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Social Practices Under the Acceleration Regime: Normative Critiques and Ethical Orientations[1]

Prácticas sociales bajo régimen de aceleración: críticas normativas y orientaciones éticas

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Abstract

The overarching process of social acceleration that structurally characterizes late modern societies has a considerable impact on most everyday social practices. The present special issue seeks to examine the effects of social acceleration on social practices from both a descriptive-explanatory and a normative-ethical perspective. In this introductory article, the editors lay the theoretical groundwork for the special issue. Before briefly presenting the volume's contributions, the key concepts that structure it are outlined—namely, "social acceleration," "social practices," "normative critique," and "ethical orientations"—and their interrelations are discussed.

Key Words: social acceleration, social practices, normative critique, practical ethics, normativity.

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Resumen

El proceso general de aceleración social que caracteriza estructuralmente a las sociedades tardomodernas tiene un impacto considerable en la mayoría de las prácticas sociales cotidianas. Este número especial se propone examinar los efectos de la aceleración social en las prácticas sociales desde una doble perspectiva: descriptivo-explicativa y normativo-ética. En este artículo introductorio, los editores sientan las bases teóricas del número. Antes de presentar brevemente las contribuciones del volumen, se exponen los conceptos clave que lo estructuran —a saber, «aceleración social», «prácticas sociales», «crítica normativa» y «orientaciones éticas»— y se analizan sus interrelaciones.

Palabras clave: aceleración social, prácticas sociales, crítica normativa, ética práctica, normatividad.

INTRODUCTION

> Faster cars, faster trains, faster planes… our age is obsessed with speed. […] A high pace, hustle and bustle, and stress mark the work world, and even on vacation we know of nothing better to do than to continue the frenzy: as skiers on mountains reduced to inclined planes, as surfers on the smooth surfaces of rivers and lakes, as travelers who make themselves into projectiles and are fired to their destination. No doubt, speed is the idol of the day, and the number of victims it claims year after year in Europe alone is on the scale of a small city (Breuer, 2009: 215).

The overarching process of acceleration that, as widely noted in contemporary social thought, characterizes late modern societies has a considerable impact on most everyday social practices. Coupled with the rigid capitalist imperatives to grow and innovate, it engenders a tendency toward social dynamization that involves a structural transformation of our established ways of doing things in the world, as well as the emergence of new ones, generally linked to novel technologies. This can be observed in the sphere of work—e. g., in medicine, education, tourism, or caregiving—, in the political and organizational domains, and in the *private* forms in which we consume, play, communicate, or relate affectively.

Yet social acceleration is not merely an object of interest for descriptive and/or explanatory social analysis, but also for normative social and political philosophy, as well as practical or applied ethics. This is due to its potential to generate different kinds of *social pathologies*: increasing rates of burnout and depression, desynchronization among different social

spheres—and between society as a whole and nature—, and distortions in the immanent teleology of social practices. Against this background, theoretical discussions on how to normatively criticize the pernicious consequences of social acceleration, as well as on how to develop ethical orientations for coping with them in everyday life, have become especially timely.

The goal of the special issue we are introducing here is twofold, coinciding with these two dimensions of theoretical engagement with social acceleration. First, in a *descriptive-explanatory* sense, this thematic issue intends to systematically examine the effects of social acceleration on the structure of social practices. Second, in *normative-ethical* terms, it seeks to discuss how the practical impacts of social acceleration can be criticized in a non-paternalistic way, compatible with the demands of ethical pluralism. Going beyond theoretical social critique, however, the special issue's contributions also consider possible orientations for addressing concrete ethical problems brought about by the speeding up of practices.

The present introductory article aims to lay the theoretical groundwork for the present thematic issue. Before briefly presenting the issue's contributions, we will outline what we mean by the key concepts that structure it —namely, "social acceleration," "social practices," "normative critique," and "ethical orientations"—and how we understand their complex interrelations.

