What are the characteristics and specificities of time policies in France?

I think that, compared to other countries where time policies have developed, the main specificity of time policies in France lies in the way they were implemented and the ways they diffused from one local authority to another.

If we look at how time policies appeared in France, we will highlight the chronological convergence of two founding elements. On the one hand, the European program EUREXCTER (1996-2000, financed by the European Social Fund) which contributed to disseminating in several European countries (Germany, Spain, Ireland, France and Italy) the principles and methods of the city (Tempi della Città) who were born in Italy in the early 1990s. Some local authorities (St Denis, Poitiers, Lille, Strasbourg, Charleville Mézières) have integrated a training program initiated by the French branch of the Eurexcter program (French School of Territorial Excellence). Furthermore, during the same period, the law reducing the legal working time from 39h to 35h was debated and passed. This constituted a powerful stimulus for reflection insofar as it placed local authorities in question about future uses of the time freed up by the reduction of working time and its impacts on service opening hours and mobility.

A sort of dialectic has been established between the concerns of the territories involved in the Eurexcter program and the law on the 35-hour workweek, which led the legislator to introduce a paragraph in Article 1 aimed at encouraging local officials (mayors, presidents of inter-municipalities of agglomerations with more than 50,000 inhabitants) to "promote the harmonization of public service schedules with the needs arising, in particular from the standpoint of reconciling professional and family life, of the evolution of work organization in the activities involved in their territory."In addition, several ministries (the Ministry of the City and the Ministry of Women's Rights) took a close interest in the issue of urban time while the Datar (an organization under the Prime Minister responsible for territorial planning) included it as one of the issues of its prospective approach "Terrotories 2020". In 2001, Prime Minister Lionel Jospin announced the creation of a support fund for time policies to be implemented in the form of a call for projects launched to local authorities, somewhat following the model of Italian regional laws.

The Datar seminar (2000-2002) had a dual effect: on the one hand, it gave legitimacy to time policies by sensitizing a wide range of institutional actors (central and local administrations, unions, NGOs, etc.) to the issue of time policies through about twenty seminars; on the other hand, it brought new territories on board with time policies. Following the 2001 municipal elections, several cities established time offices and initiated time policies actions.

However, in 2002, with the change of government that saw the arrival of the right-wing in power, government support came to an end. From then on, the ten or so cities and local authorities involved had to assume the initiatives they had undertaken without external financial support. But above all, they needed to find a substitute for the DATAR seminars that had allowed them to exchange their experiences. Since then, the dissemination of time policies to other communities has been carried out through this network that initiated symposiums (the "Tuesdays of Tempos," the "Temporelles") open to other communities in order to make time policies and initiatives implemented in adhering communities known. This is how Tempo Territorial was created in 2004.

Why are time politics successful in France?

The initiatives carried out under time policy have been numerous and cover many fields of the economic and social life of territories. It is impossible to list them all, but in a synthetic way they refer to three main fields: work/life balance, access to everyday life services, and mobility and urban

regeneration. As examples of fields of experimentation we might quote: Schools' hours and rhythms and childcare facilities' opening hours; Time schedules of market and non market services and their coordination either new services; New working time arrangements and relationships between working times and other social times; Transportation and mobility: time schedules, offering a range of mobility services to employees through involving firms in car pooling plans, right to the mobility; Night Times, Security in public spaces; Urban and space regeneration and requalification eg to rethink physical city taking in account new ways of regulating spaces and times used by organisations, individuals who lived in cities

While the emphasis placed on one or the other of these fields of application was dependent on the characteristics of each of the territories, some have spread to several of the local authorities, particularly through the exchange of good practices within Tempo Territorial, and some have become established at a wider level. For example:

The idea of a one-stop-shop, first experimented in Poitiers, which was adopted by other local authorities. But also the initiative of the city of Rennes to modify the working hours of women who clean the offices of the municipality (to ensure that they have continuous working hours without breaks and full-time jobs instead of part-time jobs). This initiative served as a model for the National Federation of Cleaning Companies and for the government to improve the working conditions of employees in this sector.

Another example is the initiative first initiated in Poitiers and then taken up in Rennes to engage in consultations with large mobility generators (hospitals, universities, large companies, or neighborhoods with many companies) to desynchronize the start times of the different courses of the university to relieve public transport and make them more attractive as an alternative to car use. This model to tackle the peak hours is now on the agenda of several metropolitan areas in France

How have the fields of intervention of time policies changed from the beginning to the present? Are time policies strategic policies for administrations? Are they still considered current? Why?

