

**Author: Günter Warsewa**

**Title: SHAPING THE CITY BY CHANGING THE TIMES**

Dr. Günter Warsewa  
IAW (Institute Labour and Economics)  
University of Bremen  
Parkallee 39  
D – 28209 Bremen

**Telephone:** +49/421/218-4207 or –3407 (Secr.)

**Fax:** +49/421/218-2680

**Email:** [gwarsewa@iaw.uni-bremen.de](mailto:gwarsewa@iaw.uni-bremen.de)

### **1. Time and modern city-life: pinboard-families, patchwork-biographies, labour-guerilleros, time-jugglers.....**

The well-known basic trends like globalisation, transformation to service and information economy, demographic and social changes (individualisation, pluralisation, over-aging etc.) produce in all western countries a number of effects, which are widely discussed and more or less a matter of common knowledge. But with all these processes we also recognize some phenomena, which did not find their way into the public awareness yet – at least as far as the european discussions are concerned: Modern all days life means – and not at least – to handle a growing number of different time-problems and time-conflicts. These are for example:

- The management of a modern family, whose members increasingly communicate by mobile phone and notes on the pinboard;
- The biographical planning of couples, who don't have a chance for professional careers at the same place and for this reason have to abstain from getting and raising children;
- The coping with unforeseen accidents in the rigid organisation of the family's normal life – e.g. if the child falls sick or lessons at school are cancelled;
- The still unequal division of tasks, burdens und chances between men and women, what - not at least - produces many different temporal loads;
- The waste of individual time by urban mobility systems: if the diversity of flexible working schedules is growing steadily, the big and inflexible means of mass transportation become more and more unefficient;
- The growing number of conflicts between different patterns of time-use: When the consumers of culture, businesspeople or tourists want to amuse themselves, other

people in the same places want to sleep and to recover; where modern service people from scientific-, media-, culture- or technologysectors are mixing work, housing, amusement inseparably, there is only little space and clearance for kids, old or disabled people.

This list could easily be continued and the whole variety of these examples demonstrate, that above all it is a problem of cities and of modern city-life, where time-conflicts have stepped up enormously with the social destandardisations in the last decades. Certainly urban life is not possible without time-problems and time-conflicts: conflicts between different rhythms and patterns, between individuals or social groups and institutions, between different kinds of using time, but - in european countries - there might have been two reasons, which prevented time-conflicts to become a serious and important issue of public and political debates: It seems as if time-conflicts are only to understand in a strongly integrating perspective, which takes into account very many different causes and effects; secondly the coping with time-problems is in western societies normally referred to the responsibility of the individuals, the families and households. As a societal or even political issue the shaping of times was not on the agenda so far.

While nowadays the increasing number of these conflicts leads to a new relevance, the search for solutions and the active implementation of an urban time-policy becomes more and more necessary. The evidence of this thesis shows in many debates, which are lead in european countries: Disputes about opening hours, working times, opening times of child care institutions and schools, time schedules of public transport, revitalizing of city centres and quarters are always disputes about different kinds of time-conflicts, which will even more in future play an important role for the development of our cities.

## **2. The social-spatial-temporal structure of the city**

Since long time it is an undisputed fact that modern cities are dividing rapidly and with growing velocity into unclear and deeply segmented parts. This development had been described and analysed on the whole as a process of social segmentation, which appears in many different forms (e.g. the emergence of a ‚new urban underclass‘, ethnic segmentation, school segregation, multiplication of demands and interests, social inclusion and exclusion). At the same time these processes do also determine the image and the spatial structure of the city. Spatial effects can even increase the dramatic of social processes, under certain conditions they might however reduce and mitigate the social dynamics. (Kronauer 2002). In any case the social dynamics are reflected by those changings of the spatial structures, which – from the emergence of an urban sprawl to residential segregation and the confrontation of ‚gated communities‘ and ‚broken window quarters‘ or ‚no go areas‘ and up to a big variety of areas with different functions – can be found in nearly all bigger cities in the world.

