

Temporality and Rhythmanalysis in Brussels(*)

Exploring variations in the spatio-temporal appropriation of a multicultural metropolis

Koen De Wandeler

KU-Leuven Faculty of Architecture, Belgium

koen.dewandeler@kuleuven.be

Abstract. This paper examines the multiplicity of context-producing and context-generative agencies that realize ‘locality’ as a property of social life (Appadurai 1995). It underscores the importance of ‘time’ in this fragile social achievement through an on-going research study on rhythmanalysis and locality-building. This research was designed to help students of the KU Leuven International Master of Architecture program examine multiculturalism in Brussels. Following Lefebvre’s (1995; 2004) theory on ‘rhythmanalysis’, the study adopted a methodological orientation that emphasized the ‘lived experience’ comparable to participant observation in anthropology (Highmore 2005: 150). As this led to a broader reflection on temporality and the transience of urban realities, the study then turned to experimental group assignments on the usage of public space. This component began to explore how rhythmanalysis could tap students’ inner knowledge and insights and connect these “designerly ways of knowing” (Doucet & Janssens 2011:2) with everyday social realities. While study outcomes are yet to be finalized, they indicate that urban studies ought to integrate ‘time’ as a full-fledged fourth dimension of urban life. By including the study of ‘rhythms’ into its curricula, spatial practitioners can re-activate their part in the increasingly intangible – network-, information and media-based – production of locality.

Keywords: rhythmanalysis; temporality; multiculturalism; Brussels.

Introduction

In 1993, Arjun Appadurai (1995: 204) assessed that ‘locality’ – the realization of a local life-world – was an “inherently fragile social achievement” in a world where “spatial localization, quotidian interaction and social scale” were “*not always isomorphic*” [my italics]¹. Today, achieving this place-like quality has become even more precarious and the question how spatially oriented disciplines like architecture and planning can be part of this endeavour may well have become crucial for the survival of the *métier*.

While architectural research has by and large joined in transdisciplinary efforts to decipher the blurring contexts of localization, day-to-day practice of architects and planners remains entangled in perceptions that differentiate situated neighbourhoods from the less tangible reality of increasingly de-territorialized, diasporic and transnational communities. Yet, both dimensions of locality are often more closely and creatively interwoven than spatial practitioners acknowledge. Human motion has become the norm rather than the exception, and virtual reality is more closely merged with actual life. People over larger distances simply have come closer together, and adjacencies like this are affecting the context within which locality is being (re)produced.

This paper contends that the education of spatial professionals should integrate these features of contemporary life by emphasizing the dimension of time. To exemplify this argument it reviews an on-going research study on rhythmanalysis and locality-building in the Brussels Capital Region (BCR). It traces the study’s theoretical basis, unfolds the different phases in its methodological grounding and reviews the potential it holds for positively contributing to design processes. The final reflections offer some of the lessons learned so far and the implications these may have for the theoretical and practical education of spatial practitioners.

¹ Appadurai presented his point of view at the 1993 Decennial Conference of the Association of Social Anthropologists of the Commonwealth. The Conference explored the shifting contexts – both local and global – in which people make different orders of knowledge for themselves.

Introducing time as a fourth dimension of urban theory and practice

Until recently, mainstream urban theory and practice have often underestimated the impact of time on urban reality and complexity and, consequently, struggled with processes of change. Yet, urban life abundantly demonstrates that the element of time is gaining ever more importance.

Temporality as driver of urban change

Relaxing trade barriers and free flow of financial, material and human resources have profoundly affected economic, societal and technological conditions of urbanism on a global scale as well as at the local level. Shifting labour demands were met with greater mobility and greater freedom to move over large territories. Many cities became more heterogeneous in terms of population (ethnic origin, religious conviction, social mobility), of activities (global network, local markets, civil associations, artists' groups, street-wise gangs), and places (the CBD, the downtown bazaar, the suburban mall, the recreation areas, the slum, the gated community).