There isn't really a shift in the areas of intervention but rather a deepening and generalization of previous orientations, particularly in newly joining collectivities of Tempo Territorial. The issues that were at the foundation of time policies in the early 2000s are still present: equality between genders and different population groups, especially in access to public services; providing greater control over time structures to various population groups (with the underlying idea of realizing a "right to time") through actions on service schedules, as well as promoting new ways of working while favoring a deceleration process; and rethinking time and space towards sustainable development, particularly in light of climate change.

The most emblematic actions today concern:

- Public services schedules, particularly sports and cultural facilities (many territories have acted on library schedules with later openings and Sunday opening hours as well as an extension of swimming pool opening times
- Rush hour, following the example of the city of Rennes that I previously mentioned, that is, engaging in consultations with mobility generators to desynchronise the start and end times of work
- Regulation of telework: several local authorities (Rennes, Strasbourg, the Metropolis of Lille, Paris) have initiated actions aimed at promoting telework for their employees. With its

widespread use following the COVID 19 pandemic, local authorities are implementing regulations for telework

If we look at the most recent initiatives and those on the agenda of some of the collectives that implement time policies, we can distinguish three areas of work:

- a. The first axis concerns work and working time: concrete actions mainly concern telework, but also the working rhythms of local authority employees. These reflections were catalyzed by a 2019 law that obliged local authorities to comply with the 1607 hours of work per year rule by removing local holidays which are above the legal holiday duration (5 weeks) This forced local authorities to examine the working conditions of their employees and to offer compensation for atypical schedules or painful working conditions. Actions on rush hour also aim to offer more flexibility to employees in managing their work schedules. This leads local authorities such as Rennes or MEL to engage in discussions with mobility generator employers to understand the underlying reasons for the observation that even when they are supposed to have flexible schedules, employees arrive at the same time.
- b. The second axis aims to better articulate time and spatial dimensions within urban and peri-urban areas to limit travel and new constructions. These actions fall within the context of urban planning with a focus on sustainable development. In this area, there are actions in favor of co-working (developing workspaces near home) as well as initiatives aimed at promoting the sharing of buildings. For example, in Rennes and Paris, actions are being taken to share the courtyards of schools. The model here is that of vensterschoolen developed in the Netherlands, where schools are reserved for students in the morning and can be used for adult education in the afternoon and for leisure activities (using school sports facilities) for neighborhood residents in the evening.
- c. Many of these initiatives are part of the "15-minute city" concept (there is a deputy mayor for the 15-minute city in Paris) and are part of a broader reflection aimed at rethinking the use of time and space from a perspective of sustainable development and adaptation to climate change. For example, the metropolitan areas of Lille and Strasbourg have engaged in a reflection and actions on urban furniture, its adaptation to seasonal changes, and its multifunctionality. This is the case of an action undertaken in Strasbourg on public benches, perceived as both a means of taking a break and as a way of reconciling rhythms between different population groups.

These various actions are indeed considered strategic for the governance of communities (cities, metropolitan areas, but also rural areas), particularly in light of changes in workers' relationships to their work, workplaces, and working hours (Tempo Territorial is monitoring a research on the effects of a four-day workweek), as well as in light of the urgency of the climate crisis. While the number of communities engaged in time policies remains limited (about fifteen communities), the actions they undertake are increasingly being watched with interest, both by other communities and by governmental agencies or other collective-interest institutions. For example, the ANCT (National Agency for Territorial Cohesion) has relied on the actions of Tempo members to conduct forward-looking action aimed at better taking into account the evolution of lifestyles in mid-sized cities. The same is true for the GART (Group of Transport Authorities), which draws inspiration from actions taken in Rennes or the MEL on peak hours.

So yes, the actions taken by the Tempo member communities are perceived as strategic and relevant in light of the challenges of changing social time relationships as well as environmental issues.

All these initiatives show that chronopolitics is heuristic in that it reveals the existence of a capacity to act in a sustainable manner on society as a whole in order to loosen the grip of prevailing temporal norms. As Christophe Bouton points out, it can limit negotium in order to regain otium."

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