

Research Article

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Sleep, Work and Globalization: The Evening/Night Shift Employees in Call Centre in Romania

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Abstract: In order to ensure synchronized operation of companies who use workforce around the world, work schedules have been divided in two or three shifts and a large number of people work in evening or night shifts. Based on interviews with 25 employees of a call centre in Romania, I describe three processes: sleep desynchronization, i.e. working during night and sleeping during the day, synchronization with those having similar nocturnal schedules and, finally, its resynchronization with the mainstream. I describe the tensions and conflicts which accompany each such transformation.

Keywords: sleep, call centre, night shift, delocalization, service sector

Motto: 'If you want to take a girl out, do you say "You know what, darling, let's go to a McDonald's drive-in, because there are no more movies tonight?" '

Interview with late evening/night shift employee

Introduction: the invisibility of work in sleep studies

The current mobility of information, goods and people, and especially the speed of their dissemination (Urry, 2007), made possible the delocalization of customer services to countries found in different time zones. From the 1970s onward, production and services have been constantly delocalized from countries like the USA, the UK or France, to India, China, Eastern Europe and other countries. Working in the destination countries for overseas customers has profound consequences on sleep,

because companies tend to synchronize their tasks with the work schedule of the countries they operate for.

Framed as a key component of the delocalization process, sleep got little attention in the sociological literature. There are many studies about delocalization (Harvey, 1990; Lash and Urry, 2002 [1994]; Urry, 2007), but they tend to ignore its effects on sleep. A few mention sleep, but they do not analyze it in a systematic manner (Aneesh, 2009; Tustin, 2010). Steger and Brunt (2003), for example, note that the presence of delocalized companies determine changes in sleep patterns. Older studies on sleep briefly discuss the deviation from the typical patterns of night sleep for an increasing number of people living in an industrial society (Aubert and White, 1959: 8). In their analysis, Aubert and White (1959: 8) talk about the technological developments which contribute to the transformation of sleeping patterns as a result of people being more apt at overcoming such obstacles as the lack of natural light, the possible dangers lurking in the dark, and the cold. Performing all sorts of tasks during the night, in particular, shift work, become a reality for an increasing number of people around the world.

In the industrial era, the two social scientists were wondering 'what will be the consequences for a social system in which an ever greater segment of the population will deviate from the habit of sleeping during the night' (Aubert and White, 1959: 18). Along these lines, Juliet Schor (1992) described that the transition from the industrial economy to the service economy in the US produced intensification of labour and a substantial sleep deficit:

Sleep has become another casualty of modern life. According to sleep researchers, studies point to a 'sleep deficit' among Americans, a majority of whom are currently getting between 60 and 90 minutes less a night than they should for optimum health and performance. The number of people showing up at sleep disorder clinics with serious problems has skyrocketed in the last decade. Shift work, long working hours, the growth of a global economy (with its attendant continent-hopping and twenty-four-hour business culture), and the accelerating pace of life have all contributed to sleep deprivation. If you need an alarm clock, the experts warn, you're probably sleeping too little' (Schor, 1992: 11).

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Other researches, usually carried out in the framework of sociology of sleep, describe the sleep of night time workers in relation to several aspects of their lives. These include the consequences of night time work for the employees' families and their responsibilities towards their family, as well as gender differences (Chatzitheochari and Arber, 2009; Maume et al., 2009; Maume et al., 2010). Some studies focus on aspects related to health and illnesses which occur because of the excessive work, the management of lack of sleep through healthicisation, medicalisation or pharmaceuticalisation (see Kroll-Smith and Gunter, 2005; Steger and Brunt, 2003), as well as shifts labour produced by the changes of biological rhythm (Boden et al., 2008; see also Birth, 2007; Kalyan, 2011; Maher et al., 2010). Wolf-Meyer (2011) notices that the necessity of synchronizing the activities of companies found on different continents and in different time zones determines changes in the sleep patterns of the employees working at the company toward which the activities have been delocalized. Wolf-Meyer (2011) does little more than putting the idea forward, leaving its further exploration to other sociologists.

Surprisingly, although there are millions of people working in delocalized sectors there are few studies which discuss sleep in relation to work and employment. One may find two types of consequences of delocalization on sleep. The first refers to the cultural and medical consequences of this process, but also the extent to which their job experiences influence the quality of their sleep (Burgard and Ailshire, 2009; Han W-J, 2008; McMillin, 2006; Taylor and Bain, 2005). The second usually points to the shift in the temporality of labour, from daytime to night-time, a fact which would determine a 180 degree change in the temporality of everyday life (Boulin et al., 2006; McMillin, 2006; Poster, 2007; Tara and Ilavarasan, 2011; Tustin, 2010; Worthman and Brown, 2013).

