

**Deutsches Institut für Urbanistik
(German Institute of Urban Affairs)**

Occasional Paper

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Time Structures of the City

Case Study Bremen

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Foreword

This report has been prepared on the initiative of Ulrich Mückenberger, Professor at the College for Economics and Politics and member of the Bremen Prospects Laboratory, and with the financial support of the European further education programme and practical research project EUREXCTER („Excellence territoriale en Europe“).

The expert interviews were conducted between June and September 1998. We would like to thank the following for giving us their valuable time and for the interest they have shown:

Mayor Dr. Henning Scherf, Free Hanseatic City of Bremen

Dr. Peter Beier, Chamber of Salaried Employees, Bremen

Dr. Paul Benteler, Personnel Manager, Stahlwerke Bremen GmbH

Jürgen Coers, Personnel Manager, Daimler-Benz AG, Bremen

Klaus Diesing, Verkehrsverbund Bremen/Niedersachsen GmbH

Dr. Narciss Göbbel, Cultural Affairs Authority, Bremen

Ulrike Hauffe, State Commissioner for Women, Bremen

Martina Heitkötter, Bremen-Vegesack Time Office

Christel Hempe-Wankerl, Senate for Education, Science, the Arts, and Sport, Bremen

Reiner Kammeyer, Bremen-Vegesack District Office

Hermann Krauß, Bremen Chamber of Commerce

Henning Lühr, Senate Commission for Personnel Affairs, Bremen

Holger Münch, Police Headquarters, Bremen

Martin Nußbaum, Bremer Straßenbahn AG

Dr. Heidemarie Rose, Senate for Health, Youth and Social Affairs, Bremen

Heiner Stück, Chamber of Salaried Employees, Bremen

Dr. Günter Warsewa, Managing Director of the Prospects Laboratory Bremen, University of Bremen

1. Introduction

1.1 Issue: Changing Time Structures

„Time“ is one of the formative paradigms of the present. The – apparent – lack of time and its consequent value as a resource shape economic activity and everyday life alike. Beyond all philosophical connotations, time is interesting primarily as a tool for coordinating social procedures. Every society has specific time structures and methods of synchronisation. We set dates and deadlines for ourselves and others, and clocks and calendars are the tools that measure our time discipline. These structures and methods form the time structure or the time order of a society, with which norms and sanctions are associated. The time structures of modern societies are determined by governmental framework regulation (e.g., legislation on working hours, school holidays and university vacations, shop opening hours, prohibition of Sunday and holiday activities), by socio-economic factors (e.g., actual working, operating and opening hours), and the resulting social rhythms, as well as natural rhythms (day and night, seasons of the year, vegetation and reproduction cycles, and biorhythms).

Developed societies are currently experiencing a structural shift from industrial society to a service and knowledge society. From the time perspective, this process takes the form of a change in time structures. Symptoms of this development are the flexibilization of working and operating hours and of working conditions, the increasing complexity of social synchronisation and changes in social rhythms. The share of people with so-called „standard jobs“ is declining, whilst the proportion of nonstandard jobs (night, shift, weekend, part-time work and regular overtime as well as job leasing, temporary or minimum employment and free-lance work) is growing from year to year and spreading to more and more sectors of the economy, especially the service sector.

This development has been triggered by a number of factors:

- *Technological change*, especially in information and communication technologies, as well as in logistics and transport, which have accelerated economic processes in the fields of development, production, and distribution.
- *Globalisation*, which has sharpened competition in international markets and intensified interlinkage between markets and companies, and which has been substantially reinforced by liberalisation in world markets, the end of the East-West conflict, and political integration, e.g., in Europe.
- The increasing importance of the time factor for the economy, which has made *acceleration* and the precise interlocking of operational processes key elements in competitiveness.
- The *individualisation* of corporate work organisation as the „corporate internalisation of time organisation“ triggered by deregulation and the declining impact of collective solutions (i.e., collective bargaining).

Taking the city of Bremen as our example, we examine whether direct or indirect effects or unintended consequences of this change in time structures are to be observed and how such consequences are to be dealt with in terms of time policy.

Despite the polemics about „the leisure park Germany“, despite high unemployment and a drop in mean working lives, the Federal Republic has remained a working society. The economic pace is set by working, operating, and opening hours, which have a particular impact on urban rhythms. Traffic rhythms are determined primarily by commuter traffic, energy consumption in private households and industrial enterprises by the alternation of working or operating time and leisure time; we organise our private schedules around the core times of our occupational life.

1.2 Impacts

In everyday life, the differentiation of working hours leads to a loss of social time. The more flexibly time is handled at work, the less planable and reliable are private periods for family, friends, or social commitments. The more complex the demands for occupational synchronisation become, the more difficult private synchronisation becomes. The system of appointments and deadlines, of time planning as such, therefore has to be carried over into everyday life, too. If this fails or is precluded by incompatible working hours, families, groups, or associations founder. Singles, single parents, and families who can communicate only by cell phone or pin board are symptomatic of a society in which time organisation has become highly complex.

For example families: flexible working hours make it more difficult to react flexibly to unexpected family demands. A child falls ill, lessons are cancelled at school, and holiday time also has to be dealt with by parents. Synchronising family life becomes more and more of an ordeal that often breaks up marriages and relationships. Children in particular suffer from their parents' time constraints. In a recent study by the University of Bielefeld on juvenile delinquency, such desynchronisation of the family was shown to be one of the causes for the growing disintegration of society, and thus for growing violence and crime among young people. „The dismemberment of time makes it into a problem; the concerns of children and young people, their needs and wishes are mainly crammed into the time gaps left over by 'flexibilized' adults. But needs, problems, fears brook no delay, if they are not to be coped with destructively, against the subject and against others“¹.

The ability to handle time rationally, i.e., to „move in time“, to structure processes in the time dimension, is now a criterion of success not only in business but also in organising private life. Time discipline and time planning carry over as key qualifications from the working world to private life. The social diktat of exact timing and permanent time saving, of speed – indeed, of all forms of haste – can be seen as second-order Taylorization that scarcely needs to be imposed from without.

Introducing flexible working hours necessarily means individualising time. Typical urban patterns of activity become less important, rhythms lose their formative function. This smoothing out and increasing flexibility of urban rhythms is clearly apparent in the fields of transport and energy. The more individual travel time becomes, the less suitable mass transit systems of public transportation become. To give one striking example: introduc-

¹ *Wilhelm Heitmeyer*, Die gefährliche Zerstückelung von Raum und Zeit, in: Frankfurter Rundschau, 26th September 1996, p. 18.

tion of the highly flexible „VW Model“ in Wolfsburg with almost 200 working time variants led to a dramatic decline in passengers for local public transport. The number of passholders dropped from 7,000 to 3,000; two dozen bus drivers were retired early or transferred, entire services were discontinued. In the private sphere, this development led to an increase in second and third cars. The desynchronisation of families also leads to an increase in private transport.

1.3 Time Policy

The development towards the highly mobile, time-sensitive, non-stop society of the future is in the first place an urban phenomenon, since the city as a transport and communications hub is the natural focus of social activity. The successful synchronisation of industrial, business, administrative, and social times is a locational factor for the economy; in this respect time structures are part of the urban „infrastructure“. A municipal time organisation is conceivable that could also harmonise the time expectations of participants in the economy with planning schedules. Municipal government moves to synchronise and flexibilize individual time budgets such as office and service hours in coordination with industry and the needs of employees and the public, can make the city a more attractive place in which to live.

Especially in times of worldwide interlinkage through global communication, through global economic cooperation and competition, in times of growing pressure to adapt and of new demands, the specific *time identity* of an urban community should be taken into account. An urban identity emerges and persists not only on the basis of shared space, but also on the basis of shared time, of a shared time-culture and the form it assumes. City government must coordinate urban time and synchronise different activities if it wishes to retain a role in shaping urban space (also, for example, with recurrent festivals and commemorations, exhibitions and conferences).

As we have seen, organising time is becoming more complex. Timing – whether in the world of work or in everyday life – is increasingly important, indeed crucial. The current transition from industrial society – with its mass production and large-scale enterprises manned by a vast workforce working at the same rhythm – to a service and knowledge society, which demands flexible, individual time models, also constitutes a structural change in terms of time. In organising time, far too little account has hitherto been taken of the impact of this trend on the population and the city, on transport and energy, on the environment, and on the options of coming generations. When it comes to regulating working, operating, and opening hours, these aspects deserve far more attention.

These developments provoke time conflicts in society. Just as the externalisation of environmental costs and increasing environmental problems boosted environmental awareness and made „environment“ a policy area, a critical time awareness is developing with the externalising of flexibilization costs in the working world. It is therefore necessary to raise the question of „time“ as a policy area. The emphasis is on strengthening cooperative approaches so that time structuring is not abandoned to the automatism of economic processes or to administrative or governmental intervention („top down“). At the municipal level this would mean recognising time constraints and conflicts and, taking account

of all relevant actors in the economy and society, organising time actively, consciously, and democratically. The guiding principle of such a policy is to harmonise divergent time interests and to maintain or establish an urban time structure that is sustainable from the social and ecological point of view. „Time“ as a new topic and field of action cuts across traditional departmental boundaries and actor constellations, and thus offers an opportunity to rethink policy.

The efforts being undertaken in this field in Bremen are a component of the study. Is the „TIMEs of the CITY“ approach within the framework of the Bremen Prospects Laboratory appropriate for dealing with the time-related structural change we have mentioned? How do the people involved assess the scope for action? Is an urban time-awareness developing in Bremen? In view of this structural change, is time becoming a subject of public debate?

2. Status of Research and Methodology

The developments we have sketched give rise to many problems that have been under observation by urban studies for some time now. On the basis of the time geography of the seventies and the increasing number of time budget studies, the connection between time structures and spatial as well as social organisation has been investigated, especially in Italy and Germany. The German Institute of Urban Affairs has been carrying out studies in this area from some ten years. Recently a project has been completed to examine the nature of time structural change in Bonn, Karlsruhe, Münster, and Wolfsburg, in which options for action were also investigated. The Academy for Spatial Research and Regional Planning (ARL) has made this issue one of the focal areas for research in the coming years. In addition, there are model projects in Bremen, Hamburg, Hanover, Hanau etc. (see also bibliography). Since 1997, the „Times and Quality of the City“ course at the College of Economics and Politics, a German component in the practical research project EU-REXCTER, in which the universities of Paris and Milan are also participating, has been offering students the opportunity to advance their knowledge in this field.

Bremen is the focus of the current analysis. With the „TIMES of the CITY“ approach, which has been practised by municipal government for some time now, and the Time Office established in Bremen-Vegesack – the first of its kind in Germany – the city has assumed something of a pioneering role.

A comprehensive primary survey cannot be financed. Moreover, the relevant data situation is very difficult owing to the relative novelty of the research. For this reason a qualitative approach was appropriate in implementing the project. About twenty focused qualitative interviews with experts from industry and commerce, government and professional associations, and from the cultural and social fields were conducted to complement the limited amount of suitable secondary data available (see also bibliography).

The study addressed the following questions:

- How have time structures developed relative to population groups, residential areas and economic sectors?
- How have urban rhythms changed as a result?
- What social, ecological, and economic consequences has this development brought?
- What options are there for political action at the local, national, and international levels?
- Is the organisational approach „TIMES of the CITY“ suitable for processing time conflicts?
- How are the priority areas Citizens Office, public security, and child care assessed?
- Bremen City and North Bremen have developed independently: are the two areas developing differently because of the unemployment in North Bremen?

3. Structurally Relevant Features

3.1 The World of Work

Due to the difficult structural changes the city-state of Bremen has been experiencing, triggered by the crisis in the shipbuilding industry, employment opportunities deteriorated during the eighties. As a major port, Bremen has lost ground internationally to Rotterdam and nationally to Hamburg. After the job cuts of the seventies (about 16 000 between 1974 and 1980) a further 22 500 jobs were lost between 1980 and 1984. Although some 33 000 new jobs were created by 1992, unemployment fell by only 12 000 over the same period. During the subsequent recession, jobs were again lost at the same rate, especially in manufacturing but also in commerce, in the transport and communications sectors as well as in the maritime industries shipping and harbour operation. Despite favourable objective factors such as low land prices, it is only recently that new industries have been attracted and planning undertaken to any extent.

This has led to a precipitous rise in unemployment. In May 1998 16.4% of the active labour force were out of work (Bremen City: 15.3%). At the end of 1997 no less than 46 951 people were out of work, with 2 029 employed under job-creation schemes. People over the age of 55 and young people were particularly badly hit. In some areas one quarter of people in employment are already working part-time, i.e., the total volume of work is declining. In 1996 the city counted almost 240 000 employees subject to social insurance contributions (population: 549 000), including a disproportionately high percentage of blue-collar workers: 42.3%².

Table 1: Employment structure*

Employees subject to social insurance	
Status: 31 st December 1996	238 614
■ % of part-time employees	14,6
■ % of white-collar workers	57,7
■ % of blue-collar workers	42,3
■ % of employees	
▲ in the secondary sector	32,8
▲ in the tertiary sector	66,9
■ % of highly qualified employees	8,6
Jobless rate	15,4



*Source: Statistics on employees subject to social insurance.


Bremen's *economy* is dominated by trade and transport as well as manufacturing (motor vehicles, steel, maritime technologies, aerospace, food and beverages). There is a lack of

² The city-state of Bremen has a total of 344 977 persons in gainful employment: manufacturing 102 314, commerce, transport, communications 91 543; other entrepreneurial services 79 592, government, private households and non-profit organisations 69 514.

producer services and the growth sectors in manufacturing (e.g., chemicals). There is a marked tendency for enterprises to relocate within and beyond the region, and strong fluctuation in production facilities and employment opportunities³. „Neighbourhood services“, in contrast, are considered a growth sector⁴. Since 1997 there has also been a positive development in manufacturing, especially in motor vehicles, with Daimler-Benz to the fore; 46% of manufacturing turnover – excluding shipbuilding – was earned by the automotive industry.

Table 2: Workplace by size of workforce*

Number of Employees	
≤ 9	53 116
10 ≤ 19	25 619
20 ≤ 49	33 053
50 ≤ 99	33 110
over 100	146 383
Total	291 281



*Source: Workplace census 1987.

With the loss of traditional areas of employment like shipbuilding, companies that typically set the pace in the local economy, like Bremer Vulkan, have lost their formative influence. The pace in Bremen is now set by the parent companies of large concerns (Daimler-Benz => Stuttgart, DASA => Hamburg). The city remains a pace-setter only as a regional centre. The most striking example is the third shift introduced by Daimler-Benz under pressure from headquarters. Decisions on changes in life and traffic rhythms are thus made both in Bremen and elsewhere. The attention of the big concerns is concentrated more on Europe and the world market than on the city.

Bremen is placing greater hopes on call centres as a promising industry, since many companies are relocating their customer services to such facilities. So far, call centres employ 1 300 people in the city, and by 2000 additional centres are expected to bring the number up to 3 000⁵. However, this increases the external dependence of the Bremen economy. Since many call centres operate round the clock, shift work in manufac-

³ An annual gain and loss of 10 000 jobs, thus a fluctuation of over 20 000 jobs per year; this development is apparent in all sectors of industries.

⁴ Services within the so-called „local economy“. „The local economy includes all activities producing goods and services and creating social well-being that to a large extent cover local needs in a limited part of a city (district), or which recruit a significant number of their workforce there.“ (Stadt Essen 1997, p. 32). The promotion of the local economy is understood in essence as an integrated concept that of necessity departs from the „royal way of settling export-oriented key industries and the associated producer services, of necessity because crisis regions have already lost in the competition for attracting industry or can no longer keep up“ (Birkhölzer 1994, p. 12). The concern is therefore to reconstruct economic and social relationships by mobilising local resources, developing human capital, and investing in the local infrastructure.

⁵ A major locational factor valued by companies is the High German diction of employees. In contrast, the establishment of call centres in southern Germany is making only slow progress.

turing is being replaced by shift work in the service sector. New leisure and shopping parks will also have to keep longer hours, too, if they are to be profitable. These trends in the cultural, leisure, and multimedia fields will hasten the development towards a night economy.

Mitte District is characterised by high-quality service jobs, whereas manufacturing dominates in the districts Hemelingen, Neustädt, and Häfen (Zarsteck 1995b, p. 47 f.). Although downtown remains the dominant job location in Bremen, it has suffered considerable losses (ibid., p. 63). Many jobs have been created in surrounding area. Jobs in commerce increased by 54% between 1970 and 1987, in banking and insurance by 90%, and in services (professional and commercial) by 112%. While Bremen City lost 7.7% of jobs over this period (-24 403), the periphery gained 29.8% (+ 32 924).

Commerce shows above-average growth in building and DIY materials, furniture and household goods. Within five years, however, overall retail sales fell by about one fifth (Handelsblatt, 30th April 1997). Large retail outlets are mostly located in southern districts of the city. On weekdays, the share of visitors to the inner city from outside was 30%, and on Saturdays 46%, their main purpose being shopping. Only four to seven percent commute from North Bremen to the centre of town. Shopping behaviour differs on Saturdays: on average, visitors spend more than Bremen residents. Eight percent of customers also work in the city centre (or are engaged in education there). The drain on purchasing power to surrounding areas amounts to DM one billion a year, the whole inner city having a turnover of DM 1.3 billion on about 145 000 square metres. Uncoordinated and uneven use was made of the longer opening hours for retailing that came into force on 1st November 1996. Inner city and suburban shopping centres exploited the extended time far more than local and specialist outlets. „Concerted“ times in the inner city appear to be impossible at present due to a conflict of interest. Time interests differ too greatly within commerce and between the trade association and individual traders. For example, whereas outlets with their own bakery would like to open earlier, clothing shops or jewellers do most business only in the afternoon and evening or on Saturdays. The time windows specific to the goods sold or circle of customers can differ widely.

Extending business hours has also brought about changes in the organisation of work. Low-paid part-time employment, so-called 630-mark jobs, has increased to the detriment of full-time employment. The new hours mean a decline in standard jobs, although this does not apply for traditional department stores and specialist shops in the city centre. Many time windows are problematic for such businesses, since to implement them they would have to introduce shift work, thus reducing the attractiveness of the workplace for their own staff. Longer opening hours on Saturdays have, as in the entire country, been welcomed by the population. In Bremen there are numerous opportunities to open on Sundays, downtown outlets being given special permits.

The *hotel trade* recorded 478 609 arrivals and 933 068 overnight stays (1994) a growth of 37% and 35.2% respectively (1987-1995). The average stay was 1.9 days, and 80.5% of visitors were from within Germany. Nevertheless, the number of visitors to Bremen is lower than the national average. With this in mind, the Senate Department for Building is looking at the time aspects of urban development. For example, the Schlachte, a place to

meet in the centre of the city with numerous restaurants, including many with outdoor facilities, is to be transformed into a pedestrian precinct from Whitsun to October (with restricted service traffic, from 1999: April to October). New is the „discovery of breakfast“ as a meal to be taken in company in public restaurants, which in recent years has led to longer opening hours in many restaurants.

Table 3: Indicators Relevant for Tourism*

Beds 1994	6 513
Arrivals	478 609
Overnight stays	933 068
Average length of stay	1.9
Overnight stays by foreign visitors (4 th quarter 1994)	48 129
	

*Source: State Statistical Offices, District Figures, 1996 editions, Comparative City Statistics.

In view of the need to create new jobs, the Senator for Building shows a particular awareness of the time factor: in a 1998 press release he guaranteed that all incoming applications for building permits would be dealt with within four weeks if the construction estimates exceeded DM five million.

Excursus: Company Survey

Because of their size and consequent impact on rhythms, two Bremen enterprises were chosen for investigation: Daimler-Benz and Stahlwerke Bremen. The development of working and operating times at the two concerns is prototypical for general trends in the differentiation and flexibilization of the time regime in the nineties.

