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Occasional Paper

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Everything anytime?

Cities on their Way to Continuous Activity

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For quite a number of years now, the restlessness of modern societies and the conquest and economisation of hitherto scarcely used time areas have become the subject of attention. Just as the surface of the earth was discovered, conquered, surveyed, distributed, and sold, time is progressively being subjugated and filled with activity. The city as a non-stop society, "the city that never sleeps", is a phenomenon and a myth of the 20th century—see New York, Paris, or London.

1. The Issue

Two clearly corresponding trends in the worlds of work and everyday life can currently be identified: the general flexibilization of work (flexibilization of work content, place of work, and working hours, and of employment through limited contracts) and the erosion of collective rhythms. The triggering factors are the adaptation of working and operating hours to the fluctuation of business, expansion trends in operating and opening hours, and the growing international networking of markets and companies. Time patterns are consequently becoming more individual and more differentiated within society, increasing the pressure for the still greater extension of hours in commerce, in the service industry, etc. With every twist of this causal spiral, collective rhythms change, such as the alternation of working and leisure time, of working week and weekend. These processes also have an impact on urban space. Many areas are involved in an almost uninterrupted activity rhythm, for example traffic hubs, spatial agglomerations of IT firms, or business districts. Because of their functions, for instance as "dormitory towns," some areas have tended to preserve their old (alternating) rhythm of activity and rest.

The extension of activity times is to be observed practically everywhere. Firstly, there are companies that operate in the evening, at night and at the weekends—whether in classical shift-work manufacturing or, in more recent times, in service industries like software development—and which therefore need emergency and repair services, catering, and disposal services. Then there are private people whose demand for culture and entertainment, call-a-pizza and banking information is extending farther and farther into the night hours and the weekend. Together, the two areas generate a daily/weekly trend towards 24/7 activity, towards non-stop operation. In the background the police, hospitals, and the fire brigade act as public "stand-by services". Although this broadens the consumer's time options, the producer's (i.e., the employee's) working time situation is deteriorating. Night and weekend work, once specific to industrial production and parts of the public service in the context of the utilities infrastructure, is becoming an increasingly common phenomenon in services. And every employee with "atypical" working hours contributes through the shift in his demand potential to the further extension of supply hours. One and the same individual thus causes and is affected by this extension.

The development towards a leisure society—with lower average weekly and lifetime working hours, unemployment, and the growing number of pensioners—brings a steadily increasing demand for consumption and leisure services. While this demand still focuses on the atypical working times (evenings, weekend), the decline in the number of people employed in normal jobs and the growth in the number of pensioners, of people not in employment, etc., has brought greater demand during the normal working day. Expansion is thus occurring in two directions. Demand is "conquering" the normal working day, and

work is expanding into classical leisure time. Moreover, there is a change in societal values (individualisation) with traditional societal rhythms being superseded by individual time arrangements. The "holiday period" no longer exists—in principal, people can go on holiday at any time. Going to church on Sunday or the factory siren no longer mark the rhythms in cities and villages. Societal rhythms and the process of temporal destructure and detraditionalisation are thus closely related to the dissolution of traditional forms of work.

For municipalities the destructure of social rhythms and the development towards a continuously active society mean that the demands of the public and business are changing. Modified service frequencies, for example, change public transport working times, the deregulation of delivery traffic times reduces residential quality, the city can become divided into different time zones, nature and people lack rest periods like nights and weekends, etc. Night-time economic activity may possibly no longer be restricted to industrial districts (as was still the case with continuous shift systems in the iron & steel and chemical sectors), for the advent of the service society means that the inner districts of major cities can maintain their importance as consumption and cultural centres for local and outside city users—including extended-time uses obeying profitability constraints.

