

Editorial vol. 36 n. 3: “Entangled Temporalities in the Global South”

This Contracampo’s edition celebrates the 20th anniversary of our journal, as well as of the Graduate Program in Communication of Fluminense Federal University. It brings out a special issue on temporalities, specifically discussing the geographies of time in the so-called “Global South”. A very important matter, we suggest, not only because it forces us to look at and argue about the experiences of living and being in our present world from the perspective of a certain dispute, distribution and negotiation of power, but also, and mainly, for it links this problem to the idea that media – or perhaps we should say, the contemporary mediatic landscape – is very much responsible for (re)producing such disputes. The great number of articles submitted to this edition reinforces its relevance, and in order to corroborate with this view, we have decided to launch 2 (two) separate issues: the present one (Issue v.36 number 3) and the future edition (Issue v.37 number 1).

First, we would like to suggest the term Global South should be understood here as constitutive of entangled temporalities, and therefore considered less as a category that can be clearly delineated, and instead as an “ex-centric” location (Comaroff, 2012) that calls into question the “world dis/order” (Levander and Mignolo, 2011). In other words, it is the sense of Global South as an extended location that is here recognized and taken as fundamental for us to understand that time itself is much more a problem of entanglements rather than specific established and fixed models.

As Arjun Appadurai pointed out in his groundbreaking study *Modernity at Large*, today’s forced dynamics of globalization exacts a “work of imagination” (1996, 4ff.) in order to come to grips with the ways in which mediation, mobility and deterritorialized labor impact on our experiences of life and locality in a world deeply marked by geopolitical inequalities. In the current special issue of

Contracampo and its follow-up we propose to approach this work of imagination focusing on the role that time plays in the Global South at the heart of the complex conjunctions and disjunctions of ethnoscapas, mediascapas, financescapas, technoscapas and ideoscapas described by Appadurai. As a category, time relates to multiple levels of social phenomena. Time imposes discipline and routines on people so that they can live up to the role assigned to them in the dominant economic and political order. It also has a determining impact on their everyday lives. In addition, it is the clue to imagining the past and the future (Appadurai 2013) and can be a powerful asset to create time frames that resist the dominant order. Finally, time is crucial to the ways in which difference has been and is being constructed in a geopolitical context. Hence, notions of temporality linking modernity and progress to strategies of cultural othering are abundant in the West and have been extensively countered and critiqued from the South.

While all these different notions flock around time as a category in social and cultural theory, curiously enough social theory favored mainly spatial metaphors when looking for a terminology dealing with geopolitical difference – the Torrid Zone, the Third World, the Threshold Countries, the Global South. The major advantage of constructing the South in terms of timescapas is that this semantic shift allows for a more flexible and less essentialised notion of entanglement than space. We all partake of different regimes of temporality at the same time and are highly competent in swapping our roles according to the situational context. In contrast to place, which still suggests some notion of fixed being, “being” in terms of time can only be understood as becoming and overlapping. This simple semantic shift, the wide range of aspects included and the embeddedness of time in power structures make temporality a very efficient tool for understanding inequality in geopolitical terms. In such a way, “timescapas” seems to be a perfect addition to Appadurai’s heuristic model of the scapes in order to understand how people are both exposed to and act upon multiple and conflicting regimes of temporality at the heart of the conjunctions and disjunctions of our globalized world.

An understanding of globalized timescapas inevitably points to the notions of time-compression (Harvey 1989) and the resulting acceleration of everyday life (Rosa 2006) that are imposed unevenly across the world as part of the economic globalization. While there is ample evidence on the macro level, a closer look to constellations in the Global South may show a much more differentiated picture.

For example, while the affluent elites derive part of their social power from the ways, in which they are able to move freely and without delay through different timescapes, the same world of flows means for transmigrant workers in the Global South to take on perilous and lengthy journeys in order to bridge the distance between home and work place. Acceleration, holding back and exclusion thus work hand in hand in this context. As envisioned by Paul Virilio (1984), velocity has become one of the organizing principles around which power is organized in contemporary societies and, for subaltern groups, there is only restricted access to these resources. This notion is accentuated even more so by the introduction of economic transactions in real time which transcend anthropocentric understandings of time and maintain vast parts of the Global South in an object position because of the digital gap.

