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## The urban rhythms of neoliberalization

**Sandra Mallet**

University Reims Champagne-Ardennes

EA2076 Habiter - Institut d'Aménagement des Territoires, d'Environnement et  
d'Urbanisme de Reims

Translation : Sophie Didier, UMR LAVUE/Mosaïques<sup>1</sup>

*"Objectively, in order for change to actually happen, a social group, a class or a caste must intervene via the imprinting of a **rhythm** to a specific era, either by force, or by insinuating ways" (Lefebvre, 1992 : 25).*

Personal schedules, daily planners, expectations as well as practices with regards to the passing of time are all the products of historical constructs (Elias, 1984). They also vary according to cultural and class differences. According to Georges Gurvitch, "social life develops in multiple times that are always divergent, and often contradictory. Their relative unification, which is linked to an often precarious process of hierarchization, poses a serious problem to any given society" (1950, p. 325). According to social groups, one can observe differences in daily rhythms, in the way various activities are coordinated, and in the means of organizing and mastering time (Grossin, 1972). Nevertheless, there remains a fundamental paradox, which lies at the core of every society: if social times are fundamentally plural, society cannot exist without trying to unify this plurality. Yet this unification is conflictual, and this generates competition for the mastering of time and schedules (Lefebvre, Régulier, 1985). Time, just like space, is political. A power struggle is at hand around the definition of rhythms, lengths, sequences and the synchronization of all activities. In general, the fastest comes out as dominant (Virilio, 1977). For philosopher Paul Virilio, speed has even become the most powerful weapon in a world where instant time rules. What is important here is to save time, to overcome geographical constraints. Modern societies are thus deeply experiencing an acceleration of time, and capitalism plays a central role in this shift (Rosa, 2010).

This paper offers an analysis of this acceleration of our daily rhythms due to neoliberalization and some of its impacts in the city, which are labeled as unjust. The acceleration of daily rhythms is based on the rise of the amount of episodes of action, or of the number of experiences lived within a specific time unit (Rosa, 2010: 102). This rise is caused by the reduction in time resources: "**Objectively**, the acceleration

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<sup>1</sup> NDT: all terms in italics = in French in the original

of daily rhythms represents a shortening or a densification of episodes of action. (...) **Subjectively**, (...) it shows in the rise of a feeling of emergency, in the pressure of time, in a constrained acceleration generating stress, and in a fear of becoming unable 'to follow'" (*ibid.*: 103).

Empirical studies on the understanding of time have shown that the feeling of running out of time and of being in a constant hurry is dominant, and this finding is particularly true in the city. In 1903 already, Georg Simmel observed that the rhythm of the large metropolis, due to its numerous and ever-changing stimuli, creates specific psychological conditions, very different from that of small cities and rural areas (Simmel, 1903). Today, time is for urban dwellers one of the most negative aspects of their way of life. From one city to the other, the time structure of an average day appears similar: most urban dwellers work an average of seven hours, spend the same amount of time sleeping, spend an average of two hours in commute, doing chores and domestic paperwork and save the remaining three hours for their personal leisure time. But most importantly, they all seem to long for a better balance between the various times of the day and personal time is invariably deemed insufficient<sup>2</sup>.

The concept of a 24/7 city is currently raising interest, revealing a historical transformation of our ways of life, about as much influenced by the process of globalization as by the individualization of our societies. The emergence of such new forms of continuity is a direct consequence of the acceleration of time, corresponding to a densification of specific periods, and to the reduction of breaks and of what is considered "down-time". The process of neoliberalization started in the 1970s plays a fundamental role in the restructuring of collective rhythms. Logics of profitability, of competitiveness, of free individual enterprise and of globalization all lead to a lack of differentiation between various times, to the attenuation of their specificities, be they natural or cultural. A linear form of time now prevails (Lefebvre, Régulier, 1985), redefining rhythms and triggering the erasure of what could be called "secondary" times, i.e. times of a lesser intensity, 'weak', 'off-peak' times that were traditionally kept separate from work and production.

This paper addresses this issue of continuity, focusing on the current calling into question of traditional alternating times such as night and day, as well as Sundays/weekdays. The Parisian case will be central in the paper due to the current process aiming at creating a continuous city there. This ongoing process generates a

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<sup>2</sup> All results from a 2007 study conducted by IPSOS for Veolia Environnement, based on a sample of 9,000 inhabitants from 14 different metropolises around the world. The study focused on life conditions, on the inhabitants' perceptions of their urban environments and on what they expect from it.

lot of arguments between the proponents of neoliberal urban public policies and those who favor a city more attuned to social justice. Two opposing logics are at play, and both have already had legible impacts on the city. Spatially, this confrontation gives rise to tensions and conflicts, but also to increasing inequality and new socio-spatial divisions, the two main causes of spatial injustice.

