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Abstract

This work explores, from an anthropological perspective, the social imaginaries about the future and anticipation in different decision-making groups as a way to diagnose the manner in which they take their decisions and create agendas of development. Specifically, it is proposed to study the temporalities that sustain the imaginaries of anticipation in different cases and to diagnose the rhythms of life that characterize development in each group among their different symbolic fields.

To achieve this purpose, a method called *cultural rhythmics* is used to study temporality, spatiality, and rhythms of life. This method systematizes the set of everyday rhythms of life and aims to connect the “presence of the past” in the imaginaries (like history, family, identity, life trajectory, tradition) with the “presence of the future” (like planning, projects of life, dreams, hopes, wishes, utopias,

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policies, anticipation). The composition of the present imaginaries in decision-making groups can be understood as simultaneity of past and future representations.

The outputs of this model could be summarized in two tools: (1) diagnosis of imaginaries and rhythmicity of anticipation and (2) construction and synchronization of agendas. Decision-making groups could use these tools to change the way they manage territories, symbolic capitals, and social organizations. All of them are focused on applying rhythmic agendas as a management institutional strategy for facing the future, and so, to study the rhythmicity of the future in terms of anticipation.

Keywords

Anticipation · Anthropology · Ethnography · Temporality · Imaginaries · Rhythm of life · Cultural rhythmicity · Presence of the future · Argentina · Latin America · Resilience · Development · Agendas · Policies · Design of future

Introduction

In line with the central purpose proposed by Editor Roberto Poli in the Introduction chapter, that is, to establish the anticipation of the future as a legitimate topic of research, this work makes its contribution from anthropology, framed in the “Understanding Anticipation” Part. As Poli mentioned, a proper understanding of anticipation requires adopting new scientific and philosophical frameworks. This work aims to contribute in this regard, emphasizing the importance of putting greater emphasis on understanding the presence of the future, in compensation for the effort made to understand our daily decisions since the uses of past unilaterally.

In several works, Poli (2010, 2011, 2017) refers to the key concepts for the scientific field of future studies and constitutes the epistemological framework for its approach. Poli covers the main works and authors who shaped this field, which, through devices such as this handbook, positions itself firmly in the juxtaposition of studies that articulate time, the use of future, and the decisions that we deal with on a daily basis. Through the genealogy of anticipatory systems, this course produces paths of data and knowledge that are fundamental to anchor new frames of research. Concepts such as expectation, foresight, forecast, prediction, latency, and others make up the network of meanings about anticipation and anticipatory systems. In turn, they allow establishment of a fruitful dialogue of different disciplines that apply to the study of the future. These concepts and their practical manifestations are analyzed here as imaginaries and rhythmicity of anticipation. Particularly, it emphasizes Poli’s focus on anthropology following Appadurai (2015), who argues that an anthropology dedicated to understanding the future should pay attention to the interaction of three preoccupations: imagination, anticipation, and aspiration.

This work supports the idea that most theories of time need to be reviewed seriously as they fail to take into account the importance of the future and anticipation. As it will be developed throughout the work, the current hegemonic temporality

in much of the world is constructed in the imaginary of experience, as an accumulation of past events and materiality. Different scientific fields reproduce this temporality daily, in their different academic actions (the subjects of social history that introduce all social and economic sciences, the biological history that supports the evolutionary paradigm, linear models of physics that hold the technical certainties of engineering) (Iparraguirre and Ardenghi 2011). So a central question here is why not assign the same relevance to the future?

A cross-reflection derived from the whole text is the possibility of conceiving the future as factually present in the becoming, which in addition to an anthropological basis for interpreting the social dynamics requires also a phenomenological explanation for sustaining the cognitive possibility of accomplishing it. Ultimately, this work seeks to contribute to an epistemology of development that comprehends the relevance of studying the presence of the future, in compensation for the regular effort to achieve the presence of the past.

Theory and Method

Before introducing the method and the model, it is necessary to define the fundamental distinction that originates the whole theoretical and epistemological framework. As this article is included in a handbook of anticipation, I start by exemplifying the difference between *time* and *temporality*, invoking the distinction between a cultural and a phenomenal anticipation.

As stated in previous works (Iparraguirre 2011, 2016a), temporality is all human interpretation of becoming that sustains us in life, a becoming that has been assigned with multiple variations of what was historically called “time.” It was then suggested that “time is defined as *phenomenon of becoming in itself*, and temporality, as *human apprehension of becoming*. Notions of time, as conceptualizations on the *time phenomenon* placed in a socio-historical context, are temporalities. The distinction is useful for not to reduce the phenomenon (time) to only one interpretation (temporality)” (2016a: 617).