1. WHAT IS SOCIAL ACCELERATION?

Although the speeding up of social life in modernity was addressed both directly and laterally by classical social thought (see, e. g., Simmel, 2009; Marx & Engels, 1959), intellectual engagement with "social acceleration" began to gain momentum toward the end of the twentieth century (see Koselleck, 2000; Virilio, 2006; Lübbe, 1998), coinciding with an increasing public awareness of it as a pressing late modern problem.[4] However, it was not until the publication of Hartmut Rosa's *Beschleunigung: Die Veränderung der Zeitstrukturen in der Moderne* (Rosa, 2005) that the de-

[4] The reader *High-Speed Society: Social Acceleration, Power, and Modernity*, edited by Hartmut Rosa and William Scheuerman (2009), offers an exhaustive overview of the classical and contemporary literature on social acceleration.

bate acquired a solid social-theoretical foundation. The main contribution of Rosa's seminal book was to offer, for the first time, a systematic theory of social acceleration, which synthesized previous engagements with the topic and brought conceptual clarity to the blurred ways in which the term is often used, both in pre-scientific and scientific discourses.

The notion of social acceleration is a powerful *metaphor*, one that makes it possible to condense the experiences of haste, vertigo, and disorientation typical of (late) modernity, a "liquid" era in which "everything that is solid melts into air" (Bauman, 2000; Berman, 2010; see Marx & Engels, 1959: 464). However, for it to develop from a metaphor into a true theoretical *concept*, a precise definition of the phenomenon subsumed under it has to be given, and its fundamental dimensions, as well as its primary causes, must be specified.[5] This is precisely what Rosa's acceleration theory succeeds in doing—like no other approach before (or since)—and this is why we will devote the present section to outlining its main features.[6]

Rosa's theory can be understood as a systematic attempt to transfer the physicalist concept of acceleration into the study of modern societies, adapting it to account for the essential discrepancies between the social and the physical realms. As is well known, in classical Newtonian physics, acceleration is the rate of change of an object's velocity per unit of time, where velocity refers to the distance covered by the object per unit of time. Crucially, Rosa stresses that what tends to speed up in (positive) physical acceleration is *not* the same as what speeds up in *social* acceleration (Rosa, 2005: 115). In a nutshell, despite the many analogies, physical and social velocity and their acceleration are *not* of the same kind.

Specifically, Rosa defines social acceleration as a tendency toward an "increase in quantity per unit of time" [*Mengezunahme pro Zeiteinheit*], where "quantity" [*Menge*] refers to the number of activities, transformations, and outcomes performed *in—or by—a society* (see Rosa, 2005: 115). Thus understood, social acceleration consists in a progressive increase in *social velocity* in practically all spheres of social life,[7] measured in terms of the magnitude of produced goods, communicated messages,

[5] For a discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of theorizing with metaphors, as well as the tensions between metaphorical and conceptual thinking, see Swedberg (2020).

[6] For a more exhaustive reconstruction of Rosa's acceleration theory, see Gros (2024).

[7] The term *social velocity* belongs to us, not to Rosa.

lived experiences, performed tasks, and sociocultural transformations over a given time span.

The preliminary definition just given, however, constitutes only the starting point of Rosa's reflections. He acknowledges that this characterization remains unqualified, as it encompasses, in an undifferentiated manner, quite heterogeneous speeding up processes that can—and should—be analytically distinguished. For this reason, in a subsequent step of his argumentation, Rosa (2005: 161-243) offers an insightful distinction between three fundamental dimensions of social acceleration: (a) "technological acceleration," (b) "acceleration of social change," and (c) "acceleration of the pace of life."

(a) To begin with, *technological acceleration* involves a progressive speeding up of "goal-directed processes of transport, communication, and production," which is brought about by continuous technological innovation (Rosa, 2009: 82; see 2005: 462). Consider, for example, the acceleration of communication made possible in the last twenty years by the internet and mobile phones. Nowadays, we can reach people and transfer information much faster than in the 1990s and early 2000s.

