Article

Organization Studies
2020, Vol. 41(8) 1101–1122

DOI: 10.1177/0170840619830138
www.egosnet.org/os

Escaping (into) the night… : Organizations and work at night

Monika Müller
Lund University, Sweden

Abstract

Despite the increasing normalization of nightwork, organizational researchers typically study organizations and work as daytime phenomena. A nocturnal lens, nevertheless, can provide a different picture of what is going on in organizations. In this paper, I introduce nightwork into organization studies with a qualitative case study of two research sites (a factory and a hospital laboratory), and analyse employee experiences at night and responses to differences between night- and dayshifts. This study contributes to literature on agency and escape, highlighting that night enables and encourages escape in ways that differ from those during the day. Moreover, the study shows that while employees can 'escape into the night' to avoid daytime rules and pressures, many also need to 'escape from the night' and the physical and mental exhaustion nightwork entails. The paper concludes by pointing to further research on night in organizations, nightwork and escape.

Keywords

agency, control, deviant behaviours, escape, night, nightwork, nocturnal mindsets

'In the night, everything is different' (Max, interviewee)

Introduction

When organizational researchers talk about organizing, managing and working, they implicitly refer to practices which occur during the day. Academic literature, practitioners and society typically focus on daytime structures and norms. However, at the end of each day, a different and nocturnal world of work emerges in hospitals, factories, warehouses, call-centres, small corner shops and many other businesses (Crary, 2014; Heath, 1997; Hubbard, 2017). This shift between daytime work and nightwork occurs every 12 hours, but so far, organizations and work at night have not been key issues in organizational research.

Nightwork, of course, is not new – medical staff, factory workers, farmers and police officers have always worked at night. However, in former centuries, the lack of light at night had been a natural limitation to the prospect of continuous work (Ekirch, 2006; Koslofksy, 2011). The last

Corresponding author:
Monika Müller, Department of Business Administration, Lund University, Tycho Brahes väg 1, Lund, 22363, Sweden.
Email: monika.muller@fek.lu.se

decades have seen the rise of '24/7 capitalism' (Crary, 2014) in a globalized world, where people constantly order, consume, and work around the clock. In the capitalist imperative of 24/7 productivity, the difference between day and night is not a natural zeitgeber any longer, but a mere suggestion for different lifestyle models. Nightwork is therefore turning into an integral part of employees' working lives, and its normalization in many areas of service and production calls for scholarly attention to organizations and work at night.

Most academic literature on nightwork comes from the medical field, where studies investigate nightwork's connection to circadian rhythm disturbances, sleep-wake patterns (Schulz, Bes, & Jobert, 1998), a wide range of health problems (Knutsson, 2003) and increased risk of cancer (Hansen, 2001; Viswanathan, Hankinson, & Schernhammer, 2007). Sociologists and journalists address nightwork as a pressing societal issue (Aubenas, 2011; Crary, 2014; Melbin, 1987) and point to its often negative consequences for nightworkers' social and family lives (e.g. Presser, 2005; Schor, 2008).

In organization studies, night and nightwork have not been a focus so far,[1] although there are some scattered references. Roy (1952) briefly mentions that factory workers had their own ways of reaching their target performance at night, and Hood (1988) finds that janitors had more control over their work at night. These insights imply that night- and dayshifts in organizations differ and suggest that employees, given the often-negative physical impact of nightwork, might experience and respond to nightshifts differently than to dayshifts. As nightwork turns into an increasingly common phenomenon, and as medical interest in researching human circadian rhythms is growing, it is important for organizational researchers to advance their knowledge and theorize nightwork in organization studies. Therefore, as a first step, I aim to investigate *how employees experience nightwork and respond to potential differences between night- and dayshifts.*

To address these questions, I present a qualitative case study of two research sites that are traditional settings for nightwork: a factory and a hospital. The similarities of night conditions and employee experiences at both sites help me theorize nightwork in organizations and provide some generalization. Moreover, the qualitative nature of the study can capture the employees' subjective nightwork experiences, and compare their practices during night- and dayshifts.

This paper offers the following contributions: first, it introduces night in organizations and nightwork as important, yet overlooked, topics in organizational and management research. The increasing normalization of nightwork in an era of 24/7 capitalism (Crary, 2014) calls for empirical studies investigating nightwork in organizations. Second, the paper highlights the physical, mental and social implications of nightwork that researchers might miss when studying organizations and work as exclusively daytime phenomena. The biopolitical implications (Foucault, 2008) of nightwork make it important to investigate experiences of work, rest and sleep, and physical and mental limitations. Third, the paper adds to the literature on control and escape (e.g. Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Cohen & Taylor, 1993) by showing that the night enables deviant behaviours and escape in different ways than dayshifts. On the basis of their nightwork experiences, employees develop 'nocturnal mindsets' which inform deviant behaviours. Following Gupta and Govindarajan (2002), mindsets are sense-making frameworks in the form of cognitive filters for absorbing and processing information; they evolve iteratively over time, as new information or experiences either confirm or change them. Moreover, individual mindsets shape and are shaped by others and form collective mindsets (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2002). The paper shows that 'nocturnal mindsets' emerge in an exchange between individual (personal experiences, e.g. bodily strain) and collective dimensions (experiences of organizational changes at night). These nocturnal mindsets justify more relaxed interpretations of (daytime) rules, which allow members to circumvent compliance. However, while employees can *escape into the night* and avoid daytime management and controls,

they often (have to) *escape from the night* and the related physical and mental exhaustion nightwork entails by engaging in deviant behaviours (e.g. additional breaks, reading magazines, etc.).

Organizing the Night

The dark hours

Every organization is subjected to the dark hours of night: many stop their operations, some only work during nights (e.g. the entertainment business), and others continue with their daily business into the night. According to Eurostat (the European Union statistics database), 'nightwork' is done during usual sleeping hours and thus implies abnormal sleeping times[2] – national labour laws typically mention the interval between 11 pm and 4 am as constituting nightwork. Nightworkers either work permanent nightshifts or, in most cases, in rotating shiftwork models – that fully or partly include nightwork – in order to achieve workforce flexibility (Barton, 1994).

Working at night is part of what Crary (2014) calls '24/7 capitalism'. While in preindustrial times nightwork was an exception due to religious objections (night was for praying), poor light conditions and heightened risks of fire (Ekirch, 2006), industrialization has normalized nightwork and made it an acceptable phenomenon (Melbin, 1987; Negrey, 2012). Macro-level changes of neoliberal globalization emphasizing the centrality of markets, privatization and removal of government protections (Kalleberg, 2009) drove the need for flexible workforces and nightwork. The inherent demand on employees to also work at night has turned the formerly exceptional case of nightwork into the norm (Crary, 2014; Presser, 2005). Although notions of more traditional working times persist ('nine to five', 'Monday to Friday'), they are overlaid with various practices of individual time management made possible – and necessary – by 24/7 networks and markets (Crary, 2014). The 'flexibilization' of working times implies a constant readiness in which employees are in 'sleep mode' rather than actually sleeping (Crary, 2014, p. 13), which undermines the once widespread distinctions between day and night, wakefulness and sleep, and work and private lives.

The rise of 24/7 capitalism has been fuelled by three key aspects: first, the discovery that capitalism needs no rest to accumulate wealth (Crary, 2014; Marx, 2008/1867). According to Marx (2008/1867), this is inherent to capitalism: 'the lengthening of the working day […] allows of production on an extended scale without any alteration in the amount of capital laid out on machinery and buildings. Not only is there, therefore, an increase of surplus value, but the outlay necessary to obtain it diminishes' (p. 147). Second, IT makes information instantaneously available anywhere and anytime in a globalized world (Cairncross, 2002; Glorieux, Mestdag, & Minnen, 2008). Services and goods ranging from food deliveries to Uber services can be ordered online or via phone 24/7, creating a demand for organizations to deliver around the clock. And third, increasing on-demand consumption (Kreitzman, 2000) has led to an array of stores (supermarkets, cafes, dry-cleaning stores and pharmacies) that are open 24/7, especially in larger cities (Heath, 1997; Hubbard, 2017), to meet the demand of a capitalism that does not sleep (see Coren, 1996).

The idea of 24/7 readiness is hard to escape as it becomes part of an 'open prison' of everyday life; consisting of timetables, careers and routines, any attempts to escape this open prison places one in yet another variety of an open prison (Cohen & Taylor, 1993). In this field of tension around work, sleep, exhaustion and escape attempts, nightwork puts the spotlight on the body and its limitations. These limitations are the basis of nightwork regulations[3] formulated by the United Nation's' International Labour Organization (ILO); they cover 'specific measures required by the nature of night work' (article 3), including additional employee health checks and additional financial and benefits compensation. The perceived 'abnormality' of sleeping hours (Eurostat) and necessity to

monitor nightworkers' health more closely emphasize Foucault's (2008) notion of 'human capital' insofar as the 'ability-machine of which it [capital] is the income cannot be separated from the human individual who is its bearer' (p. 226). Instead of a mere exchange of labour power for wage as in classical capitalist market theory, nightwork puts the body, mind and even social life of workers centre stage in labour-wage exchanges. A key technique of the biopolitical apparatus is to normalize nightwork, i.e. to tell people that nightshifts are the same as any other (daytime) shift. And while specific regulations and extra pay for nightwork strongly indicate that nightwork is in fact different than daywork, these provisions also simultaneously help subdue possible protest.