The indistinguishable usage of time and temporality in everyday language, in political, scientific, pedagogical, or media discourses, contributes to naturalizing the same meaning for both concepts, therefore naturalizing hegemonic temporality as the *only* possible way of thinking about the phenomenon of time. Hegemonic temporality, understood as the conceptualization of Western linear time in various processes of officialization, is detected in the analysis of the imaginaries when considering the existence of *other temporalities* responding to other logics and attitudes facing becoming and not conceived as unique and univocal (2016a: 619).

Human anticipation is, within this theoretical framework, a temporality, an interpretation of time. Likewise anticipatory systems present in matter (natural or not), as a phenomenon of becoming, express manifestations of time. That is to say, anticipation exists in matter as well as among humans. Our consciousness of the anticipatory system is given in a cultural context, and as an apprehension of time, it constitutes a temporality; a notion of anticipation always entails a temporality.

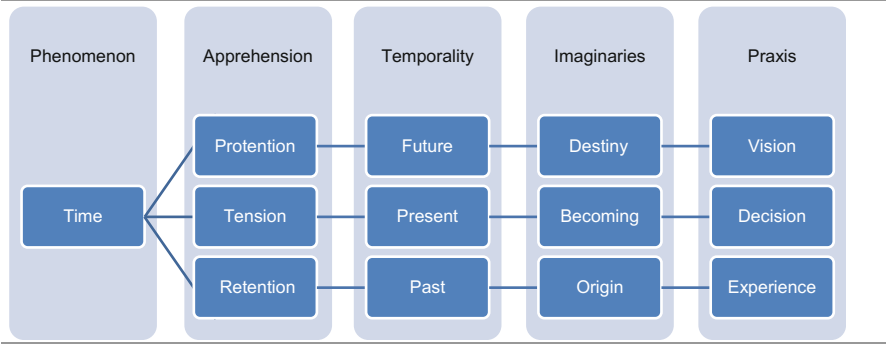
However, the phenomenon of anticipation that exceeds our interpretation and occurs at a phenomenological level, such as the fall of an autumn leaf or the configuration of aging in our DNA, also exists. Both are clear examples of time revealed above any temporality, beyond any interpretation of it. It is therefore important to remember that this distinction is useful and necessary for not reducing the phenomenon of time – and anticipation here as well – to a single interpretation, to a univocal temporality that limits apprehensions to a hegemonic conception. This distinction is in direct correlation with Poli's proposal regarding the differentiation among an empirical phenomenon and the idea of an anticipatory system: "I contend that studying anticipation as a capacity is very different from studying anticipatory systems. The former endeavor adopts a descriptive attitude, conducts experiments and collects data, whilst the latter seeks to understand what it is that makes anticipation possible" (Poli 2010: 12).

Symmetric Tension of Becoming

Recalling Husserl's definition, becoming can be understood as an articulation of protension, tension, and retention (Husserl 1959). This phenomenological structure of time constitutes the dynamics of matter's becoming, thus setting up the human-nature dynamics' interface on our planet. Our apprehension of the present is given in the tension of becoming and provides support to our decisions and hence to the actions, what we execute in the here and now. Apprehension of the past comprises retentions that make the imaginary of the origin of every process. Origin is the start conditions, the context that originated our life and ordered the experience. Apprehension of the future is the protensions that shape the visions, thus creating the imaginaries of the future upon which we can handle anticipation. Protension understood as destiny is the convergence of actions since it brings into play our last instant alive, the here and now, and constitutes the convergence of our acts and decisions. This triple tension (origin, becoming, destiny), obvious through its everydayness, is based on the triple tension of the temporality (past, present, future), which at a phenomenological level is retention, tension, and pretention. Therefore, it is feasible to interpret that apprehension, temporality, and imaginaries can be linked at a symbolic level, which has, simultaneously, a correlation in praxis through decision-making – later analyzed as cultural rhythemics.

Table 1 summarizes the correlation established to understand the group's temporality, its decision-making, and its agenda-setting, that is, its construction of horizons of the future. Decisions are made in the present, which is usually interpreted only in connection with the experience, the past. However, here it is possible to clearly see that the vision is equally relevant since protension is symmetric to retention, in the same way the origin of a decision is connected with its destiny. Every temporality, as interpretation of becoming, entails that triple distinction we know as past, present, and future, three tensions that sustain the dynamics of becoming. Future, as well as present and past, is material: the three dimensions exist in our apprehension of becoming and build the materiality of phenomena. We are able to project an idea

Table 1 Scheme of the theory of the symmetric tension of becoming



“into the future” because the mind becomes, and this becoming is tension of the past (memory) and future (imagination).

In brief, the protensive structure of becoming is what enables us to be anticipatory. That is why it is necessary to insist that the anticipation we can make is feasible based on the spatial-temporal structure of the symmetric tension of matter. From this conceptual framework, it is possible to sustain a theory that establishes the equal epistemic relevance of the past and future, a theory called symmetric tension of becoming.