## **1. Neoliberalization and daily rhythms**

The economy appears as the major organizer of daily rhythms. Early accelerations of time were visible during the 15th and 16th centuries, with the concentration of capital in the distribution sector, with the development of transportation networks and the rise of faster communications. Mostly, the Industrial Revolution triggered a shift in the process of social acceleration. The appropriation of the mechanical clock by industrialists deeply changed the way time and daily rhythms were perceived. According to Lewis Mumford in his study of the transformation of Western society under the influence of technology, "the clock, not the steam-engine, is the key-machine of the modern industrial age" (Mumford, 1934: 14). The mechanical clock made possible new forms of work organization and new forms of social control. By setting new temporal points of reference, it allowed for a stricter coordination of groups and activities. It paved the way to the implementation of modern work principles by transforming work as defined by its end-product to work as a measure of time (Thompson, 1967), thus dissociating work time from its ultimate end. Regularly, new organizations of work are planned, aiming at better productivity per each time-unit. The reference to the mechanical clock thus nurtured a specific conception of time seen as a valuable resource that must be exploited and saved. The nature of each activity then changes its meaning since every action represents now an engagement of time. In this reified conception of time, natural rhythms lose their importance (Marx, 1965). Salaried time becomes the norm and prevails until it becomes the main collective discipline. It thus brings a true temporal frame (Grossin, 1995) to every dimension of society. It establishes a new organization of the day through schedules, with consequences on the rest of daily times.

Since the 1970s-1980s, the neoliberal turn has been raising the question of the redefinition of the temporal frames of production, distribution and consumption. Work time adjustments, issues around the opening hours of stores, have all been very contested issues. The reduction of salaried work time makes it flexible, more adaptable to the constraints of economic activity. In a context of economic uncertainty, of a strengthening of competition, of just-in-time production, this adaptation translates into bigger flexibility of work configurations.

The political and economic neoliberal system favors flexibility, but also the abolishment of certain constraints, lesser intervention by the State as well as deregulation. In France, since 1987, the planning of salaried work time for employees can be negotiated on a yearly basis and thus eventually not comply with the rules of weekly schedules. The thick regulation ruling work time practices, legislated since the passing of the Labor Laws of 1841, is getting more complex since the 1980s, leading to legislative inflation. New dispositions appear with each new piece of legislation, carving out specific regimes for the modulation of work time or the accounting of down time. Traditionally, the State sets the rules for the maximum daily and weekly work time, for night time work and work on Sundays, as well as for mandatory down time. But the principle of negotiation between the State and social partners prevails since the law of 25 march 1919. Out of this law, a growing number of specific situations keep emerging.

In the end, working schedules appear less and less standardized, taking on an increasingly atypical and unpredictable turn. Short work days are now a norm, as well as those over 10 hours, those that take place at unconventional time slots as well as night work. We are witnessing a reorganization of down time with extended week-ends, down time during the week, and the fragmentation of vacation time.

In a neoliberal context, down time spent out of production and consumption appear as constraints, temporal obstacles to the good economic functioning of society. Traditional temporal frames are becoming less rigid, less repetitive, less visible, down time working here as a buffer, as a time reserve that can become profitable.

Night time and Sundays, as secondary collective times, cyclical and socially regulated, are witnessing a lessening of their qualities. Being secondary implies a hierarchy, a form of relativity: that which is secondary derives from something else or depends on it. Both periods do not hold equal status: night time is a "temporal inversion" (Sansot, 1971: 238), "inside-out time" and "a different time where the values tend to get inverted" (Espinasse, Buhagiar, 2004: 1). Night time affirms its singularity in the transformations it causes compared to day time. Sunday, located at the end of the week, often emphasized on calendars and timetables via the use of a specific font, remains 'just another day'. As a day of transition, a bridge between two different weeks, it marks the end of a week and heralds a new one. The New Oxford American Dictionary also identifies 'the week' as the five day period starting on Monday and ending on Friday, as if the week-end did not belong in the week.

But the primary tends to absorb the secondary: the latter can be seen as superfluous, unproductive, even useless. For instance, the closing of most stores at night and on Sundays opposes the neoliberal principle stating that human happiness will rise with the increase of freedom to run an individual business. In a context of time pressure,

linked to the acceleration of time and a general feeling of urgency, the conversion of these two periods to more productive time could, according to some, help businesses as well as individuals better organize their production and consumption. Finally, these down times could be occupied and invested: according to neoliberal logics, new markets need to be constantly invented. The principle of leisure-style consumption in particular is put forward by investors looking forward to creating leisure spaces that also function as spending spaces, thus reinforcing the place of consumption in our free time.

Production and consumption times structure our daily lives and imprint their rhythms on urban space. In order to be anchored in neoliberal logics, cities must adapt. The principles of entrepreneurial freedom, of competition, of creating new markets, the ideology of choice and consumption, impose the adjustment of local and traditional temporalities. A process is under way, as much led by the private as by the public sectors, within which the different schedules for urban services (transportation schedules, business hours, leisure time, etc.) are getting revised.

## **2. The gradual standardization of traditional urban rhythms**

Competition, at the heart of neoliberalism, has direct impacts on urban policies and feeds a global logic of urban competition. Some of its impacts have been thoroughly described already, by geographers in particular: the multiplication of cultural events, the 'creative city' impetus, the building of office blocks, the privatization of local urban governance, the privatization of residential neighborhoods, etc. The concept of a 24/7 city is now a fundamental element in urban competition. One can even identify cities specializing in this 24/7 model, like Ibiza or Las Vegas. For most cities, the aim is to attract tourists, students and young professionals who are the main populations pushing for a widening of schedules to night time and the week-end. They are also the major group of people who go out at night. This also allows cities to affirm their urbanity, considering that "the only real cities are cities that are active at night. Provincial cities are 'dead at night', according to popular belief." (Pinçon and Pinçon-Charlot, 2000). The reaffirming of one's metropolitan status means that one cannot have influence on a part-time basis, at certain times only, only during the day or during part of the week. It means having drawing power as strongly as possible, as often as possible, and continuously if possible. Sundays and night time are thus privileged times for Paris to confirm its supremacy compared to other French cities. Torn between the logics of international competition which tend to prevail and logics of resistance, French cities, and France's capital city even more, are caught in a complex game of stakeholders whose intentions diverge, and this game is still largely undocumented.

### **Nighttime in the city, a taboo element of its drawing power**

In general, nighttime in the city becomes an “on” time due to leisure-related activities. Paris-by-night offers numerous entertainment venues, restaurants, bars, clubs and initiatives aiming at reinforcing its nocturnal drawing power: the lighting of public monuments creating each night an exceptional decor, the multiplication of events since the 1980s (including the “White Night” concept reproduced in other metropolitan areas such as Rome and Toronto), the extension of public transportation schedules between the 1 AM-6 AM slot.

Nighttime represents a privileged time for personal time, for relaxation, and going out is a major means of escaping routine schedules. Four people out of ten, the majority of which are men, go out at least once a week at night. Only 20% never do so, compared to 67% in 1973. Those going out at night are usually young, between 15 and 34, and usually hold executive or middle-manager jobs. They are also most likely to be single with no children (APUR, 2004).

Yet, it is not only the traditional festive events but also the leisure activities traditionally on offer during daytime that are now available at night. Some private clubs and public facilities are open until late into the night. Swimming pools, public gardens and public libraries, whose closing time is usually between 5 PM and 8 PM, see their schedules contested. The Municipality of Paris is engaging in the promotion of these facilities: “You were dreaming of swimming at night? Around twenty swimming pools now welcome you between 7 PM and midnight”<sup>3</sup>.

Moreover, globally, daytime activities now encroach on nighttime schedules. A lot of facilities have late closing times. New service providers now cater non-stop to consumers. In Paris, numerous stores are open until late, restaurants and gas stations but also supermarkets, minimarts, bakeries, stores selling cultural goods and even department stores. The latter now offer nighttime opening hours at least once a week. The Champs-Élysées Virgin Megastore, open seven days a week until midnight, is said to make 40% of its gross revenue on Sundays and in the evening after 8 PM (Reinhart, 2001). Moreover, the internet allows for a form of anytime online shopping and if e-commerce remains marginal on some levels, it is progressing rapidly.

France appears “unable to keep up” for some commentators (Gwiazdzinski, 2005) when compared to the United States or Japan where supermarkets, salons, gyms, restaurants, clothing stores, libraries are sometimes open 24/7. It is true though that even in the capital city, there aren’t a lot of stores open at night in French cities. The

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<sup>3</sup> Municipality of Paris (*Mairie de Paris*) website, accessed 5 June 2007

[http://www.paris.fr/portail/Sport/Portal.lut?page\\_id=152&document\\_type\\_id=5&document\\_id=24813&portlet\\_id=10874](http://www.paris.fr/portail/Sport/Portal.lut?page_id=152&document_type_id=5&document_id=24813&portlet_id=10874).

majority of nocturnal commercial activity takes place before 10 PM or before midnight. Yet, some activities traditionally associated with daytime are on the rise. Significantly, in 2003, only two minimarts were open in Paris until midnight, both of them belonging to the same retail group; in 2010, about thirty of them close their doors between 11 PM and 1 AM and the corresponding retailers have diversified (APUR, 2010a).