This has urged local authorities to 'rethink' the city in terms of planning, designing and management. Some tried to invigorate local economies through large-scale (re)development projects which often served private interests, triggered land speculation, gentrification and the commodification of public space. Others acknowledged that growing multiplicity was yielding a wide variety of *heterotopias* or interstices in time-space that are void and yet bursting with potential (Foucault, 1986); urbanites spontaneously re-appropriated these interstices in time-space to (re)negotiate new forms of urbanism². Information and communication technology contribute in no small way to the transience of contemporary urban life. Mobile devices equipped with gadgets and apps have become widely available. They have exacerbated the pace and intensity of temporality. Shifts back and forth between vacancy, potential, realization and neglect of real property have become more affordable and accessible. This has encouraged speculation as well as entrepreneurship and consumerism. Whilst current economic setbacks may slow down these dynamics, they also add an element of thrill that often is welcomed in today's never-ending search for novelty and trendiness.

The Polish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman (2000) summarized the above-mentioned changes as a shift from "solid" modernity to "fluid" modernity. The former was a phase where changes occurred slowly as it revolved around reducing uncertainty, chaos and insecurity and creating bureaucracy, rules and regulations. The developments of the past 50 years steered us away from a firm belief in progress and the conviction that we could make a perfectly rational world. Instead, we moved into a phase that is characterized by uncertainty, continuous risk and ever-challenging opportunity. This requires us to be constantly on our guards, flexible and ready to shift loyalties and allegiances on short notice. Bauman's perspective offers a strong argument in favour of redirecting urban research and design in a way that takes full account of temporality and tempo of change.

Phenomenology and transdisciplinarity as research and design premises

With the accelerating pace and intensity of urbanization and the mounting hardships of repeated economic recessions, architects and planners – once the pioneers of the modernist utopia – entered a period of crisis towards the late 20th century. In parallel to disciplinary anxiety about aesthetic groundings, they expressed growing concern about the environmental and ethical dimensions of the *métier*. Reflection and introspection broadened their interest in phenomenological thinkers. Triggered by Norberg-Schulz's *Genius Loci*, spatial practitioners became familiarised with concepts like 'interpretation', 'lived experience', 'place' and 'life-world'. Philosophical deliberations concurred with debates revolving around participation and user involvement in the creative process. This synergy set off a series of divergent efforts to transcend the narrow confines of the profession through

² In *The Temporary City* (2012), Bishop and Williams elaborate cutting-edge research and writings by Berlin's Urban Catalyst team (2007) and the seminal work of Haydyn and Temel (2006). This body of work provides a remarkable array of temporary projects in Germany, the Netherlands, the UK and the US. Some of these ventures were initiated by private entrepreneurs, others by local authorities and yet others through private-public partnerships. The trend is exemplified and continuously updated in websites such as: <http://popupcity.net>, <http://www.urbantactics.org/>, <http://www.meanwhitespace.com/> (all accessed on 22 July 2013).

inter-, multi-, and transdisciplinary approaches. The emergence of the latter approach ran parallel to the growing interest in transience and temporality described in the previous section. Implying a hybridisation of knowledge and modes of inquiry, 'transdisciplinarity' advocated inputs by lay-people who previously had never been taken seriously in research or professional practice.

Transdisciplinarity is "a critical and self-reflexive research approach that relates societal with scientific problems" (Jahn et al. 2012:8). It integrates discipline and profession, theory and practice, as well as the ethical dimension and the inextricable 'being-in-the-worldness' of architecture and planning praxis (Harries 1997; Doucet & Janssens 2011:2).

Rhythmanalysis: theory and application in an urban setting

Lefebvre's interest in rhythms stemmed from his life-long aspiration to link up different aspects of daily life which intellectual practice had too often kept separate: time and space, the public and the private realms, the state-political and the personal life-sphere, etc. He saw rhythm as the nexus connecting these diverse aspects.

According to Lefebvre (2004:15), rhythm occurs whenever there is "interaction between a place, a time and an expenditure of energy". He argued that this interaction nowadays is governed by clock-wise regulated time: a complex of rational rhythms is overshadowing the multiple natural rhythms of the body (respiration, heartbeat, hunger and thirst, etc.).

Taking the human body as a point of departure, one discovers the relativity of rhythms: a rhythm is only slow or fast in relation to another rhythm. Our own body is an astonishing example of *polyrhythmia*, with each organ following its own rhythm. As long as we are in good health, we take the harmonious interaction between all these rhythms, i.e. *eurhythmia*, for granted. We only come to appreciate our body's synergetic vigour once we are ill and experience *arrhythmia* - or disruption of our bodily rhythms. To complement these observations, Lefebvre (2004:67) also coined the term *isorhythmia* for the rare occurrences – such as a symphony concert – where synchronization of rhythms reaches a seamless equivalence of repetition, measure and frequency.

