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Daily street life in the inner city of Prague under transformation: 
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temporal rhythms

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The paper is concerned with the everyday manifestation of 
increasing social, lifestyle and cultural diversity in the 
transforming inner city of Prague. The Smíchov 
neighbourhood and particularly its central hub, the Anděl 
junction, were chosen as the focus of the study. The 
regeneration dynamics during the post-socialist 
transformation make this place particularly interesting for 
an inquiry into the interplay of the social and physical 
environment, into the interactions of changing urban 
lscapes and people’s everyday practices. Particular 
attention is paid to the character of ordinary daily street 
life, to the users of urban space and to the manifestation of 
close-knit social, spatial and temporal diversity in the close 
vicinity of the Anděl hub. The paper concludes with the 
necessity of including the temporal dimension of space in 
urban planning and design practice. Methodologically the 
case study derives principally from direct observation of 
neighbourhood life and users, but also draws on the 
use of visual and empirical methods on one hand and stressing the daily 
24-hour rhythms of localities on the other bring a new 
fruitful insight to the everyday life of neighbourhoods 
and their public spaces.

The paper studies the users of urban public space and 
the nature of ordinary daily street life in Prague’s inner 
city neighbourhood of Smíchov. The area has recently 
been experiencing a dynamic regeneration on its 
trajectory from an industrial district to a modern city 
sub-centre with offices, retail and entertainment. 
In urban literature the exclusionary nature of urban 
regeneration is often emphasised, both in social and 
economic terms (Bianchini, Dawson and Evans 1992; 
that new developments and regeneration policies have 
intensified the threats to public urban space through its 
privatisation, control and restriction of access. We, 
however, argue, that in the case of central Smíchov, 
despite (or even thanks to) the construction of new office 
buildings, shopping malls and leisure amenities, the 
neighbourhood’s central hub has managed to maintain 
its social variety and the place attracts a wide range of 
customers. Accordingly the paper aims to demonstrate 
the spatial and temporal dimensions of differentiation in 
the use of the neighbourhood’s public spaces. It explores 
the heterogeneity of users based on the differences in 
people’s wealth, age, ethnicity and family status and the 
mix of their everyday practices in a vibrant inner city 
neighbourhood. Special attention is paid to the changing 
life of public spaces during the daytime. The following 
questions are to be answered: ‘Who are the users of the 
space?’, ‘Are there spatial and temporal differences in the 
manner various social group use the public space?’ and 
‘How is the everyday practice of various social groups 
demonstrated in the urban landscape?’ Many urban 
scholars have recognised that street life, various activities 
and events that occur in the built environment, create 
successful urban places (Jacobs 1961; Gehl 1989; 
Montgomery 1998). Therefore the users, activities and 
24-hour rhythms in public spaces and streets have to be 
studied and understood in order to design liveable urban 
spaces. As Montgomery (1998, 93) noted, ‘what might

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everyday life, mobility and temporality of cities and urban people.
appear to some as disorder is very often simply the everyday rhythm of city life. By studying the socio-spatial differentiation and everyday rhythms of people and activities in public spaces this paper discloses some of the hidden territorial and temporal orders in the daily street life of a regenerating neighbourhood.

The structure and the everyday practices of neighbourhood users are discussed as the background of a case study carried out in three public spaces in the vicinity of Anděl junction. In general the study explores the daily rhythms of the area, as Lefebvre (2004) described in his rhythm analysis. However, instead of observation from a window, we chose the direct observation of neighbourhood life and users in public spaces. Photographs are used here to support the text, as documentary evidence made during the research (Rose 2007). The paper thus integrates direct observation, fieldwork and visual documentaries in geographical research of spatial and temporal patterns at the micro-scale. Bearing in the necessity of being simultaneously inside and outside the beating and vibrant urban space, as Lefebvre (2004) emphasised, direct observation and photography are widely supplemented by our extensive research previously conducted in the neighbourhood as well as by the intensive experience of living there. This study continues wide-ranging research focused on inner city regeneration in Smíchov (Temelová 2005; Temelová 2007; Temelová and Novák 2007) and further develops the study of the visual perception of globalising Prague carried on by Temelová and Hrychová (2004).

