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THE POLITICS OF VIOLENCE IN EXTRACTIVISM

Space, Time, and Normativity

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Introduction

Extractivism is central for the working of the global capitalist system in the age of the Anthropocene. The never-ending extraction of resources for profit provides fuel for a global economy anticipated to be able to grow endlessly. Resource extraction is often linked to violence, as it creates conflicts about access, control, and use of nature (Martín, 2017). The global dispersion of violence in relation to extractivist practices is recognizably complex: Reports about environmental activists being killed and indigenous groups being expelled from their traditional land as economic activities expand demonstrate the severity of the violence (Global Witness, 2015). The expansion of extractivist practices has led to environmental destruction, social inequality, and hardship for many communities, with yet unforeseeable consequences. Research on the link between violence and extractivism has shown various forms of violence connected to extractivist practices and carefully identified nuances across contexts (Tyner and Inwood, 2014; Springer and Le Billon, 2016). In this volume, a guiding theme is that extractive violence is a core logic of the 21st century global order—expressed in the title, *Our Extractive Age*. This chapter engages with that global perspective and aims to explore the interconnections of various manifestations of violence with global structures and processes. With this agenda our focus is on the following conundrum: how can we carefully attend to nuances in particular contexts and simultaneously make sense of global dimensions that permeate violence in the hyper-extractivist age?

In order to explore this local/global perspective, we suggest taking a step back from studies of empirical manifestations of violence to address this question conceptually (Springer, 2011; see also Tyner and Inwood, 2014). With this approach we open more fundamental questions about what characterizes violence in extractivism, and how conceptions of violence limit or enable us to see and understand the global

embeddedness of violence. We argue that conceptualizations of violence show different ontological qualities and epistemological scale, leading to different foci in research on actors, structures, and processes that ultimately define what research makes visible, as well as what remains invisible. In this chapter, we develop a framework that emphasizes the spatial and temporal properties of violence in extractivism. As the basis for developing this framework, we elaborate on the everyday as a lens through which we examine the global (Enloe, 1989; Tsing, 2005; Guillaume and Huysmans, 2019). This, we argue, allows for an epistemological position that is open to a multitude of modalities of violence in extractivism and simultaneously addresses global entanglements.

The chapter proceeds as follows: In a first step, we discuss different manifestations of violence and their conceptual contribution to our understanding of violence in extractivism. Drawing on literature across various fields, including conflict research, historical sociology, geography, anthropology, and international relations, we develop our main argument that the global embeddedness of seemingly local violence can be approached through a study of the “everyday.” In a second step, we add to this discussion by focusing conceptually on the spatial and temporal dimensions of violent practices in extractivism. For analytical clarity, space and time are addressed separately in this chapter. The section “violent politics of space” examines spatial properties of violence in extractivism across local/global interconnections, focusing on violence as boundary-drawing activity and as inscribed in places, with particular spatial effects that we approach with the term “site effects” (Bourdieu, 1999). The section “violent politics of time” focuses on the temporal properties of violence in extractivism and emphasizes the fast and slow paces of violence and its temporal dispersion. These sections are followed by a concluding discussion of the impact of spatio-temporal conceptualizations of violence on research practices. We bring forth normative concerns in research on violence in extractivism pertaining to our scholarly responsibility with regard to what we make visible and what we leave invisible when we approach the study of violence in extractivism.

The Nexus of Violence and Extractivism

The discussion of violence and its different forms and manifestations is debated within multiple disciplines. These debates have developed and modified concepts and research focus in reaction to changing forms of conflict and warfare. In the 1990s the “new wars” debate (Kaldor, 2001; Münkler, 2005) moved away from state-led violence and highlighted the blurring of boundaries between state and non-state actors, focused on what is done for economic and political motives, and emphasized changes in modes of warfare and how wars are financed. As part of the efforts to analyze the newness of these wars, attention was directed towards the role of the economy and economic motives for war. The resource-curse thesis tied in to these debates and linked certain resource-rich countries to endemic violence owing to increased internal instability (Homer-Dixon, 1999; Collier, 2000). This reductionist lens was soon challenged by perspectives that addressed the financing

of the “new wars” and how the various actors and activities involved in the war economy defined conflict dynamics in terms of legitimacy. Questions were asked about the functions of violence as means of creating access to economic profit for the purpose of sustaining particular social orders and forms of domination and hierarchy, rather than necessarily to end wars (Le Billon, 1999; Keen, 2000; Kaldor, 2001). These debates on the entanglement of economics, politics, power, and violence in the post-cold war era directed attention to various kinds of resources, e.g. oil, diamonds, and cobalt, and how they defined and amplified conflict dynamics, sustaining particular violent social orders that made violence appear endemic (Bakonyi and Stuvøy, 2005; Bakonyi *et al.*, 2006). A particular focus on the micropolitics of violence emerged (e.g. Schlichte, 2009), addressing how violent entrepreneurs have expanded their legitimacy within armed groups and within larger society.