Thus, the present article explores the consequences that late evening/night shift work has on the sleeping schedule and also on the relationships of those who work in the tertiary sector. Based on the data that I collected I argue that there are three main transformations of employees' sleep patterns: 1) desynchronization of sleep from the rest of society; 2) a secondary synchronization with those having a similar work schedule; 3) the slow and difficult process of resynchronization of sleep patterns with the rest of society. Desynchronization means the loss of simultaneity between the employees' sleep and that of the other members of society, especially the sleep of family, partners, friends and neighbours. In the next stage, the employees' sleep undergoes a secondary synchronization with other call centre employees and other marginal

nocturnal social categories. The third tendency is the resynchronization with the normal sleep patterns of the society they live in, a tendency imposed by the pressure to synchronize day-to-day activities with those of their family and friends. These changes are somehow successive and may be thought of as a development cycle of one's career in the call centre.

Methods and data gathering

I conducted a qualitative research, based on comprehensive interviews among the night workers at a call centre in Bucharest. Through comprehensive interviews I was able to identify the sleep pattern of the subjects, as well as the consequences that late evening/night shift had on their daily interactions. Comprehensive interview allow me to formulate questions geared towards obtaining the engagement of the subjects, as well as the immersion into the subjects' universe in order to obtain data (Kaufmann, 1996: 224). After gathering general information, I focused on the late evening shift (16:00 – 24:00 am). Subjects were asked if there were any changes after they began working and to illustrate each change that they noticed with specific episodes.

The call centre is operated by a French group specialized in customer relations management. The other companies within the group also operate in France, Belgium, Morocco, Algeria and the UK. Since 2000, this Bucharest call centre has been working for French telecom companies that have externalized their customer relations services. Within the company, depending on the firms that require their services, the tasks are organized by project, each with its distinct work schedules. The morning shift begins at 8 am and ends at 16:00 pm, while the evening/night shift lasts between 16 pm and 12 am. Although the literature mentions these two shifts from 8am to 16 pm and from 16 pm to 24 am as being the 'day shift' and respectively the 'afternoon shift,' my subjects perceive it, however, not as 'afternoon,' but as 'evening shift' or 'night shift.' In order to ensure the fidelity of the data, I choose to use their temporal categories. I used a convenience sample, comprised of workers aged 21 and 32 and I carried out 25 comprehensive interviews.

I chose those employees who have worked at least once in the late evening shift. I asked the planning department to give a list with those employees who fit this category. I eliminated those entries which contained people who experience very difficult situations (serious illness) and those who currently live outside Bucharest, thus being difficult to reach. Aside from interviewing

current employees, I ask them to give the contacts of those who have left the company, in order to be able to contact them. As I was interested in outlining processes, rather than in quantifying the data obtained, I analyzed the data collected through interviews by grouping the bits and pieces of interviews into larger processes. The processes that I outline below could help ground a larger quantitative study a larger, more representative sample. Although I see no danger in using their real names, I choose to use pseudonyms.

Desynchronization

The first transformation of the sleep schedule of night shift employees is the desynchronization from the regular sleeping patterns of the society. This desynchronization is manifested through a loss of simultaneity with the sleep of their parents, among those who still live with them, with their flatmates, their regular schedule working friends, with their partners or spouses, but also with their neighbours. The lack of synchronization of sleeping schedules often creates conflicts, because it tends to disregard what Williams and Bendelow (1998) have called the rights/responsibilities and obligations of the sleeper in society. According to the two scholars, people can demand the right to sleep in peace and be exempted from the role responsibilities they have during waking hours, only if they sleep at night.

In the case of those still living with their parents or relatives, the desynchronization of sleep schedules generates conflicts both at the beginning and at the end of the day. During the night, conflicts are produced by the noise created by their return from their evening shift (see Williams, 2004; Williams and Bendelow, 1998). Lucia's account is particularly revealing in this regard. She is a first year Master's student. She has been working at the company for a year and a half and lives with her parents in a one bedroom apartment. Her parents live in the bedroom, while she sleeps in the living room. She says that every time she returns home from a late shift, she unwillingly wakes her parents up while getting ready to sleep. This does not go unsanctioned, especially by her father, who she says 'makes a lot of ruckus and scolds' her so that she would stop making noise.