The paper is organised into four sections. It starts with a theoretical discussion of city users, the everyday rhythms of place and public spaces as a city stage. The following section presents the biography of Smíchov and the recent developments in the neighbourhood’s physical, functional and social structure. The study area and research methods are then introduced. The core empirical section examines the everyday spatial and temporal patterns of the usage of public spaces. It is complemented by the depiction of the specific characteristics and the differences between particular social groups (in both spatial and temporal senses). The empirical findings lead to the concluding discussion of the necessity of including a mixture of uses and a temporal dimension of space in planning practice and regeneration policies.

CITY USERS, EVERYDAY RHYTHM AND PUBLIC SPACE

From the theoretical perspective, the focus of our study is based on the discussion of the conjunction of city users (Martinotti 2005), the concept of public space as a stage (Gehl 1989) and the concepts of city rhythms (Lefebvre 2004; Allen 1999; Amin and Thrift 2002) (Figure 1). The most important dimensions of contemporary everyday life include living (residence), working (employment), commuting (transport) and to a lesser extent also consumption (use of services) (Jarvis, Pratt and Wu 2001; Ellegård 1999). Cities and neighbourhoods are the arenas where urban people satisfy these common everyday needs.

Martinotti (2005) distinguished four populations operating in metropolitan centres, which are primarily defined by the place they live, work and consume. The inhabitants live in the city, commuters commute to the city mainly to work, city users go to the city to use public and private services (shopping, entertainment, education) and metropolitan business people come to centres typically only for a few days to do business and establish professional contacts. The structure of users of public space (neighbourhood) and their micro-scale territorial distribution implies social homogeneity or heterogeneity, polarisation, fragmentation or mutual mixture. Globalisation processes and the growing socio-spatial differentiation of urban space draw the attention of urban literature especially to two distinct social groups present in major cities (and thus also in their public spaces), namely to high-income managers and professionals at one end and low-wage workers, unemployed and homeless people at the opposite end of scale. Sassen (1996) distinguished a category of new city users, international firms and business people operating in global cities. Besides them, however, the producer services require the lower-level services of manual workers, immigrants and women who are involved in low-paid and temporary jobs and who swell the mass of the poor social classes in global cities (Sassen 1996). Similarly Martinotti (2005) recognised a growing segment of low-level foreign workers who furnish the services required by city users and metropolitan business people. According to Hannerz (1993) the most important categories of people who create the transnational nature of cities include, besides managerial elites and Third World populations, expressive specialists (people who are concerned with culture and expressive activities) and tourists. The study of urban public spaces

![FIGURE 1. Conjunction of theoretical foundations.](image-url)
However also reveals other distinct social groups that have not been dealt with in globalisation literature. They are neither transnational nor global, but rather locally based and are defined for example by their age (elderly and teenagers), family status (families with children) or social standing (e.g. homeless) (Temelová and Hrychová 2004). Although the number of city users is growing and they are a sociologically fairly differentiated group in contemporary cities, the statistics deal mainly with inhabitants (to a smaller degree also with commuters), but virtually no statistical attention is paid to city users (Martinotti 2005). Therefore the alternative, mainly qualitative research inevitably studies the city users and the non-resident population of our cities. Importantly, many of the global and local groups described above are visually distinct and thus the observation method enables us to identify them and study their daily routines on the streets and public spaces.

Various groups of city users and inhabitants meet and compete for space in the city, including public space (Mitchell 2003). The battle for space occurs not only between social groups but also between various functions, as those economic activities able to generate higher profits push out less competitive functions from the most attractive urban locations. The functions provided in an area obviously largely determine the users, the activities and the everyday rhythms that take place in neighbourhoods and public spaces. The indirect competition between inhabitants and users takes place as commercial and leisure activities tend to selectively filter out the original population of neighbourhoods (Martinotti 2005). Jacobs (1961) described the principle leading to the self-destruction of diversity since the victors in the competition for space represent only a narrow segment of the many uses, for a narrow segment of users who live, work or use services in the area. Sassen (1996), for example, pointed to the replacement of neighbourhood shops tailored to the everyday needs of the local residents by upscale boutiques and restaurants catering for a new high-income urban elite in attractive neighbourhoods of major cities. In areas where there is extensive new construction there is a concern as to whether the new high profile environment sustains socially inclusive places. Smithson (2008) found that most bonus plazas in front of Manhattan office buildings are intentionally designed by developers as exclusive and uninviting places to limit their use by public.

