

IULIUS-CEZAR MACARIE

Invisible Denizens:  
Migrant Night Shift Workers'  
Fragile Possibilities for Solidarity in the  
Post-Circadian Capitalist Era



## ABOUT THE PROJECT

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

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**INVISIBLE DENIZENS:  
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FOR SOLIDARITY  
IN THE POST-CIRCADIAN CAPITALIST ERA**

Iulius-Cezar Macarie

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## ABSTRACT

London's New Spitalfields market night shift workers face weak possibilities for solidarity, and so presumably they are alienated from the mainstream, diurnal society. Since, generally people working nights permanently will suffer from isolation, sleep deprivation, physical exhaustion and mental alienation. Because, evidence from occupational health inquiries show how night shift work disrupts the circadian rhythms (Arendt 2010) if at all, to rapid transitions between different shift schedules. This leads to misalignment (desynchrony, and from anthropological and global studies showing that unmet social expectations lead to “hysteresis effects” (Bourdieu, 1984) and biological dissonance amongst the “walking ghosts” of India's call centre agents (Aneesh 2012:527–29). Unless, of course, people in other job sectors are not working at night permanently, on 11/12-Hour night shifts like the respondents in this study or they are highly skilled migrants capable of buying solutions for sociability. The paper analyses firstly, three main contributing factors: (a) the *expansion of the working day* into the night; (b) the *major alterations of time* over time, and (c) the *global city*, the nurturing ground for producing the bio-automatons maintaining its global night-time economy. Secondly, the four migrant night shifters' ethnographic portraits canvassed here, expose their resilience in enduring work precariousness, and corrosion of social ties and networks with their families, away and at home.

**Keywords:** migrants, night shift, precariousness, post-circadian capitalism,

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## INTRODUCTION

*The culture of the new order profoundly disturbs self-organisation. It can divorce flexible experience from static personal ethics... It can divorce easy, superficial labor from understanding and engagement. It can make the constant taking of risks an exercise of depression... Irreversible change and multiple, fragmented activity may be comfortable for the new regime's masters,... but it may disorient the regime's servants.<sup>1</sup>*

In 18th century Britain, people were up and working at night in cotton mills (Crary 2013).<sup>2</sup> The late 19<sup>th</sup> century however, marked the dawn of nocturnalisation in larger cities like London, Paris and Berlin, which contributed to an increase in night life in Europe (Schlör 1998). Britain's industrialised capitalist era saw night shift workers regimented in two- and three-shift system. Further, rapid development of services accelerated with the technological advancement of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Subsequently, the need to work night shifts has grown in sectors that were not part of the night economy before, such as information and knowledge centers, banking, stock trading and call centres, some of which are open 24/7 and 365 days a year (Kreitzman 1999). Thus, adjacent services such as supermarkets, petrol stations and night bus networks have also expanded and proportionally the need for migrants to take the undesirable jobs refused by the locals in high income countries (Ruhs and Anderson 2010). However, unlike in the previous centuries, migrants have become the backbone of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global cities or the "light infantry of capitalism (Standing 2011a:113).

Due to the rapid development of the digital age, Sassen (2005) argues that the *Global City* of the 21<sup>st</sup> 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 (2005) 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 Will Norman's (2011) "graveyard shifters".

1 Richard Sennett, Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism (Sennett 1998:174)"type": "book"}, "locator": "174", "uris": [{"http://www.mendeley.com/documents/?uuid=a47c3a13-e455-476c-8fe7-59b4e98b8838"}]}, "mendeley": {"formattedCitation": "(Sennett 1998:174

2 In 24/7 and the End of Sleep, Johnathan Crary (2013:61) 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".

Norman's (2011) 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 – a prevalence of 8.3% of the “15.4% of UK's workforce in shift work, inclusive of night work” (Table 2 in Kubo et al. 2013). 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 (Ruhs and Anderson 2010). In short, millions of migrants are doing the “graveyard shift” in higher income countries and in the global cities in particular.

The working paper seeks to clarify the concept of solidarity from other “cognates that have long history in anthropology”, such as reciprocity, which explains solidarity as a bridge or social cohesion in austere times, as the recent political and economic crisis in Greece (Rakopoulos 2016:142). Unlike Rakopoulos and colleagues's efforts to unwrap the meanings and practices attached to solidarity in networks (Rakopoulos 2016), this working paper will assess, formulate, and propose the opposite – that fragile capabilities for sociability and solidarity prevails at individual level in a small group of night workers. The ethnographic material offers no final word on solidarity amongst migrants of the 24-Hour city. Instead, it aims to stimulate further theoretical and empirical enquiries into transnational solidarity as opposed to social cohesion amongst the sizeable segment of global migrant workers, otherwise called *The Precariat* (Standing 2011a).

In doing so, I will explore the triadic relationship between intensification of labour, time regimentation and locality, crucial in the understanding of transition from wealth accumulation to “world-making” capitalism, encompassing the conditions, mechanisms and the processes that have led to:

1. The expansion of the working day into the night aided the marching of capitalism from a circadian phase to a post-circadian capitalist age that disrespects the 24-Hour circadian rhythm – awake/sleep/relax;
2. Major alterations produced over time, ie. time regimentation, which have transformed people's perception time and capabilities for sociability;
3. And the nocturnal, global city, providing the space and the expendable work force for the marching of capitalism.

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 (Sharman & Sharman 2008). In Britain, just before Christmas of 1998, the Tesco supermarket chain surprised its competitors by opening selected stores throughout the night. The efforts of capitalists to exploit workers' labour power round-the-clock significantly contributed to the emergence of the nocturnal cities.

The aggressive expansion of food store chains in the US and the UK illustrate what Karl Marx (1976 Vol. I X) saw as the “human potency” a crucial element in cost-saving benefits of shift work:

*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.*

In other words, the increased use of night shift work has stretched the possibilities and resources of night workers, mind and body, to levels unseen before in human history and prior to the capitalist expansion. More importantly, one observation is that migrants are an easy target for supplying their unlimited low-cost labour. Hence, Standing's (2011a) proposal on the *precariat* migrant segment embedded in the growing dangerous class that he metaphorically calls the "light infantry of capitalism". Standing (2011a) adopts the globalisation studies perspective and focuses on the *precariat* group of migrants living and working precariously in the global cities. He argues that the armies of night workers, the "migrant infantry of capitalism" (Standing 2011a:113) maintain the global cities, live under the demands of 24-hour societies, and with disrespect to their own 24-Hour physiological clock. The price, Sennett shows, is that the "new economy" has a very negative impact on the "corrosion of character" of workers (1998). Put differently, it affects negatively their capabilities for sociability. Whilst Aneesh (2012:527) and Arendt (2010) if at all, to rapid transitions between different shift schedules. This leads to misalignment (desynchrony point to the biological shock that night shift workers face, gradually becoming "walking ghosts".

Nevertheless, night-time space for production needs the nurturing ground of the global city for new economic organizational structure, ie. for creating new spaces for capital accumulation into the night (Sassen, 2005). As satisfied by Ruhs & Anderson (2010), this is one condition explaining the growing reliance on the migrant workforce in high income countries. 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

*[I]nvolved 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.*

The scholars together with colleagues in the field of transnational migration provide us with map of the processes that have led to major alterations to time in the transition from circadian to post-circadian capitalism, encompassing the conditions, mechanisms and processes that have facilitated, according to Harvey's (2007) closer analysis, to the "creative destruction" of capitalism.

### ***Transition from Circadian to Post-Circadian Capitalism***

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 omitted by scholars. Whilst this remains subject to further investigation, it is my contention that this is not time to prove or disprove it, rather to further research how this happened. However, Standing (2011a) 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 in 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 *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.” (Standing 2011a:115). He means that time was spent in blocks of years in school, followed by the working life sliced into 10-12 hours shifts after which we came home or socialized, and if we were lucky we retired early. Nevertheless, those days are behind us.

Historian E.P. Thomson chronicled that “the nascent proletariat was disciplined by the clock” (cited by Standing 2011a:115). 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” (Mitchell 2002). 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 lucky), were replaced by the new terms of *flexible* and *short-term* work. There was “long term” anymore.

Time regimentation has changed our perception of time (Standing 2011a). Sennett (1998) however, explains how this happened as a result of the “new economy”. His book on the consequences of the new economy’s impact on the *Corrosion of Character*, seems more relevant now than it perhaps was at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Sennett celebrates the works of previous thinkers by pinpointing to where the new ways of organising time, particularly working time, lead us, i.e. into 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.

Whether 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 and till further notice. In short, “no long-term” and flexi-time 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 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.

Post-industrialisation or post-circadian age however, 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” (Beaumont and Self 2015) is this “new time” or “tertiary time” serving a “tertiary society” or the flexible-labour society, which surpassed the agrarian and industrial society (Standing 2011a).