Nightwork and its discontents

The limitations of body and mind that nightwork brings to the fore are common topics on websites, in blogs, or in online comments on newspaper articles[4]. While online commentators mention the (non-)financial compensation nightworkers receive as a positive, they also describe nightwork as extremely demanding for the bodies and social lives of workers. However, despite a growing interest in extreme contexts and conditions in organizations (Bloomfield & Dale, 2015; Michel, 2011) nightwork has not received much attention in organizational research.

What we know about nightwork typically comes from medical research. Mounting evidence of the effects of nightwork on employees' circadian rhythms (the body's 'internal clock') raise severe concerns about employee health. Nightworkers suffer from symptoms related to circadian rhythm disruptions, ranging from short-term jet-lag-like symptoms to permanent disruptions of sleep-wake patterns (Schulz et al., 1998), including insomnia, hypersomnia (daytime sleepiness) and general circadian rhythm disorders. Nightworkers also show reduced alertness, reduced performance, and are subject to increased accident rates during nights (Rajaratnam & Arendt, 2001). Nightwork is connected to a wide range of health problems (Knutsson, 2003) including weight gain, type-2 diabetes, cardiovascular diseases (Haus & Smolensky, 2013), immune suppression (Blask, 2009) and increased cancer risks (Hansen, 2001; Viswanathan et al., 2007). It is also associated with mental conditions such as disorientation, irritability, mood swings (Costa, 2003), depression (Scott, Monk, & Brink, 1997) and Alzheimer's disease (Ju, Lucey, & Holtzman, 2014).

Nightworkers often have to face disrupted social and family interactions (Presser, 2005; Schor, 2008) and can feel isolated. It can be difficult for them to sustain social interactions: when others are socializing in the evenings, nightworkers are on their way to work; when their families or kids are around during the day, nightworkers (attempt to) sleep (Presser, 2005). They often experience that the daytime focus of society produces higher noise levels (construction work, mowing, etc.) – a topic for various internet help sites for nightwork. Moreover, problems such as mood swings and depression also affect nightworkers' social lives, as health and social problems typically interact.

Different as day and night?

The physical, mental and social strain of nightwork as well as formulations such as 'abnormal' or 'atypical' sleeping or working times (Eurostat) point to fundamental differences between day- and nightwork. Although Western industrialized countries often treat the night the same as the day, the night defies this equation. In urban studies, Hubbard (2017) describes the daytime 'family' atmosphere of shopping streets turning edgier at night as alcohol, drugs and violent behaviour appear. Sociological studies also point to deviant behaviours at night, often connected to drinking and violence (Hobbs, Hadfield, Lister, & Winlow, 2003; Monaghan, 2002) and fuelled by looser interpretations of rules. Melbin (1987) characterizes the 'night as

frontier': a place with fewer social constraints, more helpfulness and friendliness, and also more lawlessness. In organizational research, we find a few remarks about night(work), but only in passing: in a paper on goldbricking (i.e. doing less work than one is able to), Roy (1952) mentions workers on nightshift doing their work in a few hours and then 'sit[ting] around' the rest of the night (p. 432). Hood (1988) shows that nightwork for janitors involves less direct supervision than during days, giving them more control over their work. These examples around nightwork point to important issues around managerial power, control and agency (e.g. Collinson, 1994; Knights & Willmott, 2016).

According to a Foucauldian perspective, power and control are closely tied to subjectification – an ongoing 'construction of a self' in a field of power-knowledge tensions (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p. 692) which is enacted through (self-)disciplinary control mechanisms (see Knights & McCabe, 2000). Managerial control, a process whereby managers motivate, encourage and evaluate organizational members toward achieving organizational objectives (Cardinal, Sitkin, & Long, 2010) typically works through observing the employees' behaviour directly (direct supervision) or indirectly by observing output resulting from behaviour (indirect supervision/surveillance) (see Ouchi, 1977). In this regard, Sewell (1998) describes vertical surveillance (superiors monitoring individual performance) and horizontal surveillance (through peer control).

Peer control occurs when employees at the same organizational level or in the same field (i.e. with no hierarchical authority over each other) exert control over their peers (De Jong, Bijlsma-Frankema, & Cardinal, 2014; Loughry, 2010). Loughry (2010) distinguishes formal and informal, and management-designed and worker-designed peer control. Barker (1993), for example, describes formal management-designed peer control in self-managing teams. Yet, worker-designed informal peer control is also based on unspoken and informal group norms, which occurs in teams with limited autonomy or among experts in the same field (Loughry, 2010). These group norms, i.e. informal rules that groups adopt to regulate member behaviour, develop through critical events in the group's history or carry-over behaviours from past situations (Feldman, 1984). Similarly, Warren (2003) defines informal individual norms as regularly exhibited behaviours (e.g. work routines) versus formal norms (e.g. rules, procedures). With regard to nightwork, it is important to note that peer control is not always consistent with accomplishing organizational objectives, and that peers can affect others' behaviours without indenting to do so (e.g. when individuals notice and respond to their peers' behaviours) (Loughry, 2010).

Power and control always include possibilities of agency, or 'doing otherwise' (Giddens, 1979, p. 92). In labour process theory, agency can even include 'consent', a form of willing involvement in hard work under various forms of social pressure (Collinson, 1994). Burawoy (1979) describes consent as an escape from monotonous work – 'time passes more quickly […] and one is less aware of being tired' (p. 89). Sturdy (1992) claims that consent secures a competent sense of self, allowing for escape from subordination. However, in such a 'context of an overall conformity to the organisation's goals' (Knights & McCabe, 2000, p. 434), similar to Friedman's (1977) 'responsible autonomy', we also find resistance or 'organizational misbehaviour' based on varied motives in the form of 'non-compliant practices' (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999, p. 24).

As specific form of agency, resistance refers to 'oppositional workplace behaviours' (Collinson & Ackroyd, 2005; Thomas & Davies, 2005) ranging from open confrontation to subtle subversions and ambiguous disengagement. Fleming and Spicer (2003), for example, mention cynicism as possible way of escaping power. Thomas and Davies (2005) describe employee resistance as 'a constant process of adaptation, subversion and reinscription of dominant discourses' to 'pervert and subtly shift meanings and understandings', thereby avoiding the narrow 'dualism of control versus resistance' (p. 687). In this paper, I use 'deviant behaviours' and 'escape' (instead of resistance) and draw primarily on Warren (2003), who describes deviant employee behaviours as 'behavioral

departures from norms of a reference group' (p. 622) or from norms of regular and expected behaviour (p. 624).

At night, power, control and agency might work differently in organizations, as Roy (1952) and Hood (1988) have indicated. Moreover, nightwork, as we have seen earlier, indicates abnormal sleeping times and entails severe health problems that put the employees' experiences and the limitations of the human body and mind into the biopolitical focus of attention (Foucault, 2008). The normalization of nightwork, fuelled by 24/7 capitalism (Crary, 2014), blurs the distinction between day and night, work and sleep, and employees might look for ways to escape the open prison of their every day and night lives (Cohen & Taylor, 1993). I thus set out to investigate *how employees experience nightwork and respond to potential differences between night- and dayshifts*. Addressing these questions can help us advance our knowledge and theorize night(work) in organizations.

Method

To study nightwork I conducted an extensive qualitative study at two research sites: a steel processing factory and a hospital laboratory in central Europe. The qualitative nature of the study allowed me to gather in-depth data pertaining to the everyday (or -night) rhythms in organizations and to integrate perspectives of nightworkers and those supervising nightwork. The choice of the two research sites was based on theoretical sampling, i.e. the 'likelihood that they will offer theoretical insight' (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). Moreover, both sites represent traditional, yet important contemporary forms of nightwork: manual industrial labour and service/care work. The insights from both sites establish a preliminary understanding of night(work) and provide a broader vantage point when theorizing its key characteristics (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Research context

The factory. The first research site was a steel processing company that produces components primarily for the automobile industry. The machines in the factory ran around the clock; some were stopped for employee breaks, others were kept running for 24 hours. The work conditions were marked by constant noise (loud hammering of the huge machines) and heat (produced through friction).

