, both in mind and body, to levels unseen before in human history and prior to the capitalist expansion. The efforts of capitalists to exploit workers' labour around the clock significantly contributed to the emergence of the nocturnal cities. This is eloquently captured by Mezzadra and Nielson[48]:

The prolongation of the working day beyond the limits of the natural day, into the night, acts only as a palliative. But, as it is physically impossible to exploit the same individual labour power constantly during the night as well as the day, to overcome this physical hindrance, an alternative becomes necessary between those working people whose power are exhausted by day and those who are used up at night.

So far, one observation is that migrants are an easy target for supplying their unlimited low-cost labour. Alarmingly, factors such as the British labour market's 'growing dependence on migrant workers' and the global economic deterioration (in host/ sending countries) resulting in fewer incentives for migrants to return to their countries lead to an increase in number of migrant workers in the UK economy, in low paid private sectors, and under minimal, precarious conditions. This holds even more for the case of growing precariat in the night work sectors.

48 Mezzadra, S., & Neilson, B. (2013). Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor. Duke University Press.

Isolation and Alienation: Paving the Way for Bio-Automatons

'Migrants are the light infantry of capitalism. Vast numbers vie with each other for jobs. Most have to put up with short-term contracts, with low wages and few benefits. The process is systemic, not accidental.'[49]

Standing's[50] Precariat is the definition for a disappearing proletariat and an increase of precarious conditions of workers in relation to capital and state. Standing's work contributes to the theoretical body of knowledge of Bourdieu (who articulated precarity to describe temporary or seasonal workers) and others to indicate some kind of precariousness. He points out that Weber's notions of class and status could not apply to the precariat because it is a class-in-itself, and in-the-making. in short, it is a class of its own which does not yet have a common identity because 'tensions within the precariat are setting people against each other' as opposed to being solidaire with each other. The educated migrants holding a degree find themselves at the low end of the labour markets without access to social mobility. They therefore feel frustrated for being deprived of a meaningful life, and consequently seething resentment and anger against the celebrity culture and material success experienced by the few. More pertinently to our discussion, the angry precariat resents the life that 'short-termism' or flexi-jobs result in, its insecurities and '*no construction of trusting relationships built up in meaningful structures or networks*'. Born out of despair, anomie sets in, as Emile Durkheim[51] explains, 'a feeling of

49 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black, p. 113.

50 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black

51 cited by Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat:

passivity'. It is the result of sustained defeat, a negative feeling experienced by many in precarious situations, especially when they are labelled as 'undeserving, socially irresponsible', or worse, lazy.

These people often lack a deserving place in society and fixed status and thus often live in despair. This results in anxiety-ridden behaviour, insecurity about the future and alienation from today's bread-and-butter jobs which they hold on short-term basis. In short, the people are expected to be ever more adaptable in a flexible market, which is enough to make anyone prone to the four As – *alienated, anomic, anxious and angry*. In short, we should disabuse ourselves from the illusions that a short-termist society has something positive to offer to locals born and educated in their own country, and even more so for the migrants. The next section provides a discussion on the effects and imminent problems faced by migrant night workers suffering from 'sleep despoliation', 'drifting', and regimentation of time.

Becoming the 'Zombie' Night Worker

Contemporary capitalist society requires what Johnathan Crary[52] has identified as the despoliation of sleep in the interests of maximizing the individual's potential – as both a producer and consumer – for generating profit[53]. This night-to-night reality of the nocturnal cities of the future includes divisions of invisible night workers, 'travailing at night' rather than travelling through the night. Constantly fighting sleeplessness whilst awake and working, enduring the bodily exhaustion that is produced by pro-longed physical labour, and the mental alienation from isolation by being cut-off from diurnals' minds and eyes and the social bonds they had before nightshifting invaded their nights, makes of night workers an army losing battles with the precariousness of their nocturnal working lives and sleepless days. Rather strikingly, Standing[54] argues that with the globalised era setting in, the new dawn of the 'post-circadian capitalism'[55] has placed its high demands on humanity. Namely, it is no longer the case that 'early birds catch the worm', rather the sleepless ones.