It would be misleading, however, to simply apply the heuristic apparatus of Eurocentric grand theories of modern time to the explanation of the complex workings of time in societies of the Global South. As has been pointed out by Néstor García Canclini with respect to the hybrid cultures in Latin America, the project of modernization has been implemented only in a fragmented manner outside the centers of Euro-America. The regimes of temporality of the globalized economy make no exception to this rule. Thus, the reach of secularized digital time is competing with different regimes of temporality that derive from the deep structures of coloniality, are related to persistent notions of religiosity, articulate non-European knowledges of time or are deeply embedded in natural time. In this sense, social actors in the Global South usually have to mediate between temporal regimes with different exigencies and develop tactics of how to make do in these environments. Following Achille Mbembe's notion of "time of entanglement" in his ground-breaking essay *On the Postcolony* (2001) – which we present as an introduction to this special issue –, the timescapes of the Global South can be described in terms of multi-layered entangled temporalities. In addition, there is a constant challenge for the social actors of making sense of these heterogeneous timescapes whose incongruences result from uneven power structures and lack the potential for self-determination.

The ways in which time is experienced and being dealt by social actors thus differs widely with respect to the cultural, geographic and situational contexts. Time can be understood as a product of communicative practices which exact

certain (intercultural) competences on behalf of social actors, that are termed “time literacy” by the social psychologist Robert Levine. Levine set out to explore time experience in a comparative and intercultural manner in his essay on *A Geography of Time* (1997), based on participant observation and dating back in its conception to a lengthy stay at Universidade Federal Fluminense in the 1970s. His research on the pace of life, the experience of duration and issues related to temporal micropolitics uses a willfully ironic tone reminiscent of the Euro-American traveler tradition in order to mildly deconstruct his authoritative claim on time experience in “other” cultures. His “geography of time” thus points to the difficult question of geopolitics of knowledge that any attempt to reach overarching and universal theoretical claims on time have to face.

A Geography of Time in the context of Global South Studies thus has to be particularly sensible to the locatedness of its vantage point, but also of the principle critiques that Postcolonial and Southern Theory has brought forward against the universalistic claims of European time theory. What is significant about Southern theory is that it eschews the forms of geographical essentialism (Marshall 2015; Sparke 2007) still present today in notions of “arrested” decolonization (Jeyifo 1990) or “stalled development” (Leonard/Straus 2003). Given the debates that have raged over the aporetic nature of the term of “the South” itself (e.g. Comaroff and Comaroff 2014) the alternative paradigm of temporality, although it certainly does not eschew attention to spatiality and geography, may offer an opposite means of continuing the study of the Global South while avoiding some of the pitfalls of the term.

Time has been a crucial category for constructing the Other in geopolitical terms from Aristotelian notions of the torrid zone onward – a notion, which was central to the ways in which Enlightenment thought conceived of the South as being deprived of historicity (Hegel 1961, 163). The Enlightenment separation and subsequent reification, hypostatization and commodification of time space (Giddens 1990: 19-21), and the powerful work of such temporal instruments such as work-time (Thompson 1967) laid the groundwork for temporal categories such as “modernity”, “development” and “progress” (e.g. Odhiambo 2005). In an ironic twist of history, the universalistic notions of time return, most recently, in the apocalyptic imaginaries of future ecological devastation (Hope 2011; Streeck 2014). These notions of the South as delegated to a different place in history have

always overlaid conceptions of the superiority of the “advanced, “developed” West. Primary among these concerns is of course the chronological teleology inherent in Primitivism by which West anthropology defined the West vis-à-vis non-Western Others, which were imagined as vestiges of the past of humankind (Fabian 1983). Much of Western knowledge since modernity has been expressed with the help of temporal notions of avant-garde progress and the rejection of backward tradition and timelessness, according to an additive model of knowledge-gain (Benjamin).

It is thus of crucial importance to not reduce the entangled temporalities of the Global South simply to reactions to a failed and fragmented imposition of Western dynamics of modernization. Instead, these temporalities should be understood in their own right as constitutive of “lived time” in the Global South aiming for a grounded, subject-oriented understanding of time, developed on the basis of Bergson's concept of “durée” (Bergson 1889), of “experienced time” with its focus on the subject (Mbembe 2000, Sharma 2014) or else of “performative” (as against “pedagogical”) concepts of temporality (Bhaba 1994).