The intensification of nocturnal activities in the city differs in significance from the white nights of the past. Parisian nights are changing, as can be seen in this guidebook on Paris 24/7: "Since the 1990s, Paris is not partying at night as much as it used to. Taxi drivers used to transport home drunk guys stumbling out of the Bains-Douches [*NDT: a popular nightclub*]. Nowadays, they answer the calls of managers in three piece suits who, at 1 AM, have just concluded a business meeting in La Défense [*NDT: a major business node in the Western suburbs*] or have been teleconferencing due to time zone differences with their New York partners. These are the tell-tale signs of the new morphology of Parisian nights. (...) The new regulars of the night are professionals, people like me who fully occupy their nighttime in a sober context" (WASSEF, 2007).

Furthermore, if its nights have contributed to the reputation of the French capital city, Paris has also been seen for a decade as a city dead at night, under strong competition from other European metropolises. Another guidebook thus underlines: "Here and there, the buzz is that Parisian nights have lost their shine, and that now one has to go to London, Barcelona, Amsterdam or even New York to party at night!" (Béraud and Hermange, 2007). A petition was launched at the end of 2009<sup>4</sup>, in reaction to the closure of nightclubs by the *Préfecture de Police* following complaints of noise pollution. This petition called "Paris: when the night dies in silence" was signed by 16,000 people aiming at "saving Parisian nights". According to its authors, the City of Lights is threatened to be downgraded to the status of "European capital of snooze", and it would be "well known nowadays that Paris has given up its European leadership".

The control of nighttime is fought for by numerous stakeholders (residents arguing they have a right to sleep, party-goers and clubs arguing they have a right to leisure, some stores and consumers asking for freedom of consumption, etc.) and it remains difficult to reconcile demands that are apparently antagonistic. Urban policies appear unable to adopt a clear standpoint nor can they converge. Some call for radical

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<sup>4</sup> Open letter of the Music and Night professionals of Paris to the Minister of the Interior, the Minister of Culture and Communication, the Minister of Ecology, Sustainable Development and the Sea, the Mayor of Paris, the Paris and Ile-de-France Prefect of Police and the President of Ile-de-France Regional Council.

solutions (closure of nightclubs by prefectural order), others propose conciliation and mediation-based solutions (Code of conduct for club activities, *Charte des lieux musicaux de proximité*, passed in 2004 as well as the use of City of Paris-employed mediating agents). Yet, none of them fully satisfy all of the stakeholders. In the end, conflicts intensify and injustices are felt on all sides.

In Europe, other cities have opted for radically different nocturnal policies, banking on a form of night-time economy, and in particular several British cities as soon as the end of the 1980s. The phrase 'night-time economy' refers mostly to an increase in the number of bars, restaurants and clubs that can open until late in city centers. This evolution is seen as a revitalization strategy for city centers, thanks to the conversion of derelict industrial buildings and the attached creation of jobs. "The '24/7' city thus became a seductive marketing tool for cities aiming at reinventing themselves, at remaining or becoming competitive at national, European or global levels." Following the creative cities theory, some scholars (Landry, Bianchini, 1995; O'Connor, 1997) have supported this transformation. Cultural innovation is seen as a means of energizing and revitalizing territories. Some urban centers thus morphed from deserted spaces to places with high concentrations of "young drunken people" (Roberts, 2006: 331). The multiplication of youth whose behavior is deemed antisocial is creating numerous conflicts. New fragmentations are created in cities, the center appearing to be youth territory during the night, while the over 35 now generally see it as unsafe (Thomas, Bromley, 2000). Night-time economy, seen so far under a positive light, has consequently been deemed unacceptable by the government. The issuing of liquor licenses has been severely hardened since 2003, and some cities like Leeds, Nottingham or Leicester have encouraged the development of other types of activities for the evenings (such as shopping or the creation of street-side cafés).

### **Sundays as symbols of the commodification of time**

Just like nighttime, Sundays are more and more open to activities other than leisure. Work on Sundays, as well as retail on Sundays, is getting more and more authorized. In France, the Law of 1906 specifies that an employee cannot work for more than six consecutive days and that he or she must benefit from a full day of down time on Sunday. Yet the list of economic sectors rightfully allowed to have their employees work on Sundays has been growing steadily. Since 2005 for instance, the list features gardening stores as well as video stores, and in 2008 the Chatel Law added furniture stores to the list.

On Sundays, the French capital city benefits from "tourist zones with exceptional affluence or with permanent cultural activity", within which stores are rightfully allowed to open. Five of these zones have been in existence since 1994 (Rue de Rivoli,

Place des Vosges / Rue des Francs Bourgeois, Rue d'Arcole, Avenue des Champs-Élysées, and Viaduc des Arts / Avenue Daumesnil). Boulevard Saint-Germain was added to the list in 1999 as well as Butte Montmartre in 2005, for a total of a little over 700 stores allowed to open on Sundays. Eversince the Maillet Law of August 2009, stores located in these designated zones can open on Sundays without the need for an authorization issued by the *Préfecture de Police*. All grocery stores which were previously allowed to open until 12 AM can now remain open until 1 PM.