These social and spatial changes are merging in a way, that seems to very deeply question the traditional idea of the european city and her understanding of urbanity and urban life. At first the town appears to loose her clearly defined boundaries and identifiable shape; and secondly - not at least pushed forward by this development – it becomes increasingly difficult to perceive the social structure of the city as a binding and – despite all disparities and unequalities – community causing unity for all of her inhabitants (Göschel 2000; Löw 2002). Additionally we have to consider that in todays cities it cannot be taken for granted any longer that only the needs and interests of the

inhabitants have to be the standard for the organization and the development of the towns. Even when the number of citizens is decreasing the modern town has to take into account the particular demands of growing groups of temporarily visitors and users (like tourists, businesspeople, students, commuters, visitors of leisure or culture events etc.) and offer adequate services and infrastructures for those groups (Martinotti 1996).

The new „city of differences“ (Venturi 2003) however does not arise only from the deepening and radicalization of social and spatial dynamics. Since some times it becomes evident, that the above mentioned developments are closely correlated with chronological differences (Mückenberger 2000; Henckel 2000; Henckel/Eberling 2002; Venturi 2003). Disparate rhythms, temporal guidelines and schedules, patterns of time-use and activities create a third dimension of urban development, which has found only little consideration in the scientific research and in the political and planning processes.

To operate with temporal structures in scientific analyses and in concrete research work, we have to consider that the dimension of time itself is a multi-dimensional construction. The few existing works on the interrelationship between „town“ and „time“ in Europe prove this:

- The working group of Sandra Bonfiglioli at the Politecnico di Milano has coined the concept of „chronotopes“ (Bonfiglioli u.a. 2002). Chronotopes in their understanding are patterns of urban functions, user and producer groups, their typical schedule of activities and forms of mobility dedicated to specific areas in the city. The traditional description of social and spatial diversity, which works mainly with a combination of functions and social groups, is in this perspective supplemented by the respective information about mobility and time-use. In this way it is possible to describe an internal basic pattern for single urban quarters, districts, areas, which also shows the specific rhythm of this area. Included are not at least the typical conflicts, which do result from different patterns of mobility and time-use in an area. For example: When residents want to sleep, the customers of bars, restaurants, theaters want to amuse themselves or when children or teenagers feel well in a certain place, this may be the reason for old persons to be afraid or to avoid this place at the same times. But the opposite is in the same way problematic. If places in the town are deserted or unfrequented, they will be perceived as insecure and frightening.
- Besides the significance of day/night-rhythms and other internal temporal dynamics it is foremost Marco Venturi who underlines the diversity of longterm developments of city districts. More than by material or social characteristics city districts were determined by their dynamic of change and their temporal cyclicity. „Slow“ quarters are facing relatively small changes over long periods while „fast“ quarters have more volatile characteristics and do deeply change over and over again in short periods (Venturi 2003).
- Into a similar direction goes the argument of the „three-parted“ city (Häußermann/Siebel 1990:138f), which also is to be looked upon as a „city of three speeds“. The first city is the city of international competition, of enterprises headquarters, of worldwide competing and cooperating scientific institutions, of airports, international fairs and festivals. This city encloses international relations and guests, all the services they need, e.g. the preferred hotels and restaurants or the international school. This is the part of the town where innovative potentials and

also the attention and the resources of the urban politics are concentrated. Political and economic strategies result in a steady acceleration of development processes.

The second city, which is the „normal, all days world of working, housing, consuming“, includes all the functions and social groups of the middle classes and the greater parts of their activities. In this second city the processes of modernisation proceed much slower than in the international competing city, because it can't fall back on political support and financial resources in the same scale. This is even more valid for the third city, which is the city of marginalised and excluded persons, of workless people, big groups of migrants, poor and addicted people. Considering the different accelerations and speeds of development this kind of division means that the first city is increasingly drifting apart from the second and the third city, which are moving forward much slower or even move backwards.