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 as the tipping point. For an elaborate analysis on this phase leading to the neoliberal capitalism read Kalb (2013) and Graeber (2014) pinpointing the precise historical conditions that facilitated the advancement of a modern, “creative destruction” that came into being as we experience it today. Briefly however, these scholars describe a “world-making capitalism” backed by a powerful combination of money capital and state power that functions under certain conditions of “social, institutional, and geographic power

relations ... to create new spaces of capital endlessly ... [so] large amounts of money capital return to the core over a protracted period” (Kalb 2013: 260).

More pertinently for this working paper, Harvey (2007) points out that behind the modern capitalism’s creative destruction, there are two main mechanisms: *commodification of workers’ time* and *multiplication or intensification of their labour power*. The two have been analysed here in a new light, to show how they facilitate new conditions for the expansion of incessant night-time production to create new spaces for capital, but have rarely been associated by previous scholarly efforts with Harvey’s destruction metaphor for modern capitalism.

## THE INCREASE OF NIGHT WORK IN THE POST-CIRCADIAN GLOBAL CITY

*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. (Ruhs and Anderson 2010:15)*

### ***Who Are the Migrant Night Workers? Who Needs Them?***

The Labour Force Survey (LFS) includes night shifts in the normal course of shift work<sup>3</sup>. The working regulations recommend seven-hour long night shifts as standard, 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 (Unite and McCkluskey 2013). The night workers performing “hazardous or heavy physical or mental strains” have an “absolute limit” of 8-hour shift (Kubo et al. 2013 See Appendix 1; Unite and McCkluskey 2013:16). 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 (Rienzo 2016; Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2014). Thirty-six per cent of these were employees and forty-eight 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 UK-nationals working nights has decreased from 10% to 8.3%, which could indicate the increasing reliance on migrant workforce.<sup>4</sup>

Will Norman (2011a) shows in his ethnographic study that nearly 1.5M British males and females work 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

3 Please see Appendix 1 for definitions of night time/work and night worker in European countries © (IARC Working Group on the Evaluation of Carcinogenic Risks to Humans 2010). Adapted according to Kubo et al. (2013:166) to reflect definitions and prevalence (%) of shift work that includes night work in Japan, the US and in EU27\* countries, including Bulgaria and Romania, since 2007. Sources: 4th EU Survey on working conditions for EU countries; Survey on State of Employees’ Health 2007 for Japan; US Bureau of Labour Statistics 2004 for the United States.

4 Office for National Statistics, 2011 Census.

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 as one attempts to offer an overview of the migrant population on night shifts. The Labour Force Survey does not include students living in residents' halls, many of whom are migrants themselves working to pay for their university tuition fees.

Therefore, there are no conclusive figures on the number of migrant night workers in the UK, but the following trends illustrate that the need for migrant night workers in the US and Japan has been growing for many decades. 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 the New York City alone, then representing 7% of the city's 3.3 million workers. Sharman and Sharman (2008) argue in *Nightshifts NYC* that the fabric of modern society has changed since Melbin's (1987) sociological study on the US's 20<sup>th</sup> century night shift workers.

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 pro-long the working hours alongside with the same level of capital utilization of machinery (Kreitzman, 1999). Alarming, factors such as the British labour market's "growing dependence on migrant workers" and the global economic deterioration resulting in fewer incentives for migrants to return to their home countries has led to an increase in number of migrant workers in the host countries, in low paid private sectors and under minimal, precarious conditions (Ruhs & Anderson 2010:15).

However, it could be alluded that such trends may be inclusive of but not restrictive to similar developments as is the case of 'pink collar' employment swaying the working nightscape in India (Patel 2010). Patel refers to this phenomenon described by scholars as 'feminisation of labour', or rather recently, 'feminisation of service', associated with part-time, flexible working hours for women balancing household duties as well as income earners (2010:43) a night shift labor force has gained momentum in the global economy. The hyper-growth of the transnational call center industry in India provides a quintessential example. The night shift requirement of the transnational call industry also intersects with the spatial and temporal construction of gender. Research conducted in 2006 in Mumbai, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad indicates that the nightscape is primarily a male domain (with the exception of prostitutes, bar dancers, and call girls. Patel found that,

*For some women, call center employment represents a space of empowerment through going out at night and earning a higher wage. However, the global circuitry from which their employment draws is simultaneously deemed an exploitative space because of stressful work conditions and wages lower than U.S. employees in similar positions. (2010:16–17) a night shift labor force has gained momentum in the global economy. The hyper-growth of the transnational call center industry in India provides a quintessential example. The night shift requirement of the transnational call industry also intersects with the*

*spatial and temporal construction of gender. Research conducted in 2006 in Mumbai, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad indicates that the nightscape is primarily a male domain (with the exception of prostitutes, bar dancers, and call girls)*

Within this research framework, call centre employment is of a 'pink collar' domain (Patel 2010). Her findings on the feminisation of labour in India seem to apply to the nocturnal landscape of the market in East London. Meaning that female night shift workers mother their children, near and away from their home, and in a sense they work overtime continuously, nevertheless devalued (Patel 2010) a night shift labor force has gained momentum in the global economy. The hyper-growth of the transnational call center industry in India provides a quintessential example. The night shift requirement of the transnational call industry also intersects with the spatial and temporal construction of gender. Research conducted in 2006 in Mumbai, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad indicates that the nightscape is primarily a male domain (with the exception of prostitutes, bar dancers, and call girls). The Spitalfields market acts as both the body of an institution, encouraging such labour division and embodiment a micro-social universe where feminisation of cafe delivery service is devalued as 'pink-collar' from the 'white & blue-collar' job roles: male cafe owner, market constabulary (mostly males), manager/salesman and loader/driver (Patel 2010) a night shift labor force has gained momentum in the global economy. The hyper-growth of the transnational call center industry in India provides a quintessential example. The night shift requirement of the transnational call industry also intersects with the spatial and temporal construction of gender. Research conducted in 2006 in Mumbai, Bangalore, and Ahmedabad indicates that the nightscape is primarily a male domain (with the exception of prostitutes, bar dancers, and call girls). In the same vein as Patel's research, Allison (1994) found a sharp gender divide in Japan's labouring realms.

Allison's long ethnographic project on the subject of "corporate fraternizing in a Tokyo Hostess Club" shows that although more women get paid work in Japan, "their social status is identified with home, child rearing and house work" (1994:xi and 91). Allison explains that *sarariiman* means white collar worker whose position in a large company – the standard goal for youth combined with parents' support to become middle class. Whilst Japanese families support their children to achieve *sarariiman* status, young men are favoured for *sarariiman* positions because "work in Japan is a male realm" (Allison 1994:5).

Rapid industrialisation in Japan, increased the need for more workers, so presumably the Japanese society became even further divided along gender and labour lines. More, rather recent research in Japan shows that the prevalence of night shift work among Japanese employees is on the increase, from 13.3% in 1997 to 21.8% in 2012. Japan's night labour power is at its highest since 1997 reaching twelve million night workers (Kubo 2014). The work-gender divide however, is directly proportional with the increase in the need of night shift workers, as scholars in anthropology, occupational health and political science have shown above.

Aneesh's (2012) one-year long investigation however, takes us back to India's call centres. Between Gurgaon and New Delhi, he uncovers, "global [nocturnal] villages" transform local night shift workers' social lives and somatic rhythms to meet global demands. Put differently, "global integration" of a firm's customers, require call centre night shifters to adjust their circadian rhythms to maintain such demands round-the-clock irrespective of locality, eg. North America, Europe or Australia. In short, India's call centre agents are up and working at night to serve day-time customers living in other time zones.

Night shift work is a regular part of the daily life, and the driving force behind global cities', like New York, New Delhi, London, Mumbai and Tokyo integration into global night-time economy. There is a price for this 'successful global integration', Aneesh (2012) warns. The sounding effects on the escape of women from a "patronizing patriarchy" (Aneesh 2012:528) into the night frontier of shift work in India's call centres have negative psychological consequences resulting from the physiological shock and social isolation reflected in the Bourdieusian notion of "hysteresis effect" describing unmet social expectations of night shift workers or emotional and biological dissonance expressed by one of his respondents as "walking ghost" (Aneesh 2012:527). Aneesh (2012) proposes further research on the "real-time global services" and the negative effects of the global integration onto night shift workers serving customers, globally.

Unlike Aneesh's (2012) discussion, which suggests that call centre agents find it more difficult to harmonise social expectations whilst servin in real-time globally, this investigation indicates that despite the physical proximity between night shift workers and their families or friends, London's migrant night shift workers satisfying Londoners' appetite for food, experience corrosion of social ties and networks both in terms of family relationships and with those left in the their home countries. Next, I introduce the London-based, global institution of City of London Corporation (CoLC) whose migrant night shift workers' lives I immersed into, ethnographically.