The work tasks were repetitive, often physically demanding, and dangerous (e.g. loss of fingers), and employees were faced with many safety rules and regulations (e.g. wearing hearing protection, safety glasses, etc.). Workers typically had some basic education or vocational training (e.g. as mechanics). They worked in rotating 'three shifts' over alternating weeks: one week an early shift (5 am to 1 pm), then one week a late shift (1 pm to 9 pm), then again one week early and one late, and then two weeks of nightshift (9 pm to 5 am). After completion, this cycle started over again. For the nightshift weeks, employees received about 30% of their normal daytime salary as additional compensation.

About 5 to 10 employees worked in a team and had the same shift schedule throughout the year. These teams were organized around tasks and/or machines, and were not autonomous in terms of work schedules, determining their output, etc. Instead, members of the middle management (supported by a small team of health and safety managers) set the shift schedules (e.g. based on fluctuation in orders, etc.), coordinated the shifts and monitored behaviour and performance. The managers, however, left the production site during nights, with 'setters' (experienced team members working in a primus-inter-pares fashion) taking charge. A few informants mentioned rarely occurring spot checks by management, but it was unclear if and how often they occurred. Some female teams worked directly with quality control of the finished products. Their tasks were dependent on the output timing of the machines. This type of work was demanding since it required high concentration (the finished parts were important for automobile safety), and yet was very

repetitive. Nightshift performance was evaluated through machine running times and (if possible) the number of pieces or boxes of output produced, which, according to the workers and the management, was similar if not slightly higher than during days.

The hospital laboratory. The second research site was a medical laboratory (blood bank) in a university hospital. The hospital consisted of several clinics (e.g. various surgical clinics) and the blood bank provided support for these clinics on a 24/7 basis, conducting various complex blood and antibody tests and sending the results and required blood products (blood bags, platelets, etc.) where needed.

Around 60 employees worked in different professions: several medical doctors (including the department manager and managing director), around 30 biomedical scientists, 5 nurses, and other laboratory and administrative staff. The biomedical scientists were experts working together in a specific area or 'lab' according to their specialization. The medical doctors and biomedical scientists worked 24/7 in various shifts. Their extra pay for nightwork was lower than in the factory and depended on the profession – medical doctors earned more for the night compared to biomedical scientists. Medical doctors worked 24-hour shifts starting at 8 am; they had their own shift room and bed. Biomedical scientists worked 13 hours during nights, starting at 7 pm; they were not supposed to sleep at night and thus only had a staff kitchenette area where they could rest. Many biomedical scientists also had nightly on-call duty when working dayshifts.

Nightshifts included routine tasks (e.g. handling blood donations collected during the evening) but were otherwise determined by the number and severity of cases at hand (e.g. planned or emergency surgeries) and the amount of blood products ordered for patients (varying from a few blood bags 'just in case' up to over 100 when surgical teams were fighting for a patient's life).

Similarities of both research sites. Despite obvious differences between the two sites (e.g. low-skilled factory work and highly skilled service work), which emphasize the context of each organization, the topical focus on 'night' provided emergent themes that were consistent at both sites. In both organizations, the number of employees was lower during nights than during the day, and the absence of the management team (factory) or colleagues (hospital) influenced control insofar as the modes of supervision became indirect at night.

In the factory, daytime behavioural control worked through direct supervision, where managers (who were present from 7 am to 4 pm) closely watched the employees. At night, behavioural control turned into output control and indirect supervision through electronically documented machine running times and number or weight of pieces or material produced. In the morning, managers would first check the machine log books on their laptops and then talk to the morning shift (who had taken over from the nightshift teams at 5 am) to inquire about any unusual nightshift events.

In the hospital case, daytime control worked through peer control, as employees often worked alongside colleagues and tasks would overlap. At night, control occurred through IT-based documentation of the number of orders, task specificity and speed of task completion; during the next day(s), colleagues – in case they received orders for the same patient – would look up the documented performance of the nightshift employee. They would see the exact times the blood samples had arrived in the lab, the types of tests the employees had deemed necessary, and when the results were entered into the software system. I call this indirect and IT-based form of control 'delayed' peer control.

Data collection

The empirical material used for this study mainly consists of semi-structured in-depth interviews, as well as informal conversations with and observations of employees at their workplace. I gained access to each organization through senior management. The managers asked employees who were

present at the times of my visits whether they wanted to be included in the study. I visited both research sites during days and nights for interviews and observations. In the hospital laboratory, I could follow employees around while they were working at night. In both organizations, I talked with different employee groups (nightworkers, managers, health and security managers in the factory; biomedical scientists, medical doctors and the manager in the laboratory). In total, I conducted 80 interviews: 53 in the factory and 27 in the laboratory (see Table 1, in the Appendix).

I guaranteed the interviewees anonymity, which was also agreed to by the respective management teams. The semi-structured interviews typically lasted about one hour and were audio-recorded (nearly all interviewees agreed to having the interview recorded). During the interviews, I asked the employees: (a) whether they experienced nightwork as positive or negative compared to dayshifts, (b) how nightshifts differed from dayshifts more generally, and (c) whether they went about their tasks differently during nights. I also probed for more information on a number of additional topics. I coded the empirical material according to three criteria mentioned earlier (negative or positive experiences and reasons for this evaluation; differences between night- and dayshifts; and differences in nightshift practices and behaviours).

Data analysis

In the analysis of my data, I focused on insights gained from the interviews and observations. As an additional source for understanding the interviewees' experiences, I drew on my own past experiences of working at night for many years in a hospital laboratory job. Moreover, as the literature in organization studies has not addressed nightwork explicitly, I also turned to accounts of nightwork from journalists, bloggers and online commentators of newspaper articles for additional information.

I analysed the data with an abductive approach (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009), a constant iterative process of comparing concepts in the literature with emerging insights gained from empirical data. This approach allowed me to look for concepts described in the literature (e.g. forms of control) but also emerging themes such as altered informal (group) norms or deviant behaviours during nights. I have visualized these themes in the data structure (Gioia, Corley, & Hamilton, 2012) in Figure 1: the first-order concepts are derived from the interviewees; the more abstract second-order concepts combine several first-order concepts. The overarching themes, in turn, are further abstractions of the coded material.

Findings

The findings highlight that employees experienced fundamental differences between night- and dayshifts, which informed 'nocturnal mindsets'. As frameworks of understanding and making sense of experiences during nights, nocturnal mindsets were characterized by a form of reasoning whereby differences between night and day justified looser interpretations of daytime rules and thus encouraged deviant behaviours. The section is structured according to the overarching themes in Figure 1.

Night experiences

The interviews revealed that employees experienced nightwork as a stark contrast to dayshifts: positive experiences concerned workplace changes (e.g. absence of management, indirect forms of supervision, etc.), which led to a more relaxed atmosphere. Negative accounts typically concerned personal experiences in the form of physical, mental and social consequences of nightwork (e.g. tiredness, exhaustion, fatigue, disruptions in social life).

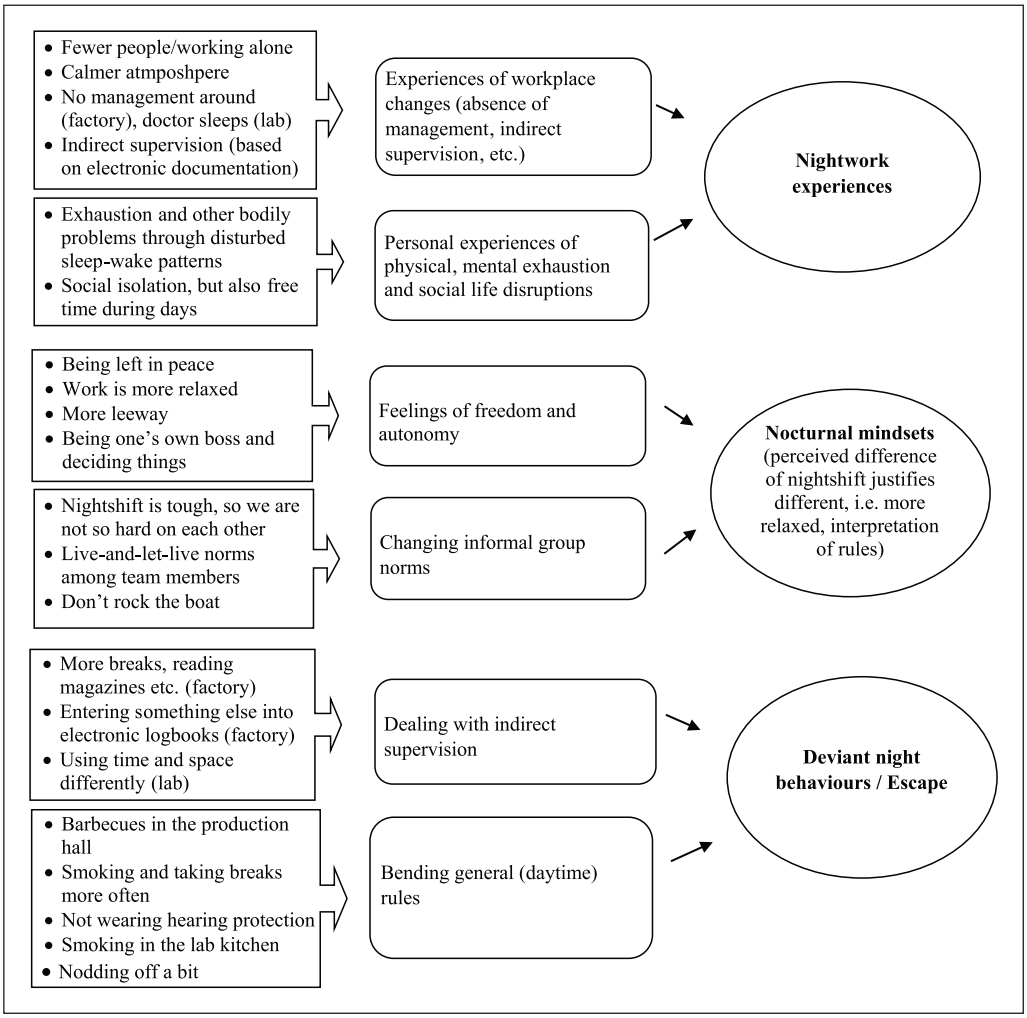

Figure 1. Data structure.

