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The future as an anthropological problem: two proposals to discuss

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Abstract

The future, of course, is not a simple question. In fact, it is an important problem in different disciplines like economy, demography, epidemiology, environmental sciences, and others. At the same time, anthropology is not well equipped to deal with the future as a specific object of study. Even currently it is just an enigmatic topic for anthropologists. Nevertheless, recently an increasing number of them are developing seminal theories and focusing their attention in the future as a true anthropological problem. This work is part of these movements. Using original ethnographic observations from West Mexico and the Argentinian Northern Patagonian region, I propose two pertinent considerations to debate: imagining the future affects the present in everyday life and the future is prefigured in cultural terms. This approach emphasizes ethnographic practice as a relevant source of theoretical elaboration.

Keywords: Future, Anthropological problem, Ethnographic practice, West Mexico, North Patagonia.