Apparently, beside functions like shops, restaurants, services and jobs, streets and public spaces occupy an exceptional position in the space of peoples’ activities. Gehl (1989) understands the street as the largest and the most used stage in the city. The streets, squares and other public spaces are a scene with many actors entering and leaving, a public stage which can be observed and studied. At the micro-level of a particular public space the actors are the place users with their heterogeneous social structure, motivations and preferences. The everyday practices of users and the way they use the space are diverse. Various people differentiated by combinations of social, demographic, ethnic and life-style factors occupy distinct territories at distinct times in the micro-space. The presence of individuals and groups at the scene represents various levels of temporality from passing and short stops to longer-term staying. People are distinguished not only by their individual characteristics but also by the purposes, roles and activities they are performing in the place. Gehl (2000) distinguished three types of activities in public spaces: necessary activities include everyday tasks (e.g. going to work or to school, shopping, waiting for a bus or a friend), optional activities happen only if outside conditions allow it (e.g. walking, observing, sitting and reading) and the resulting social activities depend on the attendance of other people in public spaces (e.g. conversation, playing, public activities). While necessary activities are only slightly influenced by the character of the physical environment, the qualities of public spaces are decisive factors for optional activities, the use patterns of public space, the volume and the character of life there (Gehl 1989).

Projecting the general types of urban populations into the territory of a particular neighbourhood and public space, it is not only the relation between the everyday practices and the city which distinguishes them, but also different nature of their presence in neighbourhoods. The presence of inhabitants (residents) and commuters has an individualised nature. They use the place in an everyday repetitive manner and one person cannot substitute another. On the other hand consumers and visitors form a more anonymous group. They also constitute everyday flows of people but within the flow each consumer and visitor is replaceable because their visits are not by nature everyday and repetitive. The flow of people, their activities, physical settings and functions together create a rhythm of place. The rhythm of a particular place consists of myriads of particular rhythms of the presence and absence of people, their flows across the places as well as of cars and trams moving through, and of the opening hours in shops and garden restaurants (Lefebvre 2004). The changing smells and sounds which give a sense of time and location are hidden in urban rhythms. The rhythm is not the result of rigid mass coordination of routines within the city but rather the outcome of vibrant city life (Allen 1999).

According to Amin and Thrift (2002) the concept, or rather the metaphor of city rhythm, helps to emphasise the neglected temporal aspect of city life. Importantly,
each activity (function) has a different temporal pattern (e.g. work dominates during the day, leisure from early evening through the whole night) (Bromley, Tallon and Thomas 2003). The spatial and temporal variance in functions and activities, its specific manifestation in the presence of users and their social composition, as well as the smells and noises connected with these functions and activities together form the unique everydayness of each public space.

In our study, public spaces are regarded as stages and the focus is on their rhythms, which are shaped by the structure of users and by their everyday practices. The case study of public spaces around Anděl junction, an area heavily affected by the construction boom, gives an insight into the relations between the built environment with its functions and the socio-temporal differentiation and everyday rhythms of the place with its users. The stress is on investigating activities that occur on the stage, rather than on the complex everyday life of particular social groups in a spatially undefined urban realm.

REGENERATION DYNAMICS IN SMÍCHOV NEIGHBOURHOOD

The post-socialist cities of Central and Eastern Europe are passing through remarkable changes related both to local transition and to globalisation. The impacts of the both processes on urban space are however selective and do not affect all the city areas to the same extent. Marcuse and van Kempen (2000) identified a set of urban locations, so called soft locations, where the impacts of globalisation and post-Fordist economic change are the most pronounced. The soft locations include waterfronts, centrally located manufacturing areas, brownfield sites, central city office and residential locations, tourist sites, social housing, historic structures and public spaces. The Anděl junction could be seen as one of the soft spots in Prague.

From the end of the eighteenth century Smíchov developed as an important industrial periphery of Prague mostly inhabited by working class residents. During the socialist era the neighbourhood experienced a long-lasting physical and social degradation. Until recently, Smíchov could have been described as a traditional inner city working-class neighbourhood facing a lack of investment, deteriorating housing stock, industrial decline and large proportion of socially disadvantaged residents. The transformation of the former industrial periphery into a modern and vital centre began only in the last decade of the twentieth century, since when the neighbourhood has experienced substantial regeneration dynamics.