Daimler-Benz, a manufacturing facility with a workforce of 14 000 has strongly modified its working time organisation in recent years. After the works had won the contract for production of the SLK aircraft, production (about 11 000 workers) switched from two to three shift operation and was considerably flexibilized. Operating hours were extended from 90 to 105, although weekends remained free. Group headquarters in Stuttgart had set the time frame, but decisions on implementing it in terms of work organisation were decentralised, that is to say, up to local management.

Since the introduction of three-shift operation was linked to a long weekend every three weeks (end of work after the early shift on Friday, start again for the late shift on Monday), workers were initially more than happy. But the complex free shift system produced heterogeneous groups, which was disliked. Moreover, flexibilization produced greater coordination problems in the private sphere, that is to say strain on partnerships, which had to cope with these discontinuities. On the other hand, flexibilization offered wives, too, the opportunity to work part time during the week, since husbands were now home more often during the working week (night shifts, long weekends). In the everyday routine of the company, however, the new arrangements were welcomed primarily by younger, single workers, by those potentially best able to handle greater flexibility.

In the meanwhile, a measure of flexibilization has been reversed with the reintroduction of shift groups and the fixed shift plan, because the associated increase in the complexity of work organisation had been underestimated. The number of temporary employees, which a few years ago had peaked at over 18%, was also reduced in accordance with an agreement between works management and the works committee to 7.5% from 1999, since such personnel flexibility is practicable only for simple activities. Temporary workers often lack the experience for more complex tasks, the flexibility needed for changing assignments, and the motivation. Thus flexibilizing work organisation does not necessarily lead to the flexibilization of work and workers.

A flexitime system operates for office work, and employees demand greater flexibility. But to avoid (further) splitting the workforce into office staff that dispose freely of their working time and shop-floor workers who do not, the number of flexitime days has been reduced to 18 per year, while 30 hours of overtime can be carried over to the following working month.

Working rhythms in the plant have also changed. Model cycles have become shorter. There used to be a new start-up in production every four to six years with small changes in the interim. This now occurs every year with additional „modification years“ in electronics, that is to say qualitative change, which generally takes place in spring. Such changes cannot be implemented with temporary employees; experienced experts are needed. Because of the changes in spring, considerable overtime is working during these months.

This complex process of adjustment leads to „muddling through“. In the organisational process, life-long learning is the order of the day. Microelectronics sets the pace, and the acceleration of development speeds up changes in the working process. Pressure is also exerted by the market, by „innovation-crazy customers“. This changes the amortisation of investment in the plant. There used to be a long running-in phase and a model life of eight years. Now the running-in phase is no more, production is immediately geared up and runs about two to three years. Thus considerable pressure of time arises at the beginning of the model cycle. There is mutual escalation of model cycles and customer expectations.

Suppliers complain about the pressure this imposes on them, for the greater speed of „just-in-time“ production is passed on to them in full. Considerably more employees than those working directly in the plant are thus affected by the company's changes in working and operating times.

As far as future developments are concerned, shorter planning periods are expected (and thus more rapid changes in the plant), and more weekend work in production. If competitiveness is to be maintained, at least Saturday must become a working day. This means a return to models practised in the early nineties, when operating times were increased by lengthening shifts in the two-shift system to nine hours, introducing a de facto four-day week with variable days off. There is discussion on whether the weekend premium ought not to be converted, and to shift from a 35 hour week to a 28 hour week (including the whole weekend). However, the resulting abolition of working time

rhythms (four variable working days per week) would have profound repercussions for employees' private and family lives. Union opposition is likely to be stiff.

The production logic of an iron and steel works, in this case Stahlwerke Bremen with a workforce of about 5 000, is different. The technical requirement that the blast furnaces must never be allowed to go out, demands, in its impact on the work organisation of the plant, all-shift operation. Per workplace there are five employees, each working 33.5 hours per week in three shifts. Shift begin (6 h, 14 h, 22 h) has remained unchanged for a long time. In this sense the iron and steel industry is a conservative sector.

Since 1994 office staff have been working flexitime, and many employees would like to organise their working hours more freely. As in the case described above, greater privileges for office workers would split the workforce, so that the organisation of working time on the shop-floor and in administration must be tackled together. Since, with the exception of cold rolling and maintenance, the introduction of group work is impossible because of the isolated nature of activities, the development of new working time models is making no progress.

The pressure of time on production is also less great. In the iron and steel industry there is naturally no speed-up in the succession of models. Nor is „just-in-time“ production a factor, since the ideal is to keep production as continuous as possible. If furnaces operate to differing capacities the result is high consumption in materials and wear and tear for the furnaces. Quantities and temperatures must therefore always be kept constant. This is why extensive stocks are held, providing the plant and its customers with a time buffer to allow flexible reaction to fluctuating demand.

But even the apparent continuity of steel making – in contrast to the more visible changes in the motor industry – is subject to the dynamics of change generated by the „third industrial revolution“ qua information and communication technologies. Steelmaking had hitherto depended in large measure on experience. The timing of the production process was essentially in the hands of the workforce. This is why the proportion of temporary employees is relatively low. Workers see this emphasis on human experience as a sort of natural protection against the acceleration of production. However, the more this human experience-based knowledge is transferred to computer-controlled process know-how or programmes, the more workers' feeling is replaced by sensors, the more strongly the process can be placed on a scientific basis and automatised, and the more insignificant will be the frictional resistance of specifically human tempi or the opposition of existing technical personnel. Resistance on the part of the workforce to this depreciation of their experience, their „human capital“, and their loss of status in the working process can, for example, be expressed in the form of absenteeism.


The two enterprises investigated are thus in different postures in the process of changing their working and operating times. Technological developments modify not only the demands made of intellectual flexibility, of learning aptitude with regard to new working processes and speed of reaction towards new tasks, but also the demands made on employees with regard to time flexibility. In many ways, the modern employee must be less set in his ways, more compliant, more adaptable. Family ties and private time demands are a more formidable obstacle. The accustomed monotony of alternating wor-

king and leisure time is replaced by permanent change, demanding of the individual a greater capacity than ever before to organise his or her time.

3.2 Private Life

When the shipyards closed down, Bremen lost not only jobs and technological expertise with a long tradition but also an industry that had shaped its structures. Although Bremerhaven depends more strongly on maritime sectors of the economy, this loss also impacted structures in many districts of Bremen, especially in the North. The sirens, which – like the church-tower clocks – had given an audible rhythm to everyday life in the neighbourhood, have been silenced. The high jobless rate has obscured the alternation of working time and leisure time; it is successively undermining the rhythms of neighbourhood life. The number of people on welfare is also high, about 50 000, which means that some ten percent of the resident population needs support. Often, their rhythms have become disengaged from the activity patterns of people in standard employment. In the inner city and neighbourhoods less hit by unemployment, the everyday rhythms of day and night, working week and weekend, including the „summer recess“ remain relatively constant.

Table 4: Residents, Age Structure, Foreigners*

Residents 1996	548 826
% under 15	13,6
% over 65	17,7
% foreigners	12,7
	

*Source: Statistisches Landesamt Bremen, Statistisches Jahrbuch 1997 (Bremen State Statistical Office, Statistical Yearbook 1997), Bremen 1998.

Between 1985 and 1996 the *population* fell by about 30 000. Overall, the balance of migration with surrounding areas has been negative since the sixties. Like other cities, Bremen has to combat the problem of suburbanisation. The drop in population that occurred in the whole region in the early eighties had economic causes, but it was compensated by inward migration during the early nineties, principally from the former East Germany and eastern Europe. Looking at inward and outward migration from 1978 to 1990, it is striking that losses were greatest in the age group 25 to 45. Especially in city-periphery migration, the departure of young wage and salary earners and their children constitute three quarters of all outward migration, so that the average age of the core city population is rising. Between 1978 and 1990 a total of 227 451 people moved away and 201 749 arrived. In other words, almost 40% of Bremen's population has been „substituted“ merely by migration (cf. Bahrenberg/Priebs 1995, p. 7).

As far as the *housing situation* is concerned, Bremen has a reputation for being the „city of single-family housing and duplexes“. These types of housing constitute 73% of dwellings, giving Bremen the highest proportion of single-family and duplex housing of all major German cities (Nowak 1995, p. 7). The home-ownership rate is 31.9% (compared with 17.3% in Hamburg and 11% in West Berlin). It is to be assumed that, because of this

high proportion, leisure time will relatively frequently be spent at home and in the garden. Despite the fall in population, the number of households has increased, rising between 1970 and 1996 from 230 000 to 282 000. In keeping with the nationwide trend, the size of households has thus declined. 40,4% of households of the self-employed are single-person households (1987). The figure for people in the public service and in dependent employment is 45.6%, and for blue-collar worker households 31%. It thus appears that blue-collar workers tend more than other groups to live in traditional family structures (ibid., p. 17). As for rent levels, the high-price segment is concentrated in the centre of the city, especially in the Östliche Vorstadt and Ostertor⁶. In these areas gentrification has accompanied the displacement of traditional population groups.

It can be assumed that the flexibilization of working and operating hours has led to increased complexity in time planning for families, in questions of the household, school, and leisure. The more complex the lifestyle, the greater will be the burden of synchronisation. If both partners work, extensive organisational structures have to be put in place. The „patchwork day“ of family members becomes increasingly dense, and in private life, too, the mad rush from one appointment to the next becomes a daily experience. Even children come to consider being pressed for time to be an expression of their own importance. Important family pace-setters are not only the parents' employment, but also school hours and the opening hours of child-care facilities.

Leisure: Bremen is an active city offering a wide range of facilities. The 430 clubs and associations in 1996 had 189 548 members (including 340 sports clubs with about 152 000 members). Organised activities represent 28% (+ about 30% non-organised sport such as jogging, etc.). The media top the list of leisure activities, and the home is the most important place for spending leisure time. Then come sport outside the home (including hiking) and the arts/events. Residents' radius of action – and thus of leisure traffic – is increasing. Spatial ties, that is neighbourhood ties, are weakening, spatially flexible and individual offers are becoming more attractive. A spatial separation is becoming apparent in leisure activities, which will encourage greater leisure traffic (*Der Senator für Bau, Verkehr und Stadtentwicklung* 1998, p. 107ff.). Projects like „Space Park“ (site of the former AG Weser) and „Ocean Park“ (Bremerhaven) will intensify this trend still further.