All in all, in 2010, between 12,000 and 15,000 stores are open on Sundays in Paris (not including Holiday Specials or Sales periods), all day or part of the day, and this figure amounts to 20% of all stores in Paris (APUR, 2010b). They mostly consist in open air markets, grocery stores, gas stations, flower stores, drugstores, video stores, garden stores, furniture stores, cafés and restaurants.

But Paris is experiencing great pressure to open its stores wider on Sundays. Just like its nighttime, its Sundays are often compared to that of other European cities like London, which holds a reputation for week-end shopping trips. Tourism is a major pillar of the urban economy and shopping opportunities fully contribute to its drawing power, as confirmed by an alarmist report issued by the *Préfecture de Paris* in the midst of the 2009 French political debates regarding work on Sundays (Préfecture de Paris, 2009). The report stated that the French capital city's first national and international ranking "must be strengthened at a time when the World Tourism Organization (WTO) foresees a doubling of international tourism influx in Europe (...). The WTO also stated that France has lost three percent of the world's global share of international tourism since 1990, which translates into 15% of the actual number of tourists, as well as a two-percent share in terms of revenues" (*Ibid.*: 3-4). It is recommended that the country adapt to shorter trips which are dominating global tourism trends. In the end "Paris cannot (...) anymore rest on the laurels of its first rank as a tourist destination, it must now become competitive" (*Ibid.*: 5-6). The *Préfecture* then supported the proposal of the Paris Chamber of Commerce (*Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Paris*) to widen the tourist zones, proposing a central zone corresponding to the core historical *arrondissements* of Paris, as well as a number of isolated zones including a widening of the original Champs-Élysées and Montmartre zones and the creation of the new zones of Porte-Maillot, Bercy-Village and Porte de Versailles. The criteria for the creation or the widening of these zones refer to their cultural, architectural, and historical import, the high density of stores and the availability of hotels as well as the general accessibility of these touristic areas.

Yet, following a consultation of storekeepers, trade unions and *arrondissement* mayors, the Mayor of Paris, who holds the power to create new tourist zones,

concluded that "eventually, there is no need no necessity, no urgency nor shared desire to extend opening hours on Sundays for shopping in Paris"<sup>5</sup>. For some commentators, "this means that we are refusing to play the international competition"<sup>6</sup>. Yet it does not seem that the French capital is lagging behind Berlin, London or Madrid when it comes to the number of stores open on Sundays (APUR, 2010). The difference lies in the fact that in Paris, small stores and corner stores mostly are open and the bulk of the pressure comes from franchise stores, department stores and malls. The creation of 28 PUCE (*Périmètre d'Usage de Consommation Exceptionnelle*, Zone of Exceptional Consumption Use) in Region Ile-de-France between 2009 and 2011<sup>7</sup> thus allowed for a legalization of illegal practices, in particular that of Usine Center mall in Vélizy (Yvelines), Thiais-Village mall in Val-de-Marne, or Chanteraines commercial zone in Gennevilliers (Hauts-de-Seine).

Ever since the 1980s, debates around Sunday have been focusing on the issue of commerce. Debates around public services have been a lot less visible in the public arena. Nevertheless, transformations are on their way and create tensions. If the City of Paris is strongly opposing the commodification of Sundays, it is on the other hand in favor of an extension to Sundays of opening hours for public services, and in particular cultural and sports facilities.

Traditionally, cultural or leisure facilities such as museums or theatres are open on Sundays in French cities. The reason seems rather obvious: Sunday, freed from the constraints of work, is the day of leisure *par excellence*. Sunday and leisure, in their association, bring us back to freed-up time and represent a break with regards to daily life. Yet, surprisingly, other cultural or sporting facilities remain closed on Sundays. It is often the case with swimming pools for instance. More systematically, libraries are almost all closed even though they represent the most widespread cultural facility<sup>8</sup>. In Region Ile-de-France, only 29 public libraries (*Bibliothèques Municipales*, BM) are open on Sunday (out of 956) (Plein sens, 2011). Almost all of them are only open either in the morning or in the afternoon. In view of this

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<sup>5</sup> Mayor's communication to City Council about Law n° 2009-974 of 10 August 2009. This law reaffirms the principle of Sunday downtime et aims at adapting derogations to this principle in municipalities and zones with tourism and spa activities.

<sup>6</sup> After Senator Yves Pozzo di Borgo. In: *L'Orient-Le Jour*, Samedi, 5 June 2010, "Paris dira non à l'extension des ouvertures dominicales".

<sup>7</sup> Report for the parliamentary committee in charge of having the principle of Sunday rest respected, november 2011. This principle is at the core of article L. 3132-3 of the labour code (*Code du travail*).