Temporal theories based exclusively in Euro-American modernity and its paradigm of empty, homogenous time (Benjamin 1999: 252-3), the unification of global time and the logisticalization of global capitalist space (Hom 2010; Thrift 2008; West-Pavlov 2013), the production of global “time-space compression” (Harvey 1989) or of global acceleration and time-shrinkage (Rosa 2006, 2013) are too limited to take account of the “timescapes” of the Global South. They assume a spurious universality and a “temporal blindness” characteristic of time-homogenization (Birth 2017) thereby neglecting the „multitemporal heterogeneity” (García Canclini et al. 1995) that more properly characterizes the South. There are decisive ethical reasons for turning our gaze Southwards. It has become clear that concepts of time, far from being abstract philosophical issues remote from real-world practices, have been one of the fundamental factors in the conquest of the globe and the destruction of the global biosphere (Galison 2003; Kern 1983); the importance of studies of temporality, in the light of the shrinking planetary futures of the global populace (Friedrich et.al. 2016; Lenton et.al. 2008; Scheffers et.al. 2016) and retreating horizons of political hope, cannot be underestimated. In such a context, the “alternative” and “heterogeneous” temporalities to be found in the Global South may harbour future perspectives (z.B. Goldstone/ Obarrio, eds, 2017; Heidenreich/O’Toole, hg. 2016; Mbembe

2013; Piot 2010; Weiss 2014; West-Pavlov, hg. 2014) of vital significance for the entirety of the planetary polity.

An account of the temporalities of the Global South must keep in mind, on the one hand, the universal nature of globalizing temporalities, while, on the other hand, noting that these take effect in the Global South, in dialogue with autochthonous temporalities in quite distinct and diverse ways. Thus the apparently ubiquitous phenomena of temporal acceleration and the disappearance of time and futurity asserted by Rosa (2006) takes on a rather different appearance in a Global South dominated by the imposition of exogenous time regimes and the imperatives of precarity and contingency (Appadurai 1996; Mbembe 2000; Simone 2001). The forcefully imposed temporal regimes of globalized capitalism are certainly present in the South, but they merge with divergent forms of temporality, whose persistence and resilience have determined their emergent forms through the period of colonization and neo-colonization (Anozie 1981: 50-61; Hobsbawn and Ranger, eds 1983; Hitchcock 2009; Mbiti 1969; Membe 2000; Rettová 2016).

Whence the increasing importance of bringing into the foreground theoretical, approaches to Global South temporalities that originate in the South itself, ranging from "multitemporal heterogeneity" (García Canclini et al. 1995), "multiplex temporalities" (Simone 2004: 241), "plural temporalities (Chakrabarty 2000: 109), through to "entangled temporalities" (Adesanmi 2004; Mbembe 2001; Nuttall 2009) or "folded temporalities" (Hook 2013), "layered time" (Henze 2000) and finally, "the nonsynchronicity of the synchronous" (Rincón 1995, inverting Bloch's famous formulation). Such concepts offer an underlying rationale for macro-investigations at the level of "entangled histories" (Werner and Zimmermann 2002),

The Social Production of Entangled Temporalities

The two special issues of *Contracampo* will be addressing the complex regimes of temporality in the Global South with respect to the social practices and cultural imaginaries that are constitutive for the production of time in concrete local contexts. We do not aim to establish another grand narrative about the effects on social life resulting from the dynamics of modernization and globalization in the Global South. Instead, our contributors direct a micro-gaze upon the often conflicting and overlapping temporal regimes to be encountered

by social actors and cultural texts in concrete and paradigmatic settings, exploring the way these dynamics are reflected or modelled in cultural texts and media.