The internal synchronicity of bodily rhythms resonates in external *polyrhythmia*, ranging from the "bundle of rhythms" of other beings, other entities, social life, global events and even the cosmic body. Drawing on Jaulin (1973), Lefebvre (2004:95) therefore distinguished "rhythms of the self" and "rhythms of the other". He described rhythms of the self as personally inscribed rites organizing time towards private life and self-presence. Rhythms of the other, by contrast, are turned towards representation and public discourse. This seemingly polar opposition is modulated by intermediate levels, such as: "the bedroom, the apartment, the house, the street, the square and the district, finally the town – even the immediate family, the extended family, the neighbourhood, friendly relations and the city".

Lefebvre (2004:3) proclaimed rhythmanalysis - the opening and unwrapping of these distinct but intimately entwined bundles of rhythm - as "a science, a new field of knowledge [*savoir*]". It uses rhythm as a mode of analysis: a tool rather than just an object of analysis. In order to examine and re-examine temporality, rhythmanalists draws on lived experience and adopts a transdisciplinary approach bringing together widely diverse practices and types of knowledge: sociology, psychology, anthropology, economy, history, climatology, cosmology as well as poetry (the poetic) (Lefebvre, 2004:16). Rhythmanalysis essentially revolves around the correlation of natural, corporeal rhythms and rational, machine rhythms. Due to the importance of clock-wise, mechanistic rhythms in contemporary life, Lefebvre chose to exemplify his theory in urban settings³.

Testing rhythmanalytic research methods in the Brussels Capital Region

True to the transdisciplinary character of Lefebvre's theory, this research project was set off by a 'socially relevant problem' (Hirsch Hadorn 2008:431), namely the breakdown of multiculturalism as a

³ The third chapter of Lefebvre's (2004) essay describes rhythms as "Seen from the Window" set in the centre of Paris. The essay is followed by a rhythmanalytical project in which the author together with Cathérine Régulier (Lefebvre 2004: 71-100) attempted a rhythmanalysis of Mediterranean cities.

policy-norm in several European countries. The project so far unfolded into three experimental components that explored how rhythm-analytical theory measured up with actual life-worlds, how the theory could be translated into methodology, and how this methodology could be integrated into design processes. Whilst these components are analytically distinct and their inception has been carefully phased, the relationship between research and design is underlying the entire study process.

Setting the scene: the Brussels Capital Region as a de facto multicultural society

Ever since the 1960s, Europe has experienced growing migration flows as well as a proliferation of ethnic, cultural and religious heterogeneity. National and local authorities adapted a variety of multicultural “models” which, around the turn of the 21st century, began to crack up and lead to seemingly sudden eruptions of violence⁴. Although it was spared from major clashes, Brussels offered an exemplary site to re-examine multiculturalism.

The Brussels Capital Region (BCR) makes up less than 10 per cent of the Belgian population but generates close to one fifth the country’s GDP. It accounts for nearly half of all labour positions in the country’s formal economy and therefore relies on an important influx of commuters. The region has an intrinsically pluralistic tradition of governance: it accommodates not only nineteen municipalities, and the multi-layered bureaucracy of the federalized Belgian State, but also the burgeoning maze of European institutions. In parallel with this growing administrative density, Brussels evolved into an increasingly complex patchwork of social, cultural and ethnic diversity (De Wandeler & Kuhk 2009). The presence of a widely diversified migrant population made the BCR into an important node in largely informal networks that run a multi-ethnic business sector. Migrants’ settlement patterns and informal businesses operations are more or less distributed according to ethnic origin and duration of stay in the BCR. Whilst long-time settlers tend to be clustered in certain neighbourhoods, more recent arrivals are more scattered. Faced with this diversity, municipal and regional authorities often become entangled in the scattered and multi-layered complexity of mandates and tend to stifle rather than encourage the creative potential of multiplicity.

By 2010, when ‘redlining’ of so-called ‘problem areas’ had proved utterly ineffective, the author drafted a research project to examine multiculturalism through rhythm-analysis i.e.: an examination of different groups’ use of time in relation to space. The overall objective of the project was to examine how participants in a *de facto* urban multicultural society like Brussels (inter)-act. How do they get around in the city? How do they negotiate, reject and/or appropriate urban space? How do they negotiate, reject and/or appropriate an active role in urban governance, management and administration? (De Wandeler 2010:2).