Since the end of the 1980s industry has been gradually abandoning Prague’s inner city leaving large brownfield sites behind. On the one hand, the empty and derelict factories stamped a bad image on Smíchov, but on the other they created huge development potential for the neighbourhood, particularly combined with good transport accessibility. At the turn of the century several large-scale projects financed by foreign developers emerged around Anděl junction (Figure 2). Smíchov became one of the most radically changing locations in the inner city of Prague, where visible physical, functional and social changes were taking place (Temelová and Novák 2007). The enhanced commercial and residential appeal of the area further challenged the local physical environment and led to the continuous spread of physical upgrading around Anděl junction (Temelová 2007). Thus the former industrial image of Smíchov has been fading. The area around Anděl junction, the natural centre of Smíchov, has been slowly changing into a secondary city centre with all the relevant functions; offices, shops and services, entertainment, residential buildings and hotels. The combination of a central location and relatively favourable property prices drew numerous firms into the area, mostly of foreign origin. Many of the companies operate in up and coming sectors including real estate and development, financial services, information and communication technologies, consultancy, law services, media and advertising, and pharmaceuticals (Temelová and Novák 2007). The growing interest of entrepreneurs, companies and the better-off population in Smíchov has also influenced the structure of shops and services in the area. The increasing rents often lead to less lucrative economic activities being pushed out of the development core at Anděl junction. Consequently, second hand stores, cheap restaurants and various kinds of kiosks and yard sales that were typical of the place until the early 1990s have disappeared, while trendy restaurants, specialist shops and services (e.g. fashion, outdoor, wine shops and delicatessens, beauty salons and language schools) have replaced them. The large and newly built shopping and entertainment centre New Smíchov brings together not only a range of boutiques, but also a cheap hypermarket, one of the main consumer magnets in the area. Despite the supply of services and shops for different social groups of users, a clear division of functions into different places and corners characterise the organisation of micro-space around Anděl junction. The functions oriented towards lower-income clients (market halls, second hand shops, gambling houses, non-stop grocer’s shops and cheap pubs) have been displaced to the more peripheral zones of the area while the qualitatively higher retail and services are concentrated in the vicinity of Anděl junction and the new office complexes.
The revitalisation of Smíchov embraces the interplay of functional transformation, a shift in the character of the physical environment and a changing social milieu. The increasing residential attractiveness of central Smíchov, the pressure of tenement house owners for higher payoffs and commercialisation of the area have contributed to the changing social structure of residents in the neighbourhood. The social environment of Smíchov has also experienced a substantial shift in terms of neighbourhood users. Increasing social and cultural diversity necessarily brings spatio-temporal manifestations in the everyday rhythm of central Smíchov as well as in the everyday practice of inhabitants, employees, shoppers and other users.

**STUDY AREA AND SURVEY METHOD**

Anděl junction is an interesting place to study for at least two reasons. First it is the central hub of the dynamically transforming inner city neighbourhood of Smíchov, and second it is a highly vibrant place, a true junction where not only do transport routes meet but where job opportunities, shops, services and entertainment also concentrate. Moreover, the area has been under a long-term research scrutiny which has provided a broader context of ongoing social, physical and functional transformations for this rather specific study, thus enabling us to interpret the variety of users and their everyday practices in the broader context of general neighbourhood change.

Methodologically the paper relies primarily on fieldwork and direct observation of people and their activities in public spaces, of incidents and events which characterise the outdoor life of the area. The paper also works with images that illustrate the typical social situations in the public spaces, so photographs are used alongside the evidence generated by fieldwork and direct observation. We acknowledge that observation only tells a partial story about users of place as people’s motivations and attitudes remain hidden from our view. On the other hand, as noted by Ley (2004), direct experience of the city and exploration of the urban at street level can hardly be substituted in the research of everyday life.

In our study, observation is assisted by a wide-ranging field survey which was employed to map the physical settings and the functions around Anděl junction (services, offices, public spaces, new construction) (Temelová 2005; Temelová 2007; Temelová and Novák 2007). Familiarity with the functions provided in central Smíchov helps in understanding the targets of users circulating in the area.