The emphasis of conflict research on answering questions about how the power relations of a particular (violent) social order matter to how resource extraction is enabled locally served to develop a relational approach to violence. Focusing on micropolitics, this approach investigates the social and historical contexts that create conditions for the emergence of violent action. In this historical sociological perspective on violence the processual character of violence is underscored (Malesevic, 2010; 2017). Focusing on how violence is constituted relationally, this perspective directs attention to how violence is embedded in structures and processes and shaped by ideas of what is considered legitimate and illegitimate action in a particular context. The approach to micro-dynamics of violence characteristically studies specific acts of violence and how they are committed, with attention to what actors are involved and how violence is perceived and understood (Verweijen, 2020). Relational approaches to violence have also been applied in anthropology through socio-cultural perspectives that emphasize the relationships among victim, perpetrator, and witness. Attention has also been directed at the connections among economic, political, and institutional dimensions and the everyday experiences of violence among individuals and families (Accomazzo, 2012). Across these different relational approaches to violence, the interconnection between the micro-dynamics of violence and broader global processes has emerged as a core issue. For example, economic activities in violent conflicts are incorporated into the world economy through black market operations of conflict minerals; global development and shifts of energy demands drive resource extraction locally.

Expanding on the interconnection between micro-dynamics of violence and global processes, we find important insights in the spatial turn in violence research (Fregonese, 2012; Tyner and Inwood, 2014). Emerging from the field of political geography, questions about how violence is shaped by space and how violence affects space underscore the relational constitution of space and violence (Massey, 1996). While adding to and expanding the relational approach, a recurrent position across these scholarly contributions on space and violence is that there is a need to advance the theorization of violence itself (Blomley, 2003; Springer, 2009, 2011; Springer and Le Billon, 2016). For example, Tyner and Inwood insist that

“violence, in short, is given its own materiality: it simply exists” (2014, p. 773). This is evident in how, from realist perspectives, violence is considered a natural expression of human nature, whose violent aggression is taken for granted and exposed in competition to survive within a global anarchic system. With this approach, human aggression appears “natural” and violence an ever-present aspect of human life, part of humankind’s past history, present and future. Theorising violence challenges this idea of violence as pre-discursive and defined simply by its own material presence.¹ Furthermore, Tyner and Inwood underscore violence as produced discursively in ongoing political struggles, and they conceptualize violence as “the outcome of the political” (ibid). Such concern with violence and meaning-making is, however, criticized for deflecting attention from the “kill chain,” that is, the factors that produce direct, physical violence in a particular context, unless it is demonstrated empirically how such discourses feed the production of violence (Verweijen, 2020). There is thus a normative contestation over which forms of violence should be given priority in research.

The title of this chapter—the politics of violence in extractivism—reflects our understanding that political processes are relevant to the understanding of violence and underscore that it matters how violence is given meaning. We depart from the understanding of violence as a social activity and are concerned with the scholarly *meaning-making* connected to violent practices. This includes the contestations of meaning of violence and the existence of competing discourses on violence. Furthermore, we understand violence in a processual and relational way and not as an attribute of an individual or a group. We are therefore concerned with violence as it unfolds over space and time and are interested beyond its manifestations in its emergence, aftermaths, or effects. Importantly, it matters to the issue of violence in extractivism how the local and global interact and are given meaning, directing our attention to aspects of scale. The typical social science approach is to think of scales, or levels, as separate. For example, global governance institutions are discussed as a separate “global” arena detached from the everyday realities of its citizens. However, with the turn to the everyday in international relations scholarship, there is growing attention to how analysis of global processes and practices can be grounded in particular localities. This pertains, for example, to questions of how “global” norms are translated into particular local contexts (Zwingel, 2012; Zimmermann, 2017), or how everyday lives are entangled in global power relations (Enloe, 1989; Sylvester, 1994; Wibben, 2011). Instead of thinking of scales as separate, our focus is on their entanglements. We draw here on the work of Tsing (2005; 2015), who, in her research on how value is produced from nature, draws attention to the everyday and how it is embedded in global norms, processes, and practices. The global is in this perspective not a separate scale, but part of scale-making processes. This perspective underscores that we need to ask questions about and research what the global is (processes, institutions, practices, world views) and how it manifests in particular local contexts—or how “local” violence is embedded in global processes and

structures and whether and how these can be violent, too. Ontologically we thus follow Tsing in her relational approach to scale, expressed in the concern for scale-making projects in which global projections are linked with regional and local scale-making projects, in which the “global scale” either could succeed strongly, tentatively, or partly (Tsing, 2005).