These provisional analytical attempts on the time structures of towns and the urban development do not establish a new theoretical concept yet. Nevertheless it becomes clear, that these single ideas are pieces of a puzzle, which can be put together to a more general pattern of rhythm, dynamic and acceleration or deceleration. In this way the concept of „chronotopes“ has to be extended: The chronological structures of postmodern, temporarily segmented cities cannot be described only as certain quarters or districts with their own time, but as a network of certain functions, social groups, infrastructures and services, which are complementary, overlapping and distributed over the whole city. And it is obvious that there are not only overlapping and complementary structures but also competition, exclusion and segmentation. All these developments lead surely to a deepening of social disparities, but „the crucial point with these new urban processes in Europe like elsewhere is ..., that at the same time and beyond physical nearness the urban space is functionally interwoven.“ (Castells 2001: 458).

Functional interweaving and integration is established – amongst others – by the division of labour and chronologically coordinated patterns of activities. Both of it – the concrete structures of the division of labour and the coordination of time structures – could be politically influenced. For this reason a deliberate urban time policy might be one way to counteract the trends to social and spatial segmentation and desintegration. Surely also in Europe there will be no way back to traditional forms of urbanity and urban development, but the intentional consideration of time structures and time conflicts as the always present third dimension of urban development, could help to understand the division of work as complementarity rather than exclusion and to understand diversity rather as productive richness than conflict-ridden antagonisms.

### **3. The implementation of time policy as a future task**

It seems very clear that in one or another way every citizen is affected by time conflicts: The inhabitants of a town as well as commuters, tourists, businesspeople and other visitors. And like always in social processes different groups have different chances to handle and cope with the problems belonging to it. These chances differ from age and generation, from kind of household and lifestyle, from sex and family, from origin and culture, from income and social status. The growing diversity between individuals and social groups also shows consequences in the structure of the cities. Locations, centres, quarters develop their own characters, identities and functions including their own rhythm and velocity. The diverging developments of traditional residential areas,

culture districts, city centres, technology parks, media quarters, industrial sites or shopping malls prove evidence of this.

Urban time policy therefore has to aim at two targets: (1.) a general relief of the all days time problems and (2.) the compensation of particular discriminations, unequalities and social injustices. The time aware city of the future will therefore handle the time budgets of the citizens very careful and sensitive and also the citizens themselves will learn how to care about their own times and the times of their fellow citizens.

The description of these goals – which are of course closely interrelated – demonstrates very clearly the tasks of the project „Bremen 2030 – a time aware city“, which had been carried out in 2002 and 2003 by a working group of the University of Bremen and the Hamburg University of Economy and Politics. When urban time policy really shall unfold social effects and really shall change the modern city life, many different developments and processes must be implemented in all those dimensions, in which the changes of urban structures normally take place. This means to increase the sensibility of the public opinion as well as its introduction into political discussions, to systematically learn about the relevant causes and effects, to present good practices and experiences, to mobilize creativity and support in institutions, political parties, social groups and not at least to implement some exemplary experiments and pilot studies.

In the project-work of „Bremen 2030 – a time aware city“ such experiments and pilot studies were made in different parts of the City of Bremen, a german port city with about 540.000 inhabitants. The overall orientation was to organize local political processes and to find out transferable and general solutions for typical time conflicts. The project-team worked in these experiments not only as a research team, according to the concrete constellation of local and functional conditions it took over the roles of managing projects, moderating and mobilizing processes, implementing external expertise and experiences.