Cultural Rhythmicity

This theoretical framework provides support for the construction of a method that has already been applied into various case studies, such as the comparative study of the indigenous and the scientific temporalities (Iparraguirre 2011), the political-scientific management of cultural heritage (2014), the dynamics of rural tourism (2016b), and agricultural management and political decision-making (2017).

Cultural rhythmicity is a method to study temporality, spatiality, and rhythms of life. This method systematizes the set of cultural symbolic representations (imaginaries) with the set of everyday rhythms of life (practices) and aims to connect the “presence of the past” (history, family, identity, life trajectory, tradition) with the “presence of the future” (planning, projects of life, dreams, hopes, wishes, utopias, policies, anticipation). The composition of present imaginaries in social groups can be understood as simultaneity of past and future representations. At a conceptual level, cultural rhythmicity is defined as the set of life rhythms that allow us to describe and interpret constitutive practices of the social dynamics of a group of people in its everydayness.

This methodology is composed of two simultaneous processes of ethnographic research: (1) the analysis of practices of development (that which gives access to the presence of the past) and (2) the analysis of modes of agenda planning (giving access to the presence of the future) in each of the study social groups. The first one

proposes to interpret how different rhythmic of development allow characterizing of their temporalities (focusing the past in terms of experience, memory, tradition, and habits). For example, interviews with farmers in Argentina that I undertook in fieldwork between 2013 and 2014 (Iparraguirre 2017) made clear that in the life rhythm previous to the global boom of transportation and mass media, the interviewees did not experience as large a discrepancy between their daily rhythms of work and those of rest and leisure as there is today. From the 1950s to 1960s onward, the rhythm of life incorporated overlapping activities that polarized the ways of living during and off work, confronting them in the end. Farmers manifested that dichotomy between leisure and work, rest and sustenance, working to live, and living to work radicalized. Simultaneously, the influence of global economic rhythms on local territories (intensification, fertilization, acceleration of processes, and industrialization in general) altered the natural rhythms of resources and local climate variables (2017: 264). In this ethnographic case, the presence of the past is manifested in the way the farmers practice development (transform the soil, use technology, organize their daily labor or family routine); all these actions are rooted in experience, knowledge, and memory.

In the second one, the study of imaginaries about the future allows comprehension of how the decision-making process works (focusing the future in terms of vision, anticipation, foresight, forecast, and prospective). During fieldwork with these same farmers, I found a close correlation between the images associated with “development” and the references to the “future,” an imaginary nexus between the meanings of development and the expectations of the future, of what can or will happen. Also, this articulation appeared mediated by another key imaginary, the notion of “progress,” so I set out to explore this link between the three categories. For example, how farmers looked at agriculture in the coming years, what would be the future ideal production mode, what they expect from the technology for their field, what will happen to the fields in our country, or what they think about progress. Among the results obtained, it is emphasized that the visions about the future of these farmers have a clear counterpoint between the political and productive rhythmic. The political plans set a rhythm of work from an agenda that does not follow the dynamics required by producers, based on the rhythms of production and their daily organization. In turn, the ideas of progress and development are unified, as if they were the same word that can be exchanged, naturalizing that development necessarily implies progress (2017: 269).

Likewise, this methodology integrates discursive and pragmatic skills. Discursive skills allow us, from the dialogue with study groups, to survey, systematize, and interpret social imaginaries to diagnose presence of the past and presence of the future. In complement, pragmatic skills allow recognition of the rhythmic of development to evaluate the socioeconomical balance among different rhythms of life (diaries, seasonal, communicative, economic, political, and ritual).

In summary, the core hypothesis affirms that implementation of cultural rhythmic methodology to research agendas of development contributes to comprehension of and to modeling different ways of conceiving anticipation. Operationally, it conceptualizes development as temporality, as a result of time representations that take

account of the past, present, and future of social processes. This notion of becoming also explains the construction of decisions and the execution of practices. Only at this level it is understood that arrhythmic decisions are made and analyzed mostly based on the presence of the past and not the opposite. It is the linear temporality which naturalizes the experience as the basis of the decision instead of the vision and thus the anticipation. Multiple present theories of management add examples of the need to integrate visions, dreams, and wishes for complementing experiences.

The application of this method can be summarized in a simple operative sentence: let me understand your temporality and I will tell you how to change your rhythmic in decision-making. Rhythmics in decision-making allow the grouping of concepts as procedures, movements, processes, or dynamics; simultaneously, they express in their various fields the encompassing of the rhythms that constitute the practice of doing (economic, production, financial, work, daily, political, ritual, and other social dynamics as shown in Table 20 constitution of rhythmics). Rhythmics in decision-making operate accordingly as an anticipatory model, a model of how anticipation can produce changes in organizations from acknowledging their rhythmics (rhythms and imaginaries). Sections “[Imaginaries of Future](#)” and “[Rhythmics of Anticipation](#)” introduce examples that articulate the theoretical-methodological framework with the ethnographic cases studied.

