

Imaginable Futures: A Psychosocial Study on Future Expectations and Anthropocene

Dr. Monica Mastrantonio

Visiting Professor at the University of York – UK, guest researcher at JLU University in
Giessen/Germany

Abstract

Now the future has become the central time of Anthropocene due to multiple factors: climate change, war, COVID, and other threats. As a social construction, time brings a diversity of meanings, measures, and concepts permeating all human relations. In humanities, future time has become a priority, because of the actual anxiety associated with it, the speed of changes in our society, or a feeling of exhaustion. As a social boulder, the concept of time is developed based on Social Psychology and Discursive practices. To understand Imaginable Futures as narratives and imagination, this research objective is to present and discuss how individuals are imagining, anticipating, and expecting the future. According to neuroscience (Kable, 2021), imagining future events activate two sub-networks of the brain. One focuses on creating the new event within the imaginative scope, whereas the other evaluates whether the event is positive or negative. Aiming to understand how future imagination is established and whether individuals are expecting a more positive or negative future, a survey with forty questions was designed. This survey contained multiple-alternatives and open questions inquiring about how much future anxiety people related to, how often the responders thought about the future, how future expectations were related to overall and mental health, and what the future would bring to humanity, among others. The survey gathered responders to participate across social media. All data was anonymous, and anonymously treated. The research had 307 responders worldwide. Graphics for each answer were generated. The analysis involved both quantitative and qualitative data. The conclusion shows a rupture between individual e global future. It also demonstrated that the future is an important asset of the now and its relationship with health. It was possible to understand the complexities involved in future thinking, which connect to the individual, mind, and cultural aspects of future time, including how hopeful individuals are in the future, and their suggestions for a better future.

Keywords: Imaginable Futures, Future Anthropocene, Future Expectation, Cultural Studies, Temporalities.