<sup>8</sup> 84 % of municipalities run libraries and 80% of the population resides less than ten minutes away from one of them (CREDOC, 2006).

situation, some municipalities are engaged in a revision of their BMs opening hours<sup>9</sup>. This is the case in the City of Paris, where three libraries have opened on Sundays between 2008 and 2010 (none were open on Sundays before)<sup>10</sup>, and the number will probably grow in the following years<sup>11</sup>. The positive reactions to this move are numerous: first of all because BMs are major sites of culture, leisure, self-improvement, as well as a free access facility. Second of all, because Sunday audiences are different from weekly audiences. But these changes of schedules are also the result of long and difficult negotiations with library staff. A balance needs to be found in order to secure the principle of consistent performance of public service (*continuité du service public*) in order to take into consideration the diversity of populations and temporal constraints.

The Sunday and nocturnal dynamics previously described are, according to me, a reflection of the social arrangements where the primary tends to absorb the secondary. The growing continuity of major traditional rhythms is relative to the intensification of activities during usually slow hours, slow hours which tend to decrease in importance. But it is also affecting the qualities attributed to specific moments. Thus, urban nights are getting more similar to urban days and Sundays capture some of the properties of week days. Continuity is thus not only a purely quantitative phenomenon assessed by a general increase of activities: the daytime and nocturnal landscapes of stores and services are undergoing a significant transformation and more and more tend to resemble that of other urban times.

Nighttime and Sundays also hold specific value since they represent first and foremost a break from day-to-day rhythms. On Sunday, a slow day, the continuity of the week is broken and this specific day imposes a particular rhythm to the week. Characterized by the relative absence of certain social constraints, in particular those related to work, Sundays allow for a reorganization of the social game. Yet they can only hold value for a society where work rhythms represent the dominant type of organization and where Sundays allow us to escape our every day toil.

The alternating of night and day remains the basic rhythm of human beings, for physiological as well as social reasons. It lies at the root of a dialectics balancing agitation and calm, action and rest, restlessness and quietness, tension and relaxation. Night time represents a break, a time for resting and awaiting the promise of a new day. Urban nights have been the subject of a lot of research (Sansot, 1971;

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<sup>9</sup> The opening of public libraries on Sundays in France is not a new phenomenon. Historical information appears limited and some documents tend to prove that these Sunday openings were not a rarity at the beginning of the twentieth century.

<sup>10</sup> Two non-specialized BMs (Marguerite Duras (XXth arrondissement) and Marguerite Yourcenar (XVth)) and a specialized one (François Truffaut library dedicated to cinema, IVth arrondissement).

<sup>11</sup> After our interviews with municipal workers.

Cauquelin, 1977; Espinasse and Buhagiar, 2004; Gwiazdzinski, 2005) showing how much this dark time stimulates the imagination, allows for another form of sensory and bodily experience, creates a sensation of freedom, reveals certain aspects of our personality, offers the possibility to relate differently to other people and redefines our presence in the world.

Having traditional rhythms turn into continuous ones tends to reinforce and extend the constraints and the specific operating modes of daytime and of the week, and thus reduces our ability to break free of these constraints.

### **3. Temporal injustice, social injustice and spatial injustice**

Neoliberalization banalizes Sundays and night-time and generates inequalities and social injustice. Most workers see working on Sundays or at night as a constraint, and those who work at night or on Sundays are usually unhappy about it (*Fondation pour l'innovation politique*, 2009; Gazave and Enel, 2006). The temporal discrepancy created *vis-à-vis* other people has direct implications on the organization of daily life and on one's relations to others. Amongst night workers, those working three-eight-time are the most dissatisfied. Family life is one of the major motivations to stop working at night. Incompatibilities mostly stem from not being available at home, from outside noise, relationship difficulties, the difficulty to find someone to look after the children, and even more so for single mothers or fathers. Furthermore, night-time work disturbs biological rhythms traditionally based on the alternating of day and night and thus raises public health questions. For instance, the risk of contracting breast cancer rises significantly for women working at night (Ménegaux *et. al.*, 2012).

In order to answer the desynchronization of social rhythms, the adaptation of schedules and opening hours for stores is often demanded in political and social debates. But one can wonder who will benefit from the 24/7 city. Studies show that the majority of French people judge the current opening hours of stores well adapted, contrary to that of public services and administrations (CREDOC, 2008). Less than a third of them answer that they lack the time to shop and a short majority is in favor of extended hours on Sundays. These results put into perspective the general discourses condemning the impracticality of traditional opening hours for stores. The extension of these opening hours to evenings and week-ends is mostly called for by a minority of people, a specific commercial niche: the executives and the under-35s, and even more so the under-24s.