Experiences of workplace changes. The changes experienced by employees in the workplace at night – e.g. changes in the way things were organized, the overall atmosphere, etc. – was for many interviewees the only bright spot in an otherwise exhausting shift. Most, if not all, interviewees described the nightshift as being less authoritarian, more 'relaxed' and more 'peaceful'. Reinhard, for example, explained that *'It is quieter, you are left in peace… there are not so many people […], which is nicer compared to the days.'* Adrian confirmed that *'There are fewer people around… that is really nice… it feels different.'* The main attraction in this regard was the absence of management: *'many like nightwork because the bosses are not around'* (Walter); *'no bosses, so that you don't feel observed all the time'* (David). Rico attributed the 'peaceful' atmosphere to the absence of management: *'The reason is that you are left in peace as there are no bosses around.'* When asked about the advantages of nightshifts, Stefan said: *'No bosses around…it is calmer, no traffic in the hall [referring to forklifts driving around], not so much going on.'* As employees felt constantly observed and were often reprimanded during days, they experienced less *'psychological*

pressure' (Chris) at night. Benno summarized: *'In the night everything is a bit easier, you can joke and stuff…*' Harry, nevertheless, added *'You can talk a bit with the others […] but then, you are usually not that talkative; after the break it is tough and you basically just yawn at each other.'*

The absence of the management changed the main modes of supervision from direct to indirect. Rico told me: *'We have computers on the machines and we log in…if something happens, we enter it ... the morning shift then logs in and they see what happened.'* Matteo, a manager, described that he cannot talk to the nightworkers directly, as they leave shortly after 5 am while he arrives at 7.30 m. He said: *'Well, we have some [software] systems for that, but I have to trust what people tell me. […] I have access to everything they write down from every machine and from each of the setters, so I can compare… you cannot lie or enter some shit, because I see how things fit together [machine documentation, workers' entries, written and oral reports from setters].'* Peter, the factory manager, said that he would check all machine parameters in a colour-coded bar charts overview: *'At 7.30 I log into our system and have a quick look at every machine… I look at the capacity utility of each machine in the last three shifts and if there is something off, I look into it. For example, the machine was only 50%... so if I see that they had a set-up or changeover, I know everything was fine, because that's part of it…but if there was a standstill, I go deeper into the reports.'* The workers, however, felt differently during the nightly period of indirect supervision. Pedro explained: *'No bosses, managers…. controls – just the team.'* And Leo, a setter, stated that *'The bosses just don't have a clue how nightshifts work.'*

In the laboratory, employees worked alone at night and most of them liked this arrangement, once they were used to shouldering the responsibility. The nightshift included routine tasks such as routine surgeries, but also unexpected emergency or life-and-death situations. In the calmer periods of the night, employees liked the quietness. Andrea, for example, said: *'What I really like is that you are alone in the night and it is really quiet. During days it's often hectic and this permanent noise level. Noise, noise, noise… and at night, I am alone.'* And Betty explained that the dayshift is a *'hustle and bustle, […] and you don't have that during the nights, because it is just you'*. Apart from the calmer atmosphere the employees liked the idea that peers and management were not around. Paula mentioned that *'It is nice as no one disturbs you while you are doing your work'* and Laura said that *'There is just you and no one else here… and that is great.'*

In fact, a medical doctor was always in the building, but had a special room and could sleep at night. Nevertheless, Betty commented: *'well, ... basically you are alone'*. Julia confirmed that *'the doctor sleeps and we are basically responsible for everything'*. Although the lab management insisted that employees inform the doctor of any unusual events, the interviewees did not consider that to be control. Conny told me that: '*In former times, we did everything alone and found a solution […] Nowadays they want us to contact the doctor… not that they can help us with anything… it is more that they know what is going on. […] So, usually, the doctor would then ask me what to do and I'd tell him and he agrees.*'

Susan added that it was up to the nightworkers to decide when to involve the doctor (with the exception of a few standard situations). Andrea explained: '*They [the medical doctors] have their own room upstairs with a bed […] they know nothing about what's going on down here, you see. So, they are basically only involved if I call them.'* And Manuela was a bit more explicit: *'You can organise things differently… well, yes, there is the doctor, but to be honest he is not really useful for my practical work.'*

Personal experiences: physical, mental and social strain. Despite the interviewees' accounts of the positive aspects of nightwork, the physical, mental and social consequences were the most prominent topics in the interviews. Although some employees could tolerate nightwork well, the

majority described severe bodily problems during the night, during the nightshift weeks, and as long-term effects that only ceased during holidays. The following statements exemplify problems during and after nightshifts: *'the body rebels against nightwork', 'nightwork is unnatural'*, or *'you feel like a zombie after the night'*. Leo stated that *'Nightshift is horrible, just horrible… because at 2 or 3 in the morning you have a low, you basically are half-dead and nearly sleep standing.'* Benno added that *'you become really stupid somehow'*. To make things worse, the interviewees also mentioned that sleep during days is of inferior quality compared to sleep at night. Susan said: *'I actually sleep more when I work nights […] but sleep is different during days… somehow less restorative […] your body knows it is day and not night, although I close all the blinds. […] you get more and more exhausted the more nights you work in a row.'* And Jimmy described: '*You are like … like under hypnosis, not rested, not really awake, nothing […] the longer you try to sleep the more tired you get…the one who invented nightwork should be shot dead.'*

The employees' individual physical tolerance of nightwork appeared directly connected to their evaluation of how nightwork impacted social life. Those who were exhausted throughout the days painted a rather bleak picture of their social lives, as they were too tired to meet friends. Dominik said that even after he had slept until the afternoon, *'I am just finished… I get up, but can't do anything, I am not motivated to do anything… basically you wait till the next nightshift starts*.' Rico claimed that '*you have less time with your family, because you sleep'*. In contrast, nightworkers such as Matteo, whose bodies could cope more easily, mentioned having 'more time' during days for activities with their kids, going for an ice cream on a summer afternoon or having coffee in the garden. However, at some point, they had to leave their afternoon leisure activities and prepare for work: *'I have to leave exactly when things would get nice in front of the TV'* (Max). Employees with smaller children mentioned either having more time with them or being ultimately exhausted when their own sleeping time was spent to care for their families. Walter said that *'Those with kids […] you can't just go to bed but have to bring the kids to school… they are really exhausted. I see that they cannot sleep, so with a family nightwork is deadly.'*

The laboratory employees typically had only one or two nightshifts in a row, but still felt exhausted during and after nightshifts. Tessa said that: *'You are just so tired…it is catastrophic to work at night…. I often think "I don't believe this" [how tired she is]. At around 5 am things get a bit better, because then […] I know that the morning is coming.'* As many confirmed, the phase after midnight, a usual time for sleep, was the toughest stretch. Alex said: *'… till midnight or so it's not a problem. But then you just crumble… […] between 2 and 4, it is really gruelling.'* Others added that these small hours are also testing their mental limits, as exhaustion caused problems in focusing on work-related tasks. *'It is dreadful'*, Betty explained, *'…after 2 everything is… you really have to concentrate hard, and I have to double-check everything.'* And Manuela said that: *'At some point you lose concentration… and you just drag on somehow […] so, if there is an emergency at 4 that requires some skill, things get really brutal… at around 6 you have some hope that you'll get through the night.'*

The laboratory employees' social lives were only interrupted for one or two nights at a time, but they still had to organize their lives around regularly occurring nightwork. Mark, for example, mentioned that *'If you have a partner with normal working times, you can't do much with free time during the week.'* Although some liked the free time during days at first, after a few years they felt the consequences of nightshifts on their social lives. Conny said that *'You can't really do something after the nightshift…that comes with age… you need to go home to sleep, whether you want to or not.'* This statement was also confirmed by Laura: *'the regeneration time is two or three days now'*. The interviewees also mentioned irritability after nightshifts that strained their relationships: *'well, my wife knows…. so, after the night one should not set my nerves at edge…'* (Martin).