It is, therefore, not the analytical category of the abstract, empty time of modernity that is the basis of our endeavor, but rather a grounded, subject-oriented notion, developed on the basis of Bergson's concept of "durée" (Bergson 1889), of "experienced time" with its focus on the subject (Mbembe 2001, Sharma 2014) or else of "performative" (as opposed to "pedagogical") concepts of temporality (Bhabha 1994). Above all, however, we understand time as the product of social practices (Elias 1984). Temporality can thus be grasped, following the concepts of a "labor of/on time" (Bear 2014), a "making time" (Anozie 1981: 60) or a "doing time" (Felski 2000), as the result of social production, according to which the levels of structure and agency intertwine and underpin the concept of the subject as a socio-cultural entity (Mbembe 2000; Reckwitz 2006). In accordance with Giddens' understanding of recursivity, temporal relations in the Global South (and elsewhere) thus appear, on the one hand, as the product of temporal politics that mold the subject and, on the other hand, as the result of societal and cultural practices at a collective level. For further analytic precision the social production of temporal entanglements can be described as a layering of three distinct but complementary levels:

a) Temporal politics represent the structural and strategic approaches to the organization of social time, b) temporal practices discern how the subject positions himself tactically to these structures and c) temporal imaginaries show how societies make sense of entangled and conflicting time regimes in cultural texts.

The notion of temporal politics draws on Foucaultian notions of disciplinary time (1975, 1991), for example in the context of wage labour or institutional techniques of subjectification in school and the military, and its extension to temporal regimes of colonial exploitation (slave temporalities, plantation temporalities or "Kafir Time", see Atkins 1988; Johnson 2000). Its systemic dimension cannot be fully understood without taking into account how modern media and technology (Landes 1983) function to communicate time and exert a disciplining effect on the subject. In this context, it is not only the relationship between subject and community that is considered to be recursive (Giddens 1984), but also the relationship between temporality and subjectivity. If temporality is thus considered to be a product of social practices, the subject

implicated in these practices can only be conceptualized in the dimension of temporality (Mbembe 2000). This recursivity of subject and time leads to two complementary approaches of crucial importance to our endeavour. According to socio-centric approaches, the social institutions of time both exert external coercion and furnish an “apparatus of self-coercion” (Elias 1984). Following Foucault, time produces subjectivising effects in the in terms of sense of discipline and self-guidance (Foucault 1975, 1991). On the contrary, subject-centered approaches stress the importance of societal and autonomous forms of “lived time” that result from dissociation from temporal forces of synchronisation. In this latter sense, deoccidentalised alternatives to the concept of “Eigenzeit” (“subjective time”, Nowotny 1989) must be developed to take account of the ways Global South temporal practices mirror, refract or disrupt Western discourses of subjectivity. In contexts that are, for broad strata of the Global South, shaped by precarity, informality and acceleration (Simone 2010), it is particularly important to investigate which repertoires of temporal tactics of resilience or of resistance against synchronisation are available to “temporal subjects”. This is true for the shaping of everyday time, especially at the point of intersection with the “informal” subsistence economy and the work environment. Within the framework of an entanglement-oriented approach, the issue of an increasing commodification of temporality—in terms of an economisation and consumption of temporal resources—plays a central role.

On the level of temporal practices, temporality is produced in ways, which are either affirmative of the imposed structural and systemic patterns or else offer ways of managing time in a productive, autonomous and resistant manner. When studying everyday practices in Global South, notions of “making time” (Anozie 1981: 60), “making do” or social “bricolage” (Lévi-Strauss 1962) show to be part of the repertoire of tactics and improvisations (de Certeau 1980; Lefebvre 1975). Although they are embedded in the dominant relations of production and power structures, these forms of praxis nevertheless offer space for self-construction and informal subsistence. The manner in which the body is involved in everyday practices or in the experience of the duration or pace relate to the above mentioned notions of lived time (“temps vécu”, Mbembe 2000). Of crucial importance is the question as to which mediation efforts are applied by subjects to rival rhythms of life and which “time-maps” (Gell 1992) they implement to

negotiate such tensions. Which imaginaries of temporality do time-users employ to respond, productively and reflexively, to the regimes of temporality in which they are embedded? In which temporal imaginaries do subjects ground political agency? How are such imaginaries connected to the everyday praxis of political interaction (Lazar 2014)? How are temporal practices themselves used as political resources in the debate about societal participation—for example, in the form of refusal and resistance? Finally, the corporeal dimension of lived time is of significance in this context: how do bodily and natural rhythms, social practices and temporal politics interact with one another? In which way do the culturally specific roles of gender, ethnicity, class, religion and age—always understood within the perspective of their intersectionality—impact the potential formations of temporality (Felski 2000).