Lucia's housing situation is often met among the working youth of Bucharest. Romania's housing system is familial, in the sense that most often several generations live together. The average surface per person is 12 square meters, but problems arise with the price of housing, most often beyond reach for a working couple. The relative high

cost of utilities, especially during winter and spring (when the winter bills arrive), as well as the lack of any social policy aiming to deliver cheap, subsidized apartments makes the youth employees continue living in their parental home.

Misunderstandings between employees and their parents resurface in the morning. This time, friction arises because of the parents, who tend disturb the silence needed by the workers for their prolonged sleep. Often times, the attempts to renegotiate the sleep schedule by extending it during the day prove futile. In this part of the day, parents wake up their sons/daughters through the noise produced when getting ready for work. Like many others, Lucia complains that her parents do not respect her sleeping schedule. She says that 'in the mornings, they do not even attempt not to make noise.' Her parents, especially her father, 'rustles and slams things around, drinks juice, he asks me stuff, he tickles me, he starts giving me a massage,' disregarding her pleas to be left to sleep. In the morning, parents tend to wake their children also because it is the only part of the day in which they can interact with them and discuss family matters. Ana Maria's pleas to be left alone to sleep after a late night shift are met with the following answer: 'baby, since you're so tired, you'll definitely fall asleep again. Later, you'll have to leave again and so will I, and we won't have time to talk at all.'

The scenario described by Lucia and Ana Maria is recurrent among those living with their parents, being similar to the situation of other employees living with their siblings who work regular hours. Adriana, for example, lives with her brother and his girlfriend in a wagon-like apartment. She says that quarrels are frequent and quite intense in the morning due to the noise they make when they leave for work. After a late evening shift, normal conflicts arise every time she wants to sleep late in the morning. As for more serious disputes, she recalls that the last time, besides the usual noise 'they left both doors, to the bathroom and to my room, open and they didn't take out the garbage. So I took it and put it in their room.' She confesses that 'I scream and I shout at them. It's only natural to mind the fact that somebody's sleeping in the other room. Why would I make noise when you sleep?!' During the interview she was quite bitter and pessimistic, as she now able to see a solution to such conflicts, despite the fact she sees their point as well.

For those renting accommodation, different work and sleep schedules generates conflicts between room-mates. Arguments centre on the noise produced by the employees returning home after the evening shift, respectively by their flatmates in the morning. Irina's stories are very

instructive in this regard. She has been working by the company for five years. During this period she had an extremely rich life experience. She lived for two years with an aunt. Then, for a year and a half with a couple she was friendly with, and after that she moved with her boyfriend and his sister. She confesses to having had two particularly difficult periods with regard sleep conflicts with her roommates. The experience of sleeping in the same room with her aunt was unpleasant, because the lady used to wake up very early in the morning and then hit the snooze button a few times. The experience of living with her boyfriend's sister was also conflict-ridden. They lived in a wagon-apartment, moreover, her boyfriend's sister wardrobe was in Irina's room. In the morning, when Irina wanted to rest, her boyfriend's sister woke her up.

When I asked if she discussed the matter with her boyfriend's sister, she confesses that she approached it in an indirect manner: 'I gave him a hard time about it, but now, when I think about it, maybe it would have been better if I tried to get used to the situation'. When she and the sister talked about their sleeping habits, the latter used to say 'What do you want me to do? It's only natural I wake up in the morning. I want to go to the market. I have my own schedule'. During the interview, Irina kept stressing the fact that nobody understood how tired she really was. Often, because of the morning ruckus, she covered her head with a pillow. Irina's plight is not singular among these young people. Many female interviewees tell stories about room-mates who used to watch television with the volume turned up, slam doors or talk very loudly on the telephone in the morning. As a matter of fact, in the evenings, they too were admonished by their roommates for the noises they made when they returned from work. Such situations seem better tolerated when they leased a place with one or more of their friends. In order to avoid conflicts, workers rent an apartment with other friends or people they are close to.

In order to prevent conflicts which can arise from divergent sleep schedules, some situations also involve direct negotiation (Meadows, 2005). In case they have to rent an apartment with people they do not know, some of interviewees tend to set forth rules that govern the hours of sleep and commotion from the very first day. Ion, for example, has been working at this company for a year and a half. Like many other of his colleagues who work in two shifts, Ion sleeps before an evening shift. He says that, more often than not, the ruckus made by his flatmates prevented him from sleeping, but that he learned his lesson and established stricter rules. He says that, before moving into an apartment with a colleague or friend, he takes care to make clear a few sleep related aspects. He

adds that he even instituted a basic rule in this regard, in that that he is not to be disturbed before going to work. He emphasized that, when moving in with somebody, he always takes care 'to say who I am and what I expect. It's hard to live with someone in the same place. Each one of us has a different personality, habits, quirks, all of which may end up annoying you.'

