To the Rhythm of Shopping

– On Synchronisation in Urban Landscapes of Consumption

Mattias Kärrholm

Department of Architecture and Built Environment, LTH, Lund University,

SE 221 00 Lund, Sweden

This is the author's accepted manuscriptof: Kärrholm, M. (2009) "To The Rhythm of Shopping – On Synchronisations in Urban Landscapes of Consumption", *Social and Cultural Geography* 10 (4) pp. 421-440.

This article deals with the impact of retail rhythms on urban life and urban landscape, with a special focus on tendencies toward synchronisation. The article is divided into three sections. First, the history of synchronisations in public space is traced, and it is argued that the retail business has become an increasingly important actor in the production of urban temporal landscapes. Second, six different types of spatial synchronisation are discussed, derived from studies of the city of Malmö, Sweden. Finally, I discuss the problems associated with increased spatial synchronisation, as imposed by retail businesses, on public life and space, arguing that urban synchronisations might lead to an isorhythmic tendencies and a decrease in the territorial complexity of public space.

Key words; rhythmanalysis, territoriality, public space, landscapes of consumption

Introduction

Commercial activities and retail areas have become a larger and more influential aspect of urban space over the last decades (c.f. McMorrough 2001; Miles & Miles 2004). Public life seems, more and more, to take place within the frame of identifiable areas, such as pedestrian precincts, business improvement districts or shopping malls (Graham & Marvin 2001; Franzén 2004). Even activities that used to be more independent, such as airports, railway stations, libraries and museums, now include spaces for shopping, or even malls. It seems today, as if more and larger parts of public space are being used by commercial activities. Shopping, it has even been argued, has become "the last remaining form of public activity" (Tae-Wook Cha et. al. 2001:125). What does this imply for public space? New commercial spaces, more spare time, new mobile technologies, out-door restaurants, city festivals, etc., have contributed to a kind of renaissance of public life in the city centres (Gehl & Gemzöe 1996). At the same time, public life tends to be reduced to consumption that takes place at malls and enclaves, and social problems in public space are often handled through strategies of displacement (Smith 1996; Atkinson 2003). Commercial activities can thus be associated with a renaissance of public life, as well as with trends toward privatisation and social homogenisation.

The focus of recent research on the retail environment and public space has often been on aspects of territorialisation, and the tendency of shopping areas and malls to "withdraw from the wider urban fabric" (Graham & Marvin 2001:268), or to create non-places (Augé 1995), enclaves, malls without walls (Graham & Marvin 2001) camp-like facilities (Diken 2004), branded streets (Wrigley & Lowe 2002) or huge out-of-context complexes (Koolhaas 1995). It is true that retail areas, during the last decades, have tended to grow larger and more legible. Both inside and outside the city, retail areas are becoming larger and more homogenised, transforming parts of the city into territories of consumption (Kärrholm 2008).

A territory is here taken to be a discrete space affected and defined by a certain control or a regular set of behaviours (Sack 1986; Kärrholm 2007). The

territorial control is thus traceable as a spatial product in the life-world. Ordinary open public spaces might include territories such as bus stops, out door cafés, markets or cycle ways, but also some specific group's favourite hang-out place. However, large parts of a city might also be territorialised, e.g. when retail claims larger and larger spaces in the city producing large monfunctional retail areas (McMorrough 2001).

In addition to large-scale territorialisations we have the seemingly contradictory tendency of retail deterritorialising and spreading, making use of public places, such as railways stations, bus stations, museums, libraries, etc., for consumerism. Retailers try to organise and synchronise commercial rhythms with important urban rhythms and mobilities of everyday life. Mobile retail businesses and vendors minimise investments and rent costs by utilising public space, and their mobility allow them to synchronise with important urban rhythms. During the second part of the nineteenth and almost all of the twentieth century, this type of retailing was effectively restricted and legislated against in Western societies. Today, there is a growth in the numbers of retail businesses without fixed or specially designed territories (Cross 2000; Gregson et al. 2002).[1] If territorialisation indicates an increase of a specific spatial control, synchronisation seems to imply a de- and reterritorialisation of space where new commercial activities are added and coordinated with the existing rhythms of a place. These two trends of territorialisation and synchronisation both feed into and counteract each other in various ways. In this article, I hope to contribute to the discussion of the somewhat neglected aspect of the retail environment which, although clearly related to territorialisation, can sometimes be seen as an opposing tendency, feeding on variety rather than homogenisation – the commercialisation of urban rhythms through strategies of synchrony. The commercialisation of public space is not just about spatial control, but also about a temporal control adding new users to the rhythms of urban space and synchronising them at the same time. The aim of this article is to describe and expand on different types of retail synchronisation in order to enable a more thorough analysis on how retail take part in the transformation of public space in the urban landscape.

Henri Lefebvre suggests rhythmanalysis as a possible method of investigating everyday life (Lefebvre 2004). Lefebvre's notion focuses on rhythm as already related to space and body (cf. Simonsen 2005). The concept of the everyday, in fact already implies a rhythm – a focus on activities that occur every day – and the study of urban rhythms has recently also received some attention from geographers (e.g. Crang 2001; Amin & Thrift 2002; Mels 2004; Simpson 2008; Edensor & Holloway 2008). The urban landscape is a place of heterogeneous temporalities and rhythms set by clock time, working hours, seasons, timetables, bodily functions, etc., leaving places hectic and dense at some times and deserted others. Synchronisation is here taken to be a strategy of assembling, framing and coordinating these flows and rhythms in time. It must thus be understood as a form of con-temporality (as it is used in e.g. time-geography, cf. Crang 2001; Carlstein 1980) and not as an a-temporality (or indeed a-spatiality) as the structuralist use of synchrony/diachrony sometimes seem to imply (cf. Massey, 2005:36 ff.). As a case of synchronising one could for example study how the time tables of busses are adjusted to the schedules of schools, work hours, or the opening times of stores at week ends.

