

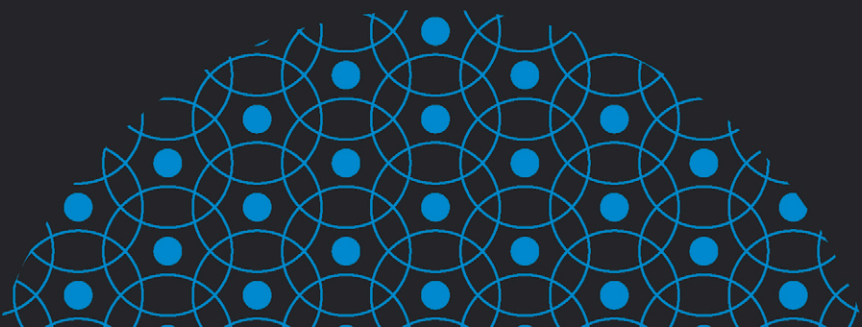


EMERALD POINTS

CULTURAL RHYTHMICS

Applied Anthropology and Global
Development from Latin America

GONZALO IPARRAGUIRRE



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Applied Anthropology and Global
Development from Latin America

BY

GONZALO IPARRAGUIRRE

University of Buenos Aires, Argentina



United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India
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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

*To Davydd Greenwood,
for his constant support in translating my ideas
and bringing this book to fruition.*

*To Viviana Montibeller,
for her vitality, strength and love.*

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CONTENTS

<i>List of Figures</i>	ix
<i>About the Author</i>	xi
<i>Prologue</i>	xiii
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xvii
Introduction	1
1. Temporality and Spatiality	5
2. Imaginaries, Rhythmics and Development	19
3. Rhythmics of Development in Argentina	39
4. Design of Development Agendas	93
<i>References</i>	119
<i>Index</i>	131

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LIST OF FIGURES

1

Figure 1.	Constitutive Temporalities of Current Hegemonic Temporality.	8
-----------	--	---

2

Figure 2.	Composition of Cultural Rhythmicity.	27
-----------	--------------------------------------	----

3

Figure 3.	Analysis Matrix of Social Imaginaries About Cultural Heritage.	42
-----------	--	----

Figure 4.	Heritage Intervention Model.	50
-----------	------------------------------	----

Figure 5.	Analysis Matrix of Social Imaginaries About Rural Tourism.	54
-----------	--	----

Figure 6.	Analysis Matrix of Social Imaginaries About Agriculture.	69
-----------	--	----

Figure 7.	Scientific Imaginaries of Anticipation.	85
-----------	---	----

4

Figure 8.	STOB Conceptual Diagram.	94
-----------	--------------------------	----

Figure 9.	STOB Graphic to Represent a Symmetrical Past-Future Flow of Time.	96
-----------	---	----

Figure 10.	STOB Characterization for Designing Agendas.	98
------------	--	----

Figure 11.	Analysis Matrix of the 'Energy Transition' Problematic.	109
------------	---	-----

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Gonzalo Iparraguirre is a Doctor in Anthropology (2015) and Licentiate in Anthropological Sciences (2010) from the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires. His work focuses on comprehending and translating temporalities, development imaginaries and their political interventions.

He completed international postgraduate courses and training at the University of Bern, Switzerland (2013); at the University of Sao Paulo, Brazil (2015); at the Czech Academy of Sciences, Czech Republic (2018); at ECLAC-United Nations, Chile (2018); and at the School of Architecture and Design in Oslo, Norway (2019).

He has more than 20 scientific productions corresponding to various disciplines (anthropology, archeology, heritage management, tourism, future studies). He has participated in more than 30 scientific and political outreach events. He has carried out consultancies and technical assistance to private and public organizations on various topics (development, agenda planning, management, cultural impact).

He is a postgraduate and graduate professor, and collaborates as postgraduate researcher for the Culturalia group (University of Buenos Aires), the ADETER group, the IIESS-CONICET (South National University), and the CEDETS group (Southwest Provincial University).

During the last 15 years he has worked in the design, management and application of public policies at different levels of public agencies in Argentina, such as: provincial government (2008–2010), national government (2010–2015) and municipal government (since 2016) where he is a public official as Secretary of Development of the Municipality of Tornquist, Province of Buenos Aires.