## THE CITY OF LONDON CORPORATION: A BRIEF HISTORY

*To understand how a society works you need to not just look at the areas of what we call social noise, i.e. what everyone likes to talk about, the equity markets, mergers and acquisitions and all the high-profile areas everyone can see. But you need to look at the social silence as well.<sup>5</sup>*

From time immemorial, the City of London Corporation has been the nurturing institution of global trade and exchange; from wool to fruits, and from foreign currency to stock exchange. It still is, *the* marketplace in Europe, attracting migrant populations from across the globe, to live, trade and/or work in financial services, information technology centers, and the food industry. For centuries, the CoLC's markets, Billingsgate, Smithfields and Spitalfields, have been catering for Londoners' incessant appetite for food. CoLC represents UK's governing body for markets in the UK and in the City of London. Its authority governs over the Spitalfields market, in Leyton, East London, the field site where I did my research.

### ***The City of London Corporation: What is It?***

CoLC is the "world's oldest continuous municipal government" (Shaxon 2011 ebook loc. 4873). However, the silence surrounding the CoLC, deafens the soundscape of the scholarly literature on the power of governing institutions acting as states within states, such as City of London, Washington

5 Tett, Gillian (2009). Fool's Gold: How Unrestrained Greed Corrupted a Dream, Shattered Global Markets (Tett 2009:288–89)



DC and the Vatican City State. The lack of literature and transparency on the CoLC points to a silo in the social landscape of British society and in the history of global finance empire hosted by the City of London in the detriment to the rest of the country (Shaxson 2012). Its jurisdiction is geographically restricted to the Square Mile – the prime area of the City measuring 1.22 square mile surrounded by the remains of an ancient wall as shown in the picture below (Shaxson 2012 ebook 4727). Financially, CoLC oversees the City’s financial global power. More, through its governing power it “enhances its status as the world’s leading international financial and business center”; One Chinese official, referred to the City of London as the “holy place” of international finance and globalization” (Shaxson 2012 ebook 4873). As a major player in the global financial regulation, including the off-shore web structure, the CoLC has influence over several of Britain’s financial regulatory bodies, such as Policy and Reform Committee; International Accounting Standard Boards (IASB) – regulates how corporations publish financial data by their own disclosure rules and without being accountable to the parliament.

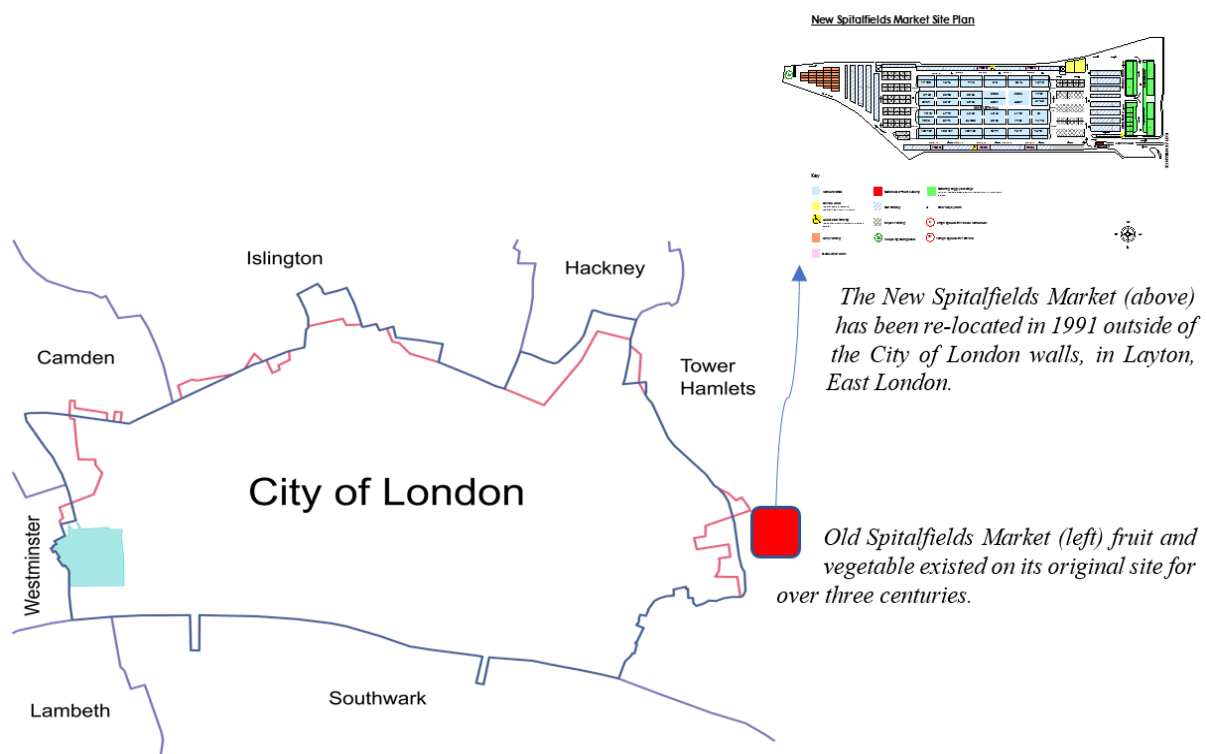


Figure 1: shows the City of London, the smallest “city” in England, surrounded by the ancient wall acting as boundary. The red line indicates the changes made to its boundaries in the 1990s. City of London Corporation owns and manages the Old/New Spitalfields Market, represented by the red and blue squares.

However, returning to the question of what CoLC is, its chief executive the Lord Mayor of the London City – not to be confused with the Mayor of London with its 32 boroughs – is the ambassador of the UK-based financial and professional services. The status that City of London has compared to the Greater London Authority (GLA) parallels that of Lord Mayor’s to the Mayor of London. In effect, there are two London cities run by separate governing bodies. City of London has in its constituency 9,000 wealthy residents living within the city wall illustrated above, whilst in the surrounding 32 London boroughs (including the poorer Tower Hamlets and Hackney) host over 7 million British and foreign-born residents.

The 350,000-strong army of workers commute daily to/from the suburbs into London Liverpool Street station (Shaxson 2012), many of whom work in the City’s financial services. According to Annual Population Survey (ONS 2007)<sup>6</sup>, CoLC finance and other business services employed, in 2005-06, 51,000 or 13% of all foreign-born living and working in London (Beaverstock 2010). In contrast, at the bottom of the labour market, the highest intake of foreign-born migrants was in the food manufacturing (38%), residential and domestic work (32%), and make-up factories (29%) (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2014). However great the reliance on itinerant workers is, CoLC does not envisage to improve the working conditions and the standard of living for those working in the supporting sectors, at the bottom, but to reward its foreign-born bankers, the high earners managing hedge funds.

London Citizens for example, represents over 140 civic and faith London based groups, and has repeatedly advocated under the London Living Wage Campaign for pay increase of the cooks, cleaners and night workers serving the City of London for an hourly rate of £8.30 per hour for a London worker (2011 Living Wage rates). However, the CoLC has often left the negotiations in disagreement with London Citizens for refusing to raise the CoL workers’ income above the national minimum wage of £6.19 per hour (2011 Living Wage rates). Meanwhile, the cumulative sum of bonuses paid to City investment bankers reached a record high of £14 billion during 2010-11, when Britain was surfacing from the financial crisis (Shaxson 2012 ebook 5394).

For centuries, UK’s foreign-born workers have been “anchored at the very bottom of the labour market” (Geddes and Scott 2010:193), and an overwhelming majority live and work in London (Rienzo and Vargas-Silva 2014), with a great intake in the food production and consumption system. As the UK’s market authority and owner of City’s oldest markets, CoLC regulates the trading practices in the markets under its jurisdiction, though geographically located outside of the walls of the City. In order to contextualize today’s market workers are governed by the ancient rules of CoLC I offer an overview of the CoLC’s ancient presence of the market, the contemporary working regime and the ethnic composition of the night workers.

### ***The City of London Corporation: Managing the (New) Spitalfields Market***

CoLC’s (New) Spitalfields market is the youngest of the three that it owns and manages - meat, fish and fruit and vegetable markets. It was given the Royal Charter in 1682, but only in 1920 it became City of London’s property, and continued to trade on the border of the east side of the square mile, under the name of Spitalfields. In 1991, it relocated outside of the City with the New prefix attached to Spitalfields. It occupies 31 acres of land colloquially called *the marshes*, and known as the site where the Huguenot refugees settled en masse in the seventeenth century. Spitalfields market is the largest of its kind in the UK, hosting 105 stands with 120 plus businesses. It open 6/7 nights per week, from Sunday to Saturday, and trades yearly over 650,000 tons of fruit and vegetables.