Synchronisation and territorialisation are related, and the synchronisation of steady rhythmic flows of people with the opening times of shops and malls could also be the beginning of the territorialisation of a certain shopping area such as a pedestrian precinct. Urban territories might be stabilised by material design, laws and regulation, and social behaviour, but also by means of synchronisation. By scheduling events such as markets, car-boot sales or festivals to certain places, the synchronisation also plays an important part in territorial production. On the other hand, the synchronisation of retail might also involve a deterritorialization of public space, suggesting or temporarily establishing usage that is considered improper from the perspective of a certain territorial regulation or regularity.

Together the aspect of synchronisation and territorialisation captures different aspects of how retail produces regular activities in public places. Elsewhere (Kärrholm 2005; 2007; 2008), I have investigated the territorialisations and commercialisations of public spaces. Here, I extend the analysis to consider how commercialisation of urban space and rhythms is synchronised at certain places and thus affects the activities of public place. I do this through a discussion of

the situation in Malmö and the regional urban landscape surrounding it. Malmö is Sweden's third largest city, has approximately 270.000 inhabitants, and is one of Sweden's best examples of a post-industrial city transforming into a neo-liberal and expanding regional centre. The commercialisation of the Malmö urban landscape has been quite strong during the last couple of decades and bears great resemblance to similar processes in other Swedish (and possibly European) cities. It includes the expansion of malls in the outskirts, a decline of retail in the local squares of the city districts, and a pedestrianisation of the inner city with new out-door restaurants, city festivals, events and extensive renovations of the city centre (cf. Bergman 2003; Cronholm & Bergström 2003). Malmö is the largest city in the fast expanding Skåne-region, second only to the Stockholm-region. This expansion – partly due to better connections to Copenhagen and the ongoing construction of the Öresund-region, attracting the attention of planners, the media, consumers and others – makes it an intriguing place for studies of urban transformations. Retail spaces of Skåne have expanded by 41 % during 1999-2005 and an additional 72 % increase was planned for already in 2006. Malmö municipality stands for the largest part of these expansions. (Bergström & Wikström 2002; *Handla Rätt* 2007, *SDS*).

The study of Malmö is primarily based on studies of newspaper archives and planning documents 1995-2007, but observational studies and photographic documentation was also made during some weeks in 2006 and 2007. The study is qualitiative, trying to describe the range of different kinds of retail synchronisations in Malmö. The article is part of larger research project investigating the landscapes of consumption in western Skåne.

Synchronisation of urban rhythms: A short history

Before turning to the case of Malmö, let us examine a brief spatial history of urban synchronisation as examples of its development during the industrial era in the Western world, especially as related to the phenomena of de- and resynchorisation. The reader is invited to be aware of the difference between synchronisation (a con-temporality, timing different events with each other), and synchorisation (a con-spatiality, producing different events in the same space). In time-geography these concepts have been used in discussions on innovations

and how they bind up certain times-space trajectories. Time-geography has thus been used as a way of analyzing if the resources needed for a certain innovation process meet the required needs of synchronization and synchorization (Pred 1977; Carlstein 1978; 1980:47).[2] In this article, I use the concepts in a similar, quite general way of describing two basic phenomena affecting the lifeworld. The background history sketched below gives a context to the recent changes discussed later, and shows why spatiality needs to be taken into account when we are dealing with synchronity.

Synchronising I: Desynchorisation

The planning and architecture of Western societies, from the late 18th century and onwards, was to be preoccupied with synchronic strategies, synchronising people and usages for effective production, turning the material world into a predictable, frictionless, scheduled environment by way of territoriality (Foucault 1993; Sack 1986; Markus 1993). Robin Evans has, for example, described the invention of the corridor (1997a), and how it facilitated purposeful movements and circulation by reducing all incidental communication to a minimum are procuring spatial privacy. The corridor enabled the proliferation of new territorial units within the building. Functions were separated and activities of similar kinds were synchronised by means of territorialisation, and a desynchorisation of activities in space. Evans also mentions Alexander Klein's *Functional House for Frictionless Living* (1928) as an example of how to plan a house in order to separate different types of movements within it, thus desynchorising different types of rhythms (cf. Evans 1997b). During the twentieth century this kind of logic was implemented on the large scale at urban and regional levels. In Swedish planning this was implemented e.g. through the neighbourhood model and traffic planning (Sandstedt & Franzén 1981). The street was considered dangerous and therefore freed from practically all activities except movements, as is suggested, for example in Le Corbusier's *Ville Contemporaine* 1929 (cf. Sack 1986). Different districts of the city were assigned different functions through zoning regulations. Space was homogenised and desynchorised of different activities, to produce predictable landscapes where every activity had its special place, e.g. streets were reserved for transport,