As a consultant in Anthropology of Development, he has worked on regional, provincial and national projects. Some of the activities carried out were: identification and modeling of territorial problems; historical analysis of development planning in Argentina; comparative analysis of public policies around the development and design of territorial agendas; fieldwork to set up sociocultural baselines for infrastructure projects with anthropological impact.

He is the author of the *Anthropology of Time* online course (www.academia.edu/learn/GonzaloIparraguirre).

PROLOGUE

It is my pleasure to introduce this work by an outstanding young Argentinian anthropologist, Gonzalo Iparraguirre, who has a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Buenos Aires and is currently the Secretary for Development of the Municipality of Tornquist in the Province of Buenos Aires. We have become colleagues despite the distance in both age and geography through the mediation of the internet. Having read my work, Gonzalo contacted me and we began a series of exchanges and videoconferences that convinced me that the issues he addressed and his unique combination of experiences tell a story of theory, method and ethnographic context that will be of broad interest to a transdisciplinary audience including anthropologists, sociologists, cognitive scientists, policymakers and philosophers.

Iparraguirre's training is both broad and deep. On the path to his PhD in Anthropology and thereafter, he has delved into cultural geography, the Frankfurt School, Cultural Studies, Bourdieu and Foucault. This combination creates fertile ground for anchoring ethnographic engagements in a much broader set of issues. He is exceptionally good and agile in managing and communicating these perspectives, and he joins the ranks of other anthropologists like Paul Rabinow (1996) and Hiro Miyazaki and Richard Swedberg (2017) in synthesizing these kinds of perspectives in a uniquely ethnographic way.

What makes him unique is that all of this academic background is leavened by year of experience as a public official in a municipal development agency. He is an academic and a practitioner who has worked out a way of conceptualizing what he learns daily in his administrative work as grist for his anthropological thinking. And then the return trip he makes involves bringing his academic learning to bear on improving the work of his agency. Unlike Donald Schön's *The Reflective Practitioner* (1983) who is an accomplished practitioner but cannot formulate in more abstract terms how he does what he does, Iparraguirre tacks back and forth between theory and practice effortlessly. He does so in a way that enriches both and shows us how both a PhD level of training and years of administrative experience can be made to speak to one another effectively.

Iparraguirre anchors the present work in a practical and grounded focus on the processes of patrimonialization, community development and internal colonialism. It is based on years of fieldwork and on his experiences in current employment as a local development civil servant in a smallish city in Argentina. Unlike many who focus on these subjects, often telling mainly applied case histories, his approach is undergirded with sophisticated readings from a variety of philosophical traditions, a blending of an amalgam of diverse social theories and systems theory.

This culminates in the novel idea of cultural rhythemics. This notion of rhythemics gathers up generations of insights about the mismatches between local and cosmopolitan cultures, between development agencies and local people, and between different strata of local societies. By rendering their linkages and disconnects in terms of this concept of rhythemics, he moves past well-known but rather shopworn ideas about domination, development and cultural commodification. In their place and without denying them, he produces a more synthetic multi-dimensional view of the complexity of these processes. One of the key dimensions of these rhythemics is anticipation and even hope as components in these processes. This links with the ground-breaking work of Hiro Miyazaki and Swedberg (op cit.) and Anna Tsing (2015) in complicating and enriching our understanding of policy processes and outcomes in more than oversimplified ‘rational choice’ terms.

This is more than a show of ingenuity. His way of engaging these issues manages to find in the diversity of stakeholder perceptions and experiences spaces for positive change and for hope. This contrasts solidly with the more dystopian views that dominate these subjects, a dystopian view to which I have also contributed my share of negativity (Greenwood, 2008). Iparraguirre offers us a sense of gritty realism, ethnographic diversity and complexity, but shows us the possibility of some negotiated solutions to the clear conflicts of interest existing between the various groups he analyzes. It is no small feat and is a story that deserves to be widely read.

I have also learned through our interactions that he has a lively, playful and ambitious mind, and I am certain that this book is only the first of many good things he will create for us.

Davydd J. Greenwood

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Finally, thanks to the Emerald Editorial team for believing in my work and for guiding me until the completion of the book.

INTRODUCTION

This book is an anthropological tool for decision-makers, development practitioners, policy-makers and academics who deal with the well-known limitations of linear models of development.