The analysis of the use of space is based on the collection of observational data focused on the description of
The direct observation aims to recount who is using the public spaces and how, and what is actually happening there during the day. The sheets of records, field notes and photographs are used as the material evidence of the observation. The structured observation involved coding people and their activities in defined territories of public spaces, followed by quantification of the observed phenomenon. It was carried out at three observation stands around Anděl junction: the Nádražní pedestrian zone located in front of the area’s flagship Golden Angel project; the piazza designed within the newly built Anděl City office and entertainment complex; and the Plzeňská pedestrian zone leading to the major shopping centre, New Smíchov (Figure 3). Importantly, all the selected observation stands are public spaces where anybody can enter and stop. All three public spaces were created after the year 2000. The piazza in Anděl City was designed as an integral part of the commercial complex with private funding, while the pedestrian zones were co-financed by the local authority and private developers on the site of previously heavily used traffic roads.

The observation was systematically selective to capture particular groups of people. The social categories were predefined in accordance with existing studies (Temelová and Hrychová 2004) and with initial scanning in the area. Designation of people into categories was based purely on our visual experience by seeing people (how they look, the way they dress, what they carry), so the categories of users were defined so that they were clearly visually distinguishable and identifiable. The types (categories) of users were distinguished along three main axes: socio-economic (managers and professionals, marginal workers, lower class looking people, homeless and underclass), ethnic (Gypsies and other ethnic groups) and demographic (elderly people, teenagers and students, parents with small children), plus a category of tourists and the residual and broadest group of ‘others’. If a person seemed to fit into more than one category, priority was given to the socio-economic aspect, followed by the ethnic and finally the demographic status of differentiation. Alongside the structure of users, their activities were also classified on the record sheets. The basic distinction was between people passing through the area and those staying there for some time. To describe the concrete activities of people in public spaces, field notes were taken to supplement the fairly quantitative record sheets. Obviously the majority of passing people were involved in necessary activities (e.g. going to work, services or transport) while those people staying were often performing optional and social activities (e.g. sitting, reading, conversation).

The observations were carried out between July and September 2008. Only week days were selected in order to ensure a range of users and to cover the people working in the area, who represent a considerable proportion of area users. Each observation stand was visited three times a day to record the morning (from...
8:30 to 9:30), midday (from 12:30 to 13:30) and evening (from 17:30 to 18:30) situations in the place. All people who appeared in the delimited territory of the observation stand were counted and categorised during a ten-minute period, four times in an hour (i.e. ten minutes of counting was followed by a five-minute break). Only sunny days without rain were selected for the survey due to the significant influence of the weather on the usage of public spaces.

As well as the functions in the whole neighbourhood, the economic activities in operation at the observation stands also influenced the structure of users and their activities. A brief situational characteristic of the studied public spaces is thus required before introducing the empirical results of the observation. The properties at all observation stands have restaurants, stores or services on their ground floors (Figure 4). In addition, the entry into an office building and multiplex cinema is located in Anděl City Piazza. The opening/working hours of these facilities are thus important in the rhythm of the public spaces. Gehl (1989) further pointed to a number of factors that determine the ‘usability’ of public spaces, including location in relation to the main pedestrian flows, the local climate, the spatial and physical qualities, the provision of furniture and details supporting staying activities. The Plzeňská pedestrian zone is one the most exposed pedestrian routes in Anděl junction, while the piazza is one of the quietest places in the area. All the selected public spaces are equipped with street furniture (benches and rubbish bins) and trees, although the number of these depends on the concrete function of the space (pedestrian zones, piazza) (Figure 4).

**THE USE OF PLACE: USERS AND ACTIVITIES**

At first sight Anděl junction is a vibrant place. During the day, streets and public spaces are full of people and the ever-present bustle during the evening and at night makes it a far from dead place. The earlier investigations into the use of pedestrian zone at Anděl pointed to a wide utilisation of the place for various purposes and different social, age and lifestyle groups (Temelová and Hrychová 2004; Temelová 2005). The transport hub and the rich commercial life around Anděl junction create a good potential for its wide-ranging attractiveness. Apparently not all places within the studied area demonstrate the same crowdedness, user structure and daytime rhythm. The difference in the quantity of users, their distribution during the day as well as their activity in the space largely results from the diverse natures of the studied public places. Figure 5 provides a quantitative view of space usage in the three locations investigated. For all the spaces, the morning is the quietest time of the day (cafes and restaurants at the observation stands are mostly closed), and they come alive in the evening when people leave work and go in search of entertainment. The three observation stands differ in the turbulence of users measured by the number of people staying or passing through the area during certain period of time (Table 1). Although passing people dominate in quantitative terms, the users staying in public spaces interact with the place more intensively and largely create its atmosphere.