With the founding of the university in the early seventies, the traditional, target-group related understanding of leisure gradually changed. The arts in particular flourished, and the demand for theatre, concerts, exhibitions, etc., rose. In other ways, too, the university was a source of stimulus. Since one focal area was teacher training, and unemployment among teachers was very high in the eighties, jobless graduates embarked on a multitude of projects. Bremen is a „project city“ with a higher proportion than other cities. Thus a culture of experiments arose, of experimental action, and it is against this background that the „TIMES of the CITY“ project is to be seen.

⁶ The demographic structure has also changed in this area: the share of the over-sixties in the Östliche Vorstadt dropped from 26.9% to 22.8% between 1968 and 1987, in Ostertor from 27.1% to 17.7% (in Bremen as a whole the figure rose from 20.9% to 23.4%), while the share of the 18 to 45 age group rose from 48.8% (östliche Vorstadt) and from 39.6% to 55.4% (Ostertor) (Bremen as a whole: 36.6% to 39.8%; cf. Nowak 1995, p. 33).

The times offered by clubs, associations and projects are themselves part of this experimentation. For example, there are theatre performances for early risers. While in many cities commercial leisure facilities such as fitness studios colonise the „unclassical“ times beyond evenings and weekends, in Bremen it is the self-organised leisure amenity providers that close the time gaps. The major public facilities like museums and theatres have retained their accustomed times. An almost unbroken range of sporting, educational, and cultural facilities has thus come into being, which has developed of its own accord—in other words, out of the city. There is still a little less on offer on Mondays (public institutions being closed), but Saturday and Sunday now have hardly more to offer than other days. Only the summer recess still exists, but here, too, changes are expected from the „Bremen Arts Summer“ on the occasion of the EXPO 2000, a move towards permanently filling the gap between theatre and concert seasons. The relatively „most popular“ times for events, despite all trends towards approximation, continue to be late Saturday and Sunday mornings and early Saturday afternoon. To coordinate this range of events, a cultural management company is shortly to be set up. Such a public time institute would seek to increase the complementarity of events and offers and help avoid overlap, which makes it more difficult for audiences to decide or leads to „ghost events“.

In terms of age groups, the experience of time is drifting apart. Young people go out later and later, often only after ten in the evening. This also impacts demand from the time point of view. The public transport youth commissioner is consulting with young people to discover what is needed to cope with this shift in mobility timing. The seasons of the year also have an impact. Older people feel insecure on winter evenings and are reluctant to leave their homes. The timing of events has to some extent reacted to this pattern, for example with early starting times or matinee performances.

3.3 Urban Rhythms⁷

These accounts already permit some conclusions about local rhythms. What actors, processes, or norms determine how urban time is structured? Have these structures changed? In what way, to what extent, and how rapidly have they changed? And what scope does local government have to intervene? Are they determined mainly by forces within the city or by external factors?

First experience and observations permit urban neighbourhoods with differing rhythms to be distinguished. Whereas the traditional working-class districts in North Bremen begin and end the day early, life in the student and academic Ostertor district is more or less staggered. The inner city has different activity rhythms than the suburbs. The evening and weekend are included in activities, while the suburbs experience the proverbial suburban peace and quiet over the weekend.


The disproportionate increase in the number of people on welfare is also reflected in the geographical distribution of poverty. On the one hand the number of neighbourhoods

⁷ Urban rhythms are to be understood as the phenomenological forms of collective time use patterns in their impact on urban space and population, which manifest themselves as movement or consumption patterns (e.g., rhythms of traffic and power use), as a factor influencing individual opportunity structures and social synchronisation in quite general terms.

strongly affected by poverty has increased, which means that new poor neighbourhoods have developed, and on the other poverty in the neighbourhoods already affected has become more entrenched – less through the outmigration of sections of the population than by a high rate of increase in welfare recipients (Farwick 1996, p. 26). The areas particularly hard hit are Gröpelingen, Neustadt, and Osterholz; above-average figures are also reported for Blumenthal and Vegesack in the North and Walle, Woltmershausen, Mitte, Huchting and Vahr.

The impact students have on urban rhythms (with their possibly staggered activity rhythms) is not strong. The number of students is decreasing slightly. Bremen is not a classical university city and the university is not a pace-setter. Since the campus is outside the city, traffic is concentrated on a few streets and bus routes. Moreover, because the starting and finishing times of daytime student activities vary, there is no perceptible rush hour, and traffic is more evenly spread over time.

Table 5: Student Nos. and Student/Resident Ratios*

Students	
■ Winter semester 1993/1994	27 039
■ Winter semester 1995/1996	26 369
■ Winter semester 1996/1997	28 895
■ Winter semester 1997/1998	25 786
Ratio of students to residents ¹	
■ Winter semester 1993/1994	4.9
■ Winter semester 1995/1996	4.8
■ Winter semester 1996/1997	5.2
■ Winter semester 1997/1998	4.7
	

1 %; as per 31 December of each year.

*Source: Statistisches Landesamt Bremen, Bremen in Zahlen (Bremen State Statistical Office, Bremen in Figures), Bremen o.J.

In neighbourhoods with an above-average number of foreigners⁸, that is to say Gröpelingen, Blumenthal, Osterfeuerberg, Hemelingen, and especially the ports (657 of 950 residents there are foreigners), no independent rhythm can be discerned. Because of the high proportion of people (German and foreign) on welfare, urban rhythms are more likely to be destructured.


Transport: The most frequent means of transport is motorised private transport (41.9%). The bicycle comes next (21.5%), pedestrian traffic (19.8%), and public transport (16.8%). Travel purposes are shopping (36%), leisure and other (27%), work (22%), and education/training (8%)⁹. As a result of suburbanisation and the associated outmigration

⁸ The average is 12.4%.

⁹ Cf. Der Senator für Bau, Verkehr und Stadtentwicklung 1998, p. 91.

of people in gainful employment, the number of work commuters from surrounding areas rose from 42 000 (1970) to 66 000 (1987), while the number of outward commuters from Bremen to surrounding areas increased from 6 000 to 16 000. The number of inner-city work commuters, in contrast, dropped from 204 000 to 195 000. Overall, the number commuters in Bremen increased by about 25 000, placing additional strain on roads in and out of the city (Bahrenberg/Priebs 1995, p. 21). Public transport commuting distances along freeway axes are shorter than along railway axes, since the attractiveness of the transportation mode naturally depends on the actual or supposed trip duration. In the West the catchment area – in relation to public transport – stretches 20 kilometres (Delmenhorst), in the East Verden is the boundary, in the North the boundary is between 20 and 30 kilometres out, but in the South between 50 and 60 kilometres.

Table 6: Commuting*

Commuters	
■ 1987	85 547
■ 1995	91 695
■ 1996	93 588
Proportion of inward commuters ²	
■ Active population 1987	38,4
■ Employees 1995	37,5
■ Employees 1996	38,9
	

1 Census, As per 30 June of each year.

2 in %.

*Sources: Bundesanstalt für Arbeit, Volkszählung 1987 (Federal Employment Agency, National Census 1987); Municipal Data 1995 and 1996, Employees subject to social insurance.

Commuter traffic still experiences the classical working-day rush-hours at eight in the morning and between five and six in the evening. Because many public authorities close early on Fridays, Friday afternoon traffic is stretched over a longer period. Owing to unchanged school times, educational traffic still has its classical rush-hours. If one compares the daily passenger density diagrams of two traffic surveys (1988, 1994/95), however, a reduction is apparent between five and eight in the morning and an increase between nine and ten, which can be attributed to the introduction of flexitime models. At the same time, the traffic peak from seven to eight in the morning conspicuously levels off, as it does between three and six in the afternoon, which means that rush-hour traffic jams are gradually losing their impact on the city. The introduction of new shopping hours will be contributing to this development. Since about a third of trips on public transport are for shopping purposes, extension of shop opening times has corrected the distorted pattern of total passenger traffic. Working time flexibilization, which has led to the (in principle welcome) correction of distortions in traffic patterns, has also reduced group size and thus load. It is presumed that the introduction of flexitime by the Stahl-

werke Bremen (formerly Klöckner) has reduced total passenger traffic and/or made private transport more attractive.

Figure 1: Traffic Survey



*Sources: Traffic Survey 1988 (Schlegel/Spiekermann); Traffic Survey 1994/1995 (Gesellschaft für Verkehrsberatung und Systemplanung mbH).

Traffic has increased particularly in the evenings from seven onwards. Saturday morning traffic is hardly less than on other working days. Sunday shows the lowest figures. The peak demand on Thursday evening, caused by extended shop opening hours between 1988 and 1996, has levelled off again. However, passenger levels in public transport are still higher from Monday to Friday than on weekends. Looked at over the year, total passenger traffic fluctuates. Whereas the figures for April, May, and October are average, the figures for the summer months (June to September) are about 30% lower, owing to holidays and weather, and in winter (November to March) the figure is about 30% higher. Because of Christmas shopping and the so-called „long Saturdays“, the December figures are still higher.

The activity frame is thus growing as a whole, rhythms are stabilising: „The day has become longer in Bremen.“ This stabilisation, for example the levelling off of low demand in the early afternoon, concerns the period between six in the morning and ten at night. Transport services reacted to this development by spreading the frequency of services more evenly over the day. In reaction to the new shopping hours, the „system interval“ (7.5 minutes) was extended until 7.30 p.m. (begin 6.30 a.m.) and the evening interval was shortened in the following period (from 20 to 15 minutes until 10 p.m.). In 1990 night bus services were introduced, which even had to be extended because of high demand, especially heavy on Friday and Saturday nights. In this respect public

transport services are pace-setters. The less frequent services are – at night buses pass once an hour – the more pronounced the pace-setting function. The more frequent services are, the less significant the waiting period becomes.

With the aid of repeated surveys, the transport utility Bremer Straßenbahn AG (BSAG) tries to orient its services more strongly on the time structures and demand behaviour of passengers. Passengers show high time sensitivity, often manifested in the form of increased impatience. Midday use of public transport is decreasing, with fewer people going home to lunch, which suggests a certain increase in work density (changes in break arrangements, greater supervision). For customers and shop employees who live in outlying areas, the new opening times are a problem, since many places are no longer served after seven in the evening.

