

Call for contributions to the issue 23 of the journal Tsantsa

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The Ethnography of Affects: Capture, Resistance, Attachment

Defined as visceral and vital intensity, affect has become a key subject in the social sciences over the last decade to such an extent that some have coined the expression of an 'affective turn' (Clough 2007 ; Blackman 2012 ; Wetherell 2012). The aim of this issue is to explore the relevance of developing this subject for anthropology and the potential that ethnographic studies of affect—and, as we suggest, of *affects*—harbours.

The recent emergence of this theme is part of a critical movement that draws upon authors such as Spinoza and Deleuze (Gregg and Seigworth 2010; Williams 2010) and questions the constructivist interpretation of the social world in terms of discourse and text. Massumi (2002), a leading author in this movement, distinguishes affect, understood as movement and energy, from emotion, which is defined as a qualified intensity, the conventional point of insertion of intensity into semantic frames. He calls for renewed attention to the body, to the materiality of things and beings and to that which acts and produces from within this materiality.

From the perspective of anthropology, interest for the affective turn has been rather limited thus far. When it does appear, a critical note is added, notably with regard to scholars' tendency to reify affect, minimise human intentionality and reduce language to representational discourse (Navaro-Yashin 2009; Long and Moore 2013; Skoggard and Waterson 2015). This issue starts from the assumption that it is beneficial for anthropologists to develop the theme of affect, provided that they deal with affects as plural forces that act in multiple ways, at definite times and places, and that are shaped by the beings they move and by their modes of imagining, expressing and interpreting (Blackman and Venn 2008; Wetherell 2012).

Hence, this issue privileges detailed empirical studies – ethnographies that describe and analyse the ways in which affects act. What impact do affects have in specific situations? When do they impose themselves in a decisive manner, and how do they determine ongoing actions and interactions? What kinds of interpretations are drawn from them? Which imaginaries and discourses are developed from this affective intensity? Conversely, which sociocultural elements account for the production of affects?

We particularly welcome ethnographic contributions that address the theme of affects and neoliberalism in the contemporary world. Recent studies, following Foucault's work on biopower, show that affect has become a major issue in our current capitalist world (Clough 2007; Thrift 2008; Shaviro 2010; Levin 2011). The body's vital capacities, and indeed life itself, are now sites of capital investment for the realisation of profit. In these writings, the notion of capture summarises the dynamic of affective instrumentalisation. Affect is conceptualised as a flow which escapes from social production and, if not arrested, entails hope for freedom and resistance (Hemmings 2005). On the contrary, some scholars (Ahmed 2004; Blackman 2008) stress affect's inherent 'stickiness' – the way in which affect, by its capacity to attach to persons, ideas, values or ways of being, takes part in the constitution of bodies and worlds and the logics that govern them.

This issue aims to explore the potential of the notions of capture, resistance and attachment for examining the link between affects and neoliberalism in diverse social settings. The article by Richard and Rudnyckij (2009) on a Mexican NGO and a spiritual reformist movement in Indonesia offers a relevant example. The authors examine how the affective expressions of embracing, crying or ecstatic effervescence are constitutive of the production of neoliberal subjects by forging bonds between the organisations' members and forming an adhesion to new programs and values. The culturally specific institution of neoliberal practices and concepts, such as privatisation, risk and freedom of choice, is hereby revealed. In line with this study, we welcome contributions that address the complex entanglements of affective experiences and neoliberal realities. A broad range of subjects can be examined in this regard, including but not limited to social organisations, political actions, popular movements, spiritual practices, household activities, artistic performances, media productions, etc.

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General guidelines

Languages: German, French and English

Please send us your abstract of max. 500 words of the proposed paper by 15 October 2016:

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Articles: Length of the text: 40'000 characters (incl. spaces and bibliography). Contributions are peer-reviewed by the editorial commission and external peer-reviewers. For more information and guidelines, please visit the Tsantsa website: <http://www.tsantsa.ch/en/>

Contributions: Once the article is accepted, it must be supplemented by

- a short (max. 500 characters) summary,
- a brief biographical note, institutional affiliation and full correspondence address (including phone number and e-mail), in English,
- 4-6 significant key-words.

Calendar

- 15.10.16: Deadline for abstracts, selection and information of the authors
- 1.5.17: Deadline for articles
- 1.6 - 1.7.17: Internal and external peer reviewing
- 31.8.17: Discussion, synthesis and transmitting remarks to the authors
- 1.11.17: Deadline articles in their final form
- Spring 2018: Publication