The source is an ethnographic and interpretative study that combines 15 years of fieldwork in public sector management of development programmes with a symbolic analysis of cultural imaginaries and rhythms of life. Analyzing the symbolic dimension of development in Argentina, this study deploys alternative proposals for the political and scientific management of these processes in Latin America.

It shows different ways that get beyond current models' failure, based solely on economics and technology dissemination, to air and reconcile conflicts that repeat failed intervention strategies and problems that have already been understood both academically and practically. It proposes future design strategies useful for business, community leaders, political decision-makers and scientists from all over the world.

Based on extensive anthropological research carried out in Argentina (southwest of Buenos Aires Province), four study cases are analyzed (politics, cultural heritage, rural tourism and agricultural production) around these cross-cutting questions: What does the development of a specific territory 'mean' in the daily practices of the different social groups that constitute it? How do political and productive actions, centred on conceptions of development that refer mainly to the past (temporalities) affect the present and the actors' views of the future? How are decision-making and development agendas constructed from a symbolical perspective? Which innovative changes can 'applied anthropology' contribute to building a bridge between science and politics?

Framed in the field of applied anthropology and development studies (Appadurai, 2015; Escobar, 2012; Eversole, 2018; García Canclini, 2008; Gardner & Lewis, 2015) with an Action-Research pragmatic perspective (Greenwood & Levin, 2006), the book answers these questions by calling attention to a specific set of rhythms of life and imaginaries called *cultural rhythmicity* (Iparraguirre, 2016, 2019, 2021). *Cultural rhythmicity* is a method

for studying temporality, spatiality and rhythms of life. These rhythmics could be compounded by different social rhythms such as political, productive, economic, financial, seasonal, touristic, of management, of organizational change, of development practices among others.

Beyond an innovative analysis of the cases presented in the book, this rhythmics perspective can be extrapolated to the practices of development in other territories of Argentina, Latin America and even the Global South (Bourqia & Sili, 2021; Sili, 2019) because the imaginaries of development and their correlated governance practices are part of a colonial matrix of thought. This colonial way of thinking, still persisting under the modernist imaginary of nation state, is a clear instance of how the past becomes present in the systems of government and in social conflicts never dismantled or transcended even actors and situations gave rise to them no longer exist.

The book raises the challenge of understanding social rhythms, initially highlighted in Anthropology as central by Mauss (2002) and Boas (1925), and studied also in classic works by Durkheim (1982), Evans-Pritchard (1977), Lévi-Strauss (1993), Hall (1983), and Bourdieu (2007). The book also contributes greatly to philosophical and anthropological studies on time and space (Appadurai, 2015; Bryant & Knight, 2019; Fabian, 2002; Gell, 1992; Knight, 2021; Lefebvre, 2004; May & Thrift, 2001; Torres, 2021), attempting to account for the combination of the two through the notions of temporality and spatiality.

The constructed theoretical and methodological framework enables the consolidation of a way of interpreting social dynamics through their imaginaries and rhythms. It is a tool that helps translate culture into *rhythmics of culture*. Formulated with a scope greater than the addressed cases, it is shown that by studying the imaginaries of a society through its symbolic representations and language, we are able to access the material world that subjects inhabit and transform.

The contents of the book are organized in four chapters, here summarized. Chapter 1 summarizes the main reference works on the problem of time and space in philosophy, science and anthropology. Diverse temporalities and spatialities of the world are distinguished to exemplify the hegemonic character of the scientific notions of time and space and their implications when analyzing social and political dynamics. This theoretical framework enables the construction of an anthropological theory of time and space required to perform an ontological analysis of the concept of development among different territories. It is proposed to conceive development as temporality, as a rationalization of the apprehension of time that implies the three tensions of every temporality: past, present and future.

Chapter 2 introduces the conceptual framework for addressing the articulation of imaginaries, discourses and practices with the rhythmic method constructed for studying the social dynamics of the various cases. Social imaginaries are sets of symbolic representations on ways of thinking and acting of a social group in its daily life. These can be analyzed through matrices that organize these representations into inclusive hierarchical levels. This method was born from the need for achieving a standard of organization of the ethnographic material, allowing comparison of social groups and case studies with each other in order to get a synchronic result out of them. *Cultural rhythmicity* is a method to study temporality, spatiality and rhythms of life. This method systematizes the set of cultural symbolic representations (imaginaries) with the set of everyday rhythms of life (practices) and aims to connect the ‘presence of the past’ (history, family, identity, life trajectory, tradition) with the ‘presence of the future’ (planning, projects of life, dreams, hopes, wishes, utopias, policies, anticipation).