residential areas for housing, squares for retail and public activities, and children were supposed to play at playgrounds. This 'civilising process' (Elias 2000) resulted in, and was combined with, new predictable timescapes. Opening times of shops (in Sweden, retail opening hours were regulated in laws and regulations of different kinds from 1909-1972), working times, holidays, etc. became more regulated, producing synchronised rhythms of urban life. By territorialising movements and flows, modern planning also created space for both slowness (e.g. the pedestrian street) and speed (the motor way). In "Pacemaking the Modern City", Hubbard & Lilley (2004) discuss how rhythms and movements of different speeds were planned in post-war redevelopment of Coventry. Rhythms of different sorts were isolated, synchronised, and most places were turned from polyrhythmic into isorhythmic places ("a rhythm falls into place and extends over all the performers" Lefebvre 2004:68), with a bureaucratic apparatus imposing the change. Spatially, this often resulted in the implementation of a tree structure, where different kinds of territorialised movements are predetermined or anticipated by the planner, as contrasted against the spatially integrated grid plans with an integration pattern taking the form of a net or a *deformed wheel* (Hillier 1996). The neighbourhood unit was thus in a sense primarily planned movements between work place and home rather than, e.g. movements between neighbouring areas. A lot of spatial connections had to be created by the residents themselves, turning residual space into pathways and shortcuts (Wikström 2005). Time-wise, modern planning seemed to work on the basis of something like the *logic of the monastery*, where the schedules are all distinctly set and movements synchronised (Lynch 1980:127; Kwinter 2001:15ff). Artefacts and actors of synchronisation, such as bells, were mobilised in monasteries already during the early Middle ages, and soon spread to town squares and public space, followed through the centuries by others such as clock towers, watches, public loudspeakers, etc. (Kwinter 2001). A good example of scheduled life can be found in the mealtimes, work times, weekends, laundry days, vacations, paydays and other events, that were institutionalised in the modern and industrialised Western societies during the 19th and 20th centuries. These schedules and rhythms to some extent also produced and were produced by the spatial organisation of territorial division and desynchorisation.

Synchronising II – Resynchorisation

New synchronising tendencies are also of importance, and include recent changes brought about by new means of synchronising urban life, like mobile technology and information technology (Drewe 2004, Hassan 2007), new organisation of infrastructures (Graham & Marvin 2001) as well as new habits of working, shopping and spending free time (Zukin 2004). Urbanists have, since late the 1990s pointed out infrastructure as a major issue of contemporary architecture and the urban debate (Graham & Marvin 2001:32; Albrechts & Mandelbaum 2005). Time, it has been argued, is more important than distance, and commuting time is an important factor in determining the maximum size of an urban landscape: "locational strategies tend to opt for places that are optimal in terms of 'connectivity' rather than proximity" (Hajer & Zonneveld 2000:348). Others, such as Crang (2007) and Hassan (2007), have argued that the importance of fixed time and clock time is decreasing, whereas relational time is becoming more important. Usefulness is defined by a "connectedness to other times, places and activities" (Crang 2007:83). Instead of setting a fixed meeting time with a friend I might set up a meeting time on the cell phone when I reach the station, instead of scheduling a purchase to a free Saturday morning, I can use a break at work for online shopping, etc. (Crang 2007).

Kevin Lynch suggested as early as 1972, that "synchronisation is slipping its hold" (Lynch 1980:82). To some extent this might be true, but it is not the end of the story. Today, we may see fewer restrictions on opening hours, working times and holidays. However, this specific desynchronisation and destabilisation of uniform patterns of behaviour and schedules, set in an industrial era, does not imply that synchronisation as such is slipping its hold on the urban life of public space. On the contrary, as the capitalism from a Fordist mode of production is transformed to a postmodern and fluid form of flexible accumulation (Harvey 1989), the field opens up for new kinds of synchronisation initiatives. These initiatives often come from private investors such as retail businesses, sometimes made possible by new, flexible or projective forms of planning (Schönning-Sörensen 2007). Retail businesses, restaurants and cafés are among the important actors in a new trend toward synchronising and resynchorisation. Shops, of

course, contribute to urban rhythms in concrete and important ways, as they set a certain rhythms to a place, relating to e.g. opening hours, weekends, holidays, paydays, and daily cycles. Spatial commercialisation could thus be described as the adding of certain rhythms to a public place, and these rhythms need to be both synchronised and synchorised in order for the business to be profitable. Contemporary retail planners have become more skilled and powerful in the art of capitalising city rhythms. Investors and entrepreneurs have come to realise the monetary potential of relatively unexploited evenings and nights (Bianchini 1995), winter months (Gehl & Gemzöe 1996), different cultural seasons and festivals (Olsson 1998; Gannetz 2000), and of other non-retail activities such as travelling, leisure, religion, health care and culture (Leong 2001a; 2001b). The processes of synchronisation in public space are still present, although it is no longer a question of desynchorisation, but rather, as I will discuss below, of resynchorisation – things are aligned both in time and space in order to increase profits.

The commercial rhythms and synchronisations of urban space are most obvious at the shopping mall; the artificial black box of the mall could in a way even be described as a kind of rhythm machine. By keeping climate, seasonal change, and daylight outside, a kind of *tabula rasa* is produced, where commercial rhythms rein free and set the order of the day (Goss 1993; Dovey 1999; Ganetz 2001), producing their own time. The shopping mall is, however, an old invention going back at least to the mid-twentieth century. Today, the retail strategies of synchronisation are not only isolated in black boxes, they are also coupled with the resynchorisation of activities in open urban spaces, as we go from the logic of the *tabula rasa* (and spatial homogenisation) to a one more related to the *palimpsest*. The palimpsest effect, as described so wonderfully by Thomas De Quincey (1896), involves the writing of a text over an already existing text (where the old text becomes transformed from figure to background).[3] Retail businesses tend to add new rhythms to a certain place, contrasting, underlining, overwriting and transforming the old ones. This resynchorisation does not mean that we are dealing with a total simultaneity of action, or with the polyrhythmic landscapes of, for example the 19th century public streets, neither is it the total isorhythmia of modern planning. The

consumption landscapes I am talking about are better described as hierarchised polyrhythmic landscapes, such as the palimpsest. The horror of the palimpsest, according to De Quincey, was the sudden experience of everything simultaneously, when things long thought of as dead suddenly rose from their slumber, and, deprived of their chronological order, produced chaos (De Quincey 1896). The process of resynchorisation needs some kind of temporal ordering in order to become intelligible (and profitable). It is not, as we shall see, a total retreat from the regulated spaces of modernist planning back into the transformative and more unpredictable events of past public spaces, but rather to a place of intersecting territorial productions and temporally controlled hierarchic synchronisations, where the hierarchy of rhythms are determined by a capitalistic logic of consumption.