Nocturnal mindsets

The findings have shown that many employees developed nocturnal mindsets as sense-making frameworks: based on their experiences of working at night, many had the idea that nightwork is fundamentally different from dayshift work, and that (daytime) rules could be interpreted differently. Nocturnal mindsets become recognizable as feelings of autonomy and freedom, and manifested in changing informal group norms that inspired 'no-reporting' alliances.

Feelings of freedom and autonomy. The employees' experiences of workplace changes, especially the absence of management and indirect forms of supervision, evoked feelings of freedom and autonomy. David said that: *'You don't feel that someone just jumps out from behind your back and checks what you are doing […] Maybe it is also in your head that you don't feel so observed…'* Similarly, Dominik stated: *'It is in your head, in your thinking… you think: "now there is no boss around, he does not observe what you do".'* The indirect supervision and more relaxed atmosphere also offered possibilities of employee discretion in handling problems or unusual situations. However, in emergency situations, for example a severe injury, employees had to call the managers. Andy (setter) said that *'We are designed in a way that we can deal with things on our own… and the nights are calmer, easier, … and freedom… we know what to do and we do it.'* Michael summed it up: *'You are basically your own boss.'* Despite the feelings of freedom and autonomy – or perhaps because of them – the night performance was very good, as Peter, the plant manager, admitted: *'Surprisingly, we have the better performance in the night […] They try to keep their machines running and have their spaces of freedom… so, yes, there are these loopholes.'*

In the hospital laboratory, the employees also perceived themselves to be freer. This 'just me' feeling made them hesitant to let me come along during their nightshift, but some did it anyway. Laura explained that *'The special thing is that you are alone, and that is fine. You are your own master, you have your peace […] it's just you and no one is meddling with what you're doing.'* The interviewees also mentioned some degree of autonomy despite the tight technical controls in form of the laboratory software system. Anne told me: *'you can do your own schedule. Of course, you have to do all the things that come up, but […] it is just you. […] So, I can do it exactly the way I want.'* And Maria said: *'there is no one constantly asking 'what about this' or 'who is doing that?' […] I have a good overview and do things in my own way and speed, depending on the task and urgency. And I really like it that way.'*

This statement points to a sense of freedom to do the work in one's own fashion and not be observed by peers. Betty also agreed that the nightshift offered some degrees of freedom and autonomy: *'it's just me and I know what I am doing […] you are not depending on others. You don't have to wait for others to finish their tasks. You decide how fast things are done.'*

Changing informal group norms. The factory workers were organized in teams around one big or several smaller machines. They mentioned that: *"We are in the same boat' at night'* (Rico), which indicated a kind of pact that no one should rock the boat too much and report a colleague. Maurice explained it would be *'difficult to report a colleague drinking coffee too often'*. As all teams were on nightshift at some point, they also had agreements with dayshift teams. Fabian explained: *'We have a kind of deal that the nightworkers only do the actual tasks, but not clean up and so on.'* Alex, a setter, stated that *'When someone goes for a break to drink a coffee or so, I would be the last to tell on him…it is just really hard at night.'* The employees reasoned that the hardships of nightwork justified some slack when interpreting daytime rules. Chris said: *'Of course you have more freedom and you can do things you should not do, that is clear […] well, it is human… I think everyone would do that […] otherwise they would lie. I think the managers know this… they are*

also human … they would do the same if they were here at night… I would not believe a manager saying he wouldn't do the same.' Nick stated that if a manager should see him breaking the rules 'I would tell him that this is the nightshift and he shouldn't overreact.' And Max reasoned: *'I think they [the management] know this anyways […] but as long as the quality is ok…what would they say […] I mean, if the employees are here in the night, and sometimes six nights in a row – what should they say?*'

The role of the setters at night played a central role in the context of the groups. Setters were experienced workers who were, at night, first among equals or *'kind-of superiors'* (Ben, worker) in their teams. While interviewees could not agree whether setters were superiors or not during the night, they agreed that it is the setters' duty to ensure that the machines run smoothly and without interruption. The setters were also the main informants for management as they updated the morning shift about the night. Otherwise, their approach to supervising focused mainly on making the machines run smoothly. Leo (setter) said that *'As long as the machine is running, I don't care if someone leaves to smoke or so.'* Andy, also a setter, described his approach as *'a kind of compromise' – 'in the night I don't care if they are out five times when it is over 40 degrees in here – as long as the work does not suffer.'* Setters would sometimes even help out, so that others could have some rest. And Joe (setter) explained that: *'at night, if all is running, I don't care what they are doing […] I don't want to be the one who has to tell them off. I would be upset for eight hours at night despite the fact that all machines are running, so that would be very stupid.'*

Factory managers (some had worked nightshifts before their promotion) knew about the laxer interpretation of rules at night and told me that had mostly accepted this practice. In contrast, the plant manager, Peter, stated that: *'I don't think that is ok – even when the machines work… if someone has more or longer breaks than he should have, it's not ok… because they are not just here to keep the machine running. There are many other tasks as well…cleaning, measuring, tidying up … this is all part of the job.'*

But Alex (setter) made clear that he thought some more freedom during nightwork was well-deserved: *'It makes me think sometimes, you know, that people who never actually did nightshifts […] take the right to have an opinion about nightwork or order us around… I don't think that this is right.'*

In the laboratory, employees had informal agreements between colleagues to cope with particularly stressful situations at night. For instance, they would call a colleague for help even though that colleague was not officially on standby duty. Maria explained that: *'especially when they [colleagues] live close by, they offer to come in or help on the phone even without on-call duty.'* Hanna added: *'of course you have more qualms if it is past midnight… but, well, if I really need to know something urgently, I just call a colleague and say thanks or even give her a small present the next time.'* When the nightshift had been tough, colleagues arriving in the morning would notice and express their empathy. Doris told me that some mornings, when the waste bin indicated a tough nightshift, *'you knew immediately that the shift had been hell. […] you feel for the other and value all that work […] And you think "shit nightshift" and we all come together and ask the poor person "oh no, was is that bad?" And then we talk among each other. I think this is good… everyone benefits from that.'* This general understanding based on their own nightwork experiences made interviewees evaluate the performance of nightshift colleagues differently than performance during days.

Deviant night behaviours/Escape

Encouraged by nocturnal mindsets and changed informal group norms, employees felt that certain behaviours that were not tolerable during days were acceptable and even 'normal' at night.

Although a few interviewees mentioned that they mostly concentrated on their work tasks at night as the best way to get through a shift, many others dealt with indirect supervision differently than with direct supervision during the day and bent the (daytime) rules at night.

Dealing with indirect supervision. Indirect forms of nightshift supervision and feelings of freedom and autonomy allowed employees to strategize around controls. The numbers of finished pieces or machine software parameters told managers only what was done, but not how it was done. Benno described that *'it is easier, easier ... you still have to do the job. They can see everything that happened during the night, but you can still go out for a bit or have an extra coffee.'* Daytime rules and supervision, according to interviewees, were very tight – *'you can't discuss some topics with the management… if you sit or stand on the stairs, they basically freak out'* (Fabian). When I asked about them leaving the machine, many were hesitant. Chris, for instance, replied: *'I don't want to answer this question… because…, umm, it is always……umm, different.'* Vicky was a bit more explicit: *'sometimes the setters would take your place for 15 minutes, so that you can go out just for a bit…'* and in her previous team *'setters helped a bit with the machine having a little problem so that you did not have to go full speed'*; or Manuela: *'team members can help each other so that you can get out 5 minutes for a coffee'*. David explained: *'they can see what you do… through your computer; they see how many pieces you did, why the machine had a standstill, how long it did not run… so, well, normally you are not allowed to eat when you are at the machine, but in the night, you just eat sometimes – they can't see that. Or you browse through a magazine if everything is running smoothly.'* Similarly, Rico stated: *'You are under full surveillance, but during days the bosses are an additional layer. In the night, it is just the machines…it is less direct, they can read up on it or they can ask you, but we have possibilities… you can also enter something else… they are dependent on these entries.'*