The concern with scale-making links to the understanding of the extractive political economy as multiscalar in nature (McNeish, 2018). We draw attention here to two specific dynamics that we argue characterize extractivism and require our attention when it comes to violence: *First*, and most importantly, extractivism is inseparable from the global spread of the capitalist paradigm. Extractivism is embedded within dynamics of the globalized capitalist system. Resource-intensive lifestyles have led to a growing demand for and use of raw materials. Increasing financialization and privatization capture all areas of life, including nature. Within this context, extractivism appears as a consequential logic within a global market. In this extractivist reasoning, raw materials are discursively presented as a necessity, e.g. the lifeblood of a nation, which legitimizes exceptional measures that are often detrimental to the environment and people. In addition, the drive for accumulation of surplus wealth pushes extraction to ever-new territories and physical frontiers. *Second*, and related to the point above, the degree, character, and manifestation of extractivism have changed in the neoliberal age. While mining, drilling, and harvesting are activities that have been associated for a long time with exploitation, “the notion of extractivism [...] remains associated with a narrow and literal sense of extraction” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2017, p. 185). Within the capitalist-extractivist logic, however, we can observe a turn away from these “traditional” material manifestations of extraction towards the extraction of data, information, and knowledge. Knowledge has achieved the status of a new raw material that can be traded. This development is, for example, evident in the notion of “biopiracy,” where the knowledge of local communities is commercially exploited, or biological resources are patented without adequate compensation. As we see in this book’s chapters, moreover, novel forms of extractivism extend to the built environment, to cultural appropriation, to the commandeering of talent, and even to the reverse-extraction dynamics of global geoengineering.

In the context of these two logics and the diversity of empirical modes and forms of extractivism, the link between violence and extractivism can be very direct. This is the case when conflict and contestations of extractivism lead to physical harm or even to people’s deaths. There is thus a direct and physical form of violence connected to extractivism, but violence also takes more subtle and indirect forms. In order to expand on the multitude of manifestations of violence in extractivism, we propose to emphasize space and time dimensions as pathways to develop a more encompassing understanding of violent practices in resource extractivism. For analytical purposes, we present them stepwise, first emphasizing spatial relations and subsequently temporality with regard to violence in extractivism.

Violent Politics of Space

Extractivism is embedded in power relations that reflect different kinds of systemic inequalities and economic rationalities. Yet, aiming to identify how violence is interwoven with extractivism directs attention to the everyday lives of people involved in or affected by extractivist practices and processes, and to the structures and institutions that permeate these everyday lives. Therefore, we utilize the “everyday” as an epistemological point of departure to study violence in extractivism, to approach the global as entangled in the everyday, and attend to the multiplicity of meanings, practices, and relations that thereby come into focus (cf. Guillaume and Huysmans, 2019). Thus, in this perspective, particular extractivist locations constitute entry-points for asking questions about the global in regard to violence in extractivism. We draw here on Massey (2004), who views locations as nodes for examining multiple interconnections and power geometries, towards which we have responsibility (as scholars). Below we outline three dynamics defined by spatial relations that we see as significant to violence in extractivism.

Violence Sits in Places and Can Be Informed by “Elsewheres”