This development thus fundamentally affects individual functions in the urban space, for instance relations between working and housing. Locational competition between cities can also be influenced by differences in the degree of involvement in international networking or how temporal liberalisation is handled—whether positively or negatively. Large cities are particularly affected by the changes, because they are bridgeheads of internationalisation and front-runners in the expansion of time windows in commerce, culture, and services. They are nodal points in international "networking infrastructures" and, at the same time, major markets, which permit or promote temporal specialisation and differentiation. From big cities, this development radiates out to surrounding areas, to middle centres, and, finally, in weakened form, to rural areas (to some extent literally via the media radio, television, and the Internet), which also means that time linkages in the city or region are affected by these supraregional linkages and forms of mutual time colonisation.

2. Methods and Structure of the Study

This study is based primarily on case studies carried out in Berlin, Frankfurt/Main and Vienna. The progress of these cities towards 24-hour societies has been examined. In addition to intensive document analysis, secondary statistical studies and the interpretation of data from rhythm-relevant areas like police, public transport, and power supply, the approach has focussed on qualitative empirical investigation. Some 100 expert interviews were conducted in the areas of local politics and government, in professional associations, science, and industry. The chosen sectors, where particularly marked expansion trends in working and operating hours were expected, were the following: financial services (investment banks, securities trading), more recent producer services (software development, call centres, internationally interlinked research and development), and tourism and commercial services (retail trade, private entertainment industry, public arts management, urban entertainment centres).

Finally, looking at the example of Berlin, the so-called *citadels of incessance* were examined in greater detail, i.e., urban areas that are particularly characterized by extended activity patterns. This can be considered as a preliminary stage of a possible systematic analysis of different time zones in the city. The three areas investigated in Berlin show very great differences in activity patterns and spatial conditions.

The study begins with an analysis of the causes for the extension of times, describing the phenomenon with the aid of secondary statistical studies, and, before turning to individual examination of the case study cities, takes a look beyond the limits of Central Europe to selected world metropolises that enjoy the reputation of being non-stop cities. Following on from the case studies, the consequences of the development of time expansion is examined in different dimensions (economic, social, spatial), and the issues of evaluation and possible control and regulation are discussed, with their vital implications for action to be taken. Three scenarios are then proposed, reflecting different political and societal decisions, decisions about preferred activity patterns and forms of the temporal expansion of activities. These differences have a specific impact on life in the cities. For all scenarios action recommendations are put forward for selected groups of actors.

3. Empirical Findings

Working and Operating Hours in General

In the course of deindustrialisation in recent decades, many technical reasons for shift and night work (for example in the iron & steel industry) have ceased to apply. Tertiarization could thus have been expected to cause a decline in these temporally atypical jobs. The contrary has been the case. In the EU, all forms of work oriented towards time-extension have, on average, slightly increased. In this respect Germany is somewhat below the EU average. Not only have hours extended in formal employment (night, shift, and weekend work) but also through overtime, new flexitime systems, working hour accounts, and the like. However, this expansion is often difficult to record statistically, because precision in recording working hours is tending to decrease in growth industries (e.g., IT or telecommunications).

Because of these developments, standard employment, namely stable, long-term jobs with relatively constant working time distribution, continues to erode. It was primarily characteristic of industrial society and generated stable rhythms, even though it still forms the (shrinking) core of current working society. It remains to be seen whether this development will produce models of work and work organisation that are new from the time point of view (duration of working time and its position in the work cycle). This question is of outstanding importance in view of the acceleration in structural change that has occurred in recent years and the development of the "New Economy". We are possibly at the beginning of a comprehensive and long-term paradigm shift, but perhaps it is only the hype of a pioneering phase, typical for the beginning of innovation cycles.