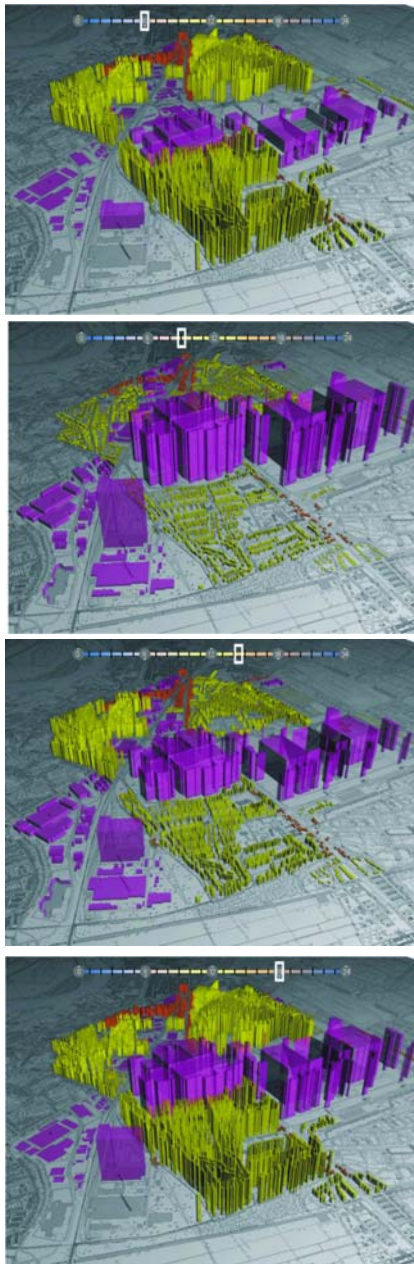
In detail the realized experiments were sorted into those four fields of action, on which the time aware city has to orientate its competences and activities:

#### *Optionality of time use*

Lots of activities and daily routines of the citizens depend strongly on institutional conditions. In many cases the institutional structures are guiding the all days life like a specific metronome and don't leave any options for individual choices or decisions, which could enable someone to follow his own rhythm and sense of time. Flexible but well coordinated mobility systems for example could contribute to more optionality of time use as well as multi-functional public spaces, where different generations have the chance to feel well and safe.

Planners dialogue and mobility in the industrial site: The eastside of the city has developed to a modern innercity industrial site, where business transports, the mobility of residents, neighbourhood traffics and interregional traffics, commuters and consumers trips to big manufacturers and shopping centers are merging and overlapping in great density. The treatment of resulting conflicts, e.g. congestion, traffic noise, risks of accidents, insufficient access, concurring modes of use, is as well a problem of town planning as a problem of organizing and managing the all days life for the involved and affected persons.

The “breathing district” – different numbers of activities at different times of the day (6.00; 10.00; 14.00; 18.00 o’clock):



The illustration\* shows the situation around the car manufacturing site in the eastside of the city and how different kinds of activities are mixing and overlapping in different times of the day. The empirical basis of this 3D-town map are real data about opening hours, working hours, numbers of workers and residents etc.

- manufacturing/ industry
- services/retail
- residential

\* made by a working group at the Politecnico di Milano

Obviously the ongoing structural change in this part of the town is made up of a multitude of single developments, planning processes and decisions. In each of the involved institutions and organizations the responsible experts are planning: conventional street- and infrastructure-planning, development of manufacturing sites and companies, workforce planning, logistics, planning of public transport companies, urban planning. And inspite of all painstaking care and professionalism in detail all these planning processes run off without recognizing that there is a multitude of plannings in the neighbourhood. Providing more efficient coordination could lead to a beneficial progress. For this reason the project „Bremen 2030“ initiated a planning dialogue, in

which the diverse dynamics in this part of the town were related to each other and patterns of time use were coordinated.

One of the major problems in this process was the increasing flexibility of working times of the employees in the big industrial factories in this area. This development leads to a growing individualization of commuting and this makes high demands on the organization of the public transport system. Since many of the workers and employees are living in widespread suburbs and distant surroundings it becomes a necessity to think about more flexible concepts of public transport. The implementation of modern communication systems for car pooling and car sharing could help as well as the combination of high capacity mass transport inside the city with small and flexible vehicles for the wider outskirts.