Violence is usually perceived as localized in particular places, linked for example to violent conflicts over resources or extractivist projects. We recognize the embeddedness of such localized experiences in global power relations thus linked to “elsewheres.” Drawing on Springer (2011), who notes that violence is perceived as an embodied, localized experience, we argue that this perception should not direct our thinking in terms of seeing place only as defined merely by local and contextual factors. Rather, as elaborated above, we need to recognize that (extractivist) places are (globally) interconnected. A spatial approach to violence in extractivism thus needs both to identify the contextual histories, actor-constellations, and institutions that caused the violence and to ask questions about global entanglements across places. Springer’s point is that violence sits in places in terms of how we perceive its manifestations, yet that this violence is co-constituted by and mediated through a “wider experience of space.” A relevant example of that is how neoliberalism manifests. Conceptualized as “an assemblage of rationalities, strategies, technologies, and techniques” (Springer, 2011, p. 95), neoliberalism is a governmentality that ensures and enables rule at a distance. It disciplines actors, institutions, and individuals to conform and “subjectivate” to market norms of competition and individual entrepreneurship. Applied to the Global South, this governing is a form of neo-colonialism and the subjection to market norms is at times complemented with the direct use of violence that “maintain the interest of an internationalised global elite” (Springer, 2011, p. 95). The argument that emerges from this spatial approach to violence culminates in a notion of extraction, which “provides a means to map and join struggles that unfold in seemingly distant and unrelated landscapes” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2017, p. 187).

The global logic of market and capital relations thus interlinks various sites of extractivism and the violence that happens in these places. Drawing on the work of Mbembe, the historical link between governing authority in the form of European imperialism and extractivism can serve as an illustration (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2017). The slave trade can be understood in extractive terms when identifying the close connections between forced labour and extractive practices. This connection was central to the continuation of extractivism through the centuries of colonialism and imperialism, creating, and reproducing coercive and fear-based cultures as part of extractivist practices. Today, the histories of these governing practices enabling extraction, and how they were justified, maintain continuity as new extractive sites are opened, and not without controversy: As Mezzadra and Neilson point out, “The violence of this opening often manifests in controversies surrounding property and land rights” (2017, p. 192). Such controversies are often pronounced when the identification and exploitation of an extractive project intersect with territorial usage by indigenous people and their traditions and interests in cultural and economic reproduction. Such conflicts evoke multiple layers of property relations concerning how access to and use of the land has traditionally been practiced and how it has often resulted in dispossession and displacement. Thus, global modes of production in one part of the world have links with extractivist and violent practices in others through governing practices and rationalities. This leads us to our next point, concerning how violence in extractivism is linked to *boundary-drawing*.

Violence Creates Order by Creating Spatial Boundaries

When a certain location is designated for an extractivist project, this is usually the result of a process that determines something as “extractable.” Representation-making practices delineate and create boundaries between “extractable,” and “non-extractable” places and objects and can imply the exclusion and marginalization of certain people and their ideas from such places. This exposes how power and hierarchy are at play in representation-making practices and shows that spatial representations are best viewed in terms of power and politics, and, importantly, in terms of how they produce inequalities.

For example, certain conceptions of extractivism produce differences between “extractivist” countries and “industrialized” countries (Martín, 2017), and also reproduce dichotomies of victims and beneficiaries (Gago and Mezzadra, 2018). Once a certain place is constructed as “extractable,” it takes away the possibility of alternative uses of the land on which the extractivist practices take place. If extractivism denies certain individuals or groups access to land and thus the use of this land for alternative usage, it has severe impacts on some peoples’ livelihoods. The effects of such spatial reordering are institutionalized through practices such as spatial mapping, land titling, and registration. Clearly, the law is a powerful boundary-making tool with regard to claims to property and land use that are essential for resource extraction (Blomley, 2003). For example, a government has the power to issue a lease to an individual if it

deems this in the interest of the state. Such state action could trigger a compensation payment to people dispossessed of their land. As the revenues serve the owner, who is often located far away from the extraction site, those who receive compensation could be dealing with environmental damage. This demonstrates how the spatial boundaries that are set by property regimes can allow “the violence of extractivism to proceed” (Mezzadra and Neilson, 2017, p. 192).

The making of spatial boundaries also has consequences for what violence is deemed legitimate and what is not: When the power to delineate spaces and assign property lies with the state, violence is typically considered legitimate, although this legitimacy needs to be recognized by people whose belief in its righteousness determines that legitimacy (Blomley, 2003, p. 133). Violence therefore plays an integral role in the legitimation, foundation, and operation of property regimes that are essential to extractivism (Blomley, 2003), and they require violence as a last resort for the enforcement of its rules. We postulate that core questions about violence in extractivism include how spatial representations and boundary-drawing make a difference to an extractivist operation, how they shape its modalities, and how they create violent effects. This requires analytical attention to the spatializing powers of governments, (para-)militaries, businesses, and other contextually specific actors. With the everyday as a point of view, we are not limited to elite actors but draw attention also to how violence in extractivism is enacted through boundary-drawing that affects trends in inclusion and exclusion of women, workers, citizens, or individuals belonging to subaltern groups (Guillaume and Huysmans, 2019). The spatial effects of such violence are in focus of our third spatial dynamic of violence in extractivism.