Exploring the basics: International Master’s students in search of their rhythms

The first component of this project involved four consecutive batches of our Faculty’s International Master’s students. As part of their course on Urban Anthropology, students identified a respondent of the same nationality / ethnic group as their own. Data collection required close collaboration between the students and their respective respondents along four lines of inquiry:

⁴ The Flemish right-wing *Vlaams Blok* party started heavily criticizing Belgium’s policies of ‘multiculturalism’ as early as the 1980s. More polemics erupted in the Netherlands after the statements and assassination of the politician Pim Fortuyn in May 2002, and again after the November 2004 murder of the controversial film director Theo Van Gogh. Mayhem culminated in the July 2005 bombings in Britain, the November 2005 civil unrest in France, and a variety of other incidents in Denmark, Sweden and other countries.

1. Socio-cultural rhythms (e.g. festivals, religious and commemorative days) (Fig. 1)

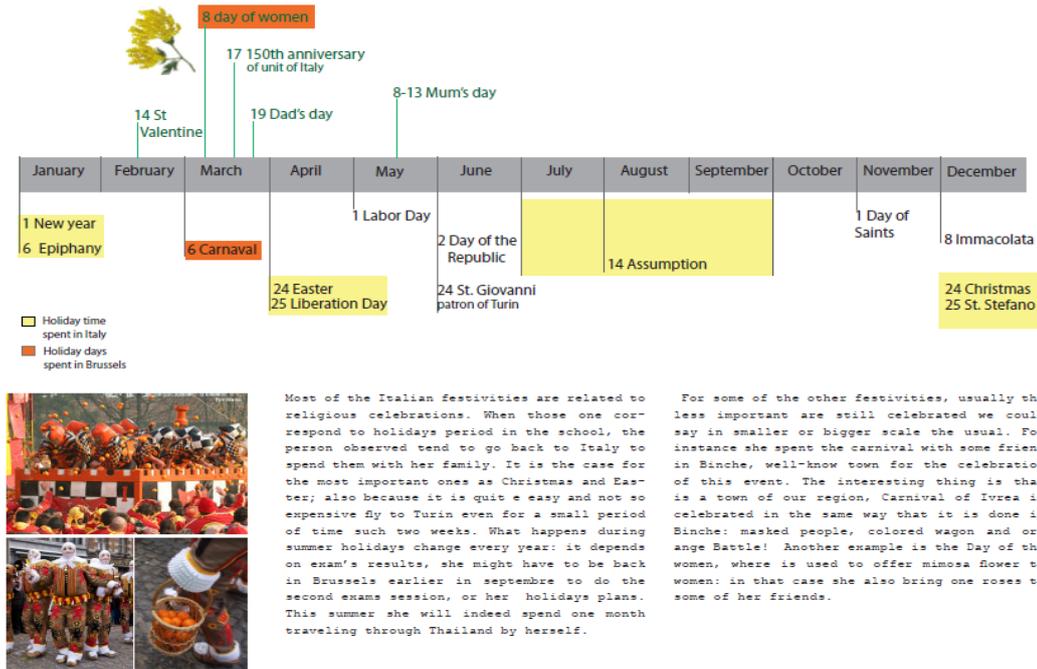
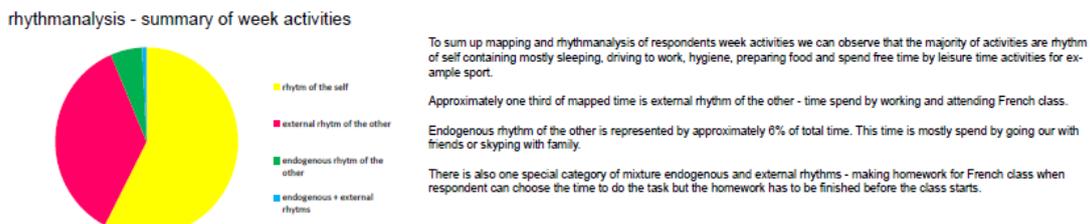
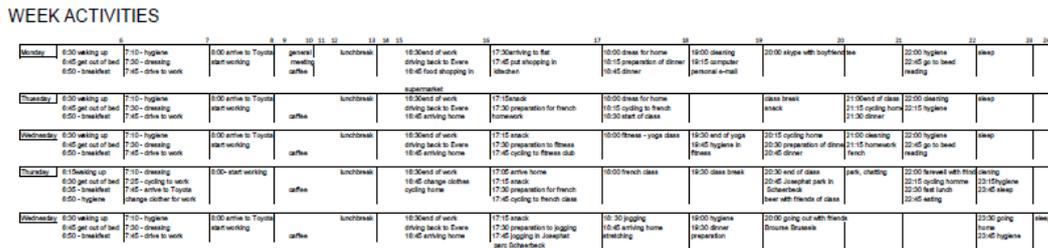