Chapter 3 condenses the application of the theoretical and methodological framework to four complementary study cases: heritage, tourism, agriculture and politics. Considering ethnographic examples of the fieldwork carried out during the last 15 years in Argentina, it proposes to articulate social imaginaries with cultural rhythms that dynamize the daily life of social groups. The analysis of cultural rhythms takes place in the simultaneous interpretation of imaginaries, discourses and practices, anchored in categories such as sustainability, production, technology, agriculture, agroecology, land uses, heritage, tourism and others of similar recurrence between the interlocutors.

In Chapter 4, the book ends with concrete anthropological proposals for intervention applied to social and technological development. The main considerations of the work are reviewed on the basis of the discussion of the necessary and urgent dialogue between science and politics, between the ethnographic planning of development, the design of agendas and its execution in the territories. The methodologies of interpretation already described are applied to the analysis of the overarching concepts of the work (development, territory, progress, heritage, becoming, time, space) and the results obtained are reviewed in the more general frame of the sociocultural dynamics of territorial development.

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TEMPORALITY AND SPATIALITY

1.1 TIME AND TEMPORALITY

In order to clarify the possible meanings of concepts used frequently in daily life, such as temporality and time, it is necessary to establish a thorough distinction between both of them, which is vital to comprehending a study on temporalities and development.¹ These notions have been indistinctly used in western thinking since the sixteenth century, a period wherein there was a rise in philosophical and scientific works which focused on the problems of their definitions and implications in the understanding of the phenomenon of time (Kant, 1996; Newton, 2004). I begin with the definitions built according to the bibliographical overview, which structure the semantic axis of the book, perspective from which other definitions and their theoretical backgrounds are evaluated.

I define *temporality* as the apprehension of becoming, which every human being accomplishes through their cognitive system in a cultural context; and *time*, as the phenomenon of becoming in itself, which the human being is capable of apprehending as temporality (Iparraguirre, 2016, p. 616). The importance of distinguishing these concepts arises initially from the reading of *Being and Time*, by the philosopher Martin Heidegger, published in 1927, where he presented a definition of temporality that differs from the *vulgar conception of time*, as he terms the notion of time conceived as a succession of homogeneous instants. Heidegger suggests that ‘the existential and ontological constitution of the totality of the Da-sein is grounded in temporality’ (Heidegger, 1997, p. 398) and relates this concept to the *being-toward-death*

¹ This chapter contains sections which have been published in previous works, revised and rewritten for this book (Iparraguirre, 2011, 2016).

and daily nature. This ontology defines in Heidegger the comprehension of everything relative to the meaning of the being and his existence, terms that are not often used in Anthropology, but are present in constructs such as *human being*, *social being* or as it was pointed out by Pablo Wright in his work *Being-in-the-Dream*, where a *being-in-the-world* prior to the being-there is suggested, since we 'are settled in the world even before being able to think about it' (Wright, 2008, p. 34).

Now considering the definition of time, on one hand, this resumes philosopher Immanuel Kant's famous ideas, who clearly and concisely systematized conceptualizations on time and space, arriving at a metaphysical limit, which none of the thinkers who followed him reached. In his *Critique of Pure Reason*, an impressive work written in 1781, Kant says:

Time is not an empirical concept that has been derived from any experience ... Time is a necessary representation that grounds all intuitions ... Time is therefore given a priori ... Time does not inhere in objects, but merely in the subject who intuits them.

(Kant, 1996, pp. 47–50)

On the other hand, I resume the meaning of the term phenomenon formulated in *Being and Time*, to assert that time is a phenomenon. Heidegger says: 'The confusing multiplicity of "phenomena" designated by the terms phenomenon, semblance, appearance, mere appearance, can be unraveled only if the concept phenomenon is understood from the very beginning as the self-showing in itself' (Heidegger, 1997, p. 27). Therefore, the idea of *time as phenomenon of becoming in itself* rises from the set of formulations made by both thinkers. Initially, I resume the aprioristic definition of time to argue that whenever temporality is mentioned, it is in reference to a cultural construction, thus derived from a subject's experience, hence not an a priori intuition. Time, then as a phenomenon, is intrinsic to every human being; on the other hand, temporality, besides being intrinsic to every human being, instead, acquires a cultural character, seeing as it depends on an in-context experience, thus, constituting an interpretation. Notions of time, as conceptualizations on the *time phenomenon* placed in a socio-historical context, are temporalities. The distinction is useful to avoid reducing the phenomenon (time) to only one interpretation (temporality).