Commercial synchronisations in Malmö

Malmö has, at least in a Swedish context, been quite commercially successful during the last decade, with increasing numbers of both customers and stores, and it is has also been one of the fastest growing municipality when it comes to retail development in Skåne (*Handla rätt* 2007). The pedestrianised areas of the old city core have grown, and sales have increased with the introduction of new malls and shopping galleries. Large-scale car-oriented shopping areas have also been further developed (e.g. Svågertorp, Burlöv Center). This has brought about a commercialisation of public life, where new mono-functional territories (of retailing) are developed, and where the old city core can now be described as divided into two parts (following a figure-background logic) – one largely pedestrianised mono-functional shopping area, and 'the rest': offices, housing, institutions, and other functions, characterised by the fact that the number of shops is slowly decreasing (Kärrholm 2008). Malmö had a total of about 1800 stores in 2001, since then the number has decreased, but with a steady increase in sales and size. The central shopping district has increased sales in terms of choice product retailing, whereas everyday merchandise become increasingly available in car oriented places (*Detaljhandeln i Malmö* 1999; 2004). The centre of Malmö is advertised as a shopping city with 800 shops and 300 cafés and

restaurants. On the home page of Malmö Tourist Information we are encouraged to "Re-discover shopping, Malmö-style!" Based on studies of the retail environments of Malmö, I below present (or sketch) six different types of synchronisation: synchronization to the rhythms of retailing, movements, events, activities, bodies or collectives. These types are ways in which commercial activities synchronise urban rhythms at certain places in order to increase consumption and sales. They are not always (but sometimes) intentional strategies, but nevertheless they seem to be part in a more general tendency of resynchorization as discussed above.

Retailing

Commercial actors tend to organise in order to synchronise the timetables of their most important events, opening hours and special offers, with the intention of ensuring a critical mass of shoppers, stabilised by joint ventures and organisation. These synchronisations are most evident in the city core, where *Malmö Citysamverkan* ("City cooperation in Malmö") was founded in 1995 in order to increase sales, improve co-operation between shopkeepers, and make the city more attractive. Their strategies include giving courses at the City Academy, working for longer and better synchronised opening hours, less vandalism, better safety, and arranging events on Saturdays and holidays (www.malmocity.nu). The founding of collaborative organisations such as *Citysamverkan* became a trend during the 1990s both at local and national levels. The national equivalent, *Svenska Stadskärnor* ("Swedish city cores") was founded in 1993, with both private entrepreneurs and municipalities as interested parties. In Malmö, apart from *Citysamverkan*, there are also smaller, local organisations, like *ÖsterGruppen*, focusing more locally on the eastern part of the city core – "Our goal is to create a more attractive Östercity, our Shopping mall" (www.ostercity.se) – and *Lilla torg.* Lilla torg is a square, but since 2004 it is also a registered trademark owned by the restaurants owners around the square. In short, urban life has come to be more of a recreational public events culture, where different kinds of (often commercial) organisations produce scheduled events for recreation and consumption. In the 1960s the square Lilla Torg was an integrated part of local everyday life, with a covered market

(*saluhall*) for groceries (Korosec-Serfaty 1982), whereas today it is a thematised, museumised and to some extent privatised place, a trademark and stage for all sorts of events.

Another example of city life synchronisation in terms of organisation is the large city festivals that became popular in Sweden during the late 1980s (Olsson 1998; Bergman 2003:178; Marling & Zerlang 2007). The festival marketplace is one type, developed in the tradition of older markets, carnivals, etc., that became institutionalised and commercialised during the 1990s. (Ellin 1997:183). Malmö has one of Sweden's first (1985-) and most popular city festivals. 75% of the city inhabitants are said to visit the festival, and shopping has become a more and more important part of the festival in recent years. Since 2004, an important central street, Regementsgatan, has been temporarily pedestrianised during the festival in order to accommodate shopping.

All the scheduled events of festivals, organisations, collaborations, shop-owners etc., represent ways of creating, organising and synchronising new rhythms and flows of people throughout the year, redistributing and attracting people in an effort to increase sales as well as the predictability of customer behaviour. Through the organisation of different events they tend to evoke daily, weekly, monthly and yearly consumption rhythms of different kinds, thus turning irregular consumption into repeated and regular purchases.

A spatial parallel is the branding, thematisation and synchorisation of certain districts or streets, such as restaurant districts (Östergatan & Lilla torg), or fashion streets, such as the main artery of Malmö's pedestrian precinct (from the Central station to the shopping mall *Triangeln*), with a total of 85 fashion shops in 2007. This kind of thematisation can be found on different scales, also with indoor examples such as the planned fashion street in one of the larger regional malls, *Center Syd*.

In short, there has been a clear tendency of organising, synchronizing and resynchorising different kinds of retail businesses with each other in Malmö during the last couple of decades. This has been done through large-scale events such as *Malmöfestivalen*, and small scale events such as the beach volleyball tournament at Lilla torg, or through advertisement campaigns both in the centre and at the retail areas in the outskirts.

Flows and movements

A second type of synchronisation is that of retailing adjusting to important spaces for urban flows and movements. Retailing is dependent on public space and a steady flow of people, and shops have always tended to be located at places where people pass by, e.g. on the most spatially integrated city streets (Hillier 1996). With the increasing importance of the car as well as of different forms of public transport, these localisation patterns have become more complex, as flows of different character emerge. The Swedish retail environment has changed over the last decades, and a lot of retail business has moved from local areas and neighbourhoods to car-oriented places in the outskirts and (sometimes) to pedestrianised areas of the old city cores with good access to parking and public transport. The average distance from home to store has thus increased (Franzén 2004). These changes, however, are not just a question of relocation but a shift where distance seems to become less important and spatial integration and connectivity more so (cf. Hassan 2007). Shops, from grocery stores to petrol stations, have decreased dramatically in number over the last decades (Boverket 2004), but the ones that do prosper are usually big and well-connected to important nodes and arteries of the urban landscape. These places are often coordinated with advertisements. Commercial advertisers utilise urban rhythms, e.g. of people commuting to work. Large billboards are placed at important places, along pedestrian streets, highway exits, bus stops, train stations, etc. (Cronin 2006).