Fig. 1. Rhythmanalysis Research Project Brussels. Chart of socio-cultural rhythms and related travel. Source: Elena Bologna (2011) *Rhythmanalysis of an Italian person*

2. A detailed overview of the respondent's daily activities - over a period of minimum one week comprising five working days and one weekend.



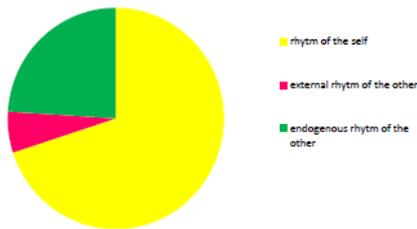
WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Saturday					10:00 wake up 10:15 hygiene 10:30 preparation breakfast 10:45 breakfast	11:00 cleaning apartments		12:00 lunch preparation	14:00 lunch 14:30 cleaning 14:00 dressing	15:10 go to city centre by bus 15:45 arriving to Rogier [Daca, coffee]	16:00 shopping 16:45 ice cream Haagen on City 2 store	18:00 Carrefour food shopping 18:30 going home	19:00 arrive home 19:15 prepare dinner 19:45 dinner	20:00 prepare travel for Sunday barbecue	20:30 cleaning	21:00 hygiene 21:30 watching movie		22:30 hygiene 23:45 sleep	
Sunday				9:30 wake up 9:45 hygiene	10:00 preparation breakfast 10:15 breakfast 10:30 cleaning 10:45 dressing	11:00 skype parents 11:30 shower 11:45 jogging	12:30 return 12:45 preparation 13:30 lunch	14:00 cleaning 14:30 nap	15:00 preparing food for friends 15:45 friends are coming	16:00 watching ice hockey championship Canada - Czech Rep.			18:00 barbecue on terrace	20:00 cleaning 20:45 computer	21:00 skype call 22:00 hygiene 22:45 magazine	23:00 sleep			

rhythmanalysis of weekend activities



rhythmanalysis - summary of weekend activities



To sum up mapping and rhythmanalysis of respondents weekend activities, respondent spend weekend according her wish. She does not have any responsibilities concerning her job.

Most of the time contains category rhythm of the self. Respondent spends time by sleeping, preparing food, hygiene, shopping, cleaning, reading books.

External rhythm of the other represents time during the respondent travels to the city centre by mean of public transportation from her home in Evere.

Endogenous rhythm of the other respondent spend her time with friends watching International hockey championship at TV. Watching hockey international matches has very strong tradition and popularity among Czech people. In fact it is the most popular sport event. That is the reason why people gather in pubs and bars or invite friend to their flats to watch the match together even in foreign countries.

Fig. 2 Rhythmanalysis Research Project Brussels. Activity sheet and overview of rhythms of self, endogenous and external rhythms during weekdays and weekends. Petra Holubová (2013), *Rhythmanalysis of a Czech person*

3. A time-space analysis of these activities, categorizing them into rhythms of the self, and endogenous or external rhythms of the other (i.e. respectively relating to second or third person interaction).