Bremen is a polycentric city with an inner city as core of the metropolitan area, Vegesack as central place in North Bremen and twelve subcentres. The metropolitan area stretches in a more than 40-kilometre-long ribbon development along the river Weser with further axes towards the West (Delmenhorst) and East. The port area is particularly strongly affected by structural change, and is to be revitalised after rezoning. In the port of Vegesack, on the site of the former Lürssen shipyard, 35 000 square metres are being devoted to a „leisure, shopping and service centre“ („Haven Höövt“), which will enhance centrality and independence from Bremen City as far as leisure services and thus leisure traffic is concerned („Weser development axis“). The centre will include not only a department store and shops but also a cinema, a bowling alley, and a discotheque. This also affects activity rhythms in the district, since there is more on offer in the evening and at weekends¹⁰. With growing leisure time, additional consumption and leisure opportunities like „Haven Höövt“ in Bremen-Nord or the „Space Park“ in Bremen-Stadt (and the „Ocean Park“ in Bremerhaven), because they attract local residents and people from farther afield, can, on average, contribute to the continuousness of activity rhythms.

All in all, however, there have been no drastic changes in time structures. As in other cities, the individualisation of working time through flexitime systems and the decline of normal employment in favour of part-time and temporary work, as well as the increase in insecure jobs has meant that urban rhythms have tended to blur. Demographic data and employment structures permit no conclusions on the potential for time-related dynamics in the city. The proportion of students in Bremen is also at the level of comparable places. The activity frame of the city has expanded, growing exclusion from gainful employment – evidenced by the rise in welfare recipients – has, however, led to visible changes only in the hardest hit districts. Since perceptible breaches in the overall development of deindustrialisation and tertiarisation are lacking¹¹, awareness of time structures and time organisation remains „subcutaneous“, tending rather to manifest itself in specific events like extended shopping hours or other time patterns that affect everyday opportunity structures¹². Finally, they are „stealthy changes“, woven into the e-

¹⁰ Since Bremen-Vegesack has no cinema, the „Haven Höövt“ will not only enliven the banks of the Weser in the evenings but also reduce leisure traffic into the city centre.

¹¹ Such a breach occurred, for instance, with the introduction of the four-day week and the massive flexibilization of working hours in Wolfsburg in 1994, leading to perceptible, identifiable effects on social relations and urban rhythms (cf. Eberling/Henckel 1998).

¹² Opportunity structure is the (time) structure of service offers, leisure offers, etc.

veryday rhythm of the city without provoking reflection about the development of time structures or the conditions for their modification.

4. TIMEs of the CITY

The Bremen Prospects Laboratory, set up in 1991 on the initiative of Mayor Henning Scherf and staffed by experts from the Senate departments and academics, is concerned with long-term urban development. In this context the FORUM TIMEs of the CITY was set up with the aim of permanently improving Bremen's time structures, specifically the opening times of public and private service providers. The members of the forum are the Bremen Equality Office (Bremische Gleichstellungsstelle), public transport (BSAG), the university, professional associations, and the Protestant Church. The forum is thus well entrenched in the city as an urban development approach, and, with the mayor's commitment to the Prospects Laboratory, at a high level. The „time-conscious city“ is one of the municipal government's guiding visions for the development of the city.

There are three focal areas – child care, administrative reform („Citizens' Office 2000“), and public security.

- Child care: the differing and varying school hours present many parents – especially working parents – with coordination problems. Cancelled classes, school holidays, and the sudden illness of a child repeatedly lead to conflict between occupational and family obligations. For this reason it is important to improve the reliability of child-care hours.
- Citizens' Office: the decentralisation of administration and the creation of offices close to the citizen on the basis of existing district authorities not only improve work organisation within the public service. Being an urban development approach, the project also pursues other goals, such as mixed use zoning and „short routes in the city“. Citizens' offices help to avoid journeys and travel time, waiting times are shortened by extending consulting hours. This extension of the time window diminishes the pace-setting function of public authority office hours, and the citizen has more time to deal with official business.
- Public security: a subjective sense of security depends on the time of day and use rhythms, especially in the city centre. Low-use levels in the evening or after the shops close increase unease in the city, particularly among women. A mixture of uses with regard to time can be an urban development policy approach towards eliminating this correlation. Moreover, ascertaining the rhythm of work volume in police services permits manning levels to be better adapted to the flow of work.

Hearings are regularly held on these issues, in which citizens can bring their interests and suggestions to bear. On 1st October 1997 – in the context of the administrative modernisation project „Citizens' Office 2000“ – a „Time Office“ was opened on the premises of the Vegesack (North Bremen) district authority, which has the task of implementing the guiding vision and organisational approach in an urban district in concrete terms. The Time Office is seen as a civil society mediation agency on the spot that seeks to coordinate the time interests of the public with the time windows of the services provided by public authorities, commerce, public transport, etc. The project is modelled on approaches to local government time organisation in Italy, where, under

the heading „Tempi della città“, mediation processes between the public and local government have already been initiated on such issues in about 40 larger towns and cities. On the occasion of an event organised by the Bremen Prospects Laboratory on 1st October 1992 on the subject „Time in the City“, an exchange of views took place between representatives of the Italian project and members of the government and administration, academics, and trade unionists, which provided the initial impulse for addressing time-related issues. Bremen, which sees itself as an experimental area for new ideas, seemed to be the right place for investigating questions of community time organisation.

Closer cooperation is also planned with public transport authorities in coordinating urban activity rhythms and service frequencies, with the Church in preventing the development of a non-stop society, with the Equality Office in resolving time problems specific to women, with the urban development authorities and the Agenda 21 project on the issue of „sustainable urban development“, e.g., mixed-use zoning from the time point of view. The attractiveness of the city centre – for both the „resident tourist“ from the metropolitan area and visitors from elsewhere – can certainly be enhanced by time coordination or interlinkage of culture, sport, commerce and the restaurant trade.

4.1 Reliable Child Care

Working parents, especially single parents, face the difficult task of reconciling occupational and family demands on their time. Child care services are a problem as far as both extent and time are concerned. Although the three to six age group has a legal right to child care in the form of access to a kindergarten, and compulsory schooling takes up where this service ends, there are nevertheless difficulties with the daily hours of child-care offered and the reliability of the service. Pre-school child care until twelve noon puts even parents who work part-time under pressure. Free hours during the school day and school holidays demand skilful improvisation on the part of parents or staunch relatives or neighbours who can step into the breach.

Especially full-day or at least half-day schooling would substantially ease parents' time organisation problems and allow everyday family life to be more strongly structured. According to a survey conducted by the Senate Department for Education, Science, the Arts and Sport in 1996¹³, 53% of parents wanted an open full-day school, that is to say, a school with voluntary participation in afternoon activities. 37% wanted a complete half-day school, that is a school with set starting and finishing times. 56% favoured combining school and day centre to provide integrated child-care services. The figures for single parents were significantly higher: 78% also wanted a lunch service and 83% afternoon care. The major reason advanced for these demands was that the parent(s) worked, stated by 65% of all parents. Queries addressed to the Women's Commissioner also frequently involve problems of reconciling work and family.

Surveys in neighbouring Lower Saxony came to similar conclusions. Parents wanted greater capacity in day centres and more differentiated child-care facilities to enable them to cope with bottlenecks at short notice and flexibly. Day care for children under the age of three is also part of this complex. Bremen provides day care for 1 340 children

¹³ Der Präsident des Senats und der Universität Bremen 1997, p. 33.

out of a total of 14 839 in this age group (as per 1st January 1997), a rate of nine percent (Der Senator für Frauen, Gesundheit, Jugend, Soziales und Umweltschutz 1997, p. 6). With the individualisation of working time, it is becoming more difficult for parents and services to coordinate time schedules. Outside the 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. time window, however, there is no demand worth mentioning. These periods are coped with privately. This is also shown by the fact that commercial child-care structures, e.g., baby sitting services, have not developed.

For three to six year-olds, about a third of child-care facilities offer the classical half-day care from 8 a.m. to noon (i.e., four hours), one third extend to 2 p.m., (i.e., six hours plus early and late service, with a half-hour buffer period before and after), and one third are day nurseries (i.e., eight hours). The legal right to a place in a kindergarten with four hours' supervision has led to an expansion of facilities in this area. At the same time, however, the demand for child-care services beyond these four hours is growing. Day nurseries have not expanded their capacities, but noon-time care has increased to a certain extent.

There are two kindergartens in a hospital and at the airport (jointly financed by DASA) that deviate from the usual hours, but they open at eight in the morning, offering a so-called „early service“ for children brought a little earlier. Despite the flexibilization of parents' working time and the resulting differences in the need for child care, the facilities also have to set fixed hours, because they not only look after children but are also educational institutions. A reliable timetable ensures continuity of reference individuals for the child, whether they be staff or playmates. Social behaviour is more difficult to learn in varying contexts, for instance in supplementary play groups. Although child minders can complement child-care services, they are generally less well trained and cannot replace group education.

Since 1990 the school system has provided so-called child-care schools, which offer a complementary service with child-care over the midday period. In 1996, ten percent of Bremen primary schools were child-care schools, with 20% of the children benefiting from the special service. More schools are to be included. They are selected not only by educational but also by social criteria. Especially schools in North Bremen neighbourhoods with social problems have been fostered in this way. Besides regular meals for children from „difficult backgrounds“, the emphasis is on a steady rhythm of instruction, relaxation, and play phases. Teaching hours and thus teaching staff have been increased. In these schools, grades 1 and 2 have lessons from 8 to 12 a.m., grades 3 and 4 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. As a rule, there are no free hours at the beginning or end of the school day.

Another approach towards providing relief for parents is to combine school and day centre. In a pilot scheme running from September 1998, day centre staff spend part of their working time (ten hours per week) in school. The full half-day school is to be introduced throughout the city in the long term, to begin with until noon, later with midday care. During the holidays, however, parents have to rely on the day centres. In upper secondary school, there is an open all-day service with lunch in 7 of 35 school centres. These schools are also beginning to offer services at the beginning and end of the holidays. With the exception of the Christmas holidays, good use has been made of

these services, but numbers are limited, as no additional staff hours are available for this measure. In June and July 1998 there were „open days“ in schools interested in the Prospects Laboratory time project.