Imaginaries of Future

Social imaginaries are sets of symbolic representations on ways of thinking and acting of a social group in its daily life. These can be analyzed through matrices that organize these representations into inclusive hierarchical levels. This method was created from the need for achieving a standard of organization of the ethnographic material, allowing comparison of social groups and case studies with each other in order to get a *synchronic result* out of them. This emerges epistemologically from the analysis and reinterpretation of authors such as Appadurai (2015), Bachelard (2011), Baczko (2005), Castoriadis (1989), Durand (2004), Ricoeur (2012), and Wright (2008a, b).

If described in a simplified way, the method introduces three complementary levels of signification: constellation (main imaginaries), component (symbolic representations), and category (discursive concepts). Matrices schematize the set of mapped representations to analyze the social dynamics of a single or several social groups. It is at the level of components where discrepancies leading to divergent significations of the same groupings of imaginaries that operate in the constellations are expressed. That is to say that for the same set of imaginaries, as the constellation “future,” different interpretations can be found at the level of its components (such as temporality and prediction), and therefore they explain that the categories associated with these imaginaries differ to a lesser or greater degree (Table 2). Matrices of imaginaries provide a scheme of the symbolic field of the interlocutors arranged by the ethnographer, in order to systematize interview answers, conversations, and the analysis of the respective discourses. Likewise an ethnographic approach to the imaginaries necessarily entails considering the interlocutors’ voice at the moment of

Table 2 Scientific imaginaries of anticipation

Constellations (main imaginaries)	Components (symbolic representations)	Categories (discursive concepts)
Future	Temporality	Expectation
		Predictive
		Discontinuity
	Prediction	Foresight
		Forecast
		Development
		Latents
		Possible
		Forward looking
Model	System	Phenomenon
		Impredicative
		Predicative
		Future literacy
	Scenarios	Explorative
		Normative
Behavior	Culture	Research
		Decision
		Uncertainty
	Decision-making	Culture facts
		Imagination
		Aspiration
		Environment
		Perceive

designing the tool of analysis, and not necessarily this must measure and codify them for translating their logics, knowledges, and practices.

However, how is an imaginary distinguished from a rhythmic? I take the category “progress” as an example commonly associated with the “future”: is it a rhythmic or an imaginary? It is not a rhythmic as “progress” is not a specific practice; the *action of progressing* is not practiced since it is a cultural construction expressed in concrete practices such as sowing, harvesting, transporting, financing, or any other concrete action. A set of specific rhythms defining “progress” does not exist either. It can be conceived instead as imaginary, as a set of representations that can be conceptualized as a component of a single or several imaginaries. For example, “progress” is a key component either of the imaginary development or the imaginary modernity, or actually these two are constellations of the imaginary capitalism. Besides, “progress” can be split into more precise categories: “wealth,” “well-being,” “comfort,” and “good living,” just to mention a few. Considering, for instance, the phrase “at the rate of progress,” it is precisely an image that makes use of the imaginary of the concept “rate” to give support to symbolic components such as “change,” “speed,” or similar.

The importance of understanding the imaginaries of the future from the social sciences has been stressed by Appadurai (2015), who extensively analyzes the future

in his book's final section called "building the future" (377–395). He points out that an anthropology focused on the understanding of future should pay attention to the interaction of three essential aspects: imagination, anticipation, and aspiration. He explains that "as we refine the ways in which specific conceptions of aspiration, anticipation and imagination become configured so as to produce the future as a specific form or horizon we will be better able to place within this scheme more particular ideas about prophecy, well-being, emergency, crisis and regulation" (377). Appadurai affirms that "imagination is a vital resource in all processes and projects, and must be seen as a daily energy" (378) and draws up an itinerary to be followed for deepening and strengthening those social studies that account for the design of the future and its implications in topics such as the production of everydayness, the dynamics of the lived experience, or the production of locality (379). By confronting topics such as aspiration and politics of hope, risk and speculation, and the way of articulating them within a solid theoretical framework, the author makes clear the necessary orientation that anthropology and social sciences must take toward the symbolic comprehension of how future is built.

Precisely, representing convergent imaginaries in the "construction of future" may be odd and, as it is intangible, has been elusive to modern scientific knowledge. Our daily decisions are made based on the past, since it is the tangible, what we see and touch and what we cling to; it defines our spatiality and our materiality. Clinging to materiality is clinging to the past. We visualize the material space as we build it as past, which prevents us from seeing the impact of the future, the way future operates the present when making decisions, or how a vision affects a decision (Table 1).

Anticipation allows visualization of the other half of the symbolic components that intervene in the process of decision-making. There is a presence of the future that influences with equal strength as the presence of the past. Imaginaries of future constitute half of the process of decision-making; the other half is the imaginaries of the past. Anticipation, understood as the presence of the future, provides us with a new tool for considering the future as a source of understanding the decisions we make in our becoming. In this sense and considering Appadurai's thoughts, the future is a *missing cultural fact* in our life's daily decisions. We will see next the application of the method through a matrix of imaginaries of the future, in particular, on the imaginaries of anticipation.