Mapping of the activity sheet

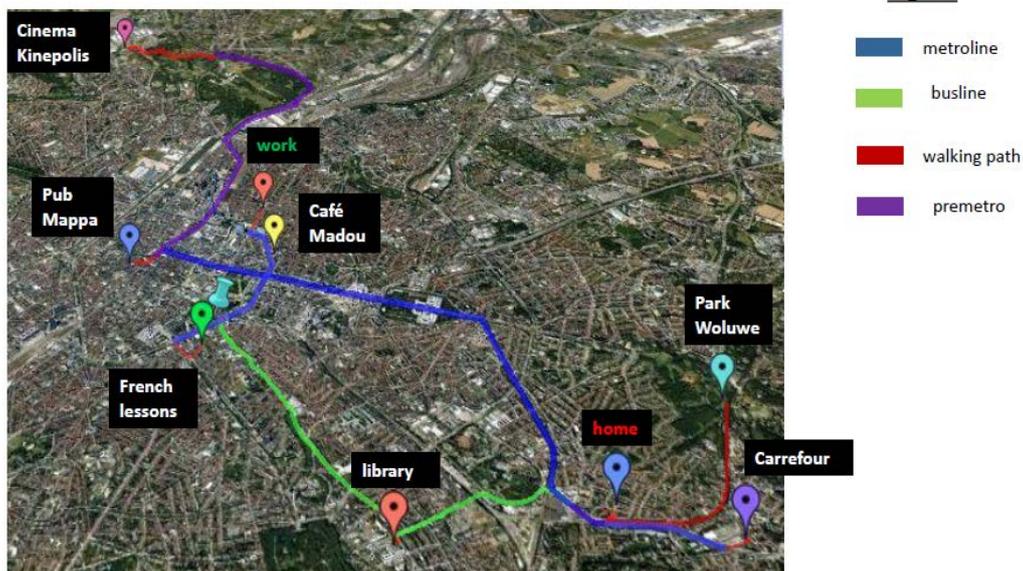


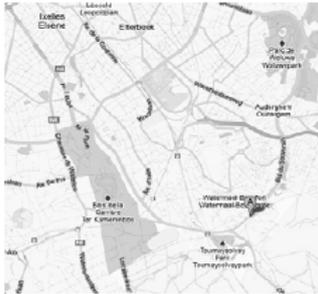
Fig. 3 Rhythmanalysis Research Project Brussels. Spatial distribution of activities and transportation modes. Source: Ralitsa Dilova (2011), *Rhythmanalysis of a Bulgarian person*

4. A participant observation of the respondent's use of public spaces.

A Sundays market that sells food, fabrics, flowers and plants, household items, and just about food, clothes, flowers and plants, craftwork and household goods and anything necessary for the house. On Sundays from 08:00-13:00. Place Gilson.

C.II JUSTIFICATION FOR THE SELECTION OF THE PUBLIC SPACE

WATERMAEL-BOITSFORT MARKET

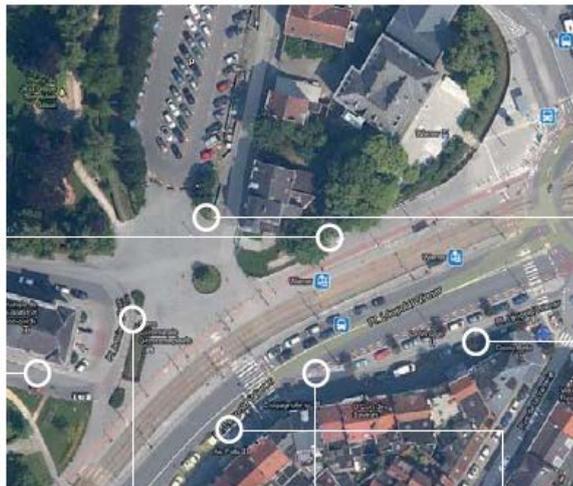


Going to markets has become a way of life for most Europeans people, especially women. In case of my respondent, she prefers to go to the Watermael-Boitsfort Market on Sunday mornings. She goes there very often together with her boyfriend or usually end up the shopping with some friends. She is the most interested to buy food and ingredients for cooking: fruit, vegetables, speciality cheeses, bread, olives, sun dried tomatoes, flowers, rotisserie chickens, fish and occasionally tarts or pastries.

She goes there regularly each Sundays. It takes only 8 minute by tram from her apartment, Weiner stop on the 94 tram.

Market is also known as being a social gathering place later in the evenings where people enjoy drinking wine, beer and a variety of foods, such as local cuisine, among tables within the market and nearby cafes. Many people agree that this market has its own unique local charm enticing people to come back over and over.

It's a fairly large market occupying a few streets along with the centre at a small square. The structure is very comfortable by its size. It caused affable atmosphere. Its width for passing through and also to have stop for shopping is suitable. There is several places for having coffee or break, where are offered chairs and small tables. Around the square are small stands with goods.



_Variations occupying space and sale of goods

_variety of possibilities of movement in space and its use

_adjustment of the initial conditions

Fig. 4 Rhythmanalysis Research Project Brussels. Graphic representation of rhythms of public space. Source: Kamila Vaničková (2011), *Rhythmanalysis of a Czech person*

Currently, near to one hundred of the most complete case studies have been inventoried for in-depth analysis. A preliminary assessment reveals several noteworthy patterns.