The Sectors under Study

The globalisation of the *finance industry* is well advanced. Working hours in securities and foreign exchange trading have expanded into the evening.¹ The American exchanges set the pace, and a continuously operating world exchange can be expected, which means a uniform electronic market place. Internationally oriented banks operate with time-zone management ("follow the sun") that passes on trading positions. This also modifies back-office (handling securities and foreign exchange business) working hours. At the local level, the opening hours of bank branches are increasingly adjusting to retail-trade opening times. The pressure to adjust is greatest in shopping centres. In Germany, younger employees are affected to a disproportionate degree because, in the case of new appointments, Saturday counts as a normal working day without bonus entitlement, and for cost reasons the banks will be increasingly using younger people for Saturday work. In investment consulting there is a trend towards the mobile consultant, who is expected to advise clients outside their working hours, and who is accordingly often busy in the evening or at the weekend. In the long term the banks expect customer relations to be automated, which means that private customers, in particular, will (have to) handle their banking business from home (via the Internet, telephone, or fax) or in the remaining highly automated and semi-automatic branches. Many contacts will pass via call centres or only through person-machine dialogue (synchronous and asynchronous communication is offered in parallel).

In *commerce* there was no expansion of outlet opening and business hours during the period under study, but the issue continues to be debated. In all case-study cities it was clear that Saturday afternoon was the main period at issue in the extension of opening hours, since Saturday has developed into a popular shopping day. Any extension in the evening would be practicable at most in 1a locations and shopping centres. Even in neighbourhood centres the present hours have proved quite sufficient.

In *information and communication technology and services*, smaller firms and the self-employed, in particular, are expanding working and contact hours, thus eroding standard employment conditions. The question is whether this is to be seen as a temporary stress in a special development phase of technical innovation (mobile telephony, Internet) or a new style of work. It must therefore be asked whether the expansion trends observed and the dissolution of traditional working rhythms will be lasting phenomena or not. The larger of the firms under study, at any rate, displayed markedly more constant and regulated working time patterns. They have already left the start-up mentality behind them and have emerged from the particularly fierce competition of the establishment phase. It is still too early for a final assessment.

In the *banking industry*, where shift work and staggered times have hitherto played almost no role, the developments described have led to a marked increase in these forms of work. In commerce, the new opening hours of the last expansion round have largely been covered by part-time employees. The trend towards part-time employment and precarious jobs and to some extent the replacement of skilled personnel by semi-skilled people continues,

1 From 2002, the NYSE (New York Stock Exchange) will initiate non-stop trading in 100 to 200 selected, internationally well-known securities like IBM, DaimlerChrysler and Sony (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 23 March 2001).

and has been intensified by the difficult situation in the retail trade (stagnation in sales and profits). In the information and communication sector, the lack of skilled labour is holding back expansion, which is in turn the reason for the predominance of permanent jobs and comparatively good pay, compensated in principle by regular overtime on the part of the scarce experts. At the same time, however, it is apparent that competition induced rationalisation in some firms of this sector does not take the form of reductions in individual working hours but of redundancies. This indicates that, in addition to the presumed lack of skilled labour, there are other causes for the time-extension trends in this industry—that a specific style of work has apparently become established which firms expect of their staff, and which, as far as can be seen, employees do actually accept.

These trends are intensified by the expansion of *private activities* in the evening, due firstly to the expansion and flexibilization of working hours and, secondly, to the far-reaching change in life styles and value attitudes. Observers agreed that the activities of people in the city are distributed throughout the entire evening and the first half of the night, and subside only well after midnight. In the cities under study, public transport night services, especially bus services, are currently being extended. Officially enforced closing times as an element of time regulation are therefore coming under the same pressure as business opening hours in general. Nevertheless, many leisure-time rhythms have remained, people go out more frequently on Friday and Saturday evenings than on the other days of the week. The supplementary demand generated by tourists has only partly influenced rhythms. They intensify demand in the evening mainly in downtown areas. However, tourism is also an argument for extending night transport services and opening hours.² Especially strongly affected by developments as a whole are the catering trade and cultural and leisure facilities. Restaurants and cinemas are relying more and more on semi-skilled part-time labour (students, etc.) to manage the extended times (continuous opening for establishments, afternoon and sometimes morning performances in the big cinema centres, extended opening times in the evening and at night).