In Malmö, retailing has largely adjusted to interurban flows during the last decennium. The concept of route planning (*stråkplanering*) has also become important in Malmö planning, with projects that focus on routes such as Bennets väg and Norra Industrigatan (cf. Persson 2004; *Agora* 2006). The commercialisation of important routes is also an important part of the proliferation of big box retail landscapes organised along e.g. Agnesfridsvägen.

The largest retail investments in Malmö focus primarily on regional rather than intra-urban movements. The increasing number of shops at train stations, bus stations and airports are one aspect of this focus, and there are also large-scale examples. Svågertorp and Hyllievång, the two largest shopping areas in progress

(the first with about 30 hectare of “category killers”, the second with plans for a mall of 70,000 square meters) are being planned in conjunction with the first Swedish highway exit, and the first Swedish train stop on the line from Copenhagen, Denmark. Another example is *Stadens entré* (The Gate of the City), a large projected entertainment centre with 25,000 square meters of shops and 11,000 square meters of entertainment (cinemas, restaurants etc.), located at the east entrance of the Malmö city core (one of the main ways into the city) just next to the bus hub at Värnhemstorget.

The increasing synchronisations of retail with movements in Malmö also include a small increase of mobile vendors, such as food vendors outside large work places like the University, or transport nodes like the Railway Station. However, the tendency primarily involve a more permanent resynchorisation of fixed retail businesses and shopping centres with important communication centres and transit nodes of the urban landscape, such as Hyllie and Värnhem.

Cultural events

A third type of synchronisation is that of retail activity to the rhythms of cosmological and cultural seasons, or other kinds of more or less institutionalised moments such as paydays and rush hours. One important modern example of temporal adjustment to institutionalised events is the prolongation of opening hours to evenings and weekends, the proliferation of after-hour supermarkets etc., that has been going on since the 1960s to adjust opening hours to people’s non-working time (Bergman 2003; Gehl & Gemzöe 1996). In Sweden, unregulated opening hours were introduced in 1972, but the trade unions have since worked for regulation, and today the topic is still debated. The shop owners in Malmö and Lund are currently discussing opening hours, suggesting a shift to later hours in order to better coincide with after-work time (and the opening hours of shopping malls). In some parts of Malmö (Lilla torg, Östergatan), we can also see how restaurants, night clubs and night-time entertainment blend with shops, keeping the city populated both day and night (cf. Bianchini 1995). Related to this is also the prolongation of seasonal activities, where outdoor restaurant try to exploit a longer season. In 2000, there

was a clear increase in the number of open air cafés that applied for, and were granted permits to serve, even during winter months in Malmö.

There are also synchronisations that adjust, and indeed transform, cultural seasons and holidays. Retail businesses profit from cultural seasons by reconstructing them as commercial seasons: School start, Halloween, Father's Day, Christmas, Valentine's day, Winter sports holiday, Mother's Day, and Summer (Ganetz 2004; cf. Goss 1993) have all become transformed by association with, and production of, specific advertisements, special offers, events and sales. The commercial seasons of summer, autumn, Christmas, etc. do not coincide perfectly with their cultural or cosmological equivalents. At the mall "autumn" begins in mid-August when the children go back to school, Christmas starts just after Halloween but is over before New Year's Eve (and not as traditionally in Sweden at "Tjugondag Knut", twenty days after Christmas) – in short, retailers use the seasons to create new rhythms shaped according to the logic of commerce (Ganetz 2004; Cronin 2006). In the end, this impacts on the role, scope, and even dates of cultural holidays and seasons. Malmö has, of course, its share of Christmas fairs, markets, sports events, festivals, etc. Their effects are quite massive today, mostly owing to the improved organisation of commercial actors and shopkeepers, as described above. Commercial seasons, such as Christmas are large spectacles imbuing the urban landscape as a whole. The synchronisation of retailing with seasons and moments also contributes to the territorialisation of public places (at the relevant times); as well as producing a kind of metaphorical territories, where the object of control and 'ownership' is not a certain area but a certain date or moment in time, such as night, winter, Christmas or Halloween (introduced in Sweden by retail businesses as recently as 1995). Cultural events have also become an important part in the investments of a growing Malmö tourist industry. Continuous 365-days-a-year events as well as more spectacular once-in-a-lifetime events are important parts in the strategy of attracting more tourists to Malmö. A telling example of these investments is the skate park of Västra hamnen, inaugurated 2006. Other examples are the big multi-arena for fifteen thousand visitors in Hyllie, and the football stadium with a capacity for 25.000 visitors – both expected to be ready at 2009-2010 (*SDS; En region i världsklass* 2007).

During the twenty-first century we have also witnessed an increase in public and private moments adjusting to shopping. For example, people can now vote in national elections at the shopping mall *Mobilia* in Malmö, or get married at the shopping mall *Center Syd* in Löddeköpinge, and Swedish taxation authorities have at times set up offices at a number of shopping malls to help people with their income tax returns. This could be regarded as an interesting interplay where public events feed on retail rhythms and vice versa, but it also means that public events play a part in the increasing importance and further legitimisation of retail rhythms.