Imaginaries of Anticipation

From the perspective of this work, the central concepts around anticipation enunciated in Poli's Introduction (2017) can be analyzed as constitutive of a constellation of imaginaries, following the methodology that distinguishes the discursive categories, their symbolic components, and their main constellations (Table 2). Here it is applied in this matrix to understand the analytical use of the anticipation in scientific discourse and practices and which can be its main virtues and limitations.

Poli (2017) recounts three levels of studies on the future, which, in this context, entail three ways of imagining the future that can be interpreted based on the

symbolic representations (components) that define their central categories. The first level, forecasting, condenses the imaginary of “prediction” on the image of the “temporary window,” either as a “very short” estimation (in econometric models) or as a “very long” estimation (as in climate change models). Poli explains: “It is often quantitative, even point-based, and starts from an underlying assumption of continuity: the system under study will continue to work more or less as it has been working so far because its structure remains essentially the same, or the laws governing it remain the same” (Poli 2017: 4).

The second level, foresight, groups together a constellation of imaginaries around the production of possible futures with two central components, the quantitative and the discontinuum. As for its practice, “foresight exercises are primarily used to challenge the mindset of decision makers by exploring possible futures. Alternatively, normative futures can be used. The difference between explorative scenarios and normative scenarios is that the former work in a forward attitude from the present to the future whilst the latter work backward from the future to the present” (4). Here the “normative” and the “explorative” are usual categories to the imaginary of a future with a lesser impact of the presence of the past.

The third level, anticipation, shares categories and components of the two previous ones to be applied in decision-making and action and adds two new components, futures literacy and impredicativity. In the first two levels, notions of “continuity” and “projection” centered in the repetition of the past (past-based) reinforce the imaginary of becoming as presence of the past exclusively. The categories sustaining such argumentations are anchored in an asymmetric conception between the past and future that reproduces another key imaginary of the hegemonic western temporality, the linearity of time’s arrow, from the past toward the future (Iparraguirre and Ardenghi 2011).

The third level, instead, opens up an epistemological horizon to nonlinear temporalities, such as those documented by the anthropology of time (Carbonell 2004; Evans-Pritchard 1977; Fabian 2002; Gell 1992; Iparraguirre 2016; Munn 1992), thus to an interpretation of becoming off-centered from the past as the only “force” able to account for how the future impacts in the becoming, from decision-making among humans to the biological development of all living creatures.

In this preliminary version, the analysis is centered on three main imaginaries (future, model, and behavior) and systematized with only two components for each of them. Operationally, the matrix allows the understanding that discursive categories that refer to the notion of “future” (expectation, predictive, foresight, etc.) can be denatured by considering the different symbolic representations that bring together concepts such as “temporality” and “prediction.” These components allow movement from a univocal concept of “future” to a constellation of representations that configure the “imaginary of the future” in a specific group depending on their temporalities. Putting into practice anticipation varies noticeably according to the interpretation of its categories (the same notion of “prediction” can be used both for math calculations and for astrological estimations). Imagining anticipation with various components, even with shared constellations, entails various ways of exerting anticipation.

The same procedure applied to the components of “model” and “behavior” makes up a triad of constellations that provides a rich symbolic material to analyze anthropologically the “imaginary of anticipation.” For example, even if a constellation (set of imaginaries on behavior) is shared among a group of decision-makers, when various components (representations on culture and decision-making) exist, the ways of exerting anticipation may differ: a passive or repressive conduct facing a conflict of interests lies entirely in the cultural convictions of the group and on how authority is exerted in the decision chain.

I finally stress in this brief analysis that a relevant fact revealed by this matrix of imaginaries is that the concept “rhythm” is not present among the scientific imaginaries on anticipation. However, in a previous work, Poli (2011) refers to a direct implication between future and rhythms: “The seeds of the future are present not only in our expectations but also in the variety of natural and social rhythms that are reality itself – and perhaps especially in those that are less easily accessible” (72).

Rhythmics of Anticipation

The rhythmics of anticipation can be understood as the set of rhythms and imaginaries that allows us to account for social processes linking anticipatory practices. Simultaneously, they are entangled in imaginaries of anticipation, such as those analyzed in section “[Imaginaries of Future](#),” which are contextualized in the study of the imaginaries of the future. These anticipatory practices are detected when observing actions, behaviors, attitudes, and initiatives related to the “future,” that is, to the set of imaginaries regarding the future, such as development agendas, decision-making, risk, speculation, and design, just to mention a few.