(b) The *acceleration of social change*, in turn, can be defined as a constant increase in the "rates of social change," i. e., in the speed at which the fundamental socio-cultural structures of societies change: forms of life, cultural patterns, stocks of knowledge, etc. (Rosa, 2005: 462). Put differently, if technological acceleration indicates "acceleration processes *within* society," this kind of speeding up implies an "acceleration *of* society itself" (Rosa, 2009: 82, our emphasis). Think, for instance, of the novel social practices, forms of interaction, and professions that are constantly arising—and fading away—in the wake of ongoing internet-related innovations: WhatsApp or Telegram groups, online dating through apps like Tinder or Bumble, new kinds of jobs such as working as a social media influencer on TikTok or as an Uber driver, etc. (see Rosa, 2005: 176-195).

(c) Finally, one can speak of an increasing acceleration of the "pace of life" of individuals (Rosa, 2009: 85). Late modern subjects are forced to live ever faster—i. e., to have more experiences and perform more actions per unit of time—in order to keep pace with the rapid demands of the frenetic social world they live in. For this reason, they tend to perceive time as scarce and to feel extremely hurried (Rosa, 2009: 86; see Rosa, 2005: 463). Illustrative examples of this include the contemporary prevalence of *multi-*

tasking and the typical late modern experience of *being in a rush* because of demanding work- or study-related deadlines.

Besides this analysis of the three phenomenal dimensions of social acceleration, Rosa's work also provides a key resource for this special issue by offering an explanation of its *causes*. In this regard, he differentiates three "motors" of social acceleration in (late) modernity: an economic, a cultural, and a socio-structural one (Rosa, 2005: 256-311). Nevertheless, he tends to emphasize the importance of the first, seeing capitalist competition and its translation into a dominant logic of (inter)action across all spheres of life as the most relevant driver of acceleration (see Rosa, 2026: 146-147). As he writes, "[u]ndoubtedly, the dominant economic system of modernity has a fundamental significance for the constraints toward dynamization and increase that permeate all forms and spheres of the modern relation to the world" (Rosa, 2012: 14).

More specifically, Rosa's thesis is that the establishment of social acceleration as the *hegemonic temporal regime* in contemporary societies (Torres & Gros, 2022) follows from a distinctive feature of (late) modern capitalist societies, namely, the principle of "dynamic stabilization" (Rosa et al., 2016). By this, he means the structural fact that they can only stabilize themselves *dynamically*, i. e., by constantly growing, innovating, and speeding up (Rosa, 2016: 13): "Such as society requires (material) growth, (technological) augmentation and high rates of (cultural) innovation in order to reproduce its structure and to preserve the socioeconomic and political status quo" (Rosa et al. 2016: 52).

2. WHAT ARE SOCIAL PRACTICES?

The concept of social practice is not exclusive to any single discipline. Although its contemporary formulation has a plural genealogy, one of its deepest philosophical roots lies in moral philosophy, where reflection on practice is linked to character formation, habit, and the good life. A paradigmatic modern expression of this connection can be found in Alasdair MacIntyre's moral philosophy (1981). MacIntyre defines practices as cooperative activities directed toward the pursuit of certain internal goods and warns of the risks involved when institutions give priority to external goods, such as money or prestige, over those internal goods.

Yet, since the early 2000s, a "practice turn" has been identified in social thought broadly conceived (see Schatzki et al., 2001). In the last twenty years, the concept of social practice has assumed a central role beyond moral philosophy, gaining traction in social and political philosophy as well as in the social sciences. Especially in the latter, it has even displaced classical notions such as social action, social interaction, social structure, social system, and social institution. Against this background, it is safe to say that the concept of social practice has become part of contemporary intellectual common sense, being employed across disciplines for the analysis of phenomena as diverse as tourism, consumption, genocide, love, and critique.

