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**The role of past and future temporal orientation on sustainable engagement in the context of sustainable communities**

The climate crisis is inherently a temporal problem. Our actions today have far-reaching detrimental impacts on the environment in the future resulting in a temporal dilemma between short-term and long-term interests (Milfont & Demarque, 2015; Milfont & Gouveia, 2006; van Lange & Joireman, 2008). Therefore, in its most fundamental definition (Brundtland report; United Nations, 1987), sustainable development is inseparable from a temporal perspective.

From the perspective of time research, temporal orientation describes how individuals or collectives orient themselves to the past, present and future in various aspects of everyday life (Ancona et al., 2001; Bluedorn & Denhardt, 1988; Kunisch et al., 2017; Shipp et al., 2009). These temporal orientations fulfill important functions for creating order and meaning (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). Furthermore, they influence a broad range of cognitive and affective processes (Butler, 1995; Karniol & Ross, 1996; Nadkarni et al., 2016; Shipp et al., 2009). Consequently, in different studies, temporal orientation was found to influence pro-environmental attitudes and sustainable behavior (Corral-Verdugo et al., 2006; Ebreo & Vining, 2001; Lindsay & Strathman, 1997; Sadeghi et al., 2019). Combining some of these findings, in a meta-analysis of 19 independent samples from seven countries, Milfont, Wilson and Diniz (2012) found that future temporal orientation was positively associated with pro-environmental attitudes and behavior.

However, research on the relationship between temporal orientation and sustainable action almost exclusively concentrates on future orientation neglecting the role of other temporal orientations. Nevertheless, it seems of vital importance to also consider past orientation when looking at sustainable engagement in the context of sustainable communities. In general, past time is conceptualized as some point in time before the present. Individuals “evaluate the present relative to the way things were in the past” (Baldwin & Lammers, 2016, p. 14953). When the past is appraised as being more appealing than the present, a return to a past state might be desired (Baldwin & Lammers, 2016). More specifically, this comparison of a current state against a presumed past state can yield sentimental or nostalgic attitudes for the way things were in the past (Autio et al., 2013; Baldwin & Lammers, 2016). This is in line with the past-positive temporal orientation which involves focusing on good old times and positive constructions of the past (Zimbardo & Boyd, 1999). Orienting oneself to a positive past can result, for example, in a longing for past states of the ecosystem (Willson et al., 2019) or in considering locally produced food as the real, authentic food (Autio et al., 2013). For instance, terms such as *nativeness*, *naturalness*, *origins*, *roots* or *original form* are commonly employed. In the context of sustainable communities, living together in close-knit village communities, making use of earlier agricultural practices or an “escape to niche markets and niche agricultural production” can be considered as a “return to the past” (Autio et al., 2013, p. 568). Accordingly, some studies provide first indications that past-focused environmental comparisons could affect attitudes and behavior regarding climate change (Baldwin & Lammers, 2016; Lammers & Baldwin, 2018).

Therefore, insights into the influences of differing temporal orientations on individuals’ engagement in sustainability-oