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## **Abstract**

Based on the theory of social acceleration, the paper argues that the timeframe, timing, tempo and temporality of academic work are changing, leading to the strengthening of externally imposed, fast, fragmented and short-term time, which is called scheduled time. The paper investigates what temporal conflicts the dominance of scheduled time creates, and how academics navigate these conflicts in their daily work. Grounded in focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with Finnish academics in social sciences, four distinct time perspectives are discerned: body time, timeless time, career time and family time. Each of these involves specific conflicts with scheduled time, which produce paradoxes and unintended effects. By casting light on increasing temporal complexity of academic work, the paper aims to promote a better understanding of what it is to be an academic at the accelerated academy.

## **Paper**

In this paper I explore the current changes of academic work from the temporal perspective. I rely on the theory of social acceleration, which claims that the tempo and rhythm of life have speeded up in globalized and digitalized late modernity and time has become instant, simultaneous, volatile and non-linear (e.g. Adam 2004; Hassan and Purser 2007; Nowotny 1994). Rosa (2009, 2010) distinguishes three forms of social acceleration: technological acceleration (e.g. internet), acceleration of social change (e.g. organisational reforms) and acceleration of the pace of life (e.g. time pressure), which all are discernible also in the internal life of higher education.

As a result of the intensification, metrification and increasing accountability of academic work, the timeframe, timing, tempo and temporality – the four Ts by Barbara Adam (2004; see Ylijoki 2014) – are changing, which leads to the domination of externally imposed, coercive, fast and short-term time. I call this type of time by the concept “scheduled time” (Ylijoki and Mäntylä 2003). The timeframe of scheduled time is short and fragmented into unconnected events. Its timing is fixed and defined from outside, leaving little space for temporal autonomy. The tempo is hectic because of the increased, and often conflicting, demands and expectations. Finally, temporality emphasises change over continuity since in the turbulent work environment it is difficult to anticipate the future and one needs to be ready for unpredictable transformations. These changes challenge the traditional “timescape” (Adam 1998) of academic work, requiring academics to redefine and modify their daily practices.

Drawing upon the notion of the domination of scheduled time, my interrelated research questions are: 1. What kinds of temporal conflicts do academics experience? and 2. How do they respond to and cope with these conflicts?

Empirically, the paper is based on qualitative material gathered among Finnish academics. The data comprise in-depth interviews with 15 senior academics (professors and university lecturers) and three focus group discussions with altogether 12 early career academics employed on temporary contracts. All interviewees were social scientists, working in the fields of sociology, social policy and social work in three research-intensive universities in Finland.

Based on close reading of the data from a temporal analytical lens, the study discerns four temporal conflicts produced by the domination of scheduled time. First, scheduled time comes into conflict with body time when it encounters academics' physical and psychological limits, creating stress, burn out, and other illnesses. Second, scheduled time stands against "timeless time" (Ylijoki and Mäntylä 2003), which is the time academics strive for since it would allow immersion in research and teaching without constant time awareness and control. Third, scheduled time and career time can come into conflict: gaining prestige through research merits, which career progress is primarily grounded in, is difficult while being trapped in hectic, fragmented and externally imposed scheduled time. Forth, the grip of scheduled time can create a conflict with family time, unbalancing the relationship between work and other life, especially time with one's children. These conflicts are temporal constraints, which characterise the interviewees' work conditions and shape their work practices and experiences.

However, academics are not victims of scheduled time but active actors who make sense of and respond to these temporal constraints in diverse ways. Hence, the paper also investigates how academics navigate the temporal conflicts, build strategies for achieving temporal autonomy in social interaction with colleagues, and craft personally fitting ways to live and work under the dominance of scheduled time. Furthermore, scheduled time itself is complex and multilayered in nature, thereby creating paradoxes and counter-effects to the intended effects, when, for instance, the pursuit for the control of time results in the loss of control. As an example, academics' e-mail practices are discussed, showing that paradoxically e-mails both increase and decrease temporal autonomy in academic work (Ylijoki et al. 2014).

The paper directs attention to the temporal underpinnings of academic work which often remain taken-for-granted assumptions. By making explicit what is implicit and invisible, the paper aims to increase awareness of the complexity of time, which may offer insights for further research and inspire possibilities for creating new empowering solutions to the temporal dilemmas embedded in academic work in the present-day accelerated university.

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