On 18th June 1996 a hearing was organised on the overall child-care problem, which met with a great deal of interest among those with a professional interest in the subject. More or less all interests were represented. Government, the teachers, and the parents sent representatives – only the school children as the direct „customers“ of the „service provider school“ were absent. The discussion addressed the time problems of working parents, and also the fundamental question of the form of time organisation; the educational concept of time in the school, which defines learning phases as rigid 45 or 90 minute periods reduces human needs to five minute breaks. It became clear that the participation of parents, for example in midday child-care, was limited as to time. Since the lack of funds prevented child-care services being expanded in all parts of the city, there was a conflict of aims: should strategies be developed for social problem areas or for a reduced general service for everyone?

In view of changing employment behaviour among mothers, which has to do with overall changes in the way women see themselves and their social role and how they are perceived, but also with the frequent disintegration of families (single parents, disappearance of the three-generation household) and the related child-care problems, help has to be provided in the form of reliable and extended child-care times. The school is particularly suitable as a field of action for local government time organisation, since it constitutes a societal interface. Compulsory schooling brings children from all social strata together in one place, so that in principle all profit from improved child-care.

Linking education and leisure in the school, for instance with afternoon sporting and cultural events, would also obviate many trip sequences and avoid putting children and parents under further everyday pressure of time. This naturally involves promoting schools and child-care facilities from mere places of learning to life spaces. Expanding services or combining school and day centre would, incidentally, also counteract the waste of time and spatial resources through more intensive use. It is especially necessary to involve parents, in other words to create social networks. However, the stability of such networks over time is often weak. When the children reach school age, ties within groups dissolve. However, there are also constraints on the time flexibilization of facilities, such as educational demands, the legal setting, or staff wage agreements.

The more individual parents' time problems are, the more difficult it is to solve them within the formalised context of public child care. If these difficulties are not to be abandoned to the uncertainties of a commercialised child-care market, self-help is indispensable. However, to create social networks, e.g., neighbourhood parent-child groups, the local authorities have to provide the conditions and support, for instance premises, physical resources, public playgrounds or sporting amenities. Working mothers in particular will otherwise suffer from the growing complexity of time organisation in the working world and in private life.

4.2 Public Security

Because of the particular nature of their functions, the police service, along with the fire service and hospitals, are among the public services where time does not at first sight seem open to debate. Public security must be safeguarded round the clock; members of the force cannot avoid shift work or night and weekend work. Work flows are difficult to plan in a police station and, as we have seen, social rhythms are blurring. The gap also seems to be widening between the subjective sense of security and the objective security situation – whether because of a lack of social cohesion, perceived or actual alienation through socio-cultural changes (migration) or technological developments (information and communication technology), or because of the urban dweller's growing anonymity and isolation.

Nevertheless, it should be considered whether flexibilizing work allocation and basing work organisation – despite the unpredictability of events – on observable work flow rhythms would not make it possible to reduce particularly stressful working hours. There can be no question of abandoning the principle of continuous security and responsiveness; but supply and demand should be meaningfully linked. What is the product „security“, when is demand particularly high, and among whom? Is it really useful to man all shifts at the same level, or are there possibilities within shift planning to adjust working time patterns to activity patterns? If so, what activity patterns in police work can be planned, and what imponderables play a role?

Figure 2: Traffic accidents*



*Source: Statistische Monatsberichte Bremen (Monthly Statistical Reports Bremen), No. 6/7, 1998, p. 142.

Of course time plays a role in police work. First there is a link between the time of day – and thus also of specifically urban activity patterns and light/lighting – and security. The more alone a person is and the gloomier his surroundings are, the greater will be his subjective sense of insecurity and fear. Second, there is a link between security and/or the sense of security and the speed of police reaction. The longer a patrol car takes to arrive on the scene of an actual or alleged crime, the greater will be the fear of the victims and the smaller the chance of apprehending the supposed criminals. According to

an internal police study, however, many members of the public see the greatest deficiency in police work as being precisely in these areas of „public presence“ and „speed“¹⁴.

Moreover, especially in criminal police or task force operations, activities are determined by the time profiles of the offenders or the offence. Officers dealing with cases of economic crime can take their orientation from the office hours of the firms under investigation, whereas operations to do with organised prostitution typically take place in the evening or at night. Activities of the homicide squad are determined by current cases, which cannot be investigated within the context of regular shift work.

A pilot project was carried out in Bremen in 1996 and 1997. The goal was to bring police work closer to the public, and above all to strengthen the public presence of the police. From 1999 onwards, the tested concepts are to be implemented throughout the city-state.

Greater public awareness has been taken into account for some time now, as in other cities, by deploying „contact area officers“, policemen with a regular beat. This concept now includes patrols in the evening hours and on Saturdays. A stronger presence in schools also heightens awareness of the work being done by the police force. Patrolmen also distribute leaflets in their areas. In addition to greater visibility, the work done by officers in the neighbourhood is being increased. For example, burglary or mugging victims are taken care of, and crime prevention is being improved by advising the public. The officer on the beat thus gives the public the impression that he can provide fast, on-the-spot assistance, and that he can always be approached personally. According to a survey in Gröppelingen, one of the three pilot stations in West Bremen, 40% of respondents knew „their“ contact area officer, whereas only 17% did in other areas.

On the initiative of the police, prevention councils have been set up in city districts to provide public feedback on security problems and liaise with the police. The emphasis should be not only on the dialogue between the public and the police but also on developing common goals. So far, however, this cooperation has proved difficult. Complaints about conditions in problem neighbourhoods occasioned by specific circumstances tend to dominate. New forms of cooperation and joint responsibility for the quality of life in the neighbourhood have yet to develop.

Besides improving links between the public and the authorities, administrative reform aims to upgrade interlinkage among authorities and between police headquarters and police stations. To deal adequately with specific problems in police districts, working time organisation is now decentralised. In the pilot stations, rules are no longer laid down for time organisation. Only the statutory framework of ten working hours per day or 60 hours per week sets limits to the assignment of contact area officers.

Another pilot police station in Bremerhaven has gone still further. Group work has been introduced and the shift schedule has been replaced by a requirement plan. This change was in connection with the goal of enhancing security awareness by setting subgoals. Thus, there are fixed requirements like the permanent manning of a patrol car, and – depending on the day, month, or time of the year – varying goals like more intensive bicycle

14 Presented on the occasion of a hearing organised by the Forum „TIMES of the CITY“ on the subject of police in Bremen on 26th November 1996.

checks at swimming pools in summer or more preventive measures against shoplifters and pickpockets in the pre-Christmas shopping period. The duty roster no longer lists names but tasks, for which officers enter their names after internal consultation. This practice led to the splitting up of social groups in the service, resulting in complaints and initial opposition. Besides preserving group cohesion, an important aspect for the individual's lifestyle was the extent to which working time could be planned or relied on. However, the majority were in favour of continuing the pilot scheme. For implementation throughout the city-state, planned for 1999, a combination of individual freedom of choice and the preservation of the social group is preferred. Whereas patrol cars and police stations are to be manned by existing groups, targeted measures are to be organised across groups. The integrity of groups will thus be preserved.

Anticipation of work-flow rhythms is to be improved firstly with the aid of an operations centre calendar, listing such events as Christmas markets or the Kurdish new year festival, and secondly through greater reliance on local experience in individual district planning. If a police station has a swimming pool or schools in its district, bicycle thefts are likely; if there is a bank, the opening times determine the window for armed robberies, etc. Thus selective measures relating to place or time can be handled only locally. Detailed personnel planning at this level would overtax headquarters.

The operations centre determines the general framework. Nevertheless, personnel resources must be reserved for emergencies. Demonstrations or football matches are also events requiring overarching operations, for which the police districts share responsibility. In future, however, central units should be more strongly deployed on such occasions. Up to now, the riot police have provided a third of the manpower needed, and the police districts two thirds. This ratio is to be reversed to strengthen the decentralised approach.

As far as work-flow rhythms are concerned, there is a link between traffic volume and accident frequency, and between seasonal weather conditions and accident frequency (cf. fig. 2). Especially sudden cold spells in autumn cause more work for the police. Traffic jams in commuter traffic have diminished. Higher traffic volumes are now spread over two to three hours instead of being concentrated into three-quarters of an hour. Longer shopping hours demand greater attention to offences like shoplifting or handbag snatching. Summer is the season of bicycle thefts. However, these rhythms are subject to fluctuation, changing over time and differing from place to place. Decentralised operations planning is becoming all the more important because planning work flows – beyond the central calendar – is becoming more and more difficult.

These two elements, the „Pilot Scheme West“ on work reorganisation and the Bremerhaven changes in shift schedules, are steps towards the substantive, organisational, and time-related reform of the Bremen police services. In future, police authorities – like the semi-autonomous profit centres in industry – will decide on working and deployment hours and assignments themselves and monitor their work independently. In addition, highest priority is being given to close relations with the public at the neighbourhood level, self-organisation and networking at lower levels, e.g., via the prevention councils, the work of the contact area officers, or contact with the public via the Internet.

If this is to be achieved, a great deal of persuasion will be needed in police stations and in city districts, among police staff and the public and those representing their interests. Group work demands social and communicative competence to handle coordination processes, which first has to be learned and consolidated in the field. The reform, triggered by the decline in financial resources, and which aims to increase efficiency through decentralisation and networking, is embedded in the „Citizens' Office 2000“ administrative reform project for the whole of Bremen. Although there is no organisational cooperation – for example with the Prospects Laboratory – there is bilateral coordination on experience with implementation and discussion on common strategy.