Activities

A fourth type of synchronisation that has received attention in recent years is the synchronisation of retail activity with the rhythms of other non-retail activities such as museums, libraries, airports, cruises, petrol stations, etc. (Leong, 2001b; Miles & Miles 2004). These phenomena are referred to as *captured markets*, and also described as spaces for "pleasurable waiting" (Lloyd 2003:107). *Hosted markets* would, from my point of view, be a better term since some of them, such as libraries and petrol stations, are not so much spaces of 'captured consumers', but activities hosting retailing opportunities.

Airports are well-known, paradigmatic examples of how shopping has adjusted to the rhythm of air travelling – and vice versa (hybridising the functions of both shopping and air travelling). Airport passengers only have a limited amount of time, so the strategy is to make as high profits as possible in this time. This implies a focus on known brands (quick and easy to recognise), recognisable shop types, expensive commodities, large entrances, no shop windows (no window-shopping), a lot of product exposure, and commodities traditionally sold behind a counter becoming self-service. Queues are minimised and shops must be spatially intelligible, so the customers can see the scope of the retail space and the exit when entering (Freathy & O'Connell 1998; Lloyd 2003).

In Malmö, the number of hosted markets has more than doubled during the past decade. The City Art Gallery, the City Library, and museums have all introduced, developed or expanded their shops. The numbers of shops at older

retail spots such as the local airports (Sturup and Kastrup) and the railway station have increased. One can also see more and more "total environments", both on large and small scales that mix restaurants and cafés with entertainment, playgrounds for children, and shopping of different kinds (Big Bowl, Laser Dome, *Stadens entré*, IKEA, etc.). Shopping has become integrated with a number of previously more autonomous activities and enterprises. Book stores become cafés and even wine bars. Malmö public services invite shopping, but public services also find their way out to the Malmö malls, e.g. Systembolaget (The Swedish Alcohol Retail Monopoly) and Apoteket (The Swedish Pharmacy Retail Monopoly). This type of synchronization is perhaps the one that feed most strongly upon a process of resynchorisation, adding retail to activities that often were regarded as separated in the planning of e.g. the 1960s and 1970s.

Bodily rhythms

A fifth type of synchronisation is the synchronisation of retailing with various bodily rhythms. The intention underpinning utilising bodily rhythms is often to get people to spend more of their time in retail environments. Retail designers try to make use of and feed upon different body rhythms such as pace, hunger, fatigue and thirst, e.g. through commercial food courts (Bell 2007). Two of the earliest twentieth century strategies of adjusting to body rhythms were escalators and muzak, both introduced to keep shoppers on the move, to set the pace (Leong 2001a). The synchronisation of shopping with certain body rhythms has also led to the development of phenomena such as eatertainment and entertainment retailing. In order to keep shoppers at the mall, pedestrian precinct, store, etc., shopping opportunities are combined with good seating facilities, food, drinks and entertainment. When a bodily rhythm such as hunger sets in, shopping for commodities can shift to shopping for food, and the synchronisation of rhythms thus enables a body, exhausted from a certain rhythm, to rest for a moment by tuning into another. The body has been described by Lefebvre as a "bundle of rhythms" (Lefebvre 2004:80) with each part of the body having its own rhythm. The body thus produces polyrhythmia and eurhythmia, a plenitude of different but associated rhythms (Lefebvre 2004). At a deeper level, this synchronisation of shopping with the rhythms of the body

"links our embodied biographical movements in the city with the biographies of commodities" (Cronin 2004:12). The life cycles of commodities, jingles, etc., follow us, and we may associate them with certain times in our lives. By nurturing and caring for our bodily rhythms, the retail environment has also come to play a new and, in one way, more important role in our lives. Bodily rhythms, although vital, are often unreflected and tacit. This fifth type of synchronisation might therefore act in subtle ways, but it may very well have a much larger impact than realised at first (cf. Thrift 2004 on tendencies to politicise the "the simple fact of living itself", Thrift 2004:147). In Malmö, this growing awareness of bodily rhythms is quite explicit in many new commercial investments, such as the cropping up of restaurants and cafés in the central shopping districts, cafés inside stores, the entertainment centre *Stadens entré*, a massive increase of outdoor seating facilities on the pedestrian streets, etc. There were 225 outdoor restaurants with permits in Malmö 2004. When some of these permits got extended during the winter months, this was criticised by *Apoteket* since they thought that it encouraged people to smoke more (another bodily rhythm produced and cared for by commercial businesses). Another aspect of this is the recent pedestrianisation of Malmö inner city, with new smooth surfaces, automatic doors and increased seating possibilities. A small square like Lilla torg now has seating possibilities for 2000 guests in summertime, making it a kind of oasis (for paying customers, that is) in the shopping district of central Malmö.

Groups and collectives

A sixth type of synchronisation is the that of retail synchronising with the schedules, rhythms or needs of certain collectives or constellations such as car owners, parents with prams, parents on parental leave, young people, retired people, students, children, etc. This is often one aspect of a strategy aiming to influence the identity of shoppers, (cf. Miller et. al. 1998; Zukin 2004) as well as to shape commercial cultures, and to commodify cultural differences (Jackson et. al. 2000). The opening of the new central, conceptual mall *Storgatan* in Malmö 2001 (with only fashion stores) got a lot of headlines when it announced "Under 30" as its slogan, referring to young people under 30 years of age as their main

target group. Shopping malls outside the city centre like Nova Lund often focus on families, with facilities such as toy stores, game stores, fashion stores and fast food restaurants. Some cinemas have introduced specific afternoon screening for adults with infants called “mamma-bio”, where staff takes care of sleeping infants as their mother or father watches the film. Conceptual retail producing, or trying to produce, profit on certain groups have been increasing since the late 1990s. A striking example is the increasing number of retail clubs, membership cards, etc., that are produced by different companies in order to create fidelity among their customers (*SDS*).