As normally happens when concepts become commonsensical, the term tends to be utilized in a vague manner by philosophers and social scientists. Nevertheless, there seems to be wide agreement that social practices constitute *socio-culturally established ways in which things are done in the everyday world*—and that they enable agents to fulfil ends that are often normatively laden. Randomly selected examples include "attending a party," "doing a bank transfer," "dating," "praying," "stalking a person," "taking an exam," "robbing a house," "cooking," "having a drink," "driving a car," "reading a book," "watching TV," "playing soccer," "chatting," "voting," "taking a shower," and "writing a scientific paper." From this rather unsystematic list, it becomes clear that social practices can be solitary or collective, informal or institutionalized, ordinary or extraordinary; but, in all cases, they involve more or less fixed manners of relating to oneself, things, and others (see Reckwitz, 2016: 122; Jaeggi, 2014: 95).

As the title of the present special issue indicates, we think the notion of social practices can be especially productive for both the descriptive-explanatory analysis and the normative-ethical assessment of (late) modern social acceleration. Although Rosa's approach does not systematically use the concept of practices, it has been shown that it can be fruitfully incorporated into acceleration theory (see Gros, 2021). And we are convinced that the impact of acceleration on social practices can hardly be ignored by any non-paternalistic model of practical ethics that seeks to address the challenges of our time (see López-González, 2023).

Importantly, however, in our case, employing the notion of social practices does *not* imply strictly adhering to contemporary "practice theory," as defended today by authors such as Theodore Schatzki (2002) and Andreas

Reckwitz (2016). While we find some aspects of this approach convincing, we are critical of others. This is why we opt here for a *liberal use* of the term, which also allows for the coexistence of different theoretical outlooks in this special issue.

Before identifying the productive aspects of the contemporary concept of social practice, we want to make clear an aspect of practice theory that we do *not* follow, namely, its *social-ontological monism.* By this, we mean its claim that social practices are the *only* constituent elements of the social world. As Schatzki et al. (2001: 12) put it:

> In social theory […] practice approaches promulgate a distinct social ontology: the social is a field of embodied, materially interwoven practices centrally organized around shared practical understandings. This conception contrasts with accounts that privilege individuals, (inter)actions, language, signifying systems, the life world, institutions/roles, structures, or systems in defining the social. These phenomena, say practice theorists, can only be analyzed via the field of practices. Actions, for instance, are embedded in practices, just as individuals are constituted within them. Language, moreover, is a type of activity (discursive) and hence a practice phenomenon, whereas institutions and structures are effects of them.

Instead of this radical monist view, we opt for a more *pluralistic* and *pragmatic* take in matters of social ontology. As will become evident in the contributions to this issue, the perspective we defend not only acknowledges different fruitful ways of conceptualizing social reality, but also the possibility of combining the concept of practice with others, such as those of action, interaction, institution, and social structure, provided that this advances social analysis and strengthens both social and ethical critique. In our view, both in social-ontological and in normative issues, monism is an unnecessary straitjacket.

Practice theorists define social practices as "routines of behavior that are physically anchored and sustained by collective implicit knowledge" (Reckwitz, 2016: 122). In this formulation, we find three conceptual elements that we consider valuable. First, the focus on the *habituality* and *everydayness* of practices; second, the recognition of their *embodied* and materially *embedded* nature; and third, the emphasis on their constitutive dependence on *cultural pre-understandings.* Although absent from this definition, the stress on the *affective* character of practices constitutes another merit of—some versions of—contemporary practice theory (Reckwitz, 2016: 97).

We also find practice theory's insistence on the *processual* nature of sociality particularly fruitful. When conceptualized in terms of practices, social phenomena lose their apparent substantiality, being seen instead as the—always precarious—result of performative *doings* repeated over time. In this sense, practice theorists speak of "*doing gender*, *doing race*, *doing class*, and so on" (Reckwitz, 2016: 123; see Schatzki, 2002: 72, 88). It goes without saying that this stress on the essential *temporality* of social reality makes the concept of practices particularly useful for theorizing social acceleration.