Strategically placed, with access to the M11 motorway linking through the north circular to the East Anglia. It faces the road connecting Leytonstone to Stratford, the newly gentrified area that hosted the 2012 London Olympics athletes’ village, itself linked with and rejuvenated by the commercial Westfield shopping mall in the Stratford town centre, one underground stop away. This strategic position gives access to both grocers and catering businesses to distribute and supply produce in all the 32 London boroughs and throughout the UK. The CoL’s vision for the market aims:

6 Office for National Statistics, 2007 update.

*To support our tenants in creating a flourishing market by providing an exemplary trading environment that is energy efficient, well maintained, safe, innovative, profitable, and represents the diverse ethnic mix of the area served by the market (City of London's vision statement for Spitalfields)*

As you enter the site, the nocturnal rhythm beats at an incessant pace as the night grows into the day. Customers and traders who frequent the market on nightly basis, buy and sell 5/6 nights, residents walk in at dawn to buy small quantities, and lorry drivers deliver around-the-clock. The produce traded in Spitalfields travels the world. On night-to-night basis, tones of produce is muscled by workers: mango or pineapple from Peru, apples from New Zealand or the US, oranges and onions from Turkey or Germany, and Casava from Brasil, Yam from Africa.

The overwhelming majority of low skilled night workers are migrants from Bulgaria, Lithuania, and Romania working legally, while the Turkish (third-country nationals) work on business visa; but, most Indians, Bangladeshi and Pakistani work illegally at the market. Most of the night shift workers whom I met were working for several years at the market. Their immigration status has changed, especially for those arriving from other European Union (EU), countries like Bulgaria and Romania. A brief note here tracks these workers' transition process; before 2014 most worked illegally, as EU workers residing in the UK, and since 2014 they are working informally, yet as legal EU citizens. I discuss very briefly how UK's immigration policies and political approach influenced the night shift workers' status, and to different degrees, their precarious position in the UK's labour market.

The last quarter of 2013 has seen certain prevailing political discourses in the UK around the freedoms of work, travel, and social and healthcare rights for Romanians – and to some extent Bulgarians – living in the UK. The UK Government proposed reforms to the Freedom of Movement Treaty, and restrictions against full working rights entitled to Bulgarians and Romanians in the UK, post seven-year transition since joining the EU, in 2007. However, these were rejected by the European Commission. In short, though Bulgarians and Romanians were EU citizens since 2007 they faced legal restrictions to work in the UK, and most countries in the EU for seven years.

From January 2014, Bulgarians and Romanians arriving to or already living in the UK could work legally. However, night shift workers from Bulgaria, Romania told me that before 2014 they were working at the market, either self-employed or unregistered with the UK's Tax office. By the time I began fieldwork, most were working full-time legally, but informally because they declared only part-time earnings.

The 'puzzle-problem' regarding the Freedom of Movement Treaty and the impact on the full working rights of EU citizens in the UK remains as palpable as it was in 2013. So, presumably, that will affect the specific policies (on immigration and labour). Since, at the time of finalising this paper (June 2017), the BREXIT negotiations between the UK and the EU have already started. Because, as we have learnt from previous EU enlargements (2004, 2007) new migration policies will be introduced, and undoubtedly so, freedom of movement for EU workers will be less free after 2018, when the UK will have departed from the European, 'borderless' space. Unless, of course, the EU-UK post-BREXIT deal will be favorable to the freedom of movement of workers. However, that is a different question altogether and it has been addressed in a previous paper.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>7</sup> For further discussions on this topic please see, Macarie, I.-C., (2014) *Half-in, Half-out: Roma and Non-Roma Romanian with Limited Rights Working and Travelling in the European Union*. Available at: <http://bit.ly/1fzVoFu>



At Spitalfields market however, the division of labour by gender shows low numbers of women working in the higher echelons (almost inexistent except if traders' relatives), with most women working in the market café or as cashiers. The rich ethnic diversity amongst workers with limited educational background contrasts the not so representative group of salesmen and drivers with engineering background, and even fewer who do not speak English at all. This may allude us into thinking that most low-skilled migrant night workers prefer this type of activity due to their limited knowledge of English language skills, which conditions their access to London's labour market outside of the fruit and vegetable trade. The night shifts before and after bank holidays bump up the volume of sales and so the travail of those on the shift, without being remunerated in extra time off or pay rise; the opposite – earlier start, later finish, same pay.

My research site however, resembles an inter-cultural space, as well as an “outpost for transnationalised [Romanian-ness, Turkish-ness, Indian-ness], dominating over other cultural traits (Tan 2014:136). Often the ones trading are transnational themselves, some naturalised in Britain, with many coming from Turkey, Pakistan, and China. In Sahlin's (1981) view, the market site is best understood as “structure of the conjunction” between the cross-cultural and historical, global and the local, of varying cultural and linguistic backgrounds, exchanging produce for liquid assets – money, that is – and information on the current UK affairs and migrant crisis in Calais, making fraternities, building business relations, in a unique social order belonging to each community. Is this cultural, economic and social pot of human interactions between transnational migrants enough to move them towards labour solidarity? To show “sensitivity” to another individual's needs whilst working, thus growing in solidarity (Rorty 1989)? Paraphrasing Wilde: do these individuals have enough “respect for individual dignity to move into solidaristic relations”? (2013:37)

Glick-Schiller and colleagues (2006), advise us to shift focus away from the ethnic group type of relations, and so presumably find other viable in-roads into migrant practices, such as friendships, charitable and religious networks. As Wilde warns us, individuals need to work at growing division-of-labour-based solidarity, otherwise they risk succumbing to the “abnormal” developments. Anomie, inequality and inefficient organization are examples of such threat (Durkheim [1984] 2013). Born out of despair, anomie sets in as a feeling of passivity (Standing 2011b) or loss of morale (Sennett 2012). Night shift workers at Spitalfields have repeatedly described their alienation from one another, and explicitly from the mainstream society, as resulting from the precarious working conditions, inability to access social mobility, sleep deprivation, and physical hardships. Ridden with anxiety and anger, these bio-automaton workers are frustrated for not being able to develop their potential. Ultimately, they could not care less for the other co-workers' struggles, regardless of their otherwise ethnic-based fraternities.

During 2015, I spent a total of twelve months of fieldwork at Spitalfields market. In the first month, I loaded produce and carried out menial jobs for a Bangladeshi trader, where I learnt the basics of loading pallets of fruits and vegetables. I encountered many co-workers muscling fruits and vegetables, night-in, night-out, six nights a week. Nevertheless, the four night shift workers foregrounded in this working paper, are a café delivery woman, a forklift driver, a store supervisor, and one Turkish salesman, all working for Kurdish-Turkish owners/traders. The context in which I observed the night shift work phenomenon, and the circumstances that have allowed me to contact these coworkers, needs brief consideration. For five months, I was a participant observer, employed by the same Kurdish-Turkish owner as the Turkish-Romanian supervisor and the Turkish-Bulgarian

forklift driver. For another six weeks, I was employed by the same Kurdish-Turkish market café owner as Lexa, the delivery woman, where I met Logan, the Turkish sales man. And in the rest of the year, I was an involved observer, carried out interviews, and thus, I gained the insider's familiarity with the work ethics between Kurdish-Turkish owners and the Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish workers. Hence, the order in which I introduce each character reflects the degree of precariousness, not the chronological pattern of events that have taken place in the different settings, in which I closely worked with them and observed. The three men combined, fulfil duties that most fruit and vegetable stands rely upon. The fourth portrait depicts one woman's experience representative of most women delivering an auxiliary service supplied by the five market cafés situated around the main market hall.

#### FOUR ETHNOGRAPHIC PORTRAITS OF MARKET WORKERS

##### *Lexa: An Ethnographic Portrait of a Nocturnal Café Delivery Woman*

Lexa is in her late twenties and she left her five-year-old daughter with her parents, in Southern Romania. In London, she is set on spending every minute of her waking hours, working, saving, and eventually bringing over her little five-year-old daughter. Lexa says,

*I came to London on a Friday and I started to work on Friday night. Since then, I worked nights. It was a bit hard till I accommodated with the night schedule.*

Like other migrants, she is trekking on the difficult path to adjust to the host country and the available conditions, which in her case means settling in shared accommodation unsuitable for a small child. Below, I reconstruct her night shifting experience since arrival, six months ago. Desperate migrant denizens, like herself, and another market loader, whose wages were never increased as promised, become returnees for further abuse and indignities. Despite the recommendation of other Romanian women working in similar jobs at night, she seems to have serious problems accepting the new environment. Mainly, she complains, because of her Turkish boss/-es. Lexa's portrait reveals the predicaments faced by migrant women night shift workers servicing in male dominated environments. Especially, when "fresh off the boat" entering the new working settings without induction, warning or preparation for a working life without a contract.