The Case-Study Cities

The expansion of activities into the night hours and the weekend towards non-stop action has far-reaching consequences for the social organisation of society, for the economic structure, the environment, and spatial structures. Among the social consequences, the question of common times, social rhythms, and cohesion in society play a special role.

Changes in time structures have varying impact, and they influence spatial structures. An analysis of urban time topography promises to make an important contribution to understanding the city and opens up design potential for spatial-temporal planning. The ecological effects of time extension are ambiguous. On the one hand expansion is accompanied by additional resource consumption, especially energy (lighting, air-conditioning, transport). On the other hand, considerable savings in resources are achieved by substituting time for capital.

2 An important role is played above all by efforts to distribute tourist flows evenly throughout the year.

All three case-study cities display time extension trends in the areas under study. In commerce developments are stagnating, but in the medium term a new round of extension must be expected, focusing especially on Saturday. However, the cities are not on the way to a round-the-clock society in every regard. Expansion is rather in the evening and on Saturday, not so much into the night and Sunday.

This moderate extension through flexibilization and tertiarization affects the overwhelming majority of the population, while non-stop activity as expansion into the night and the complete weekend continues to concern only a minority. There are two forms of extension: through the increase in the number of people doing shift, night, and weekend work, and, especially, through the extension of working and operating hours in existing "normal" jobs. These cities do not yet have a "24/7 society" that is really active *non-stop*, but there are neighbourhoods that come close to continuous activity (a 22/7 activity in Berlin and Viennese inner city areas) and isolated locations with continuous activity (service stations, railway stations). The spatial distribution of activity patterns varies considerably. Everywhere there are places, especially residential areas, that almost completely escape temporal destructure.

The causes of extended hours (business and industrial changes, structural change, international networking of companies or markets, changes in private demand, etc.) are distributed differently from city to city, and thus produce very different constellations. *Frankfurt* is driven by the finance industry, *Berlin* by the leisure and consumption demands of residents and visitors, and to some degree by the New Economy; *Vienna* is following the trend more or less reluctantly and with a certain time lag in development. The differences in mentality between Berlin and Vienna were, incidentally, the subject of urban research projects a hundred years ago, when the two were "perceived as cities radically different in nature". "Berlin stood for civilisation, technology, artificiality, and sobriety, and Vienna for culture, spirituality, sensuality, and warmth of heart".³ Berlin was seen then as an "outpost of the Americanisation of Europe" (ibid.), a title which has since passed to Frankfurt. The differences between Vienna and the two German cities thus appear to have their roots in history.

Overall, each of the cities under study shows a trend towards the expansion of activity patterns. Differences are to be seen particularly in strategy. While the German cities understand this process as a challenge and actively accompany it, Vienna is tending to adapt passively to developments.

4. Conclusions

There is clear empirical evidence of trends towards the temporal expansion of activities. The causes are to be found in the consequences of tertiarization described above. Supply times have, firstly, to extend into hours outside the normal working time window, and, secondly, competition arises for the maximum availability of goods and services. Ultimately, supply times spiral upwards because of the differentiated working hours and the consequently differentiated free time of employees. Less influence is exerted by corporate culture in international enterprises and by global networking as a whole. At present, this

3 Ralf Thies, Wiener Großstadt-Dokumente: Erkundungen in der k.u.k. Monarchie, Berlin 2001 (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin, discussion paper FS II 01-503), p. 3.

aspect of temporal expansion is especially appreciable in the finance industry and in some producer services, as well as in transport. With the growing individualisation of leisure time and the whittling away of the time institution "weekend" through longer retail opening times and other, temporally less restricted services, the city could become a non-stop society, at least in terms of the week and the year.