### *Integration of times and time use*

Particularly in those cases where the times of several persons have to be closely coordinated (in families and bigger households) it becomes a really demanding management task to establish a „unity of the daily routine“. This task is a job that still today for the most part has to be accomplished by women. Social services, e.g. flexible and sufficient child care, are seen as appropriate measures to reduce these increasing burdens. To develop and implement more flexible times of child care was the goal of another experiment of the project “Bremen 2030”. Parents, kindergarten teachers, representatives of service organizations and public administration were involved in a working process with all the child care institutions in one city district. Suitable solutions were developed in a multistage process with all participants and lead to a participants certificate, which had been introduced into the following political discussions.

The sequence of dialogues focussed on the specific time-related characteristics of different child care concepts like position of caring times during the day, duration and flexibility of caring times, costs and feasibility. Moreover the consequences of different propositions for the educational quality of child care and for the kindergarten teachers and for the parents were critically evaluated. Particularly for the personnel and the parents the dialogue workshops (based on the method of „Choice Work-Dialogue“ by D. Yankelovich; Yankelovich 2001) gave a structured opportunity for an intensive analysis of problems, they always experienced in the normal all days routine, but never brought to some realistic solutions. With the help of the research team some practicable and adjusted models for more flexible child care were formulated.

### *Coordination of times and time use*

Conflicts about the use of time arise not at least from insufficiently coordinated opening times and durations of public and private institutions and unsuitable working hours. Some small modifications of the opening times of the inner city offices and shops could for instance contribute to avoid the daily congestions in the morning and evening rush hours – and also a remarkable number of conflicts in urban and infrastructure planning.

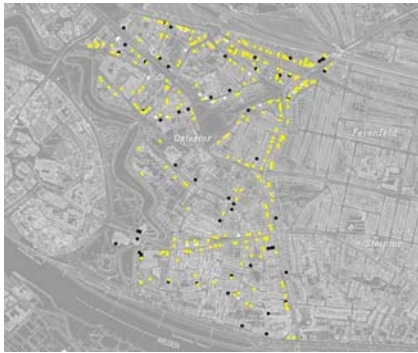
Accessibility and revitalization of city quarters: The problem in a northern city district of Bremen is the absolutely insufficient accessibility of the quarters centre from all

directions by public transport. This problem is even more serious, because there is a deep structural change in this area which must be supported and completed by an improved infrastructure and a better function of the railway station, which is the central junction in the whole region. Accessibility in this case does not only mean fast transportation, but also the quality of using the means of transport, the infrastructure and adequate alternatives for different needs of different user groups.

On this way from a traditional railway station to a modern service station lots of problems in detail have to be solved and for this reason all the involved institutions agreed to organize a common working and development process, guided by the project team of „Bremen 2030“. In this working process some good solutions for the coordination of the time schedules, the communication and common services of different transport companies, for the very important questions of prices and accounts, for the common use of rooms, information systems and distribution of information materials, for a common responsibility for safety and cleanness of the public facilities.

Nightlife and culture: Another experiment was made in the urban culture district, where always typical conflicts arise between the whole cultural and leisure business (and of course their clients) on the one hand and on the other hand the residents and retailers, who are seriously disturbed by the steady extension of night life in this area. The analyses about the development of the local retail, bars and restaurants, culture and leisure institutions their opening hours and the patterns of activities of different groups showed a tendency to a 24-hours active quarter in this area. On the basis of these results it was possible to suggest a new mode of time-regulation – a mixture of deregulated planning and construction legislation and new forms of neighbourhood agreements - for the culture district.

On-Off-Situations in the culture district (on a normal day of the week):



9.00  
o'clock Registered are all private and public workplaces in the district (about 800) with their opening hours. The illustration shows the real state of these workplaces at different times.