Violent Site Effects

The concept of “site effects” captures the idea that various dimensions of power, once inscribed in space, shape the everyday (Bourdieu, 1999, 2018; Wacquant, 2018). For example, poor housing conditions, lack of basic infrastructure, and, we can add, environmental degradation, are all forms of dispossession inscribed in space. People might experience the coercive effects of these conditions as bodily harm, which exemplifies how power inscribed in space is part of the production of precarious lives. Such violent site effects are, however, neither necessarily intentional nor caused by a subject (a perpetrator), but part of what Marx called the “silent coercion of economic circumstances” (1885/1988, p. 76). Instead, violent site effects draw attention to violence as built into the structure, and are part of the (social) order and mode of operation that defines extractivist practices.

Violence can encompass both structural and symbolic forms. Structural violence directs attention to systemic constraints, including unequal access to resources and lack of legal protection or political power, that are usually taken for granted but by their very existence perpetrate violence (examples are poverty, racism, and colonialism) (cf. Accomazzo, 2012). Structural violence operates indirectly and prevents people from realizing their full potential (Galtung, 1969). Similarly, the concept of

symbolic violence (Bourdieu, 1977/1991) shows how structured arrangements uphold particular social orders, often with the complicity of its participants or members. Within a social order, there is always a power asymmetry in which some people or groups remain in positions of dominance, while others remain in non-dominant positions. These power relations are sustained as certain kinds of practices are valued more highly than others and people often unwillingly accept the power upholding these relations. Symbolic violence is thus the violence that is exercised upon an agent with his or her complicity. This kind of violence is habitual, non-intentional, and indirect, and is produced in the everyday as an effect of a symbolic order that structures society. In regard to violence in extractivism, these concepts emphasize how extractivist practices are embedded in social structures of racism, classism, and nationalism and how the logic of extraction is often taken for granted and sustained within a capitalist social order. Within such orders, symbolic violence defines what is to be critiqued or problematized and what is defined as naturalized and thus not to be questioned. It allows the continuation of practices with violent effects.

The concept of “violent site effects” thus encapsulates the interconnections between spatial arrangements and socio-economic inequalities and directs attention to the often quite violent effects of spatial relations of power. For example, the divisions between extractivist countries and non-extractivist countries, and between extractivist regions and non-extractivist regions, create particular (global) economic geographies. Unequal access to resources generates spatial disparities which underlie uneven development and inequality. Focusing on the post-socialist space, Golubchikov *et al.* have elaborated on these interconnections and underscored that with particular contextual histories such as the socialist heritage (legacy), “it is easy to overlook the more fundamental nature of capitalism, including its systemic propensity to produce inequalities—no matter what original spatialities and legacies it colonises” (Golubchikov *et al.*, 2014, p. 618). Once difference is inscribed spatially, by becoming a structure affecting access to infrastructure, among other things, this can reproduce dominance and marginalization. This is where the site effects operate and become violent when threatening people’s livelihoods and ability to survive. Violent site effects are thus the effects that occur when violence happens and materializes in spatial differences.

Conceptually, violent site effects direct attention to how extractivist practices, as a particular utilization of space, affect people’s physical conditions. These include health deprivation, risk of death, and the systematic reproduction of certain extractivist places as deprived of alternative futures. A change of material structure as required for extractivism can be drastic and durable, not easily undone. This leads to our next step, in which we emphasize the temporal dimensions of violence in extractivism.

Violent Politics of Time

The act of violence is intimately linked to our understanding of its temporal dispersion, ruptures, and continuities, and its effects through time. The relation between violence and time has been less theorized, however, than the relation

between violence and space. But violence does not only transcend time (and space). How we think about violence also relates to how we imagine, experience, remember or forget violence—in other words, how the flow of time shapes our understandings of and assumptions about violence and its effects in relation to extractivism. Therefore, in the following, we discuss three assumptions about the temporalities of violence that are crucial for our understanding and evaluation of violence in extractivism.