The motives of business enterprises for the temporal extension of activities are primarily economic rather than functional (maintenance of public order and supplies) or technical (certain manufacturing operations, e.g., iron & steel and chemicals). This means that temporal supply windows are expanded to stimulate or satisfy demand. A moderate expansion through flexibilization and tertiarization affects the majority of the population (in the evening hours and on Saturday), while non-stop activities as extension into the night and the complete weekend (including Sunday) affects only a minority. However, this minority is growing. To some extent the individual works more rarely at the weekend but shares this experience with more and more people. Weekend work is more generally experienced and practised. Women and younger employees are affected to a disproportionate degree by these developments, because it is often part-time employees with temporary or minimum-pay jobs who have to cover the atypical working times. Moreover, other groups of employees and other social classes than in the past are now being confronted by the extension of hours in the service sector. Extended times affect not only employees in certain manufacturing enterprises and in the public service (police, etc.) but also management employees and people in highly skilled jobs.

In addition, a key role in expansion trends is played by consumer wishes, by the demand for supplementary options with regard to working hours, and by habituation to behavioural patterns of extended demand times through the media offerings of radio and television, and more recently the Internet.

In comparing cities around the world, metropolises like New York, Tokyo, or London prove to be continuously active, whereas the German case-study cities display such patterns only to a limited extent; they have not progressed so far on the path to non-stop activity. Networking between cities via international enterprises, transborder cooperation, and international markets has, however, had little direct influence in the three case-study cities on the extension of operating hours and activity patterns, since the time windows of enterprises in the given time zone are taken into account, which means that there is scarcely any mutual stimulus to extend hours, e.g., contact times in service industries. Only the finance industry will in future probably establish global non-stop operation.

Moreover, there are limits to the extension of time. Firstly, work at unusual times generally costs companies more because they have to pay bonuses, which means that the longer hours must be productive from an economic point of view. Secondly, the inertia of time institutions like the weekend and the work-free evening and the role of government regulation should not be underestimated. In this context, the importance of recognisable social rhythms must also be considered, without which the necessary societal synchronisation would be impossible or too complicated. Finally, there is a limit—often exceeded—set by human biorhythms. At night concentration and reflexes are much reduced. It can be demonstrated that the societal cost of a lack of concentration due to overtiredness is extremely high (numerous major disasters of recent decades have oc-

curred at night). However, since these costs are generally not borne by those who cause them, namely enterprises, there is considerable incentive to neglect them systematically.

We are currently in a phase of transition from rather rigid and homogeneous time structures to flexible and heterogeneous structures, whose consequences have at present to be mastered largely by the individual. In our view, only a mix of binding and flexible times can produce appropriate solutions for complex societies. It must, however, be remembered, that the opportunities offered by the flexibilization of working hours and the expansion of business and operating times can only be exploited if a reasonable amount of collective time is ensured, and if the costs of the expansion are systematically taken into account. A totally non-stop society can be had only at the price of social desynchronization and high societal costs.

The debate on what time organisation can establish this balance and what time organisation we want in our society is, however, only just beginning. Political actors at the national level are, at most, discussing retail opening hours, and in some states they are thinking about reliable school care times ("half-day school"). It would, however, be useful to consider the complex time structure of a society as a whole and to reach understanding on how a minimum level of collective time institutions can be maintained. Besides this awareness for the complex interlinkage of time structures, specific compatibility problems need to be resolved. The compatibility of work and family is a particularly vital issue in time organisation, especially when one considers that women are disproportionately affected by atypical working times and activities in sectors with a tendency towards extended hours. The determined development of child-care centres, the widespread introduction of the reliable half-day school, tax relief for personal services are important elements in time-sensitive policy at the national and state levels.

In the long term, the opportunities and risks of time-expansion trends need to be critically assessed. A minimum of collective rhythms must be maintained, the individual compatibility of flexible working hours and reliable social times needs to be promoted, and limits must be set to expansion—without endangering the competitiveness of enterprises and, thus, job security. To establish and to shape this balance between economic success and social sustainability, between differentiating time patterns in industry and the time requirements of social networks is a persistent task for the policy maker.