4.3 Citizens' Office

The declared aims of administrative reform are to bring administrative work closer to the public and to change working time policy with regard to staff. In many ways, administrative times set the pace for the public. The length and positioning of office hours, application and payment deadlines, the time spent visiting public authorities (travel and waiting time) are only the most important points. A recent study on waiting times in registration offices, conducted in the context of comparisons between municipal services (cf. „Tagesspiegel“, 27th September 1998), showed considerable differences. Whereas Castrop-Rauxel residents waited an average of only one to six minutes and people in Gütersloh 1.8 minutes, Berliners had to wait from between seven minutes (Registration Office 31, Brunnenstraße) and 65.4 minutes (Registration Office 54, Sonnenallee). There were also great differences in average weekly hours. Whereas the metropolis Berlin offered 30 hours per week, Dessau authorities were open for a total of 63 hours.

The optimum time window can vary from place to place. The evening office hours – to match longer shopping hours – demanded by the public at a hearing on administrative reform for Bremen were indeed introduced by the authorities (Monday and Thursday up to 7 p.m.), but the public took hardly any advantage of them¹⁵. Apart from such experimental action, surveys (see next chapter), that is to say tools of empirical social research, are becoming more and more important in coordinating public authority times with the interests of the public, in ascertaining time supply and demand. However, the representation of these interests lacks organisation, is concerned with partial issues or tends to be haphazard, which poses a problem. As clients of public services, citizens are not organised to the extent necessary for a decentralised harmonisation process. Residents of the classical working-class neighbourhoods are certain to have other needs in this respect than people who live in student neighbourhoods. Families with children are louder in demanding Saturday office hours, whereas the middle classes prefer evening hours. „Breaking down“ the reform to suit the needs of social groups or specific districts, in other words its conceptual differentiation, naturally increases its complexity, which does not facilitate the adjustment process.

Apart from this lack of information about public demand and its specific local characteristics, there is naturally also resistance among staff to changes in opening and office hours. New

¹⁵ Such extensions are generally implemented without further feedback from the public. Moreover, public authority staff often have a personal interest in the failure of such innovations, and pronounce the failure of the measures all too rapidly in order to return to accustomed patterns of working and office hours.

organisational models, especially group work and the associated flatter hierarchies as well as changes in responsibilities and flexibilization of working time are met with suspicion by some members of staff. After all, the motives for addressing time organisation and service issues indicate a desire for rationalisation and increased efficiency. The „TIMES of the CITY“ project is, as it were, the third party in the negotiation process between employers and employees in the public service – representing the interests of the public.

In order to spare the public excessive travel in the „ribbon settlement“ of Bremen, the decentralised district offices are to be revitalised as „citizens' offices“ and given greater responsibilities. Pilot projects are running in three of the 17 district offices. Members of the public as clients of the public service are to be spared travel time; opening hours are to be extended. A distinction has to be drawn between authorities that receive large numbers of visitors and those that deal with smaller numbers (for example, there is a substantial difference between the welfare office and the registry office). Services for the numerous commuters, for example the „Citizens' Information Office“ at Bremen central station are to offer improved facilities and help avoid traffic by linking the route to work and visits to public authorities. The public will in future be able to deal with registration matters at the office of their choice. Although this will put further strain on inner city offices, it will spare the working public irksome travel. Pilot project offices cope with the new „rush-hour“ between 11.30 a.m. and 2.30 p.m. through team work, setting manning levels to match the volume of work¹⁶.

The public have more time to deal with official business and are less dependent on opening times – and thus on public authorities as pace-setters. Internet services, a „kiosk system“ (distribution of forms) and the preparation of applications in offices (check of the documents to be submitted at a front desk to avoid members of the public having to come back, or incomplete applications being processed) are intended to help emancipate the public from the local government time regime.

At the Vegesack district office, it has been sought to institutionalise contact with the public in the shape of a „Time Office“, which performs the function of a third party in administrative reform, bringing public services closer to the citizen while improving the quality of service through a process of civil society dialogue.

4.4 Bremen-Vegesack Time Office

Bremen-Vegesack has a population of 35 023 (as per 1st January 1997) and lost its independent status as a city only in 1939. As the central place in North Bremen, it is of regional importance alongside the central city, the core of the metropolitan area. After the closing down of the Vulkan shipyard, the district has faced economic crisis. The rapid rezoning of industrial land (Vulkan, Lürssen shipyards) is part of the reorganisation of economic structures. About half of all jobs in industry have been lost since 1970. The

¹⁶ On the whole, however, the flexibilization of work organisation is only in its infancy; the formal scope for action is still very limited. Time accounts exist to a limited extent, and at present one flexitime day per month is allowed. „Time budgeting“ is considered important, meaning the fixing of a time amount per task as well as a deadline, which leaves the organisation of time to perform the work up to the individual or the group – as is already done in telework. Experience with new forms of working time organisation in individual or informal arrangements could be included in the reforms.

18.7% job losses in North Bremen are far higher than in the city as a whole (6.3%) (Wildner/Heinemann 1991, p. 69). These cutbacks have turned Vegesack from an in-commuter community to an out-commuter one. Almost 50% of actively employed people in North Bremen commute out to work¹⁷. In 1970 the figure was one third (ibid., p. 51). Another aspect of the area's current peripheral structure is the low presence of service industries. Banking, insurance, post, and transport tend to locate in the city centre (ibid., p. 93). Today the economy has a largely industrial structure with many enterprises on shift operation. New jobs are expected in multimedia (call centres) and in the new Haven Höövt „Urban Entertainment Center“.

Two shipyards on the Lower Saxony bank of the Weser set the pace, as well as the shift-operating industries. Otherwise the district is middle class, traffic rhythms have the usual commuter peak hours, which are, however, somewhat mitigated by flexitime arrangements. There is relatively little demand for out-of-the-ordinary child-care times or extended hours in the leisure sector. The rate of organised leisure activity is above average: there are about 60 clubs in Vegesack. Since many leisure activities take place at home and in the garden, the complexity of (leisure) time organisation is low compared with other districts.

The district has a high proportion of single-family housing (4 988 out of 7 687 residential buildings). The „village character“ with a long tradition of independent dwellings and intact neighbourhood and family networks contributes to the everyday self-organisation of the district. The proportion of workers among the active population in North Bremen is far above the average for Bremen, and the level of education is lower than in other districts. While crime is falling slightly in Bremen City, the figures for North Bremen are stagnating, or in some fields even rising – an indication of growing social disruption.

Owing to these changes, awareness among residents that they must actively accompany the process of structural change in their district is more marked than in districts that have suffered the loss of the maritime and industrial function less directly. The loss of jobs was a creeping process, cushioned by further education measures. Because of the high rate of home ownership, which permits retreat into private life, the unemployed are less visible.

On the initiative of the Prospects Laboratory and the „TIMES of the CITY“ forum and in cooperation with the University of Bremen as well as the College of Economics and Politics in Hamburg, a time office, the first of its sort in Germany, was set up on 1st October 1997 in the Vegesack District Office. This district office is one of the three pilot projects on administrative reform. The aim of the time office is to organise the district in a more citizen-friendly fashion by coordinating times, e.g., office hours of municipal and private service providers. The structure and quality of time are the focus of this civil society project, which is intended to bring together different public and private actors in the district. The decentralised approach hopes to create intimacy and to facilitate cooperation through the specifically local connection. Vegesack is particularly suitable, since it is a distinct settlement area within the city that at the same time has big city structures.

¹⁷ For over 80% of these out-commuters, their place of work is within the city, especially in the old city, the central station district and the industrial ports, cf. Wildner/Heinemann 1991, p. 54.

For this purpose the „Forum Citizen-Friendly Vegesack“ has been created, which meets about every two months, bringing together the most important actors in the district from among the public and the municipality¹⁸. The time office sees itself as broker for the coordination of time suppliers and as representative of the public's time demands. Working groups are formed to investigate what action is needed, dealing with specific problems, and then reporting to the forum.

A „working party of public service providers“ including professional associations, local government authorities and the library aims to harmonise different opening hours. To this end the Time Office conducted a survey in collaboration with a daily newspaper. It revealed that opening hours were not or only partially known to 80% of respondents, and that they welcomed harmonisation. 50% were dissatisfied with current hours, and 77% wanted longer opening hours in local government agencies and facilities (inland revenue office 70%, employment office 42%, and library 34.5%). The main wish was for extended hours on Thursdays until 6 p.m., which 64% would use to attend to business with local authorities, and 61% would combine with a shopping spree. 54% wanted administrative agencies to open until 7 p.m., and 21% wanted them to open on Saturday mornings. However, it was also apparent that many were not aware that opening hours had already been extended in many Bremen agencies and offices, for example on Mondays and Thursdays.

The internal revenue office was the first to react by extending its hours. Previously it had opened its doors to the public three days a week between 8 and 12 a.m. Now, like the District Office/Citizens' Office, it is open from Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and on Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., a success that would have been inconceivable without direct contacts in the Forum and without the initiative of the Time Office. In this context it would be useful not only to introduce homogeneous and coordinated opening hours so that the public is not confronted with the same confusing arrangements that prevail in retailing, but also to inform the public comprehensively about such changes.

A working group on the subject of public transport is mediating between regional (BSAG) and supraregional (DB) transportation utilities and between these utilities and public interests. Bus and rail services need to be coordinated, especially in off-peak periods, and work is being done on harmonising local and long-distance traffic. As with the BSAG and the Bremen-Lower Saxony Transport Association (Verkehrsverbund Bremen-Niedersachsen, VBN), a passenger advisory board is to be set up in Vegesack to represent all user groups on an equal footing and to improve the harmonisation of supply and demand. In the long term, the public transport planning hierarchy – the railways presents their timetables first, the tramway system adapts, then bus services – is to be replaced by integrated planning.

A workshop was held on the issue of child care, which met with great interest. Ideas developed elsewhere in the city are to be applied in Vegesack. A working group has been set up for this purpose. Another discussion group is to coordinate the opening hours of retailers and the morning „vegetable market“ as well as doctors in the district.

¹⁸ Apart from public administrative agencies (district office, inland revenue, employment office, welfare office, office for social services) they include the Church, citizens' action groups, the library, the retail trade, the Savings Bank, industrial associations and pensioners.

The „Haven Höövt“ with its uniform hours of business will exert increased pressure on the Vegesack pedestrian precinct as an immediate competitor, to offer the public similarly attractive standardised hours.