The workers complain about the lack of synchronicity between their morning sleep and the sleep of their neighbours, who wake up early to go to their jobs. Recalling the time when he worked in the evening/night shift, another interviewee says that he used to be woken up by those who made a lot of noise in the building. He describes a very common situation among agents. At one time, the neighbour upstairs had some improvements done to his apartment. The renovation took six month, during which he woke up at 8am 'with the superb sound of the guy's electric drill in my ears or that of the neighbour's sledgehammer.' He tried to get the neighbour to tone it down during the early hours of the morning, explaining him that he needs to rest after working all night, but to no avail. There are also references to outside noises during the busy hours of the morning rush. Irina, whom I mentioned above, became aware to choose her rent apartment, based also on how much outside noise there is during the day and how far it is from a major crossroad or playground.

Besides numerous similar accounts, there is a series of seasonal distinctions brought up by the subjects. In the autumn and winter, the intensity of the noise is reduced by the fact that windows are closed, but during summer, as Roxana confesses, the noises coming from outside are the worst. As she explains 'it's awful in the summer, when you have to sleep with the window open and there's nothing but hustle and bustle outside. Small children in particular...they are the worst terrorists, especially since they're not going to school [during the summer break].'

Subjects speak often about the differences between their sleep/work schedule and that of their friends (Williams and Crossley, 2008). This lack of simultaneity often brings them complaints from their friends who have a regular work routine. These complaints revolve around aspects like of their relation, lack of interaction and lack face to face contact. The workers' accounts frequently mention situations when they refused to meet with their friends after an evening shift. That is why, workers sometimes change shifts with their co-workers in order to meet with their friends. Let me offer an illustration. Lucia, one of the aforementioned employees, is frequently criticized by her friends because they do not find time to see each other after she started her job. Besides the lack of proximity and closeness, another cause of friction among

friends is the reduced number of telephone calls. Lucia says that she turns off her mobile before going to bed and she sees this as another reason for their dissatisfaction.

Another interviewee, who quit the company, remembers that her friends could not get used to her schedule. They often called her in the evening to invite her out to go downtown. That way, as she likes to emphasize, she missed a lot of events, parties and opportunities to have fun (see Baker et al., 2003). A lot of interviewees are often told by their friends to look for daytime jobs. Their interactions between night workers and their daytime working friends are limited to weekends or days taken off from work. Otherwise, the only solution for them is to change shifts with one of their co-workers.

For those who are married or live together with their partner, quarrels and frictions with their partners are frequent. The conflicts usually occur when they return from work and revolve around the loneliness felt by the partner when coming home to an empty house or going out alone to a club or a social gathering. Tensions arise also because of the noise made in the morning. Irina, one of the workers mentioned above, has been living with her boyfriend for two years. She says that the conflicts caused by her sleep schedule have two main reasons. On the one hand, there are the conflicts that arise in the morning, before a night shift, when she wants to sleep more, but her partner has to get ready for work and makes a lot of noise. On the other, her boyfriend is complaining that they do not go out together as often as he would like and that she does not seem to have time to meet with their friends anymore.

There are cases in which the spouses complain about the hours they spend alone, from the time they get back to the moment he finally comes home from work. In these cases, employees tend to multiply the number of shift changes with their co-workers, in order to spend the better part of the day at work and arrive in due time at home. Lucia recalls that she used to work a lot of day shifts in order to spend more time with her boyfriend. Another interviewee says that she used to have a boyfriend who went out with her friends while she was at work. Rather frequently, he used to receive sarcastic remarks about her job from her friends, suggesting that she was a sex worker. The subject says that this was one of the main reasons for their breakup, since her boyfriend often told her that a job like hers makes family life impossible. This situation is often encountered when the employees live with his or her partner. Nonetheless, there are some interviewees who do not have any problems with their partners, because they also have non-mainstream work or leisure schedules.