- Respondents' profiles strongly differed following the origin of the investigating students. Belgian students (less than 25 per cent) typically selected respondents among fellow-students, friends and relatives, who had recently settled in the BCR for study or work. Non-Belgian students – mainly EU citizens and a few from Iran, Malaysia, Morocco, Sri Lanka and Turkey – selected a far wider diversity of respondents, with an average age over thirty, well-travelled and settled in Brussels since several years. Some were married or lived together with their partner; many had a long-distance relationship in their home country, which involved regular travel back and forth.
- Observance of socio-cultural rhythms by Belgian respondents was marked by the relative ease of travelling between Brussels and their home town. They attached less importance to the observance of religious high-days than to worldly events like sports events, music festivals, etc. The younger contingent among non-Belgian respondents was not that different, but showed a greater awareness of their cultural specificity, either due to more pronounced religiosity or to their migrant status. Whenever they could not physically attend socio-cultural rhythms back home, they relied on social network- and/or video communication channels to maintain and enhance endogenous rhythms.
- Daily activity patterns of students and free-lancers largely diverged from regularly-employed people, irrespective of their place of origin. The former devoted ample time to rhythms of the self and endogenous rhythms, whereas the latter were more 'disciplined' by external rhythms. Regardless of respondents' occupation, weekday rhythms vastly diverged from those during weekends. Endogenous rhythms took up important parts of weekends and deeply affected sleeping patterns. External rhythms fell back to all but null. Time-space analyses revealed that transportation between home and places of work, study and leisure did not substantially inflate external rhythms. A possible explanation is that municipalities of the BCR have quite autonomously established their social infrastructure (health centre, kindergarten, primary and secondary schools, playgrounds, parks, etc.), and encouraged commercial activities ranging from weekly markets, fairs, groceries, local supermarkets, etc. This enabled residents to either make their daily errands by foot or avoid traffic jams by using public transportation (bus, tramway, metro, local trains).
- Students conferred with their respondents about the choice of a public space for participant observation in function of the respondent's recurrent activities. Most case studies focused on 'neutral' public spaces such as squares, parks, sport facilities, etc. As many respondents were approximately the same age as the students, quite a few went out for drinks one evening. Others invited the student to a weekly lunch with friends or colleagues, or took them to evening classes, dance school, Mass, or a country-specific cultural event. In some rare cases, students studied their respondent's working or dormitory environment.

Each case study thus unfolded into a 'lived experience' through which students established 'rapport' with respondents, recorded and discussed their ways of 'path-finding' in the BCR and took part in one of their interactions with public space. Since the assignment emphasized the 'totality' of respondents' daily activities, however, case studies in this component showed a tendency to focus on the private realm rather than on aspects of representation and public discourse. In order to offset this bias, the author designed a second component of the project to focus on the scope, relevance and importance of rhythms in the public realm.

Measuring rhythm and temporality in the public realm

With its focus on public space, this second component re-aligned the study with its initial policy-oriented character. Moreover, it sought to complement earlier case studies by examining how

rhythmanalysis can tap students' inner knowledge and insights and connect these "designerly ways of knowing" (Doucet & Janssens 2011:2) with the social realities in the public realm. To achieve this, rhythmanalytical observations of public spaces were linked to conventional design exercises like design studios and/or student workshops.

The experiment was first applied in a group assignment that overlapped as part of the 2013- design studio of our first International Master Year. The site for this studio was an area dominated by modernist office complexes and few remaining, outdated residential buildings. The; studio instructors assigned students to explore the neighbourhood and develop a scenario in line with the studio theme of "healthy life in the context of Brussels". As part of this exploratory survey, the author asked them to make a rhythmanalysis of one neighbourhood aspect that could support their scenario-building. They could examine that particular aspect through participant observation and document their observations in time-lapse annotated sketches, photographs and /or video-recordings.