This type of synchronization might at first seem to desynchorise (i.e. spatially segregate) different groups of people, but the tendency is not so much a desynchorization as a differentiation of different groups within the same spaces through scheduling, membership cards, etc. Different groups and activities might thus be spatially integrated (resynchorised), but at the same time temporally segregated. This is thus one of the most evident ways in which time-organisation strategies striate consumers into different niches, often constructed and defined by the retail business, but sometimes also in an effort of attracting already existing groups. Differentiation through group synchronization is, however, often combined with other strategies. Retail adjusting to a time poor consumer or shift workers involve synchronization with flows (of e.g. busses and trains), and activities (waiting at the bus or train), certain hours (night time, early mornings), whereas retail adjusted to time rich consumers (e.g. students or retired people) involve synchronization with certain activities (such as recreational activities), bodies (bodily functions such as thirst and hunger) and retail (shopping facilities).

Synchronisation and territorialisation: towards isorhythmic public space?

The six types of synchronisation are an analytical way of presenting different aspects of the spatial synchronisation of retail of urban life. These types are always entangled and act together to maximise effects. They are general phenomena at the very core of retail activity and have, as such, probably been present for as long as there has been retail business. The point is, however, that

today (in Malmö, and, I imagine, in a lot of other cities); one can observe these synchronisations on a scale and of a pace that seems so manifest and stable that it calls for further investigation. Furthermore, these tendencies seem to go hand in hand with a *resynchorization* that enables retail to feed upon existing or constructed urban rhythms. Today, one need not go to a shopping mall in order to observe how commercial actors organise and synchronise different rhythms. It is easily recognised all over the urban landscape, and is reshaping it. How then do these synchronisations affect public space and life? They bring about a certain amount of synchorisation, a kind of palimpsest effect that to some extent breaks with the spatial homogenisation of modern planning and architecture (as sketched above). On the one hand, they open up for new possibilities in space, while on the other they increase temporal and privatised control, of certain occasions. I deal with this question by relating synchronisation to territorialisation, since synchronisations also form part of different territorial productions; retailing territorialises public space by way of rhythms and strategies of time. Deleuze & Guattari have developed a view on territories as not static or pre-given, but always ongoing and becoming. They have done this through the use of musical metaphors (taking their cue from animal territoriality, as birds sing to mark their territory). Each territory is shaped by a certain rhythmic activity or refrain, constituting the base for different melodies, signals or loops (Deleuze & Guattari 1988). In fact, territorialisations and territories have everything to do with movement and becomings. Territories need to be maintained and nursed in order to be effective, and the management of territories often involves strategies of time.

Synchronised and synchorised rhythms are part of a spatio-temporal ordering and thus they can not help but to take part in some kind of territorialisation process. However, the new resynchorising tendency of retail synchronisation indicates that these territorial effects are not about territorial division as they used to be in the days of modernist planning. Rather than a simple relation between one type of synchronisation and a certain territorial production, we have a process that affect the territorial composition of public space in Malmö.

Traditional public places in Malmö are often the venue of several intermingling territorial productions. A square could, during the same week, or even day, be

the place of markets, demonstrations, parking lots, skaters, gangs of youth, children playing, etc., all producing some sort of more or less stable territories. One possible description of public space as a space of sociability and accessibility (cf. Madanipur 2003) could thus be in terms of *territorial complexities* (Kärrholm 2005), where a lot of different territorial productions intermingle at a place in order to grant a certain accessibility for different groups and usages. Following the concept of complexity as put forward by Law and Mol (2002), one could describe a territorial complexity by elaborating on three crucial aspects. First, territorial complexity at a place is characterised by a large number of territorial productions. Secondly, it is characterised by multi-layered territorial productions. These overlapping productions might follow different rhythms shifting between absence and presence during the day, the week, the year, or due to the weather, etc. Thirdly, territorial complexity is characterised by non-hierarcichal relationships among different territorial productions. Within territorial complexity one might expect that different territorial productions are not reduced to units within a larger scheme (such as parking spaces in a parking lot, or shops in a mall),

In places of territorial complexity, the access to a place has to be subdivided (in time or space) to accommodate different uses, and to make room for as many different territorial productions as possible. A certain degree of territorial sorting and overlapping could very well result in a much higher degree of accessibility (Hajer & Reijndorp 2001:120f.), as spatial rules and conventions enable us to act (and co-act) in different ways. Several territorial orders also indicate several possibilities, and the danger of an exclusive one-sided spatial use does not just lie in territorial homogenisation (of one territorial production becoming more stable), but in a place lacking superimposed territorial productions. Public space could then be described as constituted by the territorial productions of a certain place, and although such a description does not cover the full scope of the concept of “public”, it nevertheless provides us with a useful metaphor. [4]

The current trend towards the synchronisation of retail with urban rhythms, often adds to the number of territories at public places, but the addition of territorial productions does not necessarily lead to a greater degree of complexity, since the addition of territorial productions are synchronised so that they only follow one

or a few rhythms, mainly controlled by commercial interests. In the new public spaces of the Malmö shopping districts, activities are resynchorised. New activities, events, collectives, flows, etc., are added but also ordered by way of synchronisation. Commercial actors utilise existing rhythms, enhance them and rewrite them, and consequently tend to hierarchise polyrhythmic landscapes of local life according to a logic of consumption. Or, they might produce an isorhythmia, reducing complexity not primarily by turning orders into a singular order (as in the modernistic tendency of spatial homogenisation), but by inscribing different orders in a system guided by a common denominator (the rhythms of consumption). If polyrhythmia indicates diverse rhythms, isorhythmia is when temporalities coincide and are orchestrated as if they were under a conductor's baton (Lefebvre 2004:67). Complexity is not just dependent on the number of entities that constitute it, but also on the structuring of those entitites The territorial complexity of Malmö public places is thus both sustained, by new territorial productions, and impoverished, by a temporal ordering that structure these productions following a single purpose. As the number of territorial productions becomes scheduled, opportunities for the unexpected decrease. When writers and planners speak enthusiastically of an urban renaissance and new public life, they tend to forget that in addition to the spatial homogenisation (as discussed by Smith 1995, Katz 2001, Zukin 1995, etc.) there is also the potential danger of temporal homogeneity. Owing to its extra-territorial nature, isorhythmia might affect the urban landscape as a whole, suggesting rhythms, schedules, movements, moments, etc., that simultaneously apply to different areas of the city. Specific events such as the Malmö City festival, specific shopping areas like the City or Svågertorp, or commercial seasons such as Christmas affect the whole region.