3. THE NORMATIVITY OF SOCIAL PRACTICES

In the context of the present special issue, we particularly value the insistence on the *normativity* of practices made by some advocates of practice theory. Here, the work of Rahel Jaeggi (2014) is especially insightful. Her Critical Theory of forms of life offers a Hegel-inspired "ethical-theoretical conception of practice theory" that goes beyond the more descriptive perspectives of authors like Reckwitz and Schatzki (Jaeggi, 2018a: 449).

If one follows Jaeggi, practices possess an "inherent *telos*," meaning that they are *intrinsically* oriented toward the "fulfillment" of specific "aims" considered good or desirable (Jaeggi, 2018b: 68; 2014: 100-101). Put more precisely, the material-symbolic structure of a social practice is *functionally* geared to the realization of its constitutive goal(s) (Jaeggi, 2014: 171). For instance, people "play soccer" for recreational and/or physical training purposes, "take a shower" for hygienic and/or relaxing reasons, and "go see a doctor" to take care of their health. The performance of any of these practices without realizing their respective intrinsic aims appears problematic or even nonsensical.

Connected to the *teleological* nature of practices is their *rule-governedness*, i. e., the fact that they are also *immanently* governed by specific "rules," both implicit and explicit (Jaeggi 2014: 98). These rules can be understood as standards that define the "success conditions" of a practice, making it possible to distinguish between "right" and "wrong" performances (Jaeggi, 2014: 143-144). In a very material sense, these internal rules warrant the practice's correct functioning, which is why they can be characterized as "ethical-functional" (Jaeggi, 2014: 98, 177). For example, if

doctors do not examine their patients exhaustively and thoroughly, medical treatment can fail and patients might suffer severe health damage (Jaeggi, 2018a: 76).

Importantly, perspectives such as Jaeggi's make it possible to normatively criticize the acceleration of social practices in (late) modernity from an *immanent* and thus *non-paternalistic* perspective, in line with contemporary tendencies in normative political, social, and moral philosophy. Since the 1980s, "externalist" forms of critique have entered a crisis. By externalist critique, we mean a mode of social criticism that operates with normative standards that the critic *imposes* upon the lifeworld *from the outside*. These criteria may include universalistic ideas of justice or conceptions of the "true" essence of human beings, which—allegedly—are "discovered" or "constructed" philosophically (see Jaeggi & Celikates, 2017: 113). The paternalism or "epistemological and ethical authoritarianism" (Cooke, 2005: 396) implied in this model of critique has become unacceptable in times of ethical pluralism. Instead, different forms of "internalist" social criticism like Jaeggi's are favored, which, in a more *democratic* spirit, derive their standards from the participant perspective of lay actors and the *immanent normativity* of their social practices.

However, this focus on internalist or immanent forms of critique should not lead us into a misleading simplification. Contemporary Critical Theory's concern about slipping into paternalism broadly parallels the criticisms levelled at a deductive model of applied ethics when it is applied to social practices. On that model, ethical principles are taken to have already been discovered; all that remains is to apply them prudently to each particular practice. Yet, in the field of practical or applied ethics, it has been sufficiently shown that universalist claims are not always imposed on social practices from the outside; nor, conversely, do social practices operate solely with a self-sufficient *internal* normativity. Social practices are also arenas in which principles are discovered, and in which immanent normativity coexists with—and is shaped by—universalizable demands that are tested in concrete contexts. Besides achieving their immanent aims, or what gives them meaning, practices also need to be socially legitimized beyond their immediate boundaries (Cortina, 2008).

This becomes especially clear when social practices are debated in public arenas of interaction and deliberation. Here, claims are always being mobilized—explicitly or implicitly—that point beyond the immediate context, transcending the boundaries of the practices themselves. We routine-

ly demand that norms be justifiable to all those affected, and we appeal to shareable moral minima that prevent decisions from being captured by asymmetries of power or exclusion. Consider, for instance, the impact of tourism on many cities. Criticism of the externalities produced by this activity is expressed through a pre-theoretical vocabulary of critique—centered on those affected—which fits with Critical Theoretical frameworks concerned with the "universal" conditions for both a good and a just life.