Violence Is Fast and Slow

Direct physical actions of harm and force, such as the destruction of livelihoods, the forceful relocation of people, or the killing of environmental protesters in order to establish sites for extractive industries, often appear to be the most obvious and alarming signs of violence in the age of hyper-extractivism. Especially in times when media attention is set towards the spectacular in politics and society, the documentation of and focus on immediate and exceptional forms of violence seem to be more important than ever.² While the materiality of violence in extractivism needs our urgent scholarly attention, the focus on immediate violence also demands critical scrutiny about society and the media's preoccupation with the political spectacle (Edelman, 1988; Nixon, 2011). In addition, this time dimension underscores important questions about the ontological status of violence, as alluded to above. Actions of physical harm and force are deemed to be violent as they are visible and ultimately "knowable" to the observer. This violence is often termed to be "fast," as it is time-bound and fixated on certain violent events at a specific point in time. While its immediacy makes it available to the researcher to be exposed, analyzed, and explained, it concomitantly sustains scholarly attention towards the material and physical expressions of violence.

The focus on fast violence is, however, limited on an ontological level as it assumes that violence is imperceptible when it is not directly visible. If we take seriously, as Tyner and Inwood (2014, p. 771) claim, that "violence has no material reality," as noted above, there is a need to rethink the ontological status of violence in terms of time. For this, we can turn to Nixon, who famously reminds us that violence is not only "a contest ... over space, or bodies, or labor, or resources, but also over time" (2011, p. 8). In contrast to "fast" violence, he argues that we need to rethink our understanding of violence and look at the unspectacular and sometimes invisible forms of violence. Nixon shifts our attention to "slow" violence—"a violence that occurs gradually and out of sight, a violence of delayed destruction that is dispersed across time and space, an attritional violence that is typically not viewed as violence at all" (Nixon, 2011, p. 2). Just like structural violence or the conception of violent "site effects," slow violence highlights the invisible and therefore often silenced violence such as the violence of poverty, inequality, or racism. The focus on the temporal dimensions of violence emphasizes the delayed effects of violence that in extractivism are often related to the "conflictual interpenetration of industrial and environmental temporalities" (Adam, 1998, p. 56).

Climate change, toxins, and growing inequalities are examples of “long dyings” (Nixon, 2011, p. 2) and less visible harm inflicted on people and environment over time. This violence unfolds slowly over long periods and, in contrast to “fast” violence, leads to invisible and therefore also unaccounted “disposable casualties” (2011, p. 13). Building on Rachel Carson’s ground-breaking thinking about death by indirection, Nixon’s concept of “slow violence” challenges us to rethink the causes and effects of violence. Nixon argues, for instance, that displacement is not just space-bound but also time-bound, when places become uninhabitable for residents in the future owing to environmental costs that make places “irretrievable.” In the case of extractivism, the environmental impacts for groundwater, biodiversity, or climate of the building of extractive sites and related infrastructure could become visible only after several decades. Hence, the extraction of materials that are potentially destructive for climate and environment might also affect opportunities and life choices of future generations. This perspective on time is explored further in the next section.

Violence Disperses Throughout Time

The focus on the spectacle of violence ascribes to violence a certain “presence” and allows the possibility of representation in the now. Nixon takes issue with this as he argues that the relative invisibility of delayed destruction and casualties poses a representational challenge. Spectacular violence can be observed, documented, and remembered and therewith also facilitates immediate responses. In the case of extractivism, burning oilfields, killings of people, or forced displacements are more likely to be reported and lead to calls for action. This can encompass legal responses, the criminalization of violence, or reconciliation processes in the aftermath of the event. In contrast, the invisible and temporarily dispersed violence of effects on the environment and people due to extractivist practices is often not represented. How something can be addressed, remembered, and acted upon when it is not represented (in the now and as part of the obsession with presentism) becomes a pertinent question.

Lundborg’s work (2012; 2016) ties into this debate. He criticizes conceptualizing violence as a singular event with a clear beginning and ending. He productively reminds us of Deleuze’s differentiation between the “pure event” and the “historical event.” The historical event alludes to an exceptional intervention that clearly presents a disruption of time and separates a “before” from an “after.” Violence is here perceived as rupture, as a radical unsettling and disrupting of the present and its pre-conceived path (Lundborg, 2016). In contrast, the pure event does not refer to a particular moment in time and place. Instead of “being,” the pure event alludes to the ambiguous process of “becoming” which displaces the presence of violence as something that moves into the past and future at the same time (Lundborg, 2012). This differentiation is useful for our understanding of violent extractivism as it makes visible how violence is represented differently over time and with what implications. The temporal borders that the historical event creates require immediate responses and often exceptional measures, but do not take into account “long-term processes and

large-scale patterns” (Lundborg, 2016, p. 115). Understanding violence “as an event with a definite beginning and end, duration and conclusion, contributes to privileging instantiations of violence like war and armed conflict over more diffuse, ongoing, structural forms of violence” (Lundborg, 2016, p. 126). In contrast, persecution, rebuilding, or compensation around future losses is difficult to establish, owing to lack of representation. It is ultimately this inaction built on doubt that creates a fatal yet invisible form of violence that is relevant to extractivism.