Even though these phenomena are less studied, some injustices manifest spatially and can thus help broaden geographical research. The transformation of our life rhythms is situated in space and it transforms the geography of our territories. New

spatial injustices are created, in cities in particular. Social justice needs to be apprehended from a spatial perspective, taking into account the major role played by the public sector since space, just like time, is a political construct (Lefebvre, 1974). According to Alain Reynaud (Reynaud, 1981), public authorities must play a redistributive role in order for justice to be. To correct spontaneous evolutions, public authorities can adopt three major positions:

- They can assist, or passively arrange things. Public policies then adapt to evolutions without questioning their legitimacy;
- They can accelerate spontaneous tendencies. Public authorities then favor the most dynamic socio-spatial classes, to the detriment of others, resulting in a reinforcement of differences;
- They can correct spontaneous tendencies, or voluntarily arrange them. Public authorities then go against *laissez-faire* and individual interests in order to favor public interest.

Two major forms of spatial injustices in the city are produced by the gradual continuity of urban rhythms created by neoliberal movements.

The first form relates to the progressive deregulation of salaried time. It can be created directly by explicit policies aiming at differentiated pay according to spatial criteria. In particular, it is visible in the form of exploitation, as noted by David Harvey (Harvey, 1992) in his take on the sociological research of Marion Young (Young, 1990). Born of the capitalist system, exploitation is based on the oppression of specific social classes. The generalization of specific down-times cannot be achieved without introducing salary differentiation. On Sundays, salaries and work shifts are modulated according to each particular trade but also according to work place. The Law of 1906 allows for compensations in the form of pay increases and special arrangements of work schedules for people who work on Sundays. Yet, ever since the passing of the Maillet Law of 2009 it is not compulsory anymore to compensate workers on Sundays in tourism zones, and they do not have the possibility anymore to refuse to work on Sundays, contrary to other workers. Thus, one can see here an inequality in the redistribution of work revenues according to space, doubled by an exclusion of workers from decision processes in certain specific zones. More generally, the generalization of nighttime work or work on Sundays in some of these zones have some fear that a general reduction of compensations, not to mention a cancellation, can be the next step, as well as a hardening of requirements.

Furthermore, deregulation threatens not only to disadvantage salaried workers but also to increase specific inequalities by giving advantages to certain stores and not to others. While no economic empirical research exists on French cities, some research

in other countries have shown that the extension of opening hours for stores has an impact on the spatial and temporal accessibility of stores, on the price of goods, on the competitiveness of stores, on their location as well as on their configuration (mini-marts, supermarkets, etc.). Deregulation transforms consuming rhythms and creates territorial discrepancies. In Germany, almost all supermarkets and department stores have extended their opening hours between 1996 (the year of the deregulation) and 1998. On the other hand, numerous convenience stores there have kept their regular opening hours seeing they could not afford to pay for another salaried worker (Kosfeld, 2002). Deregulation mostly benefits chain store retail, which usually takes the opportunity to increase their prices (Tanguay *et al.*, 1995). Furthermore, the extension of opening hours is not viable for stores which do not benefit from sufficient drawing power to compensate supplementary costs (that of salaries in particular). The location of the store is an important variable: the store has to be set in a good environment and it needs advertisement to draw enough customers during atypical hours, and this is the case mostly for stores located in the central and inner city where there is significant density and commercial diversity (Kosfeld, 2002). One can thus see remarkable geographical differences as well as witness domino effects, visible for instance close to tourism zones where stores are open on Sundays. In Paris, some stores located just outside of the tourism zone of Rue des Francs-Bourgeois (4th *arrondissement*) remain open on Sundays, even when it is illegal. One can also see the development of such clusters into polarities. It is the case for instance of the Bercy-Village mall in the 13th *arrondissement*. The mall has grocery stores, clothes stores, and specialized stores illegally open 7 days a week, sometimes until 9 or 10 PM. At another scale, next to small convenience stores remaining open until late, micro-polarities can be created at specific times. Furthermore, some stores remain open at hours when benefits are low in order to build their image or to break the monopoly their competitors would hold were they the only stores open (the manager of Place Ville Marie in Montréal thus forces all stores and restaurants to open on Sundays, even though it might not be economically viable).

The second type of spatial injustice stems from a lack of comprehensive spatial regulation and is reinforced by the recent transformation of time management over the past few decades (Mallet, 2013).