In the laboratory, employees could not deviate much from the prescribed procedures, but they could, for example, wait with one or two routine orders till a third or fourth arrived. Sometimes they would even leave a task they deemed non-urgent for the dayshift, even though their colleagues would then have to check how they had handled it at night. Maria, for instance, referred to peers checking her nightshift tasks via the software system: *'If I put something [non-urgent] aside for later because I don't know exactly what to do with it… well, at some point someone will notice and I will get called out. But that does not impress me so much any longer.'* What was interesting in this respect is that the actual overall purpose of the nightshift in the laboratory was ambiguous. Some interviewees saw it as routine shift and would do routine tasks, whereas others considered it reserved for emergency tasks. The head of department, Christian, said he saw it as emergency shift, but mentioned that even the hospital management did not agree on the purpose. The interpretation of the actual purpose of their nightwork was up to employees. Emma, for instance, stated: *'In the night, we do emergency cases as a principle… there should not be routine tasks. […] They can send them, no problem, but we'll do them on the next day during routine working times. We just don't do these things… really, there must be an emergency.'*

Bending general (daytime) rules. The findings showed that at night, employees could avoid general daytime rules and (safety) regulations, such as wearing hearing protection, not eating in the production hall, not sitting down for a bit, reading a magazine or playing around with a smartphone, etc. Kathy raised the issue of gloves. Employees previously wore cotton gloves for a better grip, but the management replaced them with 'slippery' latex gloves: *'during days the manager can really treat you like he wants… I got a written warning that I should wear the gloves I hate to wear… just because he was in the mood – but in the night, I can wear the gloves I like.'* At night, they could just 'do their thing'. Max told me that *'in the night […] the rules like no music, no eating*

at the machines, no magazines, and so on…we rather ignore that in the night' and he pointedly remarked: *'no plaintiff – no judge.'* Nevertheless, Walter added: *'we don't want to openly defy them [management]'*, as the employees know that the porters would otherwise have to report them (but *'the good ones [porters] look the other way'*). As Walter put it, the teams still had *'alert posts'* just in case. Benno mentioned sleeping or falling asleep: *'Many go to the toilet to sleep, so around 3 or 4 all toilets are closed… or sometimes at the machines – it happened to me as well, you just talk and then nod off.'* And Nick said that '*Sometimes we have a barbecue … we would not be allowed to do that…but at night, things are different… we have super-hot crates in here and if you wrap the things in aluminium foil you can grill them.'* Walter also talked about barbecues: *'In the night we have some barbecue in the break… we have everything we need, pans and stuff… or we cook some other things […] and if its someone's birthday, we have cake … […] We don't do this during days […] … of course, they could not forbid it if we are doing it in the break… but if they saw us at night eating roast pork and dumplings they would totally freak out.'*

In the laboratory, the situation at night was similar, as employees could do things that were not allowed during days. Maria mentioned smoking in the laboratory, which was actually not allowed: *'if it's real quiet, I would usually smoke. At night, I smoke in our kitchen… I check that the room is aired in the morning – but at night, I allow myself to smoke in the kitchen.'* I also found hints of 'dozing off a bit', either with or without intention. In a calm phase of the night, employees sometimes could not help dozing off for a short while. Hanna explained that: *'you doze off a bit… but you are always on 'stand-by'*; and Julia mentioned that: *'if it's quiet, I lie down a bit. I don't sleep, but I lie down. … your eyes have some rest, and you can stretch a bit […] So some of us can actually sleep here in the lab… when it is quiet… they can sleep for 10 minutes… I can't do that.'*

Discussion

We have seen that nightshifts in organizations play out differently than dayshifts, and yet organizations, organizing and work are typically researched as daytime phenomena. This study emphasizes different organizational practices and employee experiences, which only become visible when looking at organizations and work through a nocturnal lens. The key findings revolve around employees' nightwork experiences, the emergence of nocturnal mindsets, and agency in form of deviant behaviours (Ackroyd & Thompson, 1999; Cohen & Taylor, 1993), and show *that the night enables escape in particular ways that differ from those during the day*. In this section, I discuss employees' possibilities of *escaping into the night*, thereby avoiding the pressures and controls that are prevalent during the day. I also explore the possibilities of *escaping from the night* and effects of nightwork on tiredness, exhaustion and fatigue.

Nightshift experiences, nocturnal mindsets and escape

The findings highlight that employees experience the nightshift as a fundamental contrast to the standard dayshift. The analytical model in Figure 2 visualizes the influences and effects of these experiences.

The influences shown in Figure 2 are the following (the numbers here in the text correspond to those in Figure 2): 1) The study shows that the employees' *nightwork experiences* of workplace changes around organizing the nightshift (absence of management, indirect forms of supervision, nicer atmosphere) and personal experiences of nightwork (physical, mental and social strain) inform '*nocturnal mindsets*', which revolve around the idea that the nightshift is so fundamentally different that (daytime) rules can be interpreted more loosely. This influence of employees' nightwork experiences on the emergence of nocturnal mindsets has two sides (1a and 1b).

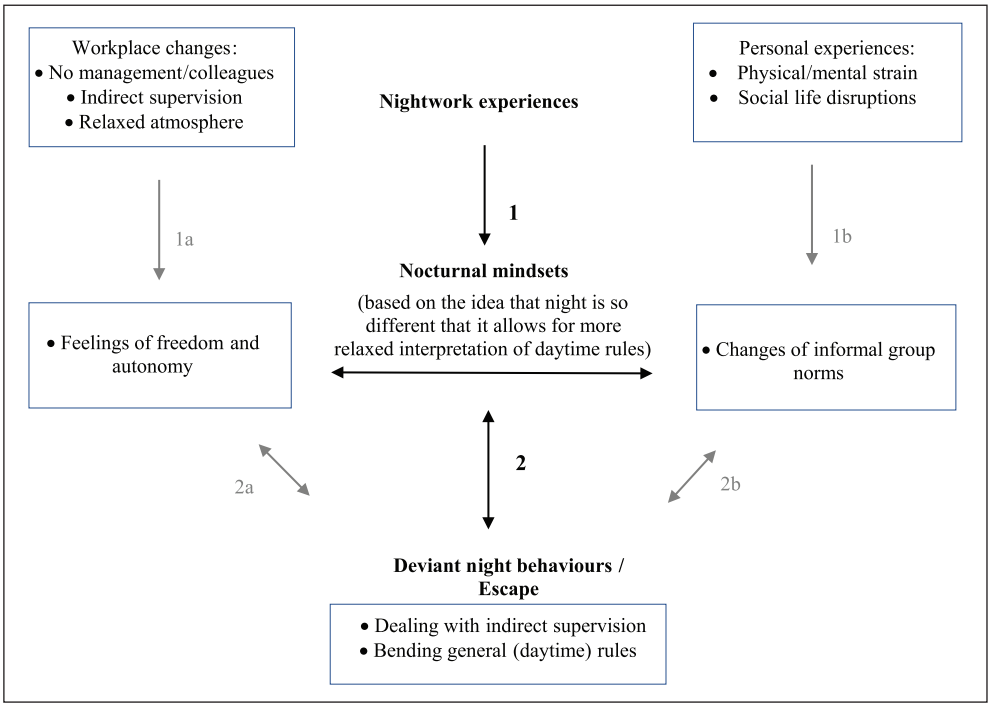

Figure 2. Influences of employees' nightwork experiences.

1a) The employees experience changes in their workplace, since nightshifts are organized differently: the absence of management (factory) and reduced number of colleagues (factory and hospital) result in an atmosphere many describe as calmer, more relaxed, and less stressful. Moreover, the main modes of supervision change from direct to indirect: from (vertical) face-to-face supervision to electronic surveillance (see Sewell, 1998) in the factory and from peer control through colleagues who are on the same shift (Loughry, 2010) to 'delayed' peer control over the course of several days (or whenever a case needs further attention) in the laboratory. These indirect forms of supervision leave more room for employees to choose how they use time and space, reach the target performance, and comply with daytime rules and regulations. Although control is not suspended and electronic surveillance still works at night, not everything can be monitored and management or peers might not know how nightworkers achieve their results. With ambiguous tensions between power, subjectivation, consent and resistance (Collinson, 1994; Knights & McCabe, 2000; Thomas & Davies, 2005), the indirect forms of supervision and absence of management can facilitate feelings of freedom and autonomy even though work tasks remain mostly the same and control systems are still in place.

1b) At the same time, the employees' personal experiences of nightwork as being physically and mentally exhausting, and of being out-of-sync with society, inform changes of implicit group norms and informal peer controls (Loughry, 2010). The exhaustion nightworkers face during their shift, the following days, and as a long-term condition point to the extremeness of their fatigue and disorientation (e.g. being a 'zombie' or 'out of it', etc.). The benefits of leisure time during days only work for those that are not (yet) affected by the consequences

of disturbed sleep-and-wake patterns, although these consequences tend to worsen with age. While peer control is still in place, many nightworkers – on the basis of these extreme experiences – justify changing implicit group norms at night. These changes include the emergence of a live-and-let-live solidarity, whereby any knowledge of behaviour that would not be tolerated during dayshifts is not reported to managers. Moreover, the findings also showed that nightworkers are often too tired to actually care about what others are doing. Even setters, as authority figures, or at least spokespersons of their teams, comply with these nocturnal norms. Once in place, these group norms are reinforced through carry-over behaviour from previous nights, critical events at night (Feldman, 1984) and regularly exhibited deviant behaviours of peers (Loughry, 2010; Warren, 2003). Thus, many nightworkers – even those whose bodies can tolerate nightwork well – subscribe to changed group norms and occasionally engage in deviant behaviours.