Lexa arrived in London, and immediately begun working at the market at a friend's recommendation. She says, *I came here to make money*. She explains that

*The friend I was telling you about called me and told me "look they pay £1000 a month, are you interested?" In Romania, I will never make this much in a month. Normally, I said yes!*

However, Lexa admits that we work not so legal here; the nightshift is too long, and it's very tiring. But, she says,

*In Romania income is low (10-20M RON/£150-300 per month), we come here and work without a contract and on low wages [too]. We come here to work for £200 per week, which for a Romanian would be enough for one month in Romania.*<sup>8</sup>

Lexa's consideration and motivation for moving to the UK is very clear. Not so clear, at this stage, is why she works nights. So, that I understood why, I encourage Lexa to detail her night shift working experience. Her shift patterns and the time spent at work comprise of 11/12-hour night shifts, starting around 9-10pm and finishing no earlier than 9am. When she took this job, Lexa had no previous experience of working in a cafe. For two weeks, her duties were mainly to clean the kitchen, learning to prepare fast foods, and gradually serving customers over the counter. Then, she moved onto delivery of hot and cold drinks and food to market workers or visitors.

Most customers were male market workers of other nationalities (eg. Chinese, Turkish), and not native English speakers, which did not help improve her already limited language skills. For example, the Chinese customers were asking coffee with *tsugār* and she could not understand their accent. Besides, being indoors for eleven hours, and working aside her boss became problematic, which led to several disagreements till the inevitable occurred. So, she talked to him and asked to work in a different cafe. She says that, *I moved to a fish market cafe where English customers dominated over other nationalities*, and only then her English language skills improved significantly.

On the flip side, women working in the market café experience more indignities, but some mirroring men's experiences. As described by her words,

*They pay us under the minimum national wage and that a 12h night shift becomes longer, you never know. You go to work, but you don't know when you finish.*

I turned up at café C2 to interview Lexa, on a Saturday morning. As I stepped in, Lexa was disputing her pay cut by the café manager, and my ex-employer too. Later, when we exited the market site, I asked Lexa if she would speak to me about it. She reconstructs the events leading up to it, in reverse. Lexa explains that her boss justified cutting her pay simply because,

*I didn't turn up on a busy shift. So, he cut two nights of my pay, instead of the only one missed. This is not normal, Lexa notes. But, there is nothing we can do. It's our fault really, because we accept to work in these conditions, which are laid out by them.*

In addition to this, they stopped the deposit from her salary. Lexa goes into such detail and says that

*Even the way they stopped my deposit. It's not normal! I understand that this is how it works here [in the UK]. Even my coworkers told me that their deposit was stopped - but, on monthly basis they took £20 during a whole year. But in my case, they stopped the whole weekly salary as deposit, for two weeks in a row.*

As her ex-coworker, I observed her often arriving on shift and ready to sleep. She came in straight from her other day-job. She was a janitor who also did room service too, and complained about how demanding the hotel customers were. And that she never knew if her nine-hour day shift, ended or if

8 Starting with February 2017, minimum wage in Romania will be increased from €275 per month or €1.65/h (1,250RON/month or 7.38/h) to €319 per months or €1.88/h (1,450RON/month or 8.56/h)

they would request for her continuing. Often, such unexpected request would cause her delays. Though she asked the manager to let her start later, like everybody else on the team he refused her. Within the space of 6 weeks, the time I worked in this café, three women came and left this role, some within the first three days, others within weeks. Lexa was the fourth delivery woman, determined to hold on, and held onto it till she could not.

When we did the interview, she was determined to denounce her abusive employers. She had the two weeks' deposit stopped by the owner of the cafe in the fish market, which he has not returned by that point. Meanwhile, the same owner's business partner who was managing this café (C2) at the fruit and vegetable market, also deducted two nights' worth of her wages, though she has only missed one. By December 2015, the time when I finished my fieldwork, Lexa, like Azí the Bulgarian forklift driver, returned to work at the market. Alas, she returned to the same employer who abused her rights in the first place. Though, Lexa dealt with that, but she could not do anything about her employee rights, such as protecting her wages or disputing successfully the deposit retainer. As she describes, confronting the manager on his inadequate proposals,

*It affected my salary rights, in the way they cut my salary, without any reason... though they gave me all sorts of reasons. Like, how I did not work as required during the week. Because I didn't pay attention, etc.*

Though she was not saying it openly during the interview, she said to me off the record, that the cafe owners made indecent proposals to her. Having not succeeded in that way, he began talking inappropriately and abusively to her, and two other migrant women who have worked for him; though he never behaved inappropriately to me, another male, or to the other two English females who have joined the cafe during that time. I interviewed separately the cafe owner, also the business partner of the above-named manager, who stopped her deposit. I asked him if he recently had or observed any inadequate experiences with the workers at the market, he defensively asked, "Unacceptable? Why?" Then, he quickly switched the conversation to the hardships he experienced during his time as a night worker.

Despite her experiences so far, Lexa believes that it's OK when you work on 8-hour night shift, legally, and on a regular night shift pattern, none of which applies in her case. Nevertheless, she says that having worked here for the past six months on the same pattern, my body got used to it, in a way. But, having also worked nights in Romania before coming to the UK, Lexa compares that to what she experiences now:

*I used to work two nights a week in a casino, in Romania. And now that have been working in the UK, nightly for six months, I think that you don't really have a life. It's just work. Nothing else. I think that you don't have a life when you work nights. You get home tired, you sleep, you have no time for children. You wake up 2 hours before the shift and this way, in the past 4 months, my life was spent on work, sleep, work, sleep. The body gets exhausted.*

Perhaps, Lexa's portrait canvassed above offers a window for further reflection, firstly, on the contributing factors which attract migrants to big cities, and secondly, and specifically on women's labour migrants' precarisation in the form of bonded labour. As with Allisson's (1994) ethnography

of the hostess club, having switched from being a loader to a café worker I was confronted with new insights unreachable to me while I was prescribed not to leave the store, as to what a café worker needs to accept on this role when servicing males. First, the café market service is 99% composed of women. Second, women's role is not just to serve but also to bump up the sales through the night for working men to spend more than they could afford. Third, I was the 0.5% male server, the other 0.5% was made up by the off-call deliveries supplied by the manager when the café was short staffed. On the second night of my employment at C2, I was ridiculed by my former coworkers because I took a "woman job". Innuendos such as lifting my apron became the delight of my new clientele, loaders and market traders, but specifically of those who felt more familiar and thought that it was acceptable to joke that way.

The four ethnographic portraits of a sales man, supervisor, forklift driver and café delivery woman canvas the lives of these migrant night shift workers from Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey, living and working irregularly at night, in London. Except Lexa, who is in her twenties, the three men are in their mid-thirties. The migrant trajectories however, differ in all four cases. Logan arrived from Turkey, as a teenager to join his sister already living in the UK. Gică and Azí travelled alone, at first, then brought their families over, and Lexa was in the process of doing so.

As for their time night shifting at the market, Logan has been there for 17 years, Gică for almost eight, Azí worked four years, and Lexa only six months. By the time, I left the field site, Azí had already left, and was unemployed, and living in the temporary accommodation with his wife and three children. Lexa was an exception in terms of education. Her high school diploma however, was not an asset to rely upon and find a decently remunerated job in Romania where national minimum wages are so small that she could not envision to prosper under those conditions soon.

The males, had only been educated up to the primary school level, and had no professional background to fall upon. Nevertheless, they had their bodies to muscle the loads of exotic fruits and vegetables and the Turkish language skills to get employment at Turkish owned companies, trading at Spitalfields market. Whilst none of the four people suffered a drop in their professional status, three out of four would have wanted to move on, but could not due to lack of English language skills.

In different ways, their lives were trapped; for Gică and Azí between hopes to save money fast and support their families; Logan loved his job and the remuneration that it brought, but was nostalgic of the missed time with families that he has built and lost along the way; Lexa was the only one at the start of her night shift experience and building high hopes to bring her daughter over to the UK. Though she already spent her first six months between working and sleeping to save every penny she was nowhere near achieving her primary goal – being together with her daughter.

The experiences of the night shift workers at the New Spitalfields, had much in common with other migrants working in London's night-time economy; with Brazilian rickshaw drivers, Romanian night auditors and receptionists in hotels or construction workers at Gatwick and chefs in China Town, whom in different ways have lived with precariousness, growing more isolated from the greater segment of society, and alienated from their families in the home countries (Lorrey, 2015). Despite that, working at night in London, as my respondents reminded me, presented an attractive destination for a more lucrative venue, especially for those who lacked English language skills, which in my respondents' cases was in excess of 99%. But, as long as their worked provided an honest living to realise earnest dreams, the precarious living and working did not present an obstacle enough for them to consider other venues.

For an onlooker, their resilience to confront hardships may seem justifiable as long as they eventually reach their aims. However, as a researcher-insider with the "sleepless bats", I have learnt that



these returnee migrant night workers, often return resource less and penniless, begging their abusive managers to give back their old jobs. Indirectly, asking for more abuse, indignities, and ultimately, as Ehrenreich found with the low wage earners in the US, once made to feel unworthy enough by their managers, they started to believe “that was their actual worth” (2010:211).