On the one hand, public authorities remain incapable of proposing efficient solutions to solve time conflicts. Time conflicts can be defined as conflicts arising from simultaneous and antagonistic uses of the same space. The growing continuity of urban times strongly generates the development of such conflicts. They are the direct result of the intensification of urban *polychronie*, related to the diversity of rhythms experienced by urban spaces and their ability to generate plural uses at the same

time. Nighttime represents a specific conflictual moment and it will be even more conflictual in the following years due to the development of nighttime work, to the diversification of leisure during this period and to the geographical diffusion of nocturnal activities in all urban spaces. Yet, "the working city, the sleeping city and the partying city do not always coexist peacefully" (Gwiazdzinski, 2005: 132). Injustice is felt by various groups of people, all of whom feel they are the victim of the other groups. Taking these conflicts into consideration nowadays seems necessary to build peaceful cities with a trouble-free coexistence of all urban dwellers. Some measures are taken in order to appease tensions, such as the drafting of 'Local codes of conduct' (*Chartes locales des usages*) or of 'Nighttime charters' (*Chartes de la vie nocturne*) aiming at renewing dialogue between the different stakeholders. As conciliation tools, these charters aim at regulating the coexistence of residents, users, store-owners, etc. They imply the creation of a form of public debate, commitments on all sides, regular reporting (usually once a year). Charters are now signed in numerous French cities (in Paris, Lyon, Lille, Reims, etc.). But these non-compulsory documents are not regulatory either, they aim only at appeasing preexisting tensions and today still, no comprehensive management of time exists in cities.

On the other hand, spatial justice implies equal accessibility to urban resources for citizens. This equality is often described in Geography as conditioned by the distance between a specific facility and its user's location (Reynaud, 1981). Yet, it is also conditioned by the accessibility of that same facility. Urban services being scarcely in operation during secondary times, at night and on Sundays, public transportation or creches for instance are not easily available and sometimes even non existent. Nevertheless, measures are taken to support the current intensification of specific times: collective services rendered necessary by the growing number of people working during traditionally downtime must be put in place (creation or reinforcement of public transportation networks at night for instance). The idea of a Right-to-time is progressively making its way. Articulated as soon as the 1980s in Italy, it gave birth to "time politics" and their coordinating structures, "Bureaus of Times", the idea of which rapidly spread to several European countries (in particular to France and Germany). In 2010, the Council of Europe proclaimed "the Right to time" a fundamental right of its citizens, thus acknowledging the various measures taken in favor of a politics of time; the Council invited its member states to support the initiatives of their local authorities in this sense. Their main objective is to act upon the growing difficulties of people to manage their timetables on a daily basis. Those living counter-time lives, by choice or by obligation, must not be excluded from the practice of certain activities, nor be deprived of urban services. These actions represent a political recognition of the multiplicity of social times. They reflect the taking into account of the diversity of daily rhythms, and they tackle in particular

the difficulties of certain populations to synchronize their times to the dominant social rhythms and to the temporal evolution of major and minor rhythms.

But the recognition of the diversity of social rhythms also comes with that of the different temporal territories, reinforcing the idea that spatial justice can only happen when the heterogeneity of space is taken into consideration. Unfortunately, the temporal dimension of space is seldom part and parcel of urban projects and planning documents. It would be appropriate for planners to take into consideration the various attributes of space in relation to the opening hours of services and to their attendance; planners should indeed question the cohesion of space's rhythms. These elements all condition the accessibility of places as well as their hospitality, their localization and the transportation systems allowing the public to go there. Keeping in mind the temporal dimension of space would help facilitate a better coexistence of all activities. Compulsory measures could help limit the encroachment of activities in specific places and "temporal centralities" could be identified and supported (Ascher, 1997). According to François Ascher, "the existence of an urban area able to offer its citizens almost every possible goods and urban services on a 24/7 basis seems compatible with a certain tradition of centrality in European cities; it also seems manageable by public authorities which could more easily help disadvantaged populations access the area; this could be called chrono-urbanism". The existence of such centralities could help answer the growingly diverse uses of time.

## **Conclusion**

Urban times are transformed under the pressure of neoliberal policies, deeming the current management of Sundays and nighttime too unprofitable and non-competitive. The question of who benefits from the 24/7 city is now raised: who is this city aimed at? Certain populations profit from it, as well as certain stores, to the detriment of others. The 24/7 city also fosters rising conflicts and increasing socio-spatial inequalities.

Yet, one can wonder at the absence of strong policies, clearly and explicitly formulated, that would offer a comprehensive temporal vision for the city. Spatial injustices are on the rise, because of the progressive deregulation of salaried time and because of a lack of spatial planning counteracting spontaneous temporal transformations. This situation shows that social justice, in a context of accelerating time, cannot be studied without a taking into consideration of both space and time. The temporal dimension of society and of space deserves more attention from researchers and public authorities. Just like space, time is a social construct and the temporal environment influences society. Research anchored in geography, in urban

planning, in sociology would achieve significant findings, were the perspective of time taken into consideration, seeing that people and societies' geographical configuration is not only spatial but also temporal.

**About the authors: Sandra Mallet**, University Reims Champagne-Ardennes EA2076 Habiter - Institut d'Aménagement des Territoires, d'Environnement et d'Urbanisme de Reims

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