The Plzeňská pedestrian zone is the busiest place with four to five times more users than the other two spaces (Figure 5). The zone is an important transit corridor between different means of public transport (underground and tram) and it also leads to the magnetic New Smíchov shopping centre. The street life pattern suggests that it is not a place to hang around but rather a communication route to other destinations. On the other hand, the further end of the Nádražní pedestrian zone, which was also under scrutiny, lies slightly aside from the heaviest flows of people and the area’s main attractions. Accordingly the space is quieter and for certain social and ethnic groups it is a place to gather and socialise. Yet if one moves along the Nádražní zone closer to the junction and the exit from underground, it turns back into a busy and vibrant arena, where masses of people circulate, and where civic activities, street art performances and promotional events take place. As expected, the volume of people is lowest in the Anděl City Piazza which has the form of an enclosed square. It has a limited amount of transit moves (people walking through usually go to and from the office complex located across the street) as the majority of users head to the targets located to the right of the piazza (services and offices). The piazza comes alive in the evening when people go to cinema, restaurants and bars located here, whereas the morning use of place is relatively low compared to the other two locations investigated. Unlike the pedestrian zones, the piazza is a real public space which offers a pleasant environment for optional and social activities, and consequently the proportion of people staying is higher here (Figure 6; Table 1).

The character of street life at Anděl junction suggested that local streets and public spaces serve a wide range of customers. In general new functions and services as well as local image enhancement draw new users to revitalising neighbourhoods (Murzyn 2006). Heterogeneous functions in both type (transport, work, and consumption) and quality (luxurious versus low-cost) set the conditions for the organic development and mixture of users in central Smíchov. The industrial history of Smíchov overlapping with the contemporary
development dynamics is well reflected in the coexistence of various social groups in central Smíchov (Temelová and Hrychová 2004). In comparison with other newly developing sub-centres in Prague, central Smíchov around Anděl junction has a relatively heterogeneous structure of users by age, income, profession and education (Polívka 2007). However, the considerable differences in the structure of users reflect the various roles of the three investigated public spaces in Anděl junction (Figure 7).

Since the emergence of new office complexes at Anděl the smartly-dressed and high-income employees of progressive sectors have become an inherent part of the local social milieu. Managers and professionals predominate in Anděl City Piazza, mainly due to the location of new office buildings right there. They are frequent users of the next-door restaurants and cafes too. Foreign language speaking experts are no exception in piazza. Employees in suits engage in staying activities in the public space when they leave the office building for a cigarette outside (Figure 8). Teenagers and students make up the second significant group of users in the piazza, with the cinema being the main attraction for them (Table 2). Although not numerous, restaurants and bars in piazza are popular with a range of customers including parents with children, young people and the elderly (Figure 8). Similarly, various people use benches for waiting, relaxing or chatting and as well as being a popular smoking place the piazza serves as a frequent meeting point. Ethnic minorities and people from the
lower end of the social ladder are barely represented in
the piazza. Out of the three public spaces studied, the
piazza in Anděl City appears to be the most exclusive and
homogenous in terms of the users. Polívka (2007)
arrived at a similar conclusion based on a questionnaire
among area users; people with a higher level of education
and income prevail in the area of office buildings and the
piazza, while in the Nádražní pedestrian zone the locals
and people on lower incomes are more present.

The Nádražní pedestrian zone has a much more
heterogeneous structure of users with a more even
distribution of particular groups (Figure 7). Managers
and professional are the most important category
together with ethnic groups and elderly people (Table 2).
Of the ethnic groups, Gypsies largely dominate followed
by a few Asians and less frequently Blacks.2 Unlike in
the case of the piazza, the remaining categories of user are
also significantly represented in the pedestrian zone.
Although the zone is primarily a transit place, for some
social groups the benches situated here seem to acquire
an important socialising dimension. In particular,
Gypsies of various ages and genders (mothers with
children, old women, men of diverse ages, teenagers)
gather around benches in the early evenings (Figure 9).
The number of participants and their demographic
composition fluctuates with people entering and leaving
the socialising knot. To a lesser extent homeless and
lower class looking people often relax with their drinks
on the benches of the pedestrian zone. Two socially
distinct spaces, public benches and private restaurants,
thus exist here in close physical proximity.