4. TWO QUESTIONS—AND A PLEA FOR A DIALOGUE BETWEEN CRITICAL THEORY AND PRACTICAL ETHICS

We believe that the features discussed above make the concept of social practices especially helpful for theorizing and criticizing social acceleration in contemporary societies. Starting from this conviction, the present special issue has been conceived to seek answers to two broad questions, namely, (a) a *descriptive-analytical* and (b) a *normative-ethical* one.

The former (a) can be formulated as follows: *what happens to social practices under the acceleration regime?* A good way to answer this question is to examine in depth what social acceleration—in its three fundamental dimensions—*does* to the key properties of practices described above, i. e., to their habituality, their embodied and embedded nature, their cognitive aspects, and their affective and temporal structures. In this connection, for instance, the cognitive disorientation provoked by the rapid transformation of social practices in late modernity can be of interest (Gros, 2024), as can the feelings of anxiety, fear, and even desperation linked to practices marked by a hyperaccelerated pace.

As to the second (b) question, it might be put this way: *what is wrong with the acceleration of social practices?* One way to answer it is by looking at the effects of social acceleration on the *immanent normativity* of practices. A key issue here—though not the only one—is that, under an accelerated regime, certain social practices simply cannot meet their aims and norms properly. This is the case, for instance, for practices of scientific research (López-González, 2024; Gros, 2021). Theory development, data collection, or data interpretation are inherently time-consuming. In this sense, acceleration imperatives in contemporary academia, paradigmatically reflected in the maxim "publish or perish," can be said to systematically undermine the success conditions of *good* scientific practices. Additionally,

when we ask what is wrong with the acceleration of social practices, it is also crucial to consider its impact on the conditions of possibility for what can count as morally binding. At present, we face serious problems of desynchronization between the pace of technological acceleration and politics' deliberative capacity—often slow—when it comes to responding to demands for justice.

Importantly, however, our special issue seeks to explore not only ways of theoretically criticizing the *pathological* impacts of social acceleration in a non-paternalistic fashion, but also concrete ways of coping with them in everyday praxis—that is, answers to the difficult question of *what to do with (or against) social acceleration*. In this respect, we believe a dialogue between contemporary Critical Theory and practical ethics can be especially productive. The present issue constitutes a first attempt to establish such a productive conversation.

While the possibility of a normative critique of social acceleration—in particular, an immanent critique—has been widely discussed in recent years (see, e. g., Rosa, 2010), contemporary Critical Theory tends to leave more properly ethico-practical issues in the background. However, we think Rosa's account of "resonance" might serve as a starting point for finding some answers in this regard. As is well known, Rosa understands resonance as a mode of world-relation marked by affection, emotion, and transformation, which might serve as a remedy to acceleration and to the alienation brought about by it. Yet his insistence that resonance cannot be produced at will greatly limits its transformative scope in social practices (Rosa, 2016).

In our view, it is not only possible but also desirable to offer alternative readings of Critical Theoretical takes on normativity that allow them to be articulated with ethico-practical perspectives. Such readings can preserve critical force without giving up ethical guidance. This may be illustrated with a reconsideration of Habermas's theoretical program.

Because of its Kantian caution toward ethical approaches that prescribe "ways of life," Habermas's approach has shown a clear ethico-practical deficit, both in its normative grounding of social critique and in its discourse ethics. Habermas himself acknowledges this deficit when he accepts that both the motivation to comply with a norm and its application depend on effective conditions of socialization. Yet he is firm about the limits of philosophy in this respect: "philosophy cannot arrogate to itself the task of finding answers to substantive questions of justice or of an au-

thentic, good life, for it properly belongs to the participants" (Habermas, 1993: 175-176).

Although it is useful to prevent totalitarian tendencies, Habermas's caution in ethical matters leaves open a decisive question related to social transformation. Neither philosophy nor social theory can afford to avoid addressing the issue of the dispositional, affective, and relational conditions that make deliberation possible and thus enable effective access to what is just. If this question is ignored, the normative perspective of Critical Theory remains on an utterly abstract plane.