Complementary to the strategies of temporal politics and to the tactical level of everyday praxis, temporal imaginaries inform the ways in which time is being conceived and made sense of. This category is based on the notion of social imaginaries as cultural foundations of social structure (Castoriadis 1975, Anderson 1983, Taylor 2004) as well as on Appadurai's concept of the above mentioned "work of imagination" (Appadurai 1996). The role of temporal imagination is of crucial importance to our context because the multi-temporal heterogeneity of temporal relations in the Global South creates a fundamental epistemological problem: the engagement with the contingency, fluidity, precarity and heterogeneity of social and political structures in everyday practices constantly challenges subjects to create a meaningful relationship to the dominant regimes of temporality. This happens through imaginaries that are not limited to the cultural elite and their capacity for reflection, but as Munn (1992: 116) postulates, can be understood symbolic categories initially based on experiential knowledge i.e. that emerge from everyday practices. Moreover, the circulation, mediatisation and archiving of embodied knowledge are to be situated on the level of temporal imaginaries as forms of symbolic and aesthetic modelling of time. The level of temporal imaginaries therefore requires the aggregation of different approaches: the cultural anthropological consideration of autochthonic practices of the imagination, especially in the sense of the ritualistic production or embodiment of temporality, textual analyses of symbolic modelling of temporality in literature and

media production and, finally, the cultural theoretical analysis of abstract theories of time.

It is at this level, that that entangled temporalities connect to the production of the past (Comaroff and Comaroff 2012) and the production of the future (Appadurai 2013). In the light of a drastic reduction of temporal horizons of futurity and historicity in the present, one must ask which utopian futures are still available at all today (Scott 1999, 2004, 2014; Mbembe 2000; Titlestad 2014). When considering the dimension of the past, it is noticeable that questions of identity in literature and the media are bound up, to a great extent, with their respective modes of modelling history, and the ways precolonial, colonial and postcolonial, mythic and progress-oriented conceptions of history are interwoven in those modes. For large sections of the Global South public, interaction with the past—for example, in the context of memory culture (truth commissions, restitution policies)—plays an important role (Comaroff/Comaroff 2012: 133-52) in which connections with present-day interests and with projections for the future cannot be neglected. With respect to imagined futures in the Global South, it is vital to understand which notions of the future, connected with hopes (Ortner 2016) and aspirations (Appadurai 2013), are possible following the crisis of the socialist liberation utopias after 1990 (Piot 2010) and in the face of precarious living conditions and global threats? What does the crisis of utopian projection mean for social agency (e.g. Heidenreich und O’Toole, ed. 2016; Weiss 2004; West-Pavlov, ed. 2014, Lambek 2010)? Which autochthonous resources for the production of futures offer possibilities of agency in the face of widespread experiences of contingency and precarity? In other words, which role do those values and norms, cosmologies and everyday practices, experiences and forms of engagement with the past play for the conceptualization and design of a good future (Robbins 2013; de Sousa Santos 2014)?

The articles in this first special issue, through distinct perspectives, cross and complexify the temporal levels mentioned before. For instance, , Sudesh Mishra’s article “On Seeing a Bull’s Skull in a Bicycle Seat: Innovative Archaisms” directly questions the issue of temporalities in Oceania”, interrogating how and if indigenous practices in that specific region of the world can open up the possibility of a future occluded by the long epoch of surplus accumulation. By arguing that future co-exists as an impeded possibility in the present, the author demonstrates

how the Global South of Oceania turns into a region of innovative archaisms, counter-national imaginings, subverting practices and communal forms of ecological ethics.

Susanne Goumegou, in "Entangled rhythms of life in Dakar...", discusses, through literature, how the description of structures and functions in the Global South city requires not only spatial but also temporal categories. The time of capitalism materialized in the circulation of disposable consumer goods is set in contrast to the ritual notions of time among the town locals who are caught in an ongoing process of transculturation. By focusing on temporality, the author demonstrates how Diop manages to integrate in his portrait of Dakar historical dimensions as well as global entanglements. Also by looking at the ordinary life of a small town in the south of Brazil, Renata Pozzo, in "The everyday life of cinema", demonstrates how the moving image, in the context of a so-called "modernity", becomes part of the everyday of the inhabitants of Laguna.