This is why the analysis of temporalities through rhythms and rhythmics allows us to carry out cross-cultural studies, as it allows us to understand both universal and particular aspects at the same time. For this reason, I propose to refer here to temporality, but not to time when alluding to *notions of time* of a

socio-cultural group. Notions of time, as conceptualizations on the *time phenomenon* placed in a socio-historical context, are temporalities. This is precisely what happens with the hegemonic temporality and what this study proposes be reconsidered. The indistinct use of time and temporality in the knowledge provided by official education at all levels, and the socioeconomic context of the capitalist mode of production, contribute to naturalizing an equal meaning for both, therefore naturalizing the hegemonic temporality as the *only* possible way of thinking of the time phenomenon. This happens every day in our society and in particular, in the scientific praxis of any discipline (Iparraguirre & Ardenghi, 2011). We naturalized the notion that time can be a measurement, a duration, a period, an epoch, an age, a season, the hour, a distance, a division, the calendar and several other interpretations, without a necessary connection between them. The intent to distinguish temporality from *time* seeks to denaturalize this univocal logic, to be able to understand cultural diversity from multiple significations. If a notion of time is naturalized, it becomes naturally unique; then all knowledge built from that notion acquires a univocal epistemological character.

The review of the philosophical and scientific bibliography (Adam, 1998, 2022; Bergson, 2004; Bohm, 1998; Dilthey, 1944; Gunn, 1986; Hawking & Penrose, 1996; Heidegger, 1997; Husserl, 1959; Kant, 1996; Newton, 2004; Prigogine & Stengers, 1998; Vostal, 2021), among others, enables us to understand that behind the notion of linear time imposed by western knowledge through different hegemonic processes, a notion of *hegemonic temporality* was generated, and raised to the character of notion of official time for its homogenization and imposition. This univocity and homogeneity is due to the official character that the western linear temporality has, originated and developed by different hegemonic processes during the past 2,500 years (Fig. 1).

1.2 HEGEMONIC AND ORIGINARY TEMPORALITY

The term *hegemony* derives from the Greek *eghestai*, which means *to lead, to be the guide, to be the leader*. By hegemony, the ancient Greeks understood the supreme command of the Army, *egemone* was the conductor, the guide and also the chief of the Army. With regard to the relationship between this concept and the meaning given here to the term *official*, I consider the definition of the Dictionary of the Spanish Royal Academy: ‘That which is by virtue of office, thus that has authenticity and emanates from the authority

Main referents of the epoch	Ideas about time	Temporalities
Pre-Socratics	Becoming and transience The mutable and immutable The temporal and the eternal Parmenides and Heraclitus	Hellenic temporality Linear temporality Non-linear temporality
Aristotle	Distinction of time and time-consciousness Time relative to movement	Aristotelian temporality
Plotinus	Time as final datum of existence Time is given Change reveals time, though it does not produce it	Differentiated subjective and objective temporalities
Medieval thinkers St Augustine	Time is irrelevant History as progress towards the Divine Contempt for the temporal process of history Distinction of past, present and future	Christian temporality Teleological temporality (the future reaches the present)
Modern thinkers Newton Kant	Present as accumulative passage from the past to the future Time's arrow in one direction toward the future <i>A priori</i> intuition	Capitalist temporality Linear-mechanistic temporality Abstract temporality (mathematical)
Dilthey, Bergson, Husserl, Heidegger. Einstein.	Experience and consciousness of time Duration and simultaneity Spatialisation Relativity of the spacetime	Western-official temporality (philosophical and scientific) Cosmological temporality

Fig. 1. Constitutive Temporalities of Current Hegemonic Temporality.

derived from the State, and not particular or private' (Española, 2001). From this definition, I resume the absence of indication to the *historical moment* referred to that authenticity, therefore suggesting a *generic temporality*, an abstract present thought for any society, without any reference to