The Plzeňská pedestrian zone, like Nádražní,
accommodates relatively heterogeneous users (Figure 7).
Compared to the other public spaces investigated,
managers and professionals are not among the most
frequent users here and teenagers, elderly people and
Gypsies (plus some other ethnic minorities) take their
place as the dominant group (Table 2). The main targets
located just outside the observation stand include the
New Smíchov shopping centre and the tram stop, which
to a large extent determine the high numbers of users.
Many people passing through head to the McDonalds
located at the observation stand. The character of the
pedestrian zone and its rather poor street furniture do
not provide a tempting environment for optional
activities and contribute to the transitory and hectic
nature of the place (Figure 10). People usually sit on the
benches only when waiting for public transport (or for
someone), resting or eating fast food. The majority of
them only stop for a short time and people rotate quite
often. Two public phone boxes represent interesting
artefacts of the place and are predominantly used by
Gypsies. The phone box usage also offers an opportunity
to gather and talk with others.

LOCAL RHYTHMS IN PUBLIC SPACES

The first impression on the streets and public spaces
around Anděl junction may suggest crowding and chaos.
Continual observation however revealed a territorial
order with times and places for different people and
activities; a finding that reflects the experience of
Cybriwsky (1978) in the inner city neighbourhood of
Table 2. The structure of users at the observation stands by the most frequent categories.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of people</th>
<th>Anděl City Piazza</th>
<th>Nádražní Pedestrian zone</th>
<th>Plzeňská Pedestrian zone</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The first three categories</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managers and professionals</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elderly people</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teenagers and students</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents with small children</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsies and ethnic groups</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The category others</td>
<td>62%</td>
<td>65%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The rest of categories</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Field survey, July – September 2008

Fairmount in Philadelphia. Although the three public spaces studied around Anděl junction are in close physical proximity, the structure of their users fluctuates during the day and reflects various daily rhythms practised by distinct groups of users. The social milieu in micro-scale thus has not only spatial attributes as discussed in the previous paragraphs, but also temporal ones, so we should rather talk about the ‘actual social milieu’ of a place. Generally the elderly tend to be morning users (shopping) while teenagers appear in public places more frequently at midday (school lunch break) and in the evenings (entertainment). Similarly, Gypsies belong among the afternoon and evening users of public spaces. Managers and professionals are most visible during lunch time when they leave their offices to eat in restaurants. Public spaces show the most transitory character in the mornings when the majority of people only pass through them. Marginal workers engaged in low tertiary sector, on the other hand, stay in public spaces to do their morning duties (cleaning, restaurant supply) (Figure 11).

Looking closer at people who use public spaces more intensively (not just passing through but occupying them for some time) there are sharper differences in the social milieu of the studied locations and the three daytime periods. Managers and professionals together with marginal workers mostly occupy the Nádražní pedestrian zone in the morning (Figure 12). Students and teenagers are also important morning users (benches are used as meeting places before school begins). The midday usage of public spaces is very low. Marginal workers and students disappear and only managers and professionals are visible as they go for their lunch. The character of the pedestrian zone totally changes in the evening. People who use the place during their daily working routines fade away and the place turns into a gathering spot. Users of lower social standing and ethnic minorities (Gypsies) predominate, although parents with children are also present in the public space.

The usage of the Plzeňská pedestrian zone is lowest in the morning (Figure 12). Lower class looking people and the elderly prevail in the public space as early shoppers head to the hypermarket (which opens at 7am). On the contrary midday is the busiest time of day when the social groups occupying the place are more heterogeneous. The predominant Gypsies and people of
lower social standing are complemented by teenagers (school lunch break or early end of school) and parents with children (resting on the way to or from the shopping centre). The social structure shifts towards poorer users in the evening. Despite the turbulent character of the place, lower classes, non-conformists and Gypsies sometimes gather at the local benches to talk or drink (Figure 10). Unlike the other locations investigated, the public space in Plzeňská does not exhibit work-related use by managers and professionals. The regularity in the rhythm of the Plzeňská pedestrian zone rests on the increasing density of pedestrian flows with the arrival of a tram.