As the issue of entangled temporalities is directly related to the one of multiterritorialities, the article written by Viviane Borelli and Vinícius Flôres – "Another measure of space-time in mediatization" – ought to be understood as a discussion, from the perspective of the digital, of the multiterritorialisation in the region of the Negro River (the Amazon) and the measure of space-time of the natives, which, according to the authors, dates back to the pre-colonial period of South America. And in "Multiple Temporalities: cultural analyses of Figueroas' music videos and performance in cultural mediations and mutations", Itania Mota Gomes, Thiago dos Santos, Carolina Araújo and Edinaldo Mota Junior articulate the maps of cultural mediations and mutations in the work of a Brazilian artist. From specific theoretical and methodological choices, the study challenges and relates different temporalities and spatialities, juxtaposing cultural matrices with global and regional musical references.

Back to literature as a resource that helps us understand how time and space are provocative instances when referring to the Global South, West-Pavlov's article brings up issues related to networking and pedagogy. In "The Time of Teaching in the Global South...", the author, based on reflection about Caribbean poetry, contributes substantially to our understanding of the interconnections between time/space, which is, somehow, in the core of this special issue itself. All of these articles, as we suggest, help the reader have a broader comprehension of the

problems tackled by this first Contracampo's special issue. In addition to the articles specifically dedicated to the proposed theme, but in no way distant from the interconnections related to entangled temporalities, Global South and media, other articles in this issue discuss matters from the perspective of Brazil as part of the "timescapes" to which the whole issue is dedicated.

From an epistemological perspective, for example, the article written by Ângela Cristina Marques e Luiz Sá Martino brings an intriguing reflection. In "Connections and tensions of time in Communication Theories", the authors raise the question of knowledge production, developing a specific vision of the potentialities and limits of the presence of time in communicative processes. From the reflection about time dimensions in certain Theories of Communication, Marques and Martino help us understand that time is a component of distinction in theoretical formulations, though its specific aspects seem to be considered as a unique dimension among others of the interactional phenomena. The questions this fact presents, when thinking from the perspective of the Global South itself, are up to each one of us readers to produce. The connection between knowledge production and the power inscribed in the created opposition South/North is somehow, as far as we understand, a very important aspect related to entangled temporalities in the Global South.

Through this issue and the problems it touches, Contracampo also presents to the international community other specific media practices and phenomena that are very specifically related to the Brazilian context and concerns. Corporate communication actions and organization, for instance, are seen and criticized through the lenses of face-to-face interactions. The biomes of Pantanal and Amazon, regions where technological appeal is less evident, are part of Ana Maria Dantas de Maio's article, one which focuses on the identification of mediations imposed by this kind of environment, analyzing the way in which these scenarios are built and mediated by the media. In "The internet as a moral space: an analysis of the "teachings" of Deboísmo", Henrique Mazetti and Ricardo Gomes da Silva address the relationship between media and morality. Mozahir Salomão Bruk e Rennan Antunes, in "Journeys and heroes in Piauí's magazine profiles...", by analysing a Brazilian magazine which uses a special type of journalism, propose a central question: how and to what extent does piauí magazine use the narrative strategy of profiling to offer the reader new ingredients and perspectives both on

the person profiled and the context and social circumstances in which they are inserted? Finally, Alisson Machado and Sandra Rubia da Silva, in "There I can be a woman": transvestite everyday life and sociability in digital trajectories", use internet ethnographic research to interpret some elements of transvestite sociability based on their practices of consumption and use of digital technologies.

This issue and the next to come are part of (and in some extension a result of) the project "Literary Cultures of the Global South" (DAAD, Germany), a research project developed by PPGCOM/UFF in collaboration with the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen. In this sense, by launching these issues, Contracampo celebrates this valuable partnership and its 20th anniversary, emphasizing the importance of building up transnational academic dialogues. We would like to thank all the team, authors and reviewers involved in this process. And we sincerely wish you all a very pleasurable and productive reading.

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