2) Nocturnal mindsets fuel deviant behaviours while deviant behaviours reinforce nocturnal mindsets. These mindsets emerge through an exchange of individual and collective sense-making frameworks and inspire the idea that nightshifts are fundamentally different from dayshifts, and that the rules do not apply in the same way around the clock. This influence also has two sides that reinforce each other: 2a) Feelings of freedom and autonomy (based on workplace changes, especially indirect forms of supervision) *encourage* deviant behaviours. 2b) Changes in informal group norms and peer control (based on experiencing physical, mental and social strain) *justify* more relaxed interpretations of rules and deviant behaviours. The resulting behaviours and practices include exploiting indirect supervision and achieving performance goals while doing things differently (e.g. asking colleagues to take over while leaving to smoke, reading a magazine, playing around with the smart phone, or waiting for additional blood test orders instead tackling them one by one) (see also Hood, 1988; Roy, 1952). Moreover, deviant behaviours also include bending general daytime rules and safety regulations (e.g. having barbecues in the production hall, not wearing hearing protection, or even dozing off for a bit on a chair or toilet).

Escaping into the night and from the night

So far, this study has highlighted that night in organizations enables deviant behaviours and escape in a variety of ways. It also points to an *ambiguous relationship* between *escaping into the night* (avoiding daytime scrutiny and pressures and engaging in deviant behaviours) and *escaping from the night* (avoiding the physical/mental strain of nightwork by engaging in deviant behaviours). Before providing more details about this ambiguous relationship, I briefly outline the concept of escape.

Escape may be characterized as a more sideways or sidestepping move away from power than an oppositional practice directed against power (e.g. as with many other forms of resistance) (e.g. Cohen & Taylor, 1993; Collinson, 1994; Fleming & Spicer, 2003). Collinson (1994) mentions distancing oneself 'either physically and/or symbolically' (p. 25) by hanging out in the toilets in the afternoon, or creating a counter-culture. Fleming and Spicer (2003) describe distancing oneself via cynicism and humour as possible ways of escaping power. Previous studies also indicated the appropriation of time and temporality to escape: for example, the famous 'banana time' (Roy, 1959) to escape monotony, or 'imaginary future selves' (Costas & Grey, 2014) to escape pressures in the present. As this study shows, the nightshift enables escape through allowing employees to appropriate time and temporality in particular ways – they are able to escape into the night, but also feel a need to escape from the night.

While *escaping into the night* and sidestepping daytime pressures, employees can appropriate time and temporality through exploiting the night as a periodically occurring interval of

diminished visibility to managerial scrutiny. Employees usually like the part of escaping into the night and avoiding managerial supervision, even though nightwork is often an involuntary necessity of the job. For many, the more relaxed and peaceful atmosphere, both in terms of relief from the dayshift's pressures and a break from its hustle-and-bustle, is a major benefit of nightwork. At the same time, however, many nightworkers (those whose bodies and minds cannot not tolerate nightwork well) deal with exhaustion and fatigue, which persists beyond the actual nightshift. These extreme experiences lead employees to *escape from the night* and engage in deviant behaviours that can help them to cope physically and mentally. In this sense, employees are appropriating time and temporality to find certain opportunities or 'pockets' of the night (e.g. when the machine is running smoothly and peers are helping out), which allow them to escape and 'subtly shift meanings and understandings' (Thomas & Davies, 2005, p. 687) that justify their behaviour. Sometimes, employees also escape (paradoxically) through consent, i.e. willingly working hard (Sturdy, 1992) to be 'less aware of being tired' (Burawoy, 1979, p. 89). However, they often engage in ambiguous combinations of deviant behaviours and consent. Employees therefore need to somehow escape from the night due to the limitations of their bodies and minds – in cases when employees fell asleep, or 'dozed off a bit', they also escaped through these limitations.

The justification of deviant behaviours based on the hardships of night is even shared by some members of management, who legitimize deviant night behaviours as long as they do not interfere with performance goals. In this study, only the factory manager insisted that deviant behaviours (even when machines were running smoothly) are not 'right', but he also acknowledges that employees probably have some ability to exploit 'loopholes', i.e. they have agency. Night behaviours might even strengthen the norm of tighter daytime rules and norms, precisely because they are limited to the night and thus remind people of how things should actually work during dayshifts.

Although some employees might choose to work in the same manner and intensity as during days (as form of consent), the body and mind have their limits. Nightwork underscores particularly well the notion of human capital as an inseparable unity of labour power and the human individual (Foucault, 2008) with its physical and mental limitations. In the bio-politically contested terrain of night(work), specific regulations and increasing evidence of severe health risks both support employees' evaluations of the nightshift as extreme – and thus also aid in their justification of deviant night behaviours as a way to escape. The sleepy, tired body and exhausted mind yearn for escape from the night. This escape manifests in additional breaks for coffee, reading, and just sitting for a bit while time passes. Even 'nodding off for a while' on a chair or toilet seat, whether intentionally or not, might be based on the sheer corporeal demands due to exhaustion. Nightly escape can mitigate physical and mental exhaustion and, through feelings of freedom and autonomy, function as way to achieve psychological relief.

Conclusions

In this paper, I introduced night in organizations and nightwork as important and relevant topics for organizational research. The paper showed that nightworkers experience the nightshift as a stark contrast to the dayshift and as a deviance from the norm. This both encourages and justifies looser interpretations of daytime rules and, in turn, deviant behaviours and escape. Therefore, the night enables agency in form of deviant behaviours and facilitates escape in particular ways that are different from those which occur during the day. While employees can escape into the night (to avoid management and enjoy a more relaxed workplace atmosphere), they often simultaneously need to escape the extreme hardships that nightwork entails.

The implications of this paper are the following. First, the study points to further research in shiftwork and nightwork as part of the normalization of 24/7 capitalism (Crary, 2014) in society. The process of nightwork becoming normalized appears to inspire public and private employers to try and cut or dodge the extra pay for nightwork (e.g. in the case of NHS junior doctors or contracted service workers).[5] These interests to redefine previously 'atypical' working times as 'normal' ones, however, are at odds with nightworkers' experiences of tiredness, exhaustion, fatigue, social life disruptions, not to mention the increasing medical evidence about the severity of health risks associated with nightwork. Second, an important avenue for further research is the physical/mental experiences of nightworkers and nightwork under extreme conditions (Bloomfield & Dale, 2015; Michel, 2011). This article serves as a first step into studying nightwork as an important topic, but further research is certainly needed to advance our understanding about what is going on in organizations at night and to theorize nightwork in organizational research. And third, the differences between day- and nightwork (that appear regularly at 12-hour intervals) suggest that further investigation of temporality in connection with agency and escape is needed. The study showed that the night renders employee behaviour less visible to management, but there could be other times, phases, or intervals in organizations that influence and/or provide possibilities of escape.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the editors, the anonymous reviewers, as well as Christian Huber, Viktorija Kalonaityte and Peter Fleming for helpful comments on earlier versions of the article.

Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

Although phrases including 'the night' might be interpreted as essentializing night, I use them merely as rhetorical shortcuts to refer to the rather complex set of phenomena we usually call 'night'.

Notes

1. Even in Taylor's (1911) classic study or the Hawthorne light experiments, for example, the night is mentioned only in passing (Izawa, French, & Hedge, 2011).
2. http://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/documents/1978984/6037342/EU-LFS-Methods-and-Definitions-2001.pdf; 'evening work' is done outside 'usual working hours' but before 'usual sleeping hours' [2018-07-11].
3. www.ilo.org/dyn/normlex/en/f?p=NORMLEXPUB:12100:0::NO::P12100_ILO_CODE:C171 [2017-12-11].
4. www.theguardian.com/money/2014/jan/21/working-night-shifts-bad-for-you; https://www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2014/nov/17/night-shift-work-linked-obesity-sleep-calories-research
5. www.theguardian.com/society/2016/may/18/junior-doctors-contract-deal-what-was-agreed; https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/jul/12/revealed-wimbledon-catering-workers-paid-day-rate-for-night-shifts

References

Ackroyd, S., & Thompson, P. (1999). *Organizational misbehaviour*. London: SAGE Publications.

Alvesson, M., & Sköldberg, K. (2009). *Reflexive methodology: New vistas for qualitative research*. London: SAGE Publications.

Aubenas, F. (2011). *The night cleaner*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Barker, J. R. (1993). Tightening the iron cage: Concertive control in self-managing teams. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *38*, 408–437.