14.00  
o'clock

**Legende:**

- Open
- Closed the whole day
- Void / no use



21.00  
o'clock

Source: own research



3.00  
o'clock

*Transformation of mentalities and time use*

Time conflicts and –problems finally must be reflected in grave processes of social changes. The modernization of the public services for instance and the switch from an historic concept of registration offices to an efficient model of public service centres is a

typical example for this kind of problems. In our case the implementation of client orientated opening hours held a big potential of conflicts, but without them an efficient modernization of public services seemed hardly possible. Before this public service centre was installed in the downtown area the project „Bremen 2030“ organized a bargaining process between employer and employees to find adequate opening hours and implemented into this process also the perspective of clients and citizens. After the initiation the project accompanies the new service centre with an evaluation. The focus of the evaluation is directed on diverse aspects of the service quality and particularly on time problems like the working times of the employed persons, the position of opening times during the day, the duration of opening times, the duration of waiting times and of dealing with the citizens requests.

#### **4. Résumé: Contractual policy for the city of networked chronotopes**

The descriptions above demonstrate that the various experiments with urban time politics in Bremen had very different issues and conditions. For this reason it seems at first sight that all these experiments did not have very much in common. However all these cases work on rather complex and dynamic constellations of time problems with a great number of different involved persons, groups and institutions. Under these preconditions better solutions for the existing problems are only conceivable, if (1.) a complicated balance of interests can be achieved and if (2.) the thematic and professional restrictions of the traditional political planning process can be overcome.

Thus the whole project „Bremen 2030 – a time aware city“ was not only an interesting experiment under the substantial aspects of time policy but also concerning some aspects of the organization and management of political processes. This was also the reason for the rather complicated institutional and organizational arrangement in the project: it should support a cross-sectional kind of work and it should guarantee a steady coordination with those institutions, who were responsible for the practical realization of time-political measures, in most of the cases the respective departments in the city administration. Moreover in all the experiments further protagonists were involved – for example enterprises, associations or even less organised groups, like for instance parents, with diverging, partly competing or contradictory interests. All these groups and interests are often not involved and not concerned in traditionally bilateral and antagonistic conflicts (e.g. between employers and employees) – they often appear as the excluded others (e.g. the clients).

With an extended participation in urban time policy the project „Bremen 2030“ is an attempt to put innovative networks out of many different protagonists in the place of traditionally regulated routine and to put agreements of the civil society in the place of the simple majority decisions. Nevertheless there is always a strong insistence of the conventional institutional mechanisms and their representatives. The practice of the experiments demonstrates clearly that new and innovative mechanisms of bargaining and decisionmaking appear in strained relation to the legitimized institutions and the professional experts of the political and administrative system. On the side of the citizens the mobilisation for these alternative forms of participation and self-organized decisionmaking is competing with lots of other all days activities and necessities – from work, household etc. to the diverse forms of consuming and leisure activities.

The experiences and results are showing very clearly that the sometimes rather high expectations in the performance of self-organizing civil society's processes have to be cut down. Legal capacities, professional handling of problems and binding commitments with collective impacts need as a rule the intensive support and participation of formal political and administrative protagonists. Although these protagonists are required in an extended role: Not only as planners and decisionmakers, but also as player amongst many others, who have to submit to common mechanisms of moderation and supervising as well as to bargaining on an equal level. Therefore a new understanding of local policy has to be installed and the experiments with time-policy have contributed to this process. In this new field of political activities it was easier for the institutions and protagonists of the traditional political system to let themselves in for a process of cautious change-management, i.e. an intentional change of their own understanding of roles and professionalism.

As this kind of cooperative local policy does unfold, it strengthens the wider process of the contraction of institutional policy and re-politicizing the society, which can be observed in Europe since some years. It can be considered as a symbolic expression and also a concrete form of this trend, that collectively binding decisions in the shape of legal regulations are more and more replaced by formal contracts, (semi)formal or informal agreements. This growing significance of „contractual policy“ (Lahusen 2003) however does not mean that legally and democratically legitimized decisions become unnecessary or stand in contradiction to this development. Lots of indications do on the contrary confirm, that the chances for the success of cooperative political processes were even enlarged by maintaining the formal legal capacity of political institutions („bargaining in the shadow of the law“).