Murray Melbin's[56] sociological analysis of the developments of the 24-hour night-time economies – of production and consumption – in the US concluded that 'if incessancy develops in the workplace, it will soon invade workers' bodies and households'. The time predicted by Melbin has arrived, and recently, art critic and theorist John Crary,[57] '24/7' depicted the

The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

52 Crary, J. (2013). 24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep. Verso Books.

53 Beaumont, M. (2015). Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London. Verso Books, 216-219.

54 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

55 Beaumont, M. (2015). Nightwalking: A Nocturnal History of London. Verso Books.

56 Melbin, M. (1987). Night as Frontier: Colonizing the World after Dark. Free Press.

57 Crary, J. (2013). 24/7: Late Capitalism and the

time we live in as the despoliation of sleep. However, unlike the 'burdened class' whom Kreitzman described as the segment of population living in The 24 Hour Society'[58], highly paid corporate executives have the power to buy solutions to avoid battling sleeplessness. Kreitzman is also argues that the difficulties of night workers have been growing for many decades now. He gives examples of the most disastrous accidents of the late 20th century that happened at night when the night workers are more likely to be exhausted, unable to concentrate, and exposed to various risks, not just in the work place but also on their return journeys between home and work.

The research division funded by the Pentagon, where scientists deprive human fellow participants of sleep and expose them to 'experiment trials of sleeplessness techniques, including neurochemicals, gene therapy, and transcranial magnetic simulation'[59] may provide sooner rather than later an antidote to fatigue by 'reducing the body's need for sleep' in the post-circadian capitalism. Nevertheless, future bio-automatons and bio-machines do not need to co-operate, support each other or show solidarity to one another! Besides, zombies, the nocturnal workers look and behave like diurnal creatures. In fact they are indistinguishable from normal human beings. As articulated by psychologist Ron Roberts, an alienated mind is an 'individual separated from self, other, his/her work' and any control over his predicament:

'Eliminated from the subject matter of the behavioural sciences, the person as a centre of experience has been supplanted by the 'zombie', celebrated by philosopher Dan Dennett as "behaviourally indistinguishable" from a "normal human being".[60]

Ends of Sleep. Verso Books.

58 Kreitzman, L. (1999) The 24 Hour Society. Profile Books Ltd.

59 Crary, J. (2013). 24/7: Late Capitalism and the Ends of Sleep. Verso Books., 21-35.

60 Roberts, R. (2014). Psychology and Capitalism. London Zero Books, p. 39.

Corrosion of Solidarity: A Proposition

We can now rephrase solidarity. This paper set an alternative basis for understanding that there are limits to solidarity as a concept previously used to explain social cohesion amongst workers. Also, when they experience migrant slavery, night shifters choose consciously or subconsciously not to show solidarity to one another, choosing small-scale conflict instead. On this battle ground, 'set by thriving polarised employment present in global cities'[61], migrants vie against one another for under-minimum wage jobs[62]. Instability becomes the normality. 'No long term' becomes the norm in a society where loose bonds are ubiquitous, i.e. no commitment and trust in relationships (e.g. divorces).[63] Sennett's investigation adds to the puzzle. Enrico's portray, once a migrant himself, rearing Rico, his American-born son, resembles the incarnation of some past legacies.

'Enrico had a somewhat fatalistic, old-world sense of people being born into a particular class or condition of life and making very best of what is possible within those constraints. Events beyond his control, like layoffs, happened to him; then he coped'.[64]

This passage offers an entry point into the matrix behind Enrico's character. His character may be the indication of a 'non-drift' attitude that kept him and his wife on track to make a better life for his son, Rico. One generation later, Enrico's son, lives in a paradox. Rico is both a successful and lost man due to the flexibility with which he approaches the demands of work at the cost of 'weakening his own character in ways for which there is no practical remedy'. Although a successful entrepreneur, uncertainty creeps in because without any 'looming historical disaster', Rico is one of the 'ideal Everyman' who is not 'reckoning the consequences of change or not knowing what comes next' because 'creative destruction' as Schumpeter said, is not happening on a Richter magnitude, but it is woven into the everyday practices of a vigorous capitalism', which requires people at ease with that. As advocated by Harvard Business School guru, Hohn Kotter, 'consulting rather than becoming 'entangled' in long-term employment; institutional loyalty is a trap in an economy where 'business' concepts, product designs, competitor intelligence, capital equipment, and kinds of knowledge have shorter credible life spans'[65] .