As introduced in section “[Theory and Method](#),” cultural rhythmics is a methodology of analysis, diagnosis, and intervention of social processes in multiple cultural contexts. For instance, rhythmics of development enable us to identify the various decisions and practices of development applied (being anticipatory or not) in the same territory – company, state, or any organization – when detecting that such practices have their roots in the imaginaries of development of their very participants. Financial speculation, the frenzy of stock markets, and the uncertainty of tomorrow’s economy are all expressions of the multiple forms adopted by the presence of the future and how these are revealed in anticipatory practices given in the rhythmics of brokers, stock exchanges, and other tools for the management of the anticipation, which Appadurai mentions as “imaginaries of uncertainty” (Appadurai 2015: 316).

Another rhythmic of anticipation is revealed in education, in the way of educating about the future. A knowledge that is taught-learned on the basis of its past-based construction reduces its pedagogical capacity. Futures literacy, as Riel Miller states, is key to transferring a didactics of the relevance of using the future as a symbolic and material element of our daily decisions. He explains: “Futures Literacy is a capability built on an understanding of the nature and attributes of anticipatory systems and processes. A Futures Literate person has the ability to select and deploy

different anticipatory systems and processes, depending on aims and context” (Miller 2015: 515). The analysis of rhythmicity in this process can contribute to what Miller calls “ability to make sense of discontinuity” (513), since rhythms are precisely grasped as discontinuities in our apprehension of time. It can also contribute to the deconstruction of an education conceived from a linear and cumulative temporality: “education, as it is practised today, dominated by aspirations to prepare and plan for the future inhibit the development and acquisition of Futures Literacy and may therefore be inimical to humanity’s capacity to understand complexity in all its richness, undermining diversification and diversification strategies for continued survival” (521).

However, these rhythmicity are anticipatory if they enable the apprehension of the presence of the future. Interpreting a daily work routine in an organization under a criterion of distinction of activities naturalized as intrinsic to a routine (presence of the past) – clock schedules of entry and exit from work, task distribution, and eating rituals, as many other *habitus* – does not account for the presence of the future at all. Nevertheless, the observation of the same routines, if denaturalized, allows us to understand the existence of anticipation in planning, innovation, design of actions, or objects not yet achieved. A social process in a tone of rhythms is anticipatory if its transference places the future in front of us.

This clearly happens with music when we listen to a combination of sounds not heard before (past), thus sounding as something “new” (future); *new* is that feeling of the future going through us. In recent decades, electronic music has set the vanguard in music creation, the setting up of the possibility of creating music different from anything heard before. Even if the same has happened with all those genres that “surpassed” their previous forms, it is possible to identify in certain periods, sets of imaginaries and rhythms, and artistic creations in this case that allowed to visualize the future, being anticipatory of what was about to happen.

In jazz music, this happened with Miles Davis when he anticipated a fusion with rock giving a horizon to multiple subgenres of jazz-rock and to legendary bands and artists such as Mahavishnu Orchestra, Weather Report, and Return to Forever, among others. The anticipation of a new age in tango was introduced by Astor Piazzolla in 1954 when he started his odyssey of creating the “new tango” opening up this genre’s timbres and harmonies to the rest of the world. Today tango has been fused with jazz, rock, electronic music, and numerous symphonic pieces. However, it is not a matter of making a retrospective of how these musicians influenced others after them. Influence may be well understood as “presence of the past,” thus hiding the other half of every social process. It is a matter of exemplifying that it is possible to observe the presence of the future and not only the presence of the past (how previous molds were broken and a genre was desacralized, as it was pointed out in both cases). In these musicians’ creations – as well as for Bach, Mozart, Stravinsky, and many other visionaries’ works – it is possible to identify a change with respect to the previous music that opened the horizon of futures to something yet unknown.

In architecture, anticipation awakens a taste for the forms that renovate the apprehension of space, our spatiality, to be precise. Zaha Hadid inspires the

apprehension of space in such a way that challenges native spatiality, jeopardizing the convictions of what a work, leisure, rest, or any other space should be. Putting at risk values and conceptions is a symptom of the presence of the future. This happened in the Renaissance period with Leonardo da Vinci, and later with the Italian futurists who conceived simultaneity as the future present in the space-time of technology, art, and urbanism, and that is what Canevacci explores as “ubiquitimes” (Canevacci 2015). In a fruitful reflection on “singular objects,” Baudrillard and Nouvel (2003) refer to the *cities of tomorrow*, and Nouvel says: “Time, not space, will determine our being a part of urban life in the future” (73).

Designing the Future

The importance of understanding the rhythms of anticipation acquires a different profoundness when it concerns design. Being the fashion industry, either clothing or any object that besides “decorating” the present, it anticipates which ones will be their new forms, how the “future will be dressed,” or the shape it will have. The impact of design lies in its ability to make present the future; it is the novelty. Novel is the future seen for the first moment; therefore the impact of design is in the presence of the future.