### *Azí: An Ethnographic Portrait of a Nocturnal Forklift Driver*

The Turkish word *gurbet* has Arabic roots and it means “being abroad”, “away from home, from the homeland”. Sometimes *gurbet* is used synonymously as “exile” as in involuntary/undesired foreign travel out of necessity. To Azí, the forklift driver, *gurbet* means

*You've left home for another place, for the first time, you're bored, missing home, friends... if you've left home on your own ... you're missing the wife, the kids... missing everyone. You don't know the new place... you've left home for the first time, I don't know, it's hard... you're crying, you're missing home.*

Azí is a Bulgarian Muslim migrant of Ottoman descent. Often, he would preach me from the Quran, and told me that in Bulgaria he was offered to become an imam. He would have probably become good at leading the prayers in his deep voice and with the enthusiasm he showed. Instead, he left Bulgaria for the first time at the age 15. At first, he travelled alone throughout Europe; first to Greece, Italy, France, Germany, and lived in the UK for the past four years. His limited education constrained him to work nights at the market, first as a loader, and later I watched him in awe maneuvering the forklift. But like many poor migrants, he was penniless and jobless when he arrived (to UK). I met him in early February 2015, when I was hired by the same company he worked at. He is the only bread winner and on the one day off, he would spend his spare time with his wife and two children. He recalls that upon arrival

*I looked for a job... From the start, I found one here [Spitalfields market] and I stayed here since. I have been working at the market for about ... 4 years.*

As a forklift driver, he enjoyed the challenge and was confident in his skill. Few days after he passed the test, Azí approached a pallet laid long ways at a speed (other forklift drivers would not dare), and smoothly inserted the right fork at a 45° angle and while going in forward at the same time he used the lever to his right hand to adjust the mast so that it pushed the right corner of the pallet till it would turn the pallet sideways. The pallet then fit the forks, like a glove on the fingers and not conversely. This operation would take Azí 30 seconds to complete. While for an amateur driver such as myself, after months of practice, it would still take me several minutes for the same task. Azí was in complete control when driving the forklift. He was maneuvering the pallets of produce like a peregrine. Once they spotted a woodpigeon they could kill it in midflight. So was Azí loading pallets surviving the pressure that forklift drivers face when working for a Turkish company. You need to be as fast and precise on the ground, as the peregrine in the air or sooner rather than later you are back to loading pallets.

Like the rest of us night workers, Azí would work six nights a week, from 10pm till 9-10am. On average, he would work 11+ hours per night shift, summing up to 66-70 hours per week. Azí had a raw instinct, at work, in action. He was swift in mind and strong in body facing the sort of effort required under such pressures. He was over 6ft (almost 1.90m) tall; his thick arms and legs were long

and muscular. His fingers were as thick as a Cuban cigar, and they gripped powerfully. As a loader, he would pick up and put on his shoulders 12-15 crates of Mangoes, each weighing 5-6kg; or take 10 sacks of onions, 5kg each, in each hand. He stepped fast and he was enjoying this physical work and the fact that he was skilled to prepare hundreds of items on one pallet. A very skillful task! If one put a crate in the wrong place the 2m high pallet loaded with wooden crates, plastic or cardboard boxes, sacks of potatoes, all would fall and crack when hitting the unforgiving tarmac.

Managers and salesmen are under pressure from the rushing customers, and they project it in turn onto the loaders and forklift drivers to finish the orders fast. On one hand, Azí says,

*As a forklift driver, compared to loader, it is a bit easier. But, it is a different tiredness. It gets stressful. Your head gets tired. You understand? But, it is better because your body does not get tired... (long sigh)... That's how it is... Night work is ... a hard job. This work, working in the market is hard.*

On the other,

*I don't know English (much). If I wanted to work somewhere else outside of here, I don't know speak English well enough. For now, we continue like this. We'll see for how long.*

Overnight, in September 2015, they became homeless by their landlord. The Police evacuated them and the Hackney Council housed them under the emergency regime procedure. The whole family's belongings, the two children were moved in and out of the hostel three times/nights before the Council gave them a temporary home. During this crisis, I saw different side of Azí. When at the Hackney Council, housing officers would not speak to him because he was not entitled to housing. They would speak to his wife only because she was the only one entitled to support. Azí was unsure and quiet during this experience; though he dealt with it calmly, as if he has seen this kind of fragility before.

Azí is now father of three<sup>9</sup>. When I first met him at the market, he only had G and S, a boy of three, and a girl of thirteen-year-old. But since, his wife gave birth to Sunny Day (literal translation from Turkish). In February 2016, Sunny Day, their youngest child, was born in this accommodation. All five members of this migrant family from Bulgaria, have been living in one bedroom temporary accommodation in North London, for over a year now.

Seldom, I contacted Azí after I left the field site. In May 2016, when I met him again, he stopped working saying that he has had enough. However, during a skype conversation in December 2016, he returned to work at a different company on higher wage, but by May 2017 when I last saw him, he returned once again to the company where I met him in 2015. Azí's portrait depicts a migrant denizen away from home, insecure of his future at the market, and in the UK, not knowing whether and for how long he can cope with his nocturnal rhythm and sleeping frugally, diurnally. Regardless, as with other night shift workers at the market, he too returns to the same place, same prospect-less night job.

### ***Gica: An Ethnographic Portrait of a Nocturnal Supervisor***

Gica migrated to the UK in 2002, from southern Romania. He is a Romanian citizen of Turkish descent. He speaks Turkish and follows Muslim traditions, but does not practice. By the time I met Gica, his wife moved back to Romania with their three-year-old boy, who has been diagnosed with

9 Between finishing the fieldwork and writing-up this paper (June 2017), his wife gave birth to their third child.

Asperger's syndrome. Following the diagnosis, they decided that it was in the child's best interest to receive the long-term medical care he needed in their home country and with the support of his wife's parents. Since, Gica saw his wife and child only few months at a time, in any one year.

This portrait illustrates what I borrow from Richard Sennett, that "power is present in superficial scenes in teamwork" (1998, p.114). This, I have noted, not so much so in Logan's work ethics and world views, as in the practices of others, like Gica, the supervisor-in-charge, training the new loaders, like myself. Gica's portrait allows me to illustrate that the acculturation process of new workers is embedded in the embodied histories of enculturated experienced workers, like Gica.

Gica has been working at this 30-employee fruit and vegetable store for about 4-5 years. From Sunday to Friday, nightly, he supervised and dispatched the orders onto us loaders, and was making sure that we completed them – that is, loading and preparing the produce onto pallets, inspected afterwards by the check man. A check man approves to have the pallets transported to the customer's vans, by forklift if the order has been completed without missing or mistaken produce. Besides of his supervisory position he also fulfilled the role of the check man, but first and foremost Gica was an experienced loader. I sketch his profile below including aspects on his migration history and certain demographics that I gleaned from him or other colleagues.

In Romania, he was a night porter in his home port town, Constanta, in Dobrogea region, as well as in Cluj-Napoca, Transylvania. While in Cluj, he worked for his older brother, whom at the time managed a wholesale trade in fruits and vegetables. However, when his brother's business collapsed and he moved to the UK to work in Spitalfields, Gica and his younger brother followed to work at Spitalfields market. Months later, his other relatives followed suit. Besides the three brothers, during the eight months I also met one of his cousins, and two brothers-in-law, who were returnee migrants and have been travelling in cycles between the UK and Romania for several years. He works and shares a three-bedroom terraced house with same relatives, plus his sister, sister-in-law, and nephew.

At times, I would arrive earlier than Gică for the night shift. His forged iron-arms merely move alongside his body, while walking. As I watch him, his brother and his brother-in-law approaching the store (the three always arrived at work together), he appears stocky looking, 5.4-5.6ft (1,65-1,70m) tall, and shows more apathy than his two companions. Shine or rain, he wore the same blue baseball hat covering his nearly bald head, at his age of thirty-one. During the winter months, with temperature in the market hall dropping below 0°C, he would always wear his blue jacket with thin, white and yellow lines on the side of the sleeves. His sullen face, barely pulled a smile most nights, except if a cafe woman would pass by whom he would immediately chat with. His face reflected a concerned mind or rather, one mind with many personal concerns, and it begged mercy. Yet, underneath this persona, it was impenetrable to reach his real intents. More so, Gica refused to be interviewed.

His portrait is canvased entirely on the backdrop of my own impressions as I participated in and observed him during the five months that he supervised us, loaders and porters. In most conversations, he would raise issues to validate certain judgments he may have construed alone. One such example concerns his interest in how much money I would make from selling the book I was planning to write about them, the night shift workers. We both seemed keen to delve below the observations. Admittedly, during our conversations, I too made suppositions on his mercantile motives, for example. During, the twelve-months period when I frequented, either as worker or observer, our conversations happened unplanned. We talked rather haphazardly, always of his own accord and intent.