Moreover, the 'short-term society' model of 'weak ties vs. strong ties' no longer works in today's 'teamwork' based environment. Mark Granovetter's[66] 'international networking' model shows that 'absent ties', a term for 'weak ties', create superficial relationships that provide networkers with no social security due to short-term and objective-based type of 'friendships' or collaboration. Lewis Coser[67] argues that 'shared values' based on solidarity create 'weak ties' and short-term relationships between the workers and communities. He argues that verbal conflict instead creates

61 Sassen, S. (2001). The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo. Princeton University Press.
62 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.
63 Sennet, R. (1998). The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. WW Norton & Company, London.
64 Sennet, R. (1998). The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. WW Norton & Company, London, p. 29.
65 Sennet, R. (1998). The Corrosion of Character. The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism. WW Norton & Company, London, p. 25.
66 Granovetter, M. S. (1973). The Strength of Weak Ties. American journal of sociology, 1360-1380.
67 Coser, L. A. (1956). The Functions of Social Conflict (Vol. 9). Routledge.

durable relationships of friendship and progress by revealing differences amongst group members, thus consolidating 'strong ties', that is stronger, longer-term types of networking and bonds when people openly confront one another over disagreements rather than showing solidarity during a set project led period.

The argument presented here offers an alternative to an understanding of the underlying mechanisms and techniques of a marching world-making capitalism, which dismantles around-the-clock the livelihoods of night workers living and working in the nocturnal cities of the future. To live in a post-circadian capitalist age means to appreciate first and foremost the way in which living in a global market society is affecting our sense of time.[68] Hence this explains the importance that time-squeeze plays in disguising that. When post-circadian time intersects with the 24-h society, people live at an unprecedented speed, and with disrespect to their biological clock and leisure time. It is at this critical junction where the corrosion of solidarity takes place amongst a mass of people, the growing class or precariat, concentrated in the global, nocturnal cities. It is my contention that solidarity does not exist amongst the cohorts and armies of the precariat. Quite the opposite and more so than in other groups of people, there is a rather fierce competition and non-solidarity than there is social cohesion amongst those living and working in precarious conditions. The solidarity model crumbled when it came to explaining cohesion amongst the burdened ones living with anomie, anxiety, anger and alienation.

In closing, I draw on Sennett's perspective on the personal consequences, among which Corrosion of Character of Individuals. He illustrates that the 'ideal Everyman' of the new economy is not 'reckoning the consequences of change or does not know what comes next' because 'creative destruction', as Schumpeter said, is not happening on a Richter magnitude, but it is woven into the everyday practices of a vigorous capitalism'. Sennett's only 'ideal' worker in the unequal global city of London that can fathom such bleak uncertainty is the wealth management corporate-executive on high pay to quadruple the 1%'s wealth and their incessant appetite for consumption. At the other end, there is the army of workers, the 99%, slaved for incessant production (and consumption).

Constantly defeated and frustrated, the people consequently are seething resentment and anger against the celebrity culture and material success experienced by the few. The angry precariat resents the life that 'short-termism' or flexi-jobs bring with it, its insecurities and 'no construction of trusting relationships built up in meaningful structures or networks'. Put differently, we should disabuse ourselves (to borrow a phrase from Noam Chomsky) from living the illusions that a short-term society provides and nurture any possibility of solidarity amongst night workers.

To think on these lines, would mean to dream of a 'future of illusions'[69] where today's alienated individual, diurnal and nocturnal alike is other than a material object for both, production and consumption, consummates and consumers.

68 Standing, G. (2011). The Precariat: The New Dangerous Class. A&C Black.

69 See Boym, S. (2010) for an extended discussion, following Arendt, of freedom as the miracle of the 'infinitely probable.' A reality which though infinitely improbable occurs regularly and publicly.

About the Author

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