The piazza in Anděl City is marked by a dual structure of its socio-temporal usage (Figure 12). Mornings are dominated by work-related users while entertainment consumers liven up the place in the evenings. The structure of morning users provides a localised representation of Sassen’s (1996) occupational duality typical of global cities. Public space is dominated by smoking managers, professionals, marginal workers and technical staff from the office buildings. A switch in public space usage between work-related and entertainment-related users starts in the middle of the day. In the piazza, high-income employees from up and coming sectors on their lunch breaks mix with students, teenagers and parents with kids. The piazza is a domain of the teenage population heading to the cinema or chatting on the benches in the evening. Thanks to the high quality of public space (benches, exotic trees, removal from the rush of the street) the piazza provides an attractive place to stay for other groups too, particularly parents with children and elderly people who often come here intentionally to sit down, rest or talk.
SOME REFLECTIONS IN THE WIDER URBAN LANDSCAPE

The presence of various social, demographic and ethnic groups around Anděl junction is manifested in the urban landscape. Since the beginning of the 1990s the physical condition of the buildings, public spaces and infrastructure has been improving as a result of the ongoing revitalisation processes. Commercial development has drawn newcomers (international firms, businessman and professionals) to the area who significantly influence the local urban space. The neighbourhood is becoming more diverse and polarised, both socially and physically, and today’s central Smíchov is full of contradictions. The sharpest contrasts exist between the progressive functions which are able to generate high profits and the less lucrative economic activities. This is clearly visible not only in the physical environment but also in the spatial pattern and location of various functions. Properties located in the peripheral and less attractive zones of the neighbourhood (along roads with heavy traffic, environmentally polluted) are not successful in the competitive economic climate and create landscapes of decay. Abandoned residential and commercial properties in impoverished localities stand in clear contrast to shining modern office complexes located in the development core around Anděl junction (Figure 13). Fragmentation of the area by a system of tunnels and slip roads separates high-value uses and offers few prospects for a better future to those parts of Smíchov which are cut off the development core.

Despite all the changes that are taking place in central Smíchov different social and physical worlds exist in the neighbourhood. The peripheral zones separated from the development hub by busy transport communications are characterised by dilapidated tenement houses inhabited by socially disadvantaged residents, non-stop game houses, second hand shops and pawnshops. The local landscape and life contrast sharply with the separated world of transnational businessmen and professionals working in new office palaces.

CONCLUSION

Globalisation, post-socialist transformation and local industrial history have all come into play in the transformation of central Smíchov into a new secondary
FIGURE 12. The structure of users engaged in staying activities at the observation stands during various day-times. Source: Field survey, July – September 2008.
centre of Prague. The paper focused on daily street life in this dynamically changing location, on the socio-spatial differentiation and temporal rhythms of public spaces around Anděl junction. From the methodological perspective the combination of visual documentary and direct structured observation proved to be a valuable and convincing instrument in public space research. The research demonstrated how the usage of space is divided between specific groups of users and how public places differ in the way particular social groups use them. Importantly, the paper proved that despite (or even thanks to) the construction of new office buildings, shopping malls and leisure amenities, the central hub of the neighbourhood has managed to maintain the social variety of users. The general appeal of the place creates an interesting mixture of social, age and lifestyle groups in a relatively small area; from newly arrived yuppies to the original working class residents and Roma inhabitants. Thus although the new landscape of Smíchov centre is predominantly set for top level functions, local public spaces provide an arena where the daily practices of different groups can meet.

The research was also valuable in demonstrating temporalities in the social milieu of public spaces. Managers, lower class people, teenagers, elderly people and Gypsies demonstrate distinct spatial-temporal patterns in the use of public space. The lessons learnt from the research call for the integration of a complex spatio-temporal dimension of public space into planning practice and regeneration policies. The awareness of temporalities performed by various users on the one hand and the temporalities produced by different functions on the other is crucial. As Jane Jacobs (1961) suggested already a half a century ago, only places which ensure the presence of people who go there on different schedules and who are in the place for different purposes can provide lively streets and successful public spaces.
Cities and especially their central areas are characterised by extreme dynamics whether from a longer-term, everyday, hour-by-hour or minute-by-minute perspective. It is not only the quality in physical form and in meaning (sensory experience), but importantly also the activity, the dynamic dimension of city life that produces successful urban places (Montgomery 1998). Therefore a dynamic approach is needed to understand what is happening inside cities and neighbourhoods. Taking their temporality into account is one step forward.

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NOTES

[1] Since the use of public spaces was our prime interest, people sitting in garden restaurants were not counted. Garden restaurants, though invading public space, are considered to be private zones where only those with money can afford to sit. Thus only people entering or leaving garden restaurants through public space were included in our record sheets.

[2] Only visually distinguishable ethnic groups could be recorded.

REFERENCES