However, over the course of several months I noted in similar occasions when the supervisor deceived his coworkers through similar practices, some whom admitted being docile, obedient bodies or “dead men walking”, to use another coworker’s expression. There were nevertheless, inconsistencies in his usual behaviour or what I sketched out as being his usual mood. One night, my body was shivering and I told him. Gica showed empathy and gave me a Nurofen tablet which released the cold for the next few hours of the night shift. I was moved by the gesture he made, but it fit his idiosyncratic behaviour. On a different occasion, about two months after I started to work under his supervision, he invited me to have a drink with the rest of the team/gang. In my notebook I wrote that,

*One Saturday morning, around 7-9 am Gica approached me. He’s telling me that I should have a drink - whiskey and coke - the usual Saturday mix bought from the money he makes on the pallets sold to truck drivers.*

In the finishing touches of this portrait, one relates an instance which took place in the early hours of the morning. Towards the end of this shift, when produce was loaded from the lower to the upper floor and into the fridges, I asked the supervisor to allow me to practice on the spare forklift, but he turned to me and said that,

*If you wanna practice, you come early in your own time. In the mornings you can’t do it anymore because I don’t need forklift drivers, I need loaders. You come and practice on the company’s money and then go-ready at another to ask a better pay.*

His younger brother was standing nearby. Having heard what Gica has just told me, he says:

*Look at this hairy guy (a Bulgarian coworker) how he lifts the loaded pallets, not like you, wondering outside the market hall for one hour and brings three pallets. You come early like Gica says. Not collecting empty pallets. You need to get going with loaded pallets.*

Somewhat strange, I thought, this intervention on his brother’s behalf. However, pertinent because I could see more clearly that in the “back stage” Romanians were clashing with the Bulgarian and Kurdish-Turkish coworkers. Whether this incident builds the case for a discussion on “ethnic lens” vis-a-vis solidarity and competition is a different question altogether and it will be thoroughly analysed and discussed in the fifth and conclusion working papers.

### ***Logan: An Ethnographic Portrait of a Nocturnal Salesman***

Logan is a 34 years old male of Turkish descent and naturalized British. He was born in Giresun, a sea town situated in the North, bordering the Black sea. Even before Logan reached age 16, he worked nights on Saturdays on a dairy farm. He recollects that upon arrival to the UK to visit his sister as a teenager, he did not speak a word of English. During the time he has been working nights at the market, he was married and divorced twice. His two girls from the first marriage live with their mother, and he sees them regularly. He had no children with his second ex-wife.

I foregrounded him, as the “successful” market night shift worker because of all respondents, Logan has successfully navigated through all the roles he held for the past 17 years of night shifting, at the market. The moment he arrived in the UK, he wanted to work at the market. As he recollects, I see his face lightening up and hear excitement in his voice. Logan says,

*I have been working in this market since I was 16. I saw the excitement and the life in the market and I wanted to work in the market. But I couldn't, because ... they said you had to be at least 16 years old. I went and when I was 16, I came back, asked for a job. And it started from there. I started from the bottom, I worked my way up over 17 years. ... In my early days, at the market, I was working for a Chinese company, Kong Ming. Then, I was clearing the bad cabbage leaves, swept the floor, loaded produce and made tea because I was too young for the dirty jobs.*

Another Turkish trader, Kara, told me that there are only three Turkish men working in this market; Logan is one. For an outsider, his physical features are different than those of other 100+ Kurdish-Turkish males working nights, at this market. He has blond hair and blue eyes, and light fair skin, whilst the others Turkish of Kurdish ethnicity, are dark haired, darker skin complexion, with brown eyes. Currently, he works for a Turkish run company, owned by a good friend of his, Hassan. The owner is an accountant originally and asks his advice, says Logan because,

*I have been in the business for so long. And I've been brought up to manage the loaders, porters [forklift drivers], the buying, the selling... For me there is no kind of pattern that I have to do. I am not just a salesman. When it comes to it, I'll become a manager; I'll tell my bosses they're wrong. When it comes to it, I load pallets, I'll drive a forklift; I'll sell stuff. I don't mind. As long as the business runs, that's all that matters.*

Compared to large wholesale trading companies, where 5-6 sales men alone are hired to sell all night long and into the day, smaller companies rely on people like Logan with long years of experience for fulfilling many roles. 17 years of working experience at the market allows Logan to be interchangeably, the supervisor in charge, company's owner advisor, and buyer. Fulfilling the multiple roles allows him to speak with authority about his mind, body and sleep experiences when night shifting, as well as that of others he manages. On any nights, and specifically on Wednesday and Thursday nights, when trading peaks, Logan oversees the loaders and forklift drivers, sells all night and continues the night shift into the day, purchasing produce. Logan's cumulative experience, with skills in sales, ex-owner of trading company with contacts in the fruit and vegetable trade, places him amongst those linked into the assemblages of the higher caliber on the hierarchy of male market traders, and puts him in charge of the other workers in his team of five males. Logan explains,

*If I'm in charge, I would like to know where my staff is, at the toilet, at the cafe. It's not the case of ... why is he going to the toilet? But when you don't know [where your staff is] it's the worst. It's best if you know. So, if I am going toilet I'll tell my boss, so he keeps an eye on [the stand].*

Logan further comments that at the market, there is no guarantee that *you'll get full holiday pay because you're working full-time. It all depends on the company's policy one works for*, he says. And on sick leave policy he explains that, again, it depends,

*If you work for an English company, you get sick pay. Up to certain time. If it's reasonable, but if you get sick twice a month, hold on a minute, this becomes a habit.*

I ask Logan to clarify his company's policy on annual leave:

*You get two weeks off. But my agreement is that I get five. If you add the two, three days, here and there, it will be about six weeks. Ya... if you add it all up, I'll do about six weeks in total.*

So, Logan gets six weeks' annual leave per year, while others two. Notably, there is no unifying policy applied by the CoLC. Market workers are employed and paid directly by the traders, and are subject to those companies' policies, and not by CoLC.

The encultured use of Turkish as the business language for workers and customers alike is yet another illustration of work ethics or trading practices at Turkish owned companies based at Spitalfields. Most customers of Turkish owned companies are Kurdish-Turkish grocers themselves, convenience stores' managers or drivers hired to purchase and transport produce at night, for restaurant and shop owners supplying fresh produce across North London, throughout the day. The above mentioned 'inhabitants' of the market are acculturated to such business ethics. However, equation changes when we speak about the Pakistani or Romanian non-speakers of Turkish, working for market-based companies. And, I probe Logan if similar practices are encultured by the company he works for.

*Yes, he says; and if you want to communicate with people you'll find a way. You understand what I mean? ... If you wanna communicate with someone of a different nationality, and there is no middle language that you both understand there is always a way. And that person will be able to understand you. Plus, if you want that person to understand, you'll try to explain the best you can.*

Having observed on and participated in several team meetings at the Turkish company that I worked for, I am aware that such approach is counterproductive unless all workers speak and/or understand the same language. But, Logan insists that his work ethics are different, partly resulting from his acculturation to the English work ethos which is more flexible and inclusive of basic rights to humane, dignifying working conditions. The right to have regular breaks throughout the shift is one, and respecting the official working hours of the market is another. Nevertheless, due to my insider's position I participated in and observed on practices at several Turkish companies. I have been subject of and have seen other workers not allowed to leave the stand for food breaks or to buy drinks from the cafés at the market. I share my insights with him, but he contradicts me. He is convinced that, they are [allowed] and puts his point of view forward stating that,

*You get breaks when there is nothing to do, when the stand is not busy. They're not slaves; in my opinion, if the job slowed down and they wanna go to have breakfast, that's fine. As long as I know that, go ahead. ...they are human beings, like us; there is no difference between us and the loaders; or porters.*

Logan appears to make a distinction between the loaders and porters needing to show appreciation to the low-level managers or the owner as is the case here. Though he acknowledges other companies' practices, his own words indicate the us/them divide in this way of thinking about the workers he oversees. He confesses:

*I don't look at it that way. People do, but, I don't. There is loads of them, but that's wrong! They are human beings. There is no difference. If there is a break, let them have it. But they got to realise. They got to appreciate it!*

Despite the striking gap between those, like Logan, who has been working at the market for almost two decades, and the other low skilled workers that I met, e.g. loaders, forklift drivers, cafe delivery women who came and left after short time, I foregrounded him to portrait the lives of others. Perhaps, in his position he copes better than the low skilled night workers. For him, “it just rolls and rolls”, as he clearly says, with this job, there is no limit to the working hours, and no weekend.