Overcoming this sort of abstraction becomes especially important when it comes to practically dealing with social acceleration and its consequences. Acceleration can distort the subject's willingness to comply with norms under conditions of heavy time pressure, as the alienation it produces makes subjects unresponsive to the value and normativity of the lifeworld (see Rosa, 2010). But even when motivation remains intact, something equally important may occur: the minimum temporal conditions needed to approximate the regulative ideal projected by moral critique may simply be absent. In these cases, we think cultivating resonance—or, better, dispositional resonant world-relations—as a *normative motivation* might be an antidote to these problematic tendences (López-González, 2025).

We see in this special issue a first step toward addressing the persistent gap between Critical Theoretical reflection and practical ethics, particularly regarding the problem of social acceleration. Our fundamental goal here is to develop a Critical Theory of acceleration capable of bringing together descriptive-explanatory depth, critical diagnosis, and ethico-practical reflections to confront, in a non-paternalistic way, the challenges that social acceleration poses to our everyday social practices.

5. THE CONTRIBUTIONS

The contributions to this special issue reflect the richness of the dialogue between theoretical and practical-emancipatory approaches. They are arranged so as to move from conceptual and diagnostic analyses of social acceleration to more situated accounts and, finally, to reflections that more explicitly address normative orientations and practical responses.

The special issue begins with a contribution that lays out a key conceptual framework for diagnosing the present. José Manuel Romero Cuevas's contribution, "Definition of the Possible and Horizon of Expectations," focuses on a crucial concept for the theoretical analysis of social acceleration, namely, the notion of "horizons of expectations," coined by Reinhart Koselleck. Specifically, the article aims to shed light on the relationship between the institutional definition of what is possible and the social horizon of expectations. The author offers a provisional characterization of both instances and analyzes different constellations between them in light of recent history. On this basis, the paper provides a diagnosis of the current political situation centered on the changes that the relationship between the institutional definition of the possible and the social horizon of expectations has undergone over the last fifty years.

The second article deepens the diagnostic dimension of the thematic issue by examining the temporal logic of post-pandemic capitalism. Agata Pawłowska's article, "The Time of Capital: Suspension and Acceleration in the Post-Pandemic World," contributes to this special issue by offering a critical-materialist account of post-pandemic social acceleration that links theoretical diagnosis to practical-emancipatory concerns. It shows how the apparent suspension of capitalist time during the pandemic was rapidly reabsorbed through digitalization, platformization, and AI-driven forms of control, while also distinguishing between administered pauses and genuinely disruptive interruptions. By bringing Marx into dialogue with Benjamin and Adorno, the article not only clarifies the temporal logic of contemporary capitalism, but also opens a space for thinking about resistance, collective agency, and struggles over time in everyday social life.

The third contribution steps back to reconstruct the broader theoretical field in which current diagnoses of social acceleration have taken shape. In his contribution, "Theorizing Social Acceleration: Criticisms for Today's Society," Felipe Torres outlines the background and main theses of the theory of social acceleration, as well as the primary criticisms to which it has been subject since its inception. He argues that this theorization of social time constitutes an analytical model of particular relevance for the contemporary world, insofar as it articulates theoretical reflection with empirical research. The article contends that this articulation represents a key axis for current Critical Theory.

The fourth article shifts the focus from general diagnosis to a concrete socio-historical reality, offering a situated analysis of how a process of accelerated crisis reshapes subjectivity in contemporary Argentina. Agustín Lucas Prestifilippo's paper, "A Time out of Joint. Reflections on Labor Precarization and Social Impoverishment in the Context of Argentina's Crisis," examines the moral attitudes and emotional dispositions of social actors in relation to economic reality within capitalist societies marked by a colonial past, through an in-depth case study of the contemporary Argentinian social reality. Building on Critical Theory's recent interest in emerging social forms of suffering, the article reconstructs how contexts of crisis shape and transform the subjectivity of workers. To this end, the meanings that individuals attribute to the temporal dimension of two of the most emblematic expressions of the current capitalist crisis are analyzed: labor precarization and social impoverishment in inflationary contexts.