The discussion around the temporal representation of violence also taps into important debates within postcolonial scholarship that advocates for a temporal reformulation of violence (see, for instance, Agathangelou and Killian, 2017b). If we take seriously the claim that the present forms of violence are temporarily dispersed, one needs to reconsider the focus on representation of violence within a linear, chronological timeline. Linear understandings of time make temporal distinctions between the modern and pre-modern world that entail a teleological orientation towards progress and an end of violence. The ontologization of the Western world as modern and secular (Agathangelou and Killian, 2017a) in contrast to the violent and irrational pre-modern world, indicates a clear understanding of temporal progress. Against this temporal linearity, which separates “‘before’ from ‘after’ and introduce[s] us to a ‘new beginning’” (Lundborg, 2012, p. 1), stands the postcolonial suggestion of temporal multiplicity, or what Chakrabarty (2007) termed “heterotemporality.” Heterotemporality challenges the notion of a universal history which narrates and makes capitalism global and resists dominant meta-narratives by articulating time in plural ways. Accordingly, next to political time we can find a multiplicity of spiritual and religious temporalities, where violence seems to be inevitable when these temporalities clash (Agathangelou and Killian, 2017a).

Acknowledging the temporarily dispersed character of violence shifts our attention towards the history of extractivism and the inability to define violence as a singular act in a singular present. Not only are extractivist practices often deeply entangled with violent histories of colonialism, as many of the world’s resources are situated in the Global South, but new forms of extractivism in the Global North are similarly entangled with the historical rise of capitalism and the violence that is exercised through the establishment of industrial and economic temporalities. Taking seriously the postcolonial claim that plural temporalities mingle, as expressed in the term heterotemporality, helps us to see how extractivist practices often build on a teleological meaning of time where extraction is part of an understanding of teleological progress and change towards becoming a “modern” and “developed” country. Within such temporal dimensions of modernization and development, we can also expand on temporalities in relation to agency as expressed through a focus on subjectivities. This is the focus of our final step.

Violence Constitutes Temporal Subjectivities and Strategies

Thinking beyond linear time enables us to understand the exclusion of many subject positions and possibilities of action (Hom, 2018). From the perspective of

heterotemporality and the coexistence of multiple (political, spiritual, religious) temporalities, it can be acknowledged how perceptions of time enable, inhibit, or conflict with extractivist practices. Extractivism is deeply bound up with modern modes of production. Acceleration shapes the world by speeding up production and consumption processes and ultimately links the good life of some with the suffering of distant others. This furthers the complicity of violence and capitalism by amplifying structural inequality and exploitation (Glezos, 2013). But the capitalist logic also prioritizes other temporal goals and focuses on short-term gains at the expense of long-term societal and environmental effects. Bourdieu showed how different temporal logics affect the ability of actors to plan. In his ethnographic studies of Algeria, he distinguished between traditional time consciousness on the one hand and the time characteristics of the spirit of capitalism on the other (Atkinson, 2018). Accordingly, time-consciousness of the Algerian peasant is rooted in the circadian rhythms and routines of the workday and the holidays given by the ritual calendar. Recurrent past experiences and the patterns of the everyday form ideas of the future, i.e. an expectation of the forthcoming. According to Bourdieu, this does not enable one to concern oneself with longer time spans or provide the ability to “colonize the future.”

This conflicting difference of temporalities and how they are acted upon becomes clear when we see how violence constitutes different subjectivities or what Fanon calls a “time lag, or difference of rhythm” (Fanon, 2002 [1963], p. 106). Fanon reminds us that violence has deep effects on individuals. Violent experiences have a particular effect on the psyche and become internalized dispositions that operate as guides to action (Fanon, 2007 [1952]). While this violence is embodied in immediate suffering and pain, the ongoing bodily existence also affects further motivation and choices (Frazer and Hutchings, 2008). Subjects are caught between backward and forward temporalities (Solomon, 2014) between the-what-has-been and the-not-yet-there. Therefore, the past becomes part of the present and similarly informs imaginations of futures. For example, there might be a discrepancy in “rhythm” and strategizing of the future between poor and rich people. While those struggling to make ends meet probably orient toward the short-term, those without immediate survival needs have the luxury to build long-term projects. In extractivism, these different rhythms influence the temporal strategies of those affected by extractivist practices. They further define how someone will experience the violence of extractivist actions and processes and inform whether the reaction will be resistance to, or acceptance of, everyday suffering.