Synchronization with other nocturnal characters

The data also suggest the existence of two types of synchronization, which will be discussed in this section. The first one is the synchronization between the employees' schedule and that of their co-workers. The second is the synchronization with marginal nocturnal socio-economical categories. In the first case, workers tend to become good friends with co-workers. They tend to organize their schedule so that they can work in the same shifts as their friends. That way, after the job, they can do things together, such as drinking beer or having a late night dinner. Furthermore, in their spare time or at birthdays, they organize parties at home or in town, where they invite their current or former colleagues. Interviewees say that because there are a lot of young employees of similar age, they made a lot of friends at call-centre. Irina, mentioned above, says that in spite of the odd working hours, the main reason for staying there were the friends she acquired. Another interviewee, who recently left the call centre, said that she cried when she left. Many employees who strive for regular work schedule and normal sleep hours do not leave because of their friends they had made there. As an intermediary solution, they managed to switch to the morning/daytime shift.

The second form of synchronization refers to nocturnal urban interaction. The odyssey of journey home from work is a trope present in all of interviews. They often mention their time and spatial proximity to marginal nocturnal characters. As I mentioned above, employees of this call centre are women. Many accounts speak of their fear and their unease during those journeys. The interviewees frequently mention cab drivers, homeless people or mentally unstable neighbours. Every night, employees are brought home by cabs hired by the company. Each car takes a group of four individuals, grouped by neighbourhoods. Employees tell stories about taxi drivers being overtly sarcastic about their occupation. One interviewee recalls the insistence with which one particular driver ironically questioned her one night about her job. He said that 'only hotline workers end their shifts in the middle of the night.' Cab drivers often imply that they work for video chat companies (a booming income source for many young women in Romania). Because of the drivers' behaviour, some employees have refused to go home by taxi, especially those who do not live very far away and can walk there on their own.

The fear of homeless people or aggressive neighbours is also a common occurrence. In order to manage this fear,

employees arrange to be met in front of the building by their partners, parents or roommates. One such employee who was not fearful of cabdrivers, was, however, scared by what happens after she gets out of the car. Another interviewee says that the road from the cab door to the building passes through a courtyard. Even if it only a few meters long, there is no public lighting. She also remembers a few instances in which she forgot her keys home so she had to call her boyfriend before getting out of the cab so that he could answer at the first buzz of the intercom system. In those instances, she experienced intense fear of the intercom being broken, thus stopping her boyfriend from hearing it. Employees often call a friend or a co-worker to keep them chatting, in order to give them a sense of safety while they are climbing the stairs to their apartment. They also say they are trying to make as much noise as they can in order to scare away anyone who might be there, because, at that hour in the night, even an encounter with a friendly neighbour might prove to be suspicious. In some cases, they avoid elevators and climb the stairs, because they have been scared by drifters and crazy people who take refuge in their apartment building.

These are not isolated cases. One subject remembers a time when the building she was living in had no intercom and no working lights on the staircase. She lives with a friend in a four storey building which does not have an elevator. She says she is afraid to walk all the way up to the fourth floor in the dark. The employees, in turn, raise their neighbours' suspicion. One night, coming back from work, she met a neighbour who had a flashlight pointed up. He followed her to her apartment without her realizing who it was. There are also workers who seem to be afraid of the dark. Once the cab brought them home, there came the fear of the dark. Like many others, in order to overcome it, the subject used to ask her boyfriend to wait for her at the cab station. A distinct case of marginal synchronization is illustrated by the male interviewees. Sometimes employees can work in successive shifts (evening plus morning ones). For example, talking about morning fatigue and sleeping in public transport, one subject stated that no matter how tired he was, he could not indulge himself to do it, because of the stigma associated with sleeping in public.

Resynchronization with the mainstream

In so far, I described how evening/night shift employees de-synchronize with their friends, families and partners and how they become enmeshed in a universe populated

with nocturnal characters. As the inconveniences created are quite substantial, they try to pull themselves out of this situation, partially by negotiating their position with their peers and their employer. Their actions may be interpreted as an attempt to resynchronization with the rest of society. The interviews reveal two types of resynchronizations. They dream and work towards moving to the daytime shift and they often succeed in doing thus ending their sleep deprivation. I noticed that evening/night shift employees often talk about their job as a temporary one, usually associated with college or master's studies. They do not want to work there all their lives, seeking to live a 'regular' way life (see Lloyd, 2012).