Considering, for example, car design: why do “new” cars represent the future? I take, for instance, the design of the Porsche 911 (Image 1). Both 911 models could have been made the same year (say 2015) and therefore have the same age. That is to say, the same presence of the material past, the same materiality from their chronologic genesis. However, nobody would doubt that the “newer” one is the one on the right, and nobody would assume that they were both made in 1965, as the one on the left was. This last assertion would not respond to materiality but to design and to the combinatority of forms, curves, and colors that drag our apprehension of the car object toward a been knowledge (based on the presence of the past, having previously perceived these forms) or to a not-yet-been knowledge (based on the presence of the future, the apprehension of a design that anticipates unknown forms, of which therefore there is not a previous experience).

This example makes clear that the “futuristic design” of any object is given as the design anticipates forms not yet apprehended. An avant-garde design, such as this Porsche’s, can be explained in that the 1965 model already anticipated an unknown future. Its permanence as an “avant-garde car” and its continuity in the identification as the “same model” have been possible since its designers knew how to balance the presence of the past (the forms, such its rounded headlights, defining Porsche’s identity and tradition) together with the presence of the future (the new lines that keep opening the game of perception to an unknown field of car’s forms innovated with every version).

The past (brand’s tradition) and the future (designers’ vision) are condensed in the present aesthetic. Anyone seeing it can say: “it is a Porsche 911, but it is a new one.” It is not only a “reform” of the shapes, or an “adaptation” of previous forms, it is the presence of the future visions of designers that is represented in the car, in the



Image 1 Porsche 911's comparison (Porsche website)

materiality, and in the plastic, sheet, and leather. Materiality always presents presence of the future and presence of the past.

Its “retro” style is detected, instead, when identifying an evident presence of the past through prevailing elements, new for the epoch, known as typical of that design’s origin. If it were only past (an abandoned car), it is not retro, it is old or obsolete. Then, inversely considered, it is the presence of the future which tells us that a design not only connects been experiences but also the opening, the vision of new experiences. Thus the imaginary of future assimilates an experience that has not been yet (but starts being).

Presence of the Future

The outputs of the model and the integration of theory and methods presented above could be summarized in two tools: (1) diagnosis of imaginaries and rhythmic of anticipation and (2) construction and synchronization of agendas. Decision-making groups could use these tools to change the way they manage territories, symbolic capitals, and social organizations. From Table 1, we can understand how agendas are built and how anticipation plays its role as a tool for promoting changes. A way to understand the possibility of producing changes in future scenarios can be built based on interventions in the temporality of decision-making groups. By approaching decision-making processes as a rhythmical diagnosis, that is, as a synchronization of tensions of every temporality, it is possible to diagnose past

(origin) and present (becoming) problems, as well as potential future ones (destiny). The rhythmical diagnosis links the temporality of the observed group by correlating the conception and use of time in the past (as an experience), in the becoming (as decisions), and in the future (as a set of visions or imaginaries of the future).

To exemplify the tools, I introduce a brief diagnosis of imaginaries and rhythmicity of anticipation applied to a group of political decision-makers and in particular the synchronization of agendas between science and politics for the analysis of the dialogue between anticipation and emergence. I focus on politicians in Argentina, as a group of decision-makers, comprising municipal, provincial, and national officials working in the province of Buenos Aires. The way these politicians make their daily governance decisions, culturally founded on a linear temporality and an imaginary of becoming centered both on the emergent and the urgent, entails a specific, basically non-anticipatory, development agenda. The constitution of an agenda is inevitable, although actors have not resolved to do so or considered it irrelevant. The agenda is automatically created by correlating daily actions and the annual calendar in a process that demarcates the administrative and bureaucratic rhythmic (administration's beginning and closing, budget construction and approval, legislative term, electoral processes, voting, etc.). As Durkheim stated: "A calendar expresses the rhythm of collective activities, while at the same time its function is to assure their regularities" (Durkheim 1982: 9). That is to say, the combinatory of the local political rhythmic and the state calendrical rhythmic produces the development agenda of the territory concerned reproducing the temporality of their decision-makers. I stress that this is a *development* agenda, and not just a *political* agenda, since this lacks ontology without the former.

This can be extrapolated into a vast number of decision-making groups in territories of Argentina, and Latin America in general, as the imaginaries of development and their correlated governance practices (political rhythmicity) have a colonial epistemological matrix; that is, they share the way the presence of the past conditions' decision-making. This matrix, still persisting under the imaginary of nation state – of the imagined communities according to Anderson (1993) – is a clear example of how the past becomes present in the systems of government and in social conflicts never defused or transcended after appealing to methods created for actors and situations that no longer exist. From family farming to tax reforms and from military dictatorships to devaluation of national currencies, policies that do not acknowledge socio-cultural and territorial diversities fail at finding homogeneous solutions for an alleged totality (of citizens, neighborhoods, towns, and even countries). We are governed by the presence of the past because we do not recognize the future as a force capable of transforming our present, in our own family and in our own country. Rituals that link us to traditions for sustaining identity are, in the same movement, the denial of a dynamic identity opened to changes that societies produce in any case.