Conclusion: On the Normativity of Violent Extractivism Research

In this chapter we have reflected on the questions, “what characterizes violence in extractivism?” and “how can we conceptualize the global dimensions that permeate violence in the hyper-extractivist age while simultaneously attending to nuances in particular contexts?” We proposed a spatio-temporal framework to study violence in extractivism that can serve as a conceptual map to expand the discussion on the

politics of researching violence in extractivism. In this conclusion, we want to foreground the scholarly responsibility with regard to what we make visible—and what we leave invisible—when we approach the study of violence in extractivism.

The conceptualization of violence can, as we have underscored, be normatively restricting in terms of what is seen or not seen as violence. For example, an often-underlying assumption in research on violence and extractivism is that extractivist practices necessarily lead to violent conflicts. An opposite view, equally often evoked throughout history, is an optimistic view of resource extraction as contributing to economic and national development, reflecting the idea of extractivism as a developmental model. These equally one-sided, dichotomous attributes reflect an ontological bias towards studying violence as the exercise of “power over” something or someone without paying attention to more subtle forms of violence that are invisible, “slow,” or indirect. In addition, the assumption directs attention to the physicality of violence, that which we can directly observe. However, violence, when restricted to a focus on visible, discursively framed forms of violence, comes with normative restrictions.

In this chapter we have shown that violence is ambiguous and transcends the local/global divide. We have argued that researching violence in extractivism brings into discussion the multi-scalar and hetero-temporal character of violence, which is embedded in a particular approach to the global, not as a separate scale but as process and becoming of scale-making projects (Tsing, 2005). Our conceptual discussion reflected on the categories with which we think and our presumptions regarding the situatedness of knowledge. Hence, the ontological quality and epistemological scale that we assign to violence and extractivism define what we make visible and what we leave in the shadow. Wolff (Martín, 2017, for example, points out that the challenge to violence in extractivism can address very different things, including specific conflicts over particular extractive projects, contestation of the development model behind extractivism, and contested perceptions about what is acceptable with regard to extractivism and “post-extractivist” alternatives. The potential for agency, or alternative thinking and ways of development, underscores possible normative consequences implied in research on violence in extractivism.

In other words, it matters how we approach and elevate violence in extractivism, whether extraordinary and exceptional instances of violence in extractivism draw our attention, or whether the ordinary, almost unseen violence is addressed. However, studying what is silenced and unseen is not easy. Just as slow violence is hard to observe, so are the reactions to it. As this violence is temporarily dispersed, too, the response is at best not immediate and at worst not happening at all. Fast and slow violence have a different heft and as scholars we need to go beyond the immediate event and shift our attention to the violence that is slowly creeping upon us. A particular normative challenge is representational, as Nixon points out, in slow violence the “long dyings are underrepresented” (Nixon, 2011, pp. 2–3). This again poses questions about the role of the scholar in research, our responsibility in representation-making practices, and the underlying normativity of research when it comes to addressing these uncomfortable questions.

We have argued that conceptualizing the space and time dimensions of violence is helpful for research on the violence in extractivism, as it leads to more reflexivity about our scholarly responsibility when invoking a term such as violence. This conceptualization is built on debates about what violence renders visible and invisible. It implies an ethical responsibility of scholars to engage critically with the conceptualization of violence, because our conceptual and theoretical choices have implications for how the world can be understood and ultimately imagined to be changed. As Martín (2017, p. 22) warns, “by disregarding the multidimensionality and complexity of the phenomenon, we run the risk of losing the transformational and enlightening power of criticism.” As researchers, we therefore need to do more than take a critical stance towards extractivism and reflect more deeply upon our own positionality and conceptual starting points.

Notes

- 1 Following Tyner and Inwood (2014, p. 774), the point here is not to suggest that violence has no materiality—which it certainly does when we consider, for example, the documentation of violent attacks on environmental activists or homicide rates across cities in the world. The point is rather to address violence as embedded in relations and to give this priority in theorization.
- 2 See, for instance, *The Guardian*’s project on “The Defenders” to document the deaths of activists around the world who fight for the environment. www.theguardian.com/environment/series/the-defenders (retrieved February 14, 2019).

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