Many say they would certainly prefer a fixed schedule, normal hours, constant rhythm, regular eating and sleeping hours. Alina mentions that she tried to leave the company for a similar job, with a similar income, but a regular working schedule, but she failed. She wanted to change her job immediately after graduating from the university. The main thing she was interested in while looking for a job was the work schedule. She says that she stopped looking when she decided to enrol in a master's program which had classes during the day. She added that she postponed looking for a new job until she graduates the MA program. Another interviewee, who has been working for seven months at the firm and was about to leave for Belgium on an Erasmus scholarship, summed up her opinion about her work place as follows: 'employees stay with the company until they finish their studies, then they switch to a regular day schedule.'

The interviews revealed the fact that those who still work in a two shift schedule present a temporary resynchronization to the socially accepted sleep framework. From time to time, they switch shifts with a colleague who works during the day, or ask their project manager to allow them to work a few days in the morning shift. They ask for such 'sabbaticals' in order to catch up with their friends, take part in family reunion, sleep, pay their bills, go to the doctor or dentist and take their exams. These 'intermittent resynchronizations' are strategies adopted by the employees in order to preserve their social relations in a flexible work environment (Pedersen and Lewis, 2012). A special case is the pressure created by the university schedule. One interviewee, a first year master's student recounts that she often switches shifts with her co-workers in order to attend her classes, but also to rest and study for her exams and seminars. Another reason for intermittent resynchronization is the agents' need to resynchronize with their partners (Hislop, 2007). One subject said that his wife is upset because of his work schedule He tries to change shifts with his colleagues as

often as he can, in order to have a similar program with hers.

In the case of night-time workers, a complete resynchronization appears to happen when they start making wedding plans and when they finish their studies. There are two routes for achieving complete resynchronization. One is to stay within the call-centre, but switch to a daytime shift. This is a good arrangement for people who have open conflicts with their significant others. This is specific to those who, after graduating, decide that they want to continue working in the customer services field, instead of other departments from the call centre. One interviewee, who has been assigned to the morning/daytime shift mentioned that since that change, he had no more issues with his friends and expressed feelings of 'normalcy' for having a schedule similar to theirs. He recalled the persistent longing for sleep during those two years. When he went out, not only was he rather absent because he needed sleep, but desynchronization affected his dating life. Few of his date, he recalled, wanted to go out at 1 am. This is him: "if you want to take a girl out, do you say, "You know what, darling, let's go to a McDonald's drive-in, because there are no more movies tonight?" The second route to resynchronization is the exit strategy. This is a common occurrence for those who graduate and want to move from a generic, low skill, peripheral job in the call centre to jobs for which they prepared in college.

Conclusions

In this article, I sought to tease out the issue of the relation between globalization, delocalization and sleep. Although a key issue in the functioning of the global service economy, the link between these processes has largely been ignored. Based on interviews with a group of employees whose work begins when most people return from home, I aimed to describe the changes in their lives. There are significant consequences in regard to workers' relationships with their families, friends and partners, as well as various anxieties and stressful processes that they experience. In my case study, I have identified three transformations of the sleep: desynchronization, secondary synchronization and resynchronization.

Desynchronization consists of the loss of simultaneity between the employees' sleep and that of the rest of society, especially family members, friends and neighbours. For those working in non-mainstream schedules, morning sleep is interrupted by the noises made by neighbours, parents or roommates who get ready for work. As many

of them explained, working until late in the night and sleeping longer than usual in the morning influences their relations with family members and friends, who often complain about their work schedule. Secondary synchronization is the synchronization of the employees with those sharing a similar schedule. They describe synchronization with two distinct social categories. These categories are their co-workers, who often become their close friends and even partners, and various nocturnal, marginal social groups, such as homeless and aggressive people (or perceived by them as such), or cab drivers. Finally, the third process is the resynchronization with the mainstream social sleep practices. This, in turn, is twofold process. There is intermittent resynchronization when employees temporary change work shifts, in order to catch up on a variety of things that they normally miss and there is also the complete resynchronization, which happens when workers switch to a daytime work schedule after graduating from school.

As the data suggests, the sleep of those who work evening and night shifts in the delocalized services sector undergoes a series of transformations which is not limited to changes in temporality or medical condition as currently assumed in the literature on work and occupation. There are profound consequences on the social life of those engaged in those economic sectors. Sleep, sleep transformations and their relations to work point out that sleep is a negotiated action (Meadows, 1995). Sleep and the sleeping become a matter of power, rights and obligations of the sleeping person, embedded in the social networks to which employees belong (Williams and Bendelow, 1998; Williams and Crossley, 2008). Further studies on sleep transformations in relation to work have the potential to offer us a better understanding of the social organization of sleep in a world where delocalization of production and services in a 24/7 economy is an expanding process.

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