*You [can] work 24/7. You can get a phone call from a customer, a supplier, when you sleep, when you walk, when you're off, when you're in the street. You can't switch your phone off in this industry. If you do, you'll lose business. And at the moment, the business is very hard. Every little that you try to get is a benefit for you. ... So, on a good day you do 12 hours.*

Undoubtedly, Logan is dedicated to this work. However, it has taken over other areas of his life. He was married twice in this business... and got divorced twice. Often, he would sacrifice sleep time spent with his two little girls who would wake him up to play. And he found that worthwhile because he is convinced that,

*Now, when they're small they miss you. When they're going to grow up, they're not gonna be next to you, they're gonna do their own thing.*

Logan further admits that

*One day you're gonna realise, and you're gonna say, I was concentrated on one thing, which was money. Why did I do it?... But, I did spend time with them. I tried to do it as much as I could.*

However, it seems that he regrets missing the days when they all lived as one family, but they could not spend more time together:

*I'm not really bothered about anything else. Nothing else, really. But, It's difficult. You have no life. You do twelve hours. On a good day, you do ten hours. You go home, your kids are in school. You wake up, they sleep. So, what kind of life you get? You get only Sundays, which is only half day. Saturday you come home, and you're knackered. They wanna go somewhere, you wanna sleep. Sunday you got time off till 4pm. Say, you go out at 10am and finish at 4pm – you've got only six or eight hours, one day per weekend. Once a week, to see your family! There is no social life. ... I love my family, my kids, but I love this job as well. What am I going to do if I leave this job? I don't think I can work in a kebab shop or a supermarket, if you know what I mean. I do this job because I love it. I do it from inside deep. I don't do it just for the money.*

Night shifting consistently and for as long as he has been, accustoms one to the trade environment, a specific life style and to people who share similar nocturnal patterns. As with others whom I heard

complaining that they cannot have regular sleep patterns, Logan explains that for someone like him who cannot sleep well, the time after work is good for household chores or extra company duties (eg. banking). Afterwards, he goes to bed at midday or after for 5-6 hours' sleep. As a day sleeper, this rhythm suits him well because, Logan says: *if I were to work in the day time, I wouldn't be able to do all these things*. Instead of concluding, the next two sections highlight the extent to which such experiences impact on the capabilities for sociability amongst night shift workers.

## 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. (Standing 2011a:113)*

Standing's (2011a) *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 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. Born out of despair, anomie sets in as "a feeling of passivity" (Emile Durkheim, cited by Standing 2011a). 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 following two short discussions look at the negative effects and imminent problems faced by migrant night workers suffering from "sleep despoliation", "drifting", and regimentation of time.

## BECOMING THE "WALKING GHOST" NIGHT WORKER

Contemporary capitalist society requires, what Johnathan Crary (2013) has identified as the *despoliation of sleep* in the interests of maximizing the individual's potential – as both, producer and consumer – for generating profit (Beaumont 2015: loc. 216-219). 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 night shifting 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 (2011a) argues that with the globalised era setting in, the new dawn of the "post-circadian capitalism" (Beaumont, 2015) 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 (1978) 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". Melbin's prediction has been fulfilled, and recently art critic and theorist John Crary, (2013) depicts 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* (1999:4), highly paid corporate executives have the power to buy solutions to avoid battling sleeplessness. Kreitzman (1999) further argues that the difficulties of night workers have been growing for many decades now. He calls our attention at how most disastrous accidents of the late 20<sup>th</sup> century happened at night when the night workers are 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" (Crary 2013: loc. 21-35) 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 (2015), 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" (Roberts 2015:29)*



## FRAGILE POSSIBILITIES FOR SOLIDARITY AMONGST MIGRANT NIGHT SHIFT WORKERS: A PROPOSITION

Let us consider a few remarks on division-of-labour based solidarity amongst transnational night shift workers. 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” (Sassen 2005), migrants vie against one another for under-minimum wage jobs (Standing 2011a). 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) (Sennett 1998). 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” (Sennett 1998:29)*

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” (1998:31) 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” (1998:31), 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” (Sennett 1998:25).

Moreover, the “short-term society” model of “weak ties vs. strong ties” no longer works in today’s “teamwork” based environment. Mark Granovetter’s (1973) “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 (1956) 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 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 (Standing 2011a). Hence this explains the importance that time-squeeze plays in disguising that. When post-circadian time intersects with the 24-Hour 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 amongst the cohorts and armies of the precariat is being weakened by the fierce competition, on one hand, and lack of in-group cohesion, on the other. The solidarity model crumbles when it comes to explaining cohesion amongst the burdened ones living with anomie, anxiety, anger and alienation.

In closing, I draw onto the overall statement of my thesis, which speaks mainly (but not exclusively) to Sennett’s perspective on the individuals’ consequences, among which *Corrosion of Character*. He illustrates that the “ideal Everyman” of the new economy is not “reckoning the consequences of change or does not know what comes next”. Sennett’s only “ideal” worker/survivor 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 expense of the army of workers, the 99%, slaved for incessant production (and consumption).

Constantly defeated and frustrated, people consequently are seething resentment and anger against the celebrity culture and material success experienced by the few. The angry precariat resent 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 for solidarity amongst night workers. To think on these lines, would mean to dream of a “future of illusions”<sup>10</sup> where today’s alienated individual, diurnal and nocturnal alike is other than a material object for both, production and consumption, consummates and consumers.

*“...The night time city is another city. Rhapsodising the public parks of the French metropolis in Paris Peasant (1926), the surrealist Louis Aragon commented that “night gives these absurd places a sense of not knowing their own identity”. It is a point that applies to all aspects of the city’s architecture or terrain. The night time self, moreover, is another self. It too is less certain of its own identity.” (Beaumont and Self 2015)*

10 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.



## APPENDIX 1

### Definitions of Night Shift Work and Prevalence of Night/Shift Work by Country

COUNTRY	NIGHT TIME / NIGHT WORK	NIGHT WORKER	Prevalence (%) of shift work that includes night work
AUSTRIA	Night work: period between 22:00 and 05:00	The workers who work at least 3 hours between 22:00 and 05:00 on at least 48 nights per year (EU-Nachtarbeits-Anpassungsgesetz 2002)	13.2
BELGIUM	Night work: a period, generally of 8 hours, between 20:00 and 06:00	Loi du 17/02/1997 et Loi du 04/12/1998: Act of 17 February 1997	13.2
FINLAND	Night work: Work carried out between 23:00 and 06:00	Night shift refers to a work shift with at least 3 hours of duty between 23:00 and 06:00 (Working Hours Act 605/1996)	24.3
FRANCE	Night time: a period between 22:00 and 05:00; Night work: whichever work period between midnight and 05:00	Any employee working usually at least 2 times per week for at least 3 hours over the period defined as night work (Loi 461/1998)	14.9
GERMANY	Night time: a period of 8 hours which includes the period between 22:00 and 06:00	A worker who during night time works at least 3 hours of his/her daily working time or a worker who has to perform night work for at least 726 hours of his/her annual working time (Presidential Decree n. 88/1999)	15.7
GREECE	Night time: a period of 8 hours which includes the period between 22:00 and 06:00	A worker who during night time works at least 3 hours of his/her daily working time or a worker who has to perform night work for at least 726 hours of his/her annual working time.	13.0
IRELAND	Night time: period between midnight and 07:00	a) an employee who normally works at least 3 hours of his/ her daily working time during night time; b) an employee whose working hours during night time, in each year, equals or exceeds 50 per cent of the total number of hours worked during the year (Statutory Instruments n. 485/1998)	12.0

ITALY	Night work: the activity carried out in a period of at least 7 consecutive hours comprising the interval between midnight and 05:00	a) any worker who during the night period carries out, as a normal course, at least 3 hours of his/her daily working time; b) any worker who during the night period, carries out part of his/her daily working time as defined by collective agreements; in default of collective agreements, any worker who works at night at least 80 working days per year (D.Lgs. 66/2003)	18.1
JAPAN	Night work: work which covers all or part of the period from 22:00 to 05:00	The workers who engage night work at least 4 times per month on average during 6 months.	17.9
NETHERLANDS	Night work: work which covers all or part of the period from midnight to 06:00		11.8
PORTUGAL	Night time: a period between 20:00 and 07:00	a) any worker who works at least 3 hours during the night period; b) any worker who during the night period, carries out part of its daily working time as defined by collective agreements (Decreto Lei 73/1998)	
SPAIN	Night time: a period which includes the interval between 22:00 and 06:00	A worker who at night carries out at least 3 hours of his/her daily working time (Real Decreto Lei 1/1995)	22.2
SWEDEN	Hours between midnight and 05:00	A worker that works at least 3 hours of his/her daily work during night time, or a worker that most likely will work at least 38% of his/her annual work during the night (Working Hours Act 1982)	16.0
UK	Night time: a period lasting not less than 7 hours, and which includes the period between midnight and 05:00	A worker who, as a normal course, works at least 3 hours of his/her daily working time during night time, or who is likely, during night time, to work at least such proportion of his annual working time as may be specified for the purposes of these Regulations in a collective agreement or a workforce agreement (Statutory Instrument No.1833/1998).	15.4
US			14.8
EU27*			17.3

Table 1 . Definitions of night time/work and night worker in European countries © IARC Working Group (2010). Adapted according to Kubo et al. (2013:166) to reflect definitions and prevalence (%) of shift work that includes night work in Japan, the US and in EU27\* countries, including Bulgaria and Romania, since 2007. Sources: 4th EU Survey on working conditions for EU countries; Survey on State of Employees' Health 2007 for Japan; US Bureau of Labour Statistics 2004 for the United States.

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