The exercise permitted students to break through their initial perception of the area as a deserted, boring urban wasteland and discover the variety of usages, perceptions and time-scales that co-existed in this apparently unattractive cityscape. Several groups documented variations and mutual relations of traffic flows of cars, public transport and tourist buses, but also of cyclists, pedestrians, and joggers; they also caught dysfunctional usages of parking garages, underground pedestrian passages and a nearly abandoned railway station. One group pinpointed the experiential bareness of the area's Pacheco Boulevard by documenting differences in activity and usage of two parallel roads: the pedestrian *Rue Neuve* and the nearby *Rue Royale* which is well provided with public bus- and tramway lines. Another group underlined that inadequacy by demonstrating that resident and non-resident pedestrians preferred using the adjoining streets. And also, one group documented the accessibility, users, frequencies and durations of usage of various zones in the nearby *Botanique* public park. All groups incorporated these materials in the group's scenario development and quite a few students used these insights to elaborate their individual urban and architectural design proposals. In addition to this group assignment as part of the design studio, the reviewed Urban Anthropology course included an individual assignment similar to the one of previous years, except that the new version focused exclusively on respondents' rhythms and pathways in the public realm.

The entire exercise was repeated in academic year 2014-15, when the design studio revolved around the theme of "crossing" boundaries along the strip of urban fabric running across different neighbourhoods at either side of the Brussels' canal zone. The selected project site comprised the business-like North-quarter on the Eastern side of the canal and a predominantly residential neighbourhood on the opposite side. The Eastern side constitutes one of the largest concentrations of office towers in the Brussels municipality and is marked by the recurrent rhythm of business hours and weekly holiday. The Western side is part of the St.Jan-Molenbeek municipality: it predominantly houses migrant populations and as such, is marked by routine domestic chores, street-corner liveliness and weekly prayers-days. In addition to the group assignment as part of the design studio and the individual assignment as part of the Urban Anthropology course, the author coordinated a mid-term "crossing" workshop., it created an opportunity for students to design within a week's time an on-site installation through which they could try out the vision they had elaborated after group-work analysis of a project site. It also allowed them to experience the extent to which their installation impacted on the everyday rhythms of the residents and users of the urban space where they had chosen to set up their installation (De Wandeler 2015).

Broadening the scope through comparative studies

It is hoped that the combined results of the first two components of the study will help to better understand how citizens in a *de facto* multicultural society like the BCR interact with each other and their dwelling environment. As in other metropolises in Europe, the BCR's increasing complexity of social, economic, cultural and ethnic intricacies – associated either with gentrification and appreciating property values or with unemployment, poverty and decay – is often viewed as problematic and engendering real and perceived insecurity, intolerance and criminality. On the other

hand, discourses on multiculturalism acclaim social, ethnic and cultural diversity as a revitalizing, enriching, and indeed, endearing quality of contemporary urbanism.

However, multiculturalism is but one of the challenges of urbanization at a global scale. Despite the homogenizing spatial effects of globalization and the growing preponderance of rational, clock-wise time-schedules, the usages and experiences of time remain vastly divergent in different parts of the world. Therefore, a third component of the study is currently being implemented. It envisages to cross-examine the methodological approaches developed in the BCR through experiments in other cities in Europe and beyond. In May 2014, the author conducted a 3-day workshop with Master students of the Faculty of Architecture of the University of Belgrade. As part of the cooperation between KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture and the Department of Architecture of the University of Moratuwa, in Sri Lanka, the methodology was tested in the 2014 and 2015 design studios assignments of the fourth year B.Arch. and the Master of Urban Design programme. The accumulated experiences and lessons learned will further be explored and put in a comparative perspective in an International Conference on 'Temporality and Rhythmanalysis' scheduled at the KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture in the third quarter of 2016.

Final reflections

The support and interest shown in this research study can be viewed as a common realization that our métier needs to re-think its long-held perception of situated communities and the conventional wisdom that space-time compression is the leading symptom governing contemporary trends of urbanization. Spatial polarization on a global scale much rather seems to lead to an urban breakdown where displacement, and parallel waves of (de)colonizing new territories are opened up, new configurations emerge and new alliances wrought. These are precisely the conditions that have engendered the multicultural society that we live in today – including its potential and its shortfalls. Whilst the research presented in this paper is yet to produce conclusive results, the intermediate findings give reason to advocate that the training of spatial practitioners integrates 'time' as a full-fledged fourth dimension of urban life and, consequently, devises curricula that include the study of private and public 'rhythms' as tools to grasp and to take part in the increasingly intangible – network-, information and media-based – production of local time-space.

(* **Note:** This paper is an updated version of a paper that was first presented at the *Creative Adjacencies - New Challenges for Architecture, Design and Urbanism* Conference, held 3-6 June 2014 at the KU Leuven Faculty of Architecture, Campus Sint-Lucas Gent.

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