Overall, great interest has been shown by the actors concerned in the „TIMES of the CITY“ and „Time Office“ project, as evidenced by the keen and sustained attendance at events (meetings of bodies, hearings, etc.). The response of the media has also been very good. The pilot project has contributed to civil-society self-organisation in the district across party and interest lines. A wide range of local actors are involved, and the will to put time policy ideas into concrete effect is there, even though the first attempt at district-related synchronisation (in this case shopping hours) failed. Actors use the project less for the advancement of partial interests than for the joint formulation of goals serving the common good and „local patriotism“. The Forum and the work of the Time Office provide feedback for administrative reform, and public awareness of the issues is also growing – increasing the pressure for change, as the question of extended office hours has shown.

However, the broad public does not relate to the time issue. The subject is often felt to be too abstract and fanciful. The 1997 exhibition on „Times of the City“ with its abundance of examples from practice, by contrast, met with lively interest and communicated an impression of the urgency of everyday time problems and time conflicts at work and in private life. There is thus a general feeling for the matter, but specific ideas are lacking on how times and rhythms can be shaped and coordinated and how urban opportunity structures can be optimised.

Activity rhythms vary within the city. In organising time opportunities, a neighbourhood-related solution would therefore be appropriate. Time Offices could mediate as „citizens' advocates“ in other neighbourhoods, too, between public and private time providers and actual demand. Since, in effect, every community faces the same tasks, the approach can in principle be transferred. The coordination of times beyond the city – for example, with regional or supraregional actors such as the railways – would be a task for the future. In any case, Vegesack has regained a degree of independence – through the planning approach, through cooperation among the various local actors – and is beginning to free itself from the role of mere appendage to the city of Bremen. The question of the extent to which this newly won form of civil-society self-organisation can really help the district to deal with its structural crisis and safeguard its identity must remain provisionally open one year after the launch of the „action research programme“ and one year before the end of the „test phase“.

5. Conclusions

Economy

Deindustrialisation and a comparatively late shift towards a service economy are characteristic of Bremen's economic structure. New leisure and shopping parks as well as multi-media industries operate with extended working and opening hours. The trend towards evening, night, and weekend work will strengthen without, however, visibly modifying the activity rhythms of the city. Nonetheless, this development will put other actors – for example service providers – under growing pressure, since the specific urban opportunity structure for resident and non-resident users is generally perceived and used as an integrated complex. If, for instance, weekend tourism increases, it will be necessary to adjust the frequency of public transport services, or even to adapt, i.e., extend, shopping hours.

At the moment the uncoordinated and varying commercial business hours are proving a hindrance to development of the central city. In comparison with the extended and uniform time windows offered by out-of-town facilities and the new shopping centres, the central city will become even less attractive. Homogeneous time clusters in certain downtown areas or product segments would facilitate personal time planning for customers. Here, too, developments will increase the pressure for change.

As a whole, working hours have become more differentiated and flexible in keeping with the national trend. However, there have been no massive changes that have vitally affected the city. Changes in working, operating and opening hours pass unnoticed as isolated developments. Because of the number of people employed, the public service and the largest employers (Daimler-Benz, Stahlwerke Bremen) set the pace, although their impact is relative. Only unemployment has led to the breakdown of time-honoured activity rhythms – and only in certain neighbourhoods.

Society

Bremen has no dominant pace-setter, having a polycentric pace-setter structure little different from that of other large German cities. The decline in the importance of the port and maritime industries has, however, brought changes to urban rhythms at the district level. The closing of the shipyards has deprived neighbourhoods of the formative power of the traditional working rhythms. Unemployment is now changing rhythms. In a particularly hard hit area (Blumenthal), many people get up only in the late morning; retailers have already reacted by opening later. The early-shift siren as rhythm and pace setter no longer sounds, so that a symbol of time structuring has been also lost.

Unemployment is not an experience of life that offers potential for developing a critical sense of time. The problem is individualised and not addressed by the people concerned (to avoid social stigmatisation). The high rate of home owners in Bremen (about 50% of blue-collar workers and 60% of white-collar workers) contributes to the invisibility of the phenomenon of underemployment. The „discovery of slowness“ appears – not only in Bremen – to be more appropriate for people under time stress. Indeed, the public has no

awareness of the „times in the city“ issue, although the planning approach has been given publicity in the media. Thinking about time tends to be restricted to specific issues like opening hours that are a controversial subject not only for merchants and shop workers. Although time is second only to the weather as a subject of discussion, the potential for overall planning to optimise urban opportunity structures, e.g., citizen-friendly public services with reasonable opening hours, is not recognised.

Time Organisation

The „Time of the City“ scheme in Bremen is certainly an innovative project that can serve as a pilot venture for other cities. Overall, however, the administrative side looms too large in the Bremen project, membership of the various bodies is too unbalanced. At the city-wide level there is a lack of civil-society and economic actors. Following Italian models, the focus is on the public service, on the interface between government and society, and commerce. The main pace-setters in the city, the industrial and service enterprises (where they are not public enterprises like hospitals), are left out of account. With their changed working hours, with the differentiation of corporate organisation, they are the first to require greater flexibility among employees, and thus the first to trigger new time conflicts and problems. Precisely the sectors leisure and multimedia, in which Bremen is placing great hopes, demand extended working time windows and contribute to the so-called night economy. Within the setting of the Forum it is, of course, impossible for the conflict of interests between employers and employees, between capital and labour to be addressed, let alone solved on behalf of society as a whole. Nevertheless, including economic actors would be a decisive step forward, and has also been advocated by a number of respondents in this study.

There is a gap with regard to unorganised and unorganisable interests. Even at hearings on the main topics it was clear that representation of the people actually affected is often very problematic. Who represents patients in questions of hospital work organisation? Who represents school children in issues of child care? (Are the parents and teachers the only people who can do this?) Who represents recipients of social assistance (as „long-term customers“ of the authorities) or the unemployed, pensioners, and foreigners? It is no wonder that many of the articulated interests have a „middle-class bias“. Whereas blue-collar workers demand, for example, that public authorities open early, white-collar workers or the self-employed plead more frequently for the authorities to institute a „service evening“.

Integration of the citizenry in the – hitherto institution-dominated – organisational process is a crucial task for the near future. The more concrete the approach and the problems are, the greater the relevance for the immediate and everyday time difficulties of those affected, the easier it will be to reach the public and make them aware of the issues, and the greater will be the public legitimisation of the „TIMES of the CITY“ project. The Time Office in Vegesack in particular offers enough starting points. This small-scale and district-related approach has been successful in this regard. There is equal representation on the relevant body, i.e., almost all potential actors from society, government and industry are integrated, and – most important – very committed. The actors questioned agree that, at this local level, the implementation of time policy measures seems within

closer reach than in the city-wide Forum. Civil society innovations, too, for example, the prevention councils and the passenger advisory boards, enhance public awareness. Public surveys in particular could lend the approach a broader empirical base.

Of course, private sector working, operating, and opening hours quite simply set a limit to the organisation of time. Even by involving actors in the organisational process, only a limited measure of coordination can be achieved, because Bremen, subject to pressure from the national and international economic fabric, has very little room for manoeuvre. Many large enterprises are subsidiaries of parent companies outside Bremen, like Daimler-Benz (=> Stuttgart) or Dasa (=> Hamburg), many trading concerns must obey external instructions on opening hours. This external dependence of industry weakens locational ties and thus the interest in local issues; „global players“ no longer bear any responsibility for their immediate environment: they have their eyes on world markets. By contrast, the small and medium-size sector is underrepresented. The many small enterprises have no pace-setting function (beyond the opening hours issue). Nevertheless, active coordination is indispensable, for instance between transport services and industry.

Essentially, the question is whether – given the flexibilization of working, operating, and opening hours and the individualisation of time organisation per se – it is still possible to coordinate times at all. The isolation and polarisation of time interests could hamper the organisation of common times, although they indicate the need for organisation. Collective rhythms are no longer taken for granted. Instead, it has become necessary to structure time consciously, to regulate and organise it. Group and district-related rhythms possible set limits to harmonisation. Time structuring should therefore primarily be decentralised, local, and place-related, for instance, in setting opening times for private and public service providers. For the city as a whole, better coordination and interlinkage between cultural, restaurant and other services would be useful for city marketing – internal and external. Non-integrated units in outlying areas with their extended and uniform time windows are strong competitors for the central city. Flexibility and stability with regard to time, i.e., adaptation to customer wishes and the reliability of service structures will have to be carefully balanced.

Interviewees complained that the public was not yet aware of the time issue; however, the exhibition mentioned above did contribute towards engendering such an awareness. This suggests that it will be necessary in the future to open up the scheme to a greater extent and to communicate the feasibility of shaping time structures and urban rhythms more effectively. The health aspect could also be usefully addressed – illness due to time-induced stress, or to the lack of challenge and isolation that comes from involuntary inactivity. The „Bremen Time Laboratory“ thus points the way to further tasks in community time organisation.

Prospects

How can the time issue be dealt with at the local level over and above the organisational approach presented here?

- *Work:* a conceivable time project within public services would be to link working hours and employment policy. Already temporary reductions in working hours in

schools provide opportunities for younger generations entering the profession. Part-time work and part-time employment for pensioners are the headings for corresponding redistribution projects. In this context the time issue could be developed in the sense of a local alliance for employment.

- *Urban development:* the comprehensive coordination of activities within the city in the framework of local time management and cultural management, between city districts as well as between the city and the surrounding areas would also be conceivable. The activity rhythm of the community, the alternation of important events and „breathing-spaces“ in the city can thus be organised specifically for the city, to give the day, the week, the month, or the year a structure of its own to provide orientation for residents and visitors alike. There could be zones of differential speed and activity, places with unlimited time opportunities and places with protected times. The sustained use of buildings and land, e.g., the extended use of public facilities outside the classical time windows would help to prevent the functional differentiation of the city territory and to avoid the alternation of desolation and overuse.
- *The environment:* an ecology-related time policy would initially have to take account of natural rhythms, throughout the city and not only in green areas. Chronotopes, that is to say protected times, are needed to complement biotopes, protected spaces. It would also be important to make the times of nature visible in the city, which means integrating the daily or seasonal rhythms of the environment more fully in the organised time structure specific to the city.

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