The different experiments with time policy and the agreements they aimed at were a core element of the project „Bremen 2030“ and as such they have also put in concrete terms the idea of “contractual policy”. It was shown that they could contribute to an innovative renewal of local policy neither as a pure civil and self-organized activity independent from formal legal structures nor as a simple new field of political action in the traditional structures of the political system. Instead of this, it was demonstrated, that the complicated network of local conditions and interests has to be transformed into a procedure and an arrangement, that could be accepted by all the different institutions and protagonists as reasonable, fair and justified (Warsewa 2003). How such solutions can be created in concrete cases is at best predictable in parts or in general outlines. A considerable part of the necessary decisions has to be developed in the form of concrete regulations, which have to prove their suitability in a single case. This process including the required agreements had been designated as local justice by the american author Jon Elster (Elster 1995; Schmidt 2000). Following his analyses the experiments with local time policy lead to some new forms of agreements between very heterogenous protagonists, in which the procedural and substantial elements were interrelated very closely and which – because of the steady uncertainties of all those elements – always can stay stable only for a limited period.

## Literature

- Bonfiglioli,S./diCarlo,P./Gugliotta,M./Manfredini,F./Stabilini,S./Zedda,R.2002:  
A comparative study on urban time maps and mobility maps. State of the art and the  
innovation of the Politecnico di Milano chronomaps.; Dipartimento di Architettura e  
Pianificazione, Politecnico di Milano; Milano
- Castells,M. 2001: Das Informationszeitalter. Bd. 1 Die Netzwerkgesellschaft. Opladen
- Elster,J. 1995: Local Justice. How Institutions Allocate Scarce Goods and Necessary  
Burdens. New York
- Göschel,A. 2000: Integration in der entgrenzten Stadt. Vortragsmanuskript. Berlin
- Häußermann,H./Siebel,W. 1990: Neue Urbanität. 3. Aufl., Frankfurt/M.; S.138f
- Henckel,D. 2000: Arbeitszeiten und soziale Organisation der Zeiten. In:  
Mückenberger,U. (Hg): Zeiten der Stadt. Bremen, 2.Aufl., 62-70
- Henckel,D./Eberling,M. (Hg) 2002: Raumzeitpolitik. Opladen
- Kronauer,M. 2002: Die neue soziale Frage: Armut und Ausgrenzung in der Großstadt  
heute. In : Walther,U.J. (Hg) 2002: Soziale Stadt – Zwischenbilanzen. Opladen, S. 45-  
55
- Lahusen,Ch. 2003: Die Kontraktualisierung des Politischen. In: Nassehi,A./Schroer,M.  
(Hg): Der Begriff des Politischen. Sonderband Soziale Welt, Göttingen
- Löw,M. (Hg) 2002: Differenzierungen des Städtischen. Opladen
- Martinotti,G. 1996: Four Populations. Human Settlements and Social Morphology in  
Contemporary Metropolis. In: European Review, Vol. 4, Number 1, pp. 3-23
- Mückenberger,U. (Hg) 2000: Zeiten der Stadt. Bremen, 2. Aufl.
- Schmid,V. 2000: Bedingte Gerechtigkeit. Soziologische Analysen und philosophische  
Theorien. Frankfurt
- Venturi,M. 2003: Die Form der Veränderung. Manuskript; In: Mückenberger,U./  
Timpf,S. (Hg.), 2003: Zukunft der zeitbewussten Stadt. Ergebnisse einer internationalen  
Enquête-Kommission (i. Vorb.).
- Warsewa,G. 2003: Aufklären, Verordnen oder Verkaufen – Wie lässt sich nachhaltiger  
Konsum gesellschaftlich herstellen? In: Linne,G./Schwarz,M. (Hg): Wie ist  
nachhaltiges Wirtschaften machbar? – Ein Handbuch für nachhaltige Entwicklung.  
Opladen
- Yankelovich,D. 2001: The Magic of Dialogue: Transforming Conflict into Cooperation.  
Simon & Schuster