Barton, J. (1994). Choosing to work at night: A moderating influence on individual tolerance to shift work. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, *79*, 449–454.

Blask, D. E. (2009). Melatonin, sleep disturbance and cancer risk. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, *13*, 257–264.

Bloomfield, B., & Dale, K. (2015). Fit for work? Redefining 'normal' and 'extreme' through human enhancement technologies. *Organization*, *22*, 552–569.
Burawoy, M. (1979). *Manufacturing consent*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
Cairncross, F. (2002). The death of distance. *RSA Journal*, 40–42.
Cardinal, L. B., Sitkin, S. B., & Long, C. P. (2010). A configurational theory of control. In S. B. Sitkin, L. B. Cardinal, & K. M. Bijlsma-Frankema (Eds.), *Organizational Control* (pp. 51–79). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Cohen, S., & Taylor, L. (1993). *Escape attempts: The theory and practice of resistance to everyday life*. London: Routledge.
Collinson, D. L. (1994). Strategies of resistance: Power, knowledge and subjectivity in the workplace. In J. M. Jermier, D. Knights, & W. R. Nord (Eds.), *Resistance and power in organizations* (pp. 25–68). London: Routledge.
Collinson, D. L., & Ackroyd, S. (2005). Resistance, misbehaviour, and dissent. In S. Ackroyd (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of work and organization* (pp. 305–326): Oxford Handbooks Online.
Coren, S. (1996). *Sleep thieves: An eye-opening exploration into the science and mysteries of sleep*. New York: The Free Press.
Costa, G. (2003). Shift work and occupational medicine: An overview. *Occupational Medicine*, *53*, 83–88.
Costas, J., & Grey, C. (2014). The temporality of power and the power of temporality: Imaginary future selves in professional service firms. *Organization Studies*, *35*, 909–937.
Crary, J. (2014). *24/7 Late capitalism and the ends of sleep*. London: Verso.
De Jong, B. A., Bijlsma-Frankema, K. M., & Cardinal, L. B. (2014). Stronger than the sum of its parts? The performance implications of peer control combinations in teams. *Organization Science*, *25*, 1703–1721.
Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*, 25–32.
Ekirch, R. A. (2006). *At day's close: Night in past times*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.
Feldman, D. C. (1984). The development and enforcement of group norms. *Academy of Management Review*, *9*, 47–53.
Fleming, P., & Spicer, A. (2003). Working at a cynical distance: Implications for power, subjectivity and resistance. *Organization*, *10*(1), 157–179.
Foucault, M. (2008). *The birth of biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*: Springer.
Friedman, A. (1977). Responsible autonomy versus direct control over the labour process. *Capital & Class*, *1*(1), 43–57.
Giddens, A. (1979). *Central problems in social theory: Action, structure, and contradiction in social analysis*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
Gioia, D. A., Corley, K. G., & Hamilton, A. L. (2012). Seeking qualitative rigor in inductive research: Notes on the Gioia methodology. *Organizational Research Methods*, *16*, 15–31.
Glorieux, I., Mestdag, I., & Minnen, J. (2008). The coming of the 24-hour economy? Changing work schedules in Belgium between 1966 and 1999. *Time & Society*, *17*(1), 63–83.
Gupta, A. K., & Govindarajan, V. (2002). Cultivating a global mindset. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *16*(1), 116–126.
Hansen, J. (2001). Increased breast cancer risk among women who work predominantly at night. *Epidemiology*, *12*(1), 74–77.
Haus, E. L., & Smolensky, M. H. (2013). Shift work and cancer risk: Potential mechanistic roles of circadian disruption, light at night, and sleep deprivation. *Sleep Medicine Reviews*, *17*, 273–284.
Heath, T. (1997). The twenty-four hour city concept: A review of initiatives in British cities. *Journal of Urban Design*, *2*(2), 193–204.
Hobbs, D., Hadfield, P., Lister, S., & Winlow, S. (2003). *Bouncers: Violence and governance in the night-time economy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Hood, J. C. (1988). From night to day: Timing and the management of custodial work. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *17*, 96–116.
Hubbard, P. (2017). 24-hour party people. In: *Battle for the high street* (pp. 89–118). London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Izawa, M. R., French, M. D., & Hedge, A. (2011). Shining new light on the Hawthorne illumination experiments. *Human Factors*, *53*, 528–547.

Ju, Y.-E. S., Lucey, B. P., & Holtzman, D. M. (2014). Sleep and Alzheimer disease pathology: A bidirectional relationship. *Nature Reviews Neurology*, *10*, 115–119.
Kalleberg, A. L. (2009). Precarious work, insecure workers: Employment relations in transition. *American Sociological Review*, *74*, 1–22.
Knights, D., & McCabe, D. (2000). 'Ain't misbehavin'? Opportunities for resistance under new forms of 'quality' management. *Sociology*, *34*, 421–436.
Knights, D., & Willmott, H. (2016). *Labour process theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
Knutsson, A. (2003). Health disorders of shift workers. *Occupational Medicine*, *53*, 103–108.
Koslofksy, C. (2011). *Evening's empire: A history of the night in early modern Europe*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Kreitzman, L. (2000). *The 24-hour society*. London: Profile Books.
Loughry, M. L. (2010). Peer control in organizations. In S. B. Sitkin, L. B. Cardinal, & K. M. Bijlsma-Frankema (Eds.), *Organizational control*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
Marx, K. (2008/1867). Machinery and modern industry. In R. J. Antonio (Ed.), *Marx and modernity* (pp. 143–152). Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.
Melbin, M. (1987). *Night as frontier: Colonizing the world after dark*. New York: Macmillan Free Press.
Michel, A. (2011). Transcending socialization: A nine-year ethnography of the body's role in organizational control and knowledge workers' transformation. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *56*, 325–368.
Monaghan, L. F. (2002). Regulating 'unruly' bodies: Work tasks, conflict and violence in Britain's night-time economy. *British Journal of Sociology*, *53*, 403–429.
Negrey, C. (2012). *Work time: Conflict, control, and change*. Cambridge: Polity.
Ouchi, W. G. (1977). The relationship between organizational structure and organizational control. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *22*, 95–113.
Presser, H. B. (2005). *Working in a 24/7 economy: Challenges for American families*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation.
Rajaratnam, S. M., & Arendt, J. (2001). Health in a 24-h society. *The Lancet*, *358*(9286), 999–1005.
Roy, D. (1952). Quota restriction and goldbricking in a machine shop. *American Journal of Sociology*, *57*, 427–442.
Roy, D. (1959). Banana time: Job satisfaction and informal interaction. *Human Organization*, *18*, 158–168.
Schor, J. (2008). *The overworked American: The unexpected decline of leisure*. New York: Basic Books.
Schulz, H., Bes, E., & Jobert, M. (1998). Modelling sleep propensity and sleep disturbances. In K. Meier-Ewert & Õ. Masako (Eds.), *Sleep wake disorders* (pp. 11–26). New York: Plenum Press.
Scott, A. J., Monk, T. H., & Brink, L. L. (1997). Shiftwork as a risk factor for depression: A pilot study. *International Journal of Occupational and Environmental Health*, *3*(2), S2–S9.
Sewell, G. (1998). The discipline of teams: The control of team-based industrial work through electronic and peer surveillance. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, *43*, 397–428.
Sturdy, A. (1992). Clerical consent: 'Shifting' work in the insurance office. In A. Sturdy, D. Knights, & H. Willmott (Eds.), *Skill and consent: Contemporary studies in the labour process* (pp. 115–148). London: Routledge.
Taylor, F. W. (1911). *The principles of scientific management*. New York: Harper.
Thomas, R., & Davies, A. (2005). Theorizing the micro-politics of resistance: New Public Management and managerial identities in the UK public services. *Organization Studies*, *26*, 683–706.
Viswanathan, A. N., Hankinson, S. E., & Schernhammer, E. S. (2007). Night shift work and the risk of endometrial cancer. *Cancer Research*, *67*, 10618–10622.
Warren, D. E. (2003). Constructive and destructive deviance in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, *28*, 622–632.

Author biography

Monika Müller is a Senior Lecturer in organizational research at the Department of Business Administration, Lund University. Her past publications focused on internal branding as normative control, internal branding metaphors, and on identification processes. Her work has been published in *Organization Studies, Organization* and *Journal of Management Inquiry.* Current research interests involve nightwork as well as temporal, spatial, material and corporeal conceptions around work and organizations.

Appendix

Table 1. Informants at the two research sites.

Informants	
Production Factory (53 interviews)	
Production manager	Interview
Health manager	Several informal conversations
Safety manager	Interview + informal conversations
3 Managers	Interviews + informal conversations
10 Setters	Interviews + informal conversations
38 Workers	Interviews
Hospital Laboratory (27 interviews)	
Department manager	Interview + informal conversations
5 Medical doctors	Interviews
21 Biomedical scientists	Interviews + informal conversations