CALL FOR PAPER

MIGRATION TEMPORALITIES AND MIGRANTS' EXPERIENCE OF TIME IN RURAL AND REMOTE PLACES

Dear Colleagues,

We are opening a call for paper for a Special issue focusing on time and temporalities of migration in rural and remote regions. A proposal will be submitted to the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies by the end of June 2023.

Migration is often understood as a spatial process where time is implicit (Baby-Collin *et al.*, 2017; Griffiths *et al.*, 2013; Mercier *et al.*, 2021). Yet, "the focus on the temporal experience of migrants can illuminate the nature of migration itself, (…), and the way that, in a diversity of ways, it dis-places and re-embeds people and communities around the world" (Cwerner, 2001, p.32). The reflection on migration and time is far from new. Twenty years ago, King *et al.*, (2004) identified two main strands of research, one originated in the work of the Swedish geographer Torsten Hägerstrand and his attempt "to represent the mobile life-path webs of individuals in three-dimensional time-space" (ibid., p. 10); and the other referring to the sociologist Saulo Cwerner (2001) and his conceptualisation of the 'times of migration' as "the process of confrontation between time conceptions and perspectives, the attitudes towards time and the temporal habits of migrants and those of the host society" (Elchardus et al., 1987, p.139, quoted in Cwerner, 2001, p. 7). In 2013, Griffiths *et al.* (2013) reviewing the field ten years later discussed how time has been addressed in the mobilities field and in the life-course and longitudinal studies. The mobilities perspective allows us to recontextualise migration within the general field of movement, ceasing to consider it as an exception to sedentarism, and to investigate migration journeys and their temporalities. Studies on the life-course, by connecting migration to the "natural time" (ibid.), allows us

to appreciate how changing the life-course affects migration as well as to redress "the focus on productive mid-life" (ibid., p. 12) by exploring age-related migrations (e.g., migrations of children or retirees). Finally, longitudinal studies looked at migrants' trajectories through long temporal perspectives, allowing us to grasp how migration drivers, experiences, decisions, challenges, etc. develop and change over time. In 2021, Mercier *et al.* (2021) in a special issue of the review *Temporalités*, called *Temps et migrations* reflected on migration and temporality through three axes. Firstly, the times of the migration journey and of the exile (*les temps des déplacements, des déplacés*), with a focus on the waiting times. Secondly, the time of the migrant labour force and the time that is organised around the work *(le temps de la segmentation des marchés du travail)*. Thirdly, the times of controls, such as how constraining the times of individuals is a technology of power. In this sense, Western states, through their policy of control of migratory flows, participate in ordering of the social world through the definition of a social and identity hierarchy *(les temps des contrôles, des interstices)*. Finally in 2022, a special issue of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies edited by Triandafyllidou (2022) explored temporariness as essential category in the contemporary fragmented, non-linear international migration phenomenon (ibid.). To discuss this specific temporality of migration, Triandafyllidou proposed an analytical framework that brings together the policies – and their role in shaping migration as temporary - and migrant agency and experience in perceiving their project as temporary or permanent.

This brief introduction provides an idea of how time is increasingly explored in migration studies. Yet to date, very few scholars have addressed migration and time in rural and remote regions. Remote and rural regions have been taught to 'know their place' (Ching and Creed, 2013). The imaginary of remoteness is dominated by a powerful centre that defines spaces and places outside and away from the political centrality as peripheral and marginalized, the spatial fringe interfering with the political deficits. Remoteness eludes any static description; it is a relational process. "Remoteness is never fixed;

it is not a predetermined and enduring place, but a process situated in dynamic fields of power. The condition is always infused with the edgy feeling experienced by people living in a world where the relations of inside and outside, near and far, proximate and remote are always contested" (Harms et al., 2014, p.364).

This special issue wishes to stimulate a needed reflection on migration temporalities and migrants' experience of time in rural and remote spaces and places and fill this gap in the literature. It aims at analysing the vital and multi-faceted worlds of mobility, migration and time that characterise rural and remote places and at pleading for sense-making policies sensitive to local places and temporalities.

The presence of international migrants in rural regions of the global North has received growing scholar attention. Migration is seen "as a means of facilitating development and the sustainability of rural regions and communities. Interventions to attract, recruit and retain international labour migrants (...) in the context of aging populations and high levels of outmigration of the young and economically active in rural areas, have received increased research attention" (de Lima *et al.*, 2022). Yet, labour migrants in their productive mid-life are only part of the migration phenomena that interests rural and remote regions. Increasingly asylum seekers and refugees are resettled in remote or peripheral geographical locations by state organisations (Schech, 2014). Morén-Alegret *et al.* (2018) - discussing sustainability in rural regions as a temporal framework that attempts to bridge present and future generations while taking the past into account - show how labour migrants and life-style migrants, attracted to rural places with high amenity value, may live side-by-side: they "age together and their children play in the same playgrounds" (ibid., p. 265). Temporality of rurality and remoteness is a major attraction to amenity migrants and neo-rurals.

The rural and remote spaces and places of arrival contribute to the construction of migration times and temporalities. In a time-geography perspective, rural and remote spaces and times are mutually constituted (Ho, 2021). Times and temporalities are socially constructed in and through spaces and places (ibid.) and therefore are space specific. In this sense, we think that migration time and temporalities need to be analysed within and through the space where they occur, in our case rural and remote places. Place is understood here accordingly to Massey (1991) as "constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations, meeting and weaving together at a particular locus" (ibid. p.6), and representing an unique point of intersection constructed on a far larger scale than the place itself.

Using Cwerner's (2001) typologies of 'migration times' we can exemplify how time need to be understood in relation to the rural and remote spaces and places. This is the case for instance for what Cwerner defines as the strange, heteronomous, and asynchronous times that refer to how the encounter with different temporalities and rhythms results for newcomers in displacement, uprooting, and the rupture of daily routines. While in super-diverse urban spaces the syncretism of social times may attenuate this sense of 'temporal displacement' in newcomers, in rural and remote places and communities the encounter with a sole dominant social time (that of the local community) may reinforce it. For instance, a limited (or absent) experience of migrants' social time (e.g. religious holidays) or to more generally of different social times may have an impact on the adjustment between migrants and local communities.

Similarly, looking to migration and time through the mobility approach, as reviewed by Griffith (Griffiths *et al.*, 2013), we immediately see how migration journeys are impacted by rurality and remoteness. The migration journeys - including here all the journeys aimed to nurture the migrants' transnational ties - can prove lengthy, difficult, unaffordable, or impossible – e.g., because of bad weather, insufficient connections, or high costs. This impacts the frequency of the migrants' travel to their families and networks (even in the hosting country) and can orient or shape migration rhythms and trajectories

(Caputo *et al.*, 2023b). Furthermore, everyday challenges in terms of mobility within the region, in terms of access to scarce or distant services, may contribute to the perception of the migration experience as short-term and therefore impact migrants' engagement with the local communities, their willingness to seek more stable or better employment or to enrol in training, etc. Therefore, rurality and remoteness can impact migrants' perception and expectation regarding the duration of their migration experience – its temporariness.

Those perspectives on migration and time in rural and remote places are far from being exhaustive but provide some indication on how this special issue would contribute to the field. To explore the migration temporalities and migrants' experience of time in rural/remote spaces and places we would like to articulate the special issue around some conceptual clusters.

A first cluster is with agency, subjectivity, and capacity to act in migration processes, where the nexus is conceived as a key feature of migrant experience shaped by the political, economic, and securitarian order (Anderson, 2019; Baas and Yeoh, 2019; Barber and Lem, 2018). Migrants agency together with migration policies are essential in structuring the temporality of migration and its perception (Triandafyllidou, 2022). For instance, migrant agency can be essential to orient the migration path toward rural areas and toward a permanent setting there, as in the case of Afghani refugees who actively chose to settle in rural and remote Scotland – where they could access permanent housing within a few weeks - to avoid the waiting time and the sense of temporariness of hotel accommodation in urban or periurban British regions (Caputo *et al.*, 2023a). How is this relation shaped in rural and remote spaces and places? Remote regions – as distance in time and space from centres of power – can also allow more space for migrant agency (Caputo *et al.*, 2023b). The role of agency in structuring time and migration to rural and notably remote places is underexplored by the literature.

A second and related conceptual cluster is with public policies. How do public policies (mis)consider migration and integration times in rural and remote regions? Public policies aimed at integration are intimately connected with a 'Western' conceptualisation of time (e.g. employment oriented with specific schedule for joining and achieving training). Policy impose the power temporality on the local experience of migration, e.g. by the construction of a refugee reception centre in a town with no migrants. Temporality becomes an axis against which inclusion success is assessed for both migrants and actors, like local governments and NGOs, providing services and shaping inclusion patterns. Funding for such policies comes with an expiry date, they do not adequately take into consideration specific needs and challenges that newcomers face, like trauma and inability of projecting themselves in the future, their own cultural sense of time, neither the specific challenges they may encounter in rural and remote regions e.g. in accessing services and opportunities.

Other scholars have reflected on the waiting time in receiving societies created by migration policies - for example for asylum seekers - and bordering practices - how migrants time is managed at the EU border through extending and challenging their migration journey. Critical rural research has reflected on how time is weaponised against forced migrants by state organisations as they have limited or no choice about their rural or remote settlement location and of the duration of their stay ((Krivokapic-Skoko *et al.*, 2018; Nunn *et al.*, 2022; Schech, 2014). Nationalist, far-right anti-immigrant rallies, actions, mobilisations introduce the temporality of politics in the experiences of both migrants and locals.

A third cluster is with life stages and generations. From a life-course perspective, the relation between time and migration and rural and remote spaces can be explored in its impact on age-related migrations. For instance, scholars have explored aged migrants' trajectories from and to rural regions, as in the case of migrants that return to the home country in late-life to live with (or near) relatives for support and

care (Warnes and Williams, 2006), or flee or plan to flee rural and notably remote regions to get easier access to specialistic health care (Caputo *et al*, 2023b).

The last cluster we would like to propose is with labour. The investigations on migration and "natural times" (Griffiths *et al*, 2013) introduced in the previous cluster in rural and remote regions should consider not only the biological time, but also the astronomical times such as the length of daylight, the seasonality, etc. The astronomical time structure the economic activities in those regions – notably in the primary economic sector – and therefore affect labour opportunities (e.g. in the agriculture or fishing industries, in the tourism sector, etc.) impacting both the migration trajectories and the perception of their durations (temporariness). Rurality and remoteness and time can be though as axes for an intersectional analysis of migrant workers' opportunities (Carlbaum, 2021).

To develop this special issue on migration and time in rural and remote places, we would like to kindly invite you to send an abstract of 400 words together with a summary of maximum 50 words (that will be included in the proposal) by June 9th 2023, to the email address: marialuisa.caputo@unipr.it

For further information about the proposal and the review process, please find attached the Special Issue guidelines of the Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies or contact us.

Your sincerely,

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