Present examples of micro- and macro-politics that can be quoted abound municipal budget dependence on federal resources, concentration of economic capital in major urban centers, perpetuation of provincial feudal-like power structures, the ungovernable size of territories that reproduce colonial administrations, and imperial cities such as Ciudad de México, Santiago (Chile), São Paulo (Brazil), or Buenos

Aires (Argentina) that reproduce this “imaginary of governance” and are unable to succeed at tackling overcrowding issues, social inequality, and lack of planning (drug trafficking, violence, crime, extreme poverty, housing deprivation, epidemics).

Another clear example of anticipatory political rhythmic and synchronization of agendas is science applied to political governance. Science reflects on prediction and uses knowledge for anticipating results; it is in its genesis. From a different perspective, politics also aims at anticipating social facts, being either elections or minimum gestures that make for the lucidity of the administration and its execution. The imaginary of administration is precisely a constellation of symbolic components around future, providence, emergence, categories, and practices that vary between the coming and what becomes daily. Every anticipatory practice within politics is usually thought of as “prevention”: preventing fires, diseases, floods, deficits, strikes, poverty, absenteeism, attrition, and every “social evil” that adversely affects governance and the citizen as well. Then, in this conflict-saturated horizon, there is the inevitable leak of strategies of the future, some anticipatory ones, some others that are predictable, and some retrogressive ones. Therefore, the challenge is to set up a dialogue between the art of doing science and the art of doing politics – as Bourdieu (2007) and Latour (2007) stated – in which anticipation is a bridge, a connective language between the imaginaries of the future and the past.

The diametrical change of governance involved in using the presence of the future for building anticipatory political rhythms opens up the way to creative, innovative, sustainable, and resilient decision-making, which ontologically entails another temporality. This anticipatory temporality can be described at first as being non-accumulative (since the past is no longer the exclusive source of knowledge) and coming (since it assumes its main input is the energy of the present moment for the apprehension of the social emergence, both individually and collectively). In this sense, the urgency becomes an agency, a conductible emergence, manageable by local resources.

If our political decisions are no longer thought of as clinging to the past, then we begin to understand that the intervention in nature and its resources has an unknown possibility if considering the future as a source of energy. Resilience is also a way of conceiving the future as an energy carrier, instead of assuming that our planet is an infinite and renewable resource. Additionally, to conceive it as renewable entails the presumption that its origin (past) will be the same in the future, which is another way of reproducing a sequential and cumulative temporality.

If it is assumed that the energy sources *are being* in the future, then the connection with materials and resources changes. Water could be conceived of as energy and not only as a chemical compound in an industrial chain; food, as energy providing access to the future and not only as appropriation of the past and the resources that generated it; and property, as a transitory habitat and not only as accumulation of power conditioning access to the proper space. Thus, the territory ceases to be a space of the past to which I must return to defend it (wars, invasions, colonies) and becomes the place where the future is revealed, where vital energy is possible and hence life can be sustained.

The discovery and development of energy from fossil fuels are the product of a temporality centered on the past; fossil resources are accessible because they lie in

the past. Renewable energies, such as wind and solar power, express instead an anticipatory energy that takes into account the resilience of systems. Sun and wind are coming resources. Resources are in the future, and their “capture” is only possible in the becoming, which makes them unpredictable while, simultaneously, less polluting. The systems of their “capture” are anticipatory as they enable transformation of the resource without a spatial accumulation for which its control entails the consumption and pollution of other resources.

Summary

Anticipation reveals that the future is symmetric to the past, as the future is not reduced to projections set in motion on the basis of previous static knowledge. The past is never on its own or isolated. It only works in tension with the future which provides it with coming energy. It is as simple a concept as understanding that death disconnects the body from the future. A dead body is only past, matter with no access to the energy source. This energy is not just from the brain or the heart, but they give access and movement to the future, to time, and to becoming.

It is the symmetric tension between the past and future that supports the present and its actualization in physical terms. At the sociological level, social processes are the tension between socio-imaginary forces, experience, and vision. The idea of becoming as actualization explains social processes from a different logic: our decisions are not projections but actualizations of the being-there (Heidegger 1997), and therefore, the epistemology is not on the weight of the past toward the future (entropic arrow) but on the force exerted by the future on the becoming, the presence of the future.

As it was stated in section “[Theory and Method](#),” our greatest social and personal strength comes from the future, from the void created by our visions of what we are not yet and expect to be based on previous experience. However, the strength is not given in isolation by experience and memory. Phenomenologically, the future opens up the horizon of the present, and it is the source of our strength for becoming, that is, for waking up every day and making a set of decisions in our lives always based on a symmetric tension between the past and future, experience and vision, and origin and destiny.

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