Although individual or 'grassroot' resistances to commercial rhythms are always possible and present (Certeau 1987), also in Malmö, public initiatives in this field seem to be uncommon. There are, however, a few new public initiatives that may be seen as a possible (but in no way exhaustive) way of tackling or even counteracting this kind of development. In planning, the explicit notions of time and urban time policies have been developed in Italy, from the late 1980s (Belloni 1998; Mareggi 2002). In 2000, "Territorial Timetable Plans" became

compulsory for Italian municipalities with more than 30,000 inhabitants. These time plans co-ordinate opening and closing hours of public services (schools, libraries, public offices, etc.), synchronising opening hours with peoples non-working time, and they desynchronise certain movements in order to decongest rush hours (Mareggi 2002). Such efforts are laudable, since it is not synchronicity *per se* that poses a threat to the complexity of urban life, but isorhythmia.

Concluding Remarks

New rhythms and cycles were introduced with the advent of the industrial society, i.e. the linear, dominating rhythms of production (Lefebvre 1991). Today, the rhythms of consumption are becoming increasingly important, and differ somewhat from these as they are considerably more adjustable and flexible (although the rhythms of production have also changed in this direction, c.f. Sennett 1998). The rhythms of consumption are sensitive to existing cosmic, cultural and corporeal rhythms, and retail businesses are often manipulative in trying to find ways of utilising these as they increasingly take part in a resynchorising synchronisation of urban life. This can be noticed in Malmö, where a formerly multi-functional and polyrhythmic city core look more and more like a rhythm box for the synchronised beats and refrains of consumption. But it can just as well be observed in the shopping malls of the outskirts, where suddenly new and public activities are made possible such as buying medicines or liquor (from State-owned *Apoteket* or *Systembolaget*) attending marriages, filling in tax forms and even voting for Parliament.

Today, it seems that the rhythms of consumption are always there, whatever we do, we can always do it to the rhythm of shopping. The commercialisation of the rhythms of seasons, movements, bodies and activities do perhaps create a certain sense of security, but this ubiquity is also a distraction that to some extent might slow down the evolution of diversity, new experiences and cultures (Young 1989: 180 ff.). One could also, easily argue that these rhythms are not for everyone, and not all people's everyday lives are synchronised to retail. There are in Malmö, as in a lot of other places, large groups living far from both shopping mall and city centre that do not have the money, means or interest to

make use of this new timescape. Indeed, it seems fair to argue that aspects of gentrification, homogenisation and exclusion need to be analysed as temporal and not just spatial phenomena.

Rhythms are “differences with repetition” (Lefebvre 2004:90), and thus always carry a seed for change. The possibilities of change are also an important factor in the strategies of commercial enterprise, as they feed upon trends and new rhythms in society. Commercial actors are thus not only dependent on the knowledge of the rhythms of urban life, but also on the polyrhythmic activities themselves, since total predictability, stabilisation and stagnation equals death to commercial profits and the production of new desires. However, in order to prevent the commercial rhythms from reign freely and continuing a kind of mallification of public places of the urban landscape, these activities need to be balanced or at least acknowledged in planning, e.g. by considering these aspects in urban time policies. The effects of retail synchronisation might look benign at first, but they are important to acknowledge, since they tend to influence the whole of the urban landscape. Strategies of synchronisation might seem to bring heterogeneity or synchority from the local perspective of a specific public place, as they introduce new activities or colonise new places or times. Such a view could, however, be deceptive, since these additions come with an isorhythmia that not only affects the territory or place at hand, but also the structural relationship between different kinds of territorial productions, contributing to large-scale transformations, the exclusion of certain groups and de-autonomisation of certain functions. Although retail areas are concentrated and tend to be localised to fewer (but larger) places, the urban landscape as a whole is influenced by and adjusts to these shopping-oriented temporalities.

Acknowledgments

The supportive suggestions of the anonymous referees are gratefully acknowledged. The work reported in this paper was financed by the Swedish research council FORMAS.

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[1] Certainly, other kinds of 'mobile vendours' exist as well, for example in the genre of domesticated leisure and consumption (on-line shopping, dial takeouts, home deliveries, watching movies on-line, etc.). However, in this article I focus on the impact of retail on the activities of urban public places. Although relations between public life and the increase in domesticated on-line shopping have been noted (mostly negative), they are not the focus of this paper.

[2] Cf. Carlstein: "The synchronization of resources and the substitution between resources must thus be seen in spatial context of how they are synchorized in space and coupled in time-space". (Carlstein 1978:157).

[3] A palimpsest is according to De Quincey in his text "The palimpsest of the human brain", "a membrane or roll cleansed of its manuscript by reiterated succession", (De Quincey 1896:341). Freud later used the same metaphor, comparing the human brain to the city of Rome (Amin & Thrift, 2002:19 ff.).

[4] This description bears some resemblance to public space as seen through the eyes of e.g. Goffman, Jacobs, Lofland and Sennett, (Madanipour 2003).