While the first set of contributions is primarily diagnostic, the second set of articles connects description and explanation with possible ways of practically responding to acceleration.

Alfonso Galindo Hervás's paper, "Who Said 'Acceleration'? An Analysis of Three Proposals on Social Acceleration," occupies a transitional place in the special issue, as it combines comparative diagnosis with an assessment of rival responses to acceleration. The paper reconstructs and counterpoints three theories of social acceleration, namely, those of Alexandre Kojève, Reinhart Koselleck, and Hartmut Rosa. Kojève interprets social acceleration as dehumanizing, Koselleck, as producing social uprooting, and Rosa, as generating alienation. The discussion then turns to three proposals for counteracting its pathological effects: Rosa's notion of resonance as a remedy for acceleration; Giorgio Agamben's advocacy of a "life of use"; and the accelerationist perspective, which calls for the radicalization of capitalism's technological and abstract dynamics. The article concludes with an assessment of these approaches and a reflection on the importance of avoiding an indiscriminate demonization of social acceleration, as this hampers the development of persuasive strategies for engaging with the phenomenon.

A similar movement from diagnosis toward response can be found in the contribution by Riveros, Tobar and Montero. In "The Acceleration Ethics and the New Spirit of Academicism," the authors address the problem of social acceleration in contemporary academia. As they argue, contemporary academia has acquired a vertiginous character, one that can no

longer be explained merely through notions such as "academic capitalism" or "scientific productivism." What truly runs through it is an accelerating ethic—a shared mentality that rewards speed, efficiency, and constant productivity. Drawing on Rosa's theory of social acceleration, the authors develop an account of academic acceleration that combines structural elements—such as state management devices and the evaluative logics of the scientific system—with cultural dimensions that shape academics' desires and fears. This approach enables a nuanced understanding of both the pathologies and the achievements of academic acceleration, while advancing a proposal to reorganize academic life around the formative value of thought.

The final contributions move more explicitly toward ethical orientation and practical-emancipatory reflection. Javier Gracia Calandín's contribution, "From Acceleration to Resonance: Phenomenological and Hermeneutical Assumptions about the Subject's Relationship with the World Based on Charles Taylor's and Hartmut Rosa's Proposals," proposes a dialogue between Hartmut Rosa's theory of resonance and Charles Taylor's ethics of authenticity from a phenomenological and hermeneutical perspective. Both authors share a critique of modernity—Rosa through his concept of social acceleration and Taylor through his diagnosis of the modern malaise marked by atomism, instrumental reason, and social dismemberment. In both cases, modernity appears as having disrupted the meaningful relationship between subject and world, replacing lived meaning with dynamics of control and permanent growth. The article aims to elucidate the phenomenological and hermeneutical presuppositions underlying both proposals, to analyze their theoretical affinities, and to examine points of tension between them, including Rosa's critique of Taylor's concept of authenticity.

The special issue closes with the most explicitly practical-emancipatory contribution, which seeks in laziness an ethico-political and aesthetic resource for resisting acceleration. In his article, "Laziness: A Public Feeling. Political and Aesthetic Strategies against Acceleration," Juan Evaristo Valls Boix seeks to define the affective economy that characterizes late-capitalist Western societies through a resignification of laziness. He argues that the last two decades—marked in the Spanish context primarily by the 2008 financial crisis and the pandemic crisis of 2020—are distinguished by a shift in collective sensibility, one that manifests itself in our relationship to work. This transformation of our way of desiring points toward what Mark Fisher

termed a "post-capitalist desire" and reveals a collective effort to outline horizons of the good life beyond capitalist promises of happiness. Thus, laziness emerges as the affective force underpinning aesthetic-political practices that resist the acceleration of our time. It becomes a public feeling that recognizes the political condition of psychic distress and articulates a rejection of the capitalist regime, while also affirming alternative modes of coexistence and care beyond the neoliberal order.

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