

ISLANDS AND TIME: ISLAND TEMPORALITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF ISLAND RESEARCH INTRODUCTION

Waking up *on time*. *Taking time* to plan the day. Often working *overtime* while daydreaming of *me time*. Recalling *good times*, envisioning *better times*. Switching to Zoom and scheduling meetings in different *time zones*. *Making time* for family and friends. *Lunchtime*. Multitasking different things at the *same time*. Checking the clock and reminding oneself of *the time*. Predicted *waiting time* for the operator to answer is 38 minutes. *Enduring time*, it felt like a century. Late evening and *bedtime*. Setting the alarm and no more snooze button. *Saving time, giving time, chasing time, wasting time...* in the worst-case scenario *doing time*. *Island time?*

The challenge of time, its lack or abundance, permeates our everyday communication, but it also reflects our day-to-day rhythms/pace and, in many cases, overcrowded schedules and thus becomes a problem that takes time to master. The ways in which time dictates our everyday activities (in contemporary Western cultures) and marks our language brings about contradictions and ambivalences. Notions of “me time” or “no time at all” fundamentally reconfigure our everyday lives. “Time is money” parallelly co-exists with a longing for “boredom” and “time at a slower pace” or experiences of “forgetting about the time” and “living out of time” that we connect with specific spaces, geographical locations, or times of crisis. Even now, in the time of the energy and ecological crises while the “time of Covid-19” pales, we crave for relaxation and procrastination to escape our possibly dark thoughts of what sometimes feels like a not-so-bright future. But in these rather hectic and sometimes pessimistic visions of the insecure times ahead of us, the figure of an island and the metaphor of *ISLAND TIME* stand out as persistent and alluring ideas that manage to outlive the predicaments of our times. Entrenched in the imaginings of a utopian place, whose spatial “anomalousness” presupposes temporal escapism, the popular perception of island time and its practical reflections led us to consider island temporalities as a challenge for ethnographically grounded research that will enable us to think about and beyond our usually romanticised experiences of being on an island. Without implying that being on an island necessarily means bowing down to its spatial limitations or one-sided perspectives, our call to re-think the notion of “island time” was stirred by the fact that our experiences of islands

adhere to specific epistemological limitations, whose temporal echo is reflected in scholarly debates even today. In an attempt to move away from the notion of time as something independent of human experience, we wanted to expand our horizons of knowledge about islands by highlighting the ties between islands and time.

In the context of the social sciences and humanities, interdisciplinary research on islands is primarily characterised by spatiality as a fundamental determinant of island cultures. The frequent emphasis on spatiality has resulted in representations of islands as constrained both in everyday life and in terms of geography and marked by a historicised present and a belated modernity. In emphasising spatiality, the transformative and dynamic character of culture has often been neglected, as well as the heterogeneity of the lived experiences of island communities. By placing an analytical focus on island temporalities in relation to the frequently emphasised spatiality of islands, the intention of this thematic issue is to contribute to the expansion of knowledge on the complexities of island communities and their negotiations of temporalities, but also to engage in the current scholarly debate on the poetics and politics of temporality.

We see temporality as an experiential and heterogeneous process that goes well beyond the deterministic structures of linearity or chronology. Based on many familiar examples, there is a growing concern for a critical understanding of temporality that goes further than our typical, abstract, clockwise-oriented conception of time. Research inspired by the postcolonial approach has already problematised the phenomenon of temporality by criticising the temporal singularity resulting from Western hegemony. In an attempt to move away from privileged spatialised approaches and guided by knowledge of culturally, historically, and socially shaped experiences of temporality, the temporal turn has opened up a number of stimulating research topics. In this thematic issue of *Narodna umjetnost*, we approach temporality as a historically and socially situated process, or as a specific way of being that is created in mutually interconnected processes between individuals, communities, and their social and cultural contexts. Our aim is to provide new perspectives on the diversity of temporal experiences on islands, which have often been reduced to essentialised notions of what life on islands is like, nostalgia for the lost “island tradition”, and rhetoric on temporal alternation coupled with dramatic appeals to save the remaining island cultural phenomena (traditional architecture, the economy, dialects, food culture, etc.). We want to reflect on the heterogeneity of lived experiences through the prism of island temporalities conceived as specific historical, social, and cultural modalities of being. Our goal is to refresh our understanding of island temporalities by enriching the spatial perspective with different temporal modalities that shape the way islanders and non-islanders experience time. This goes for the role of the seasonal rhythms, the delay in applying development policies, and the co-existence of multiple temporalities, including temporal fragments, expectations, boredom, and static notions of time. Awash in a multitude of temporalities, we hope that now is *the time* to reflect on the often neglected, yet no less important, ways we make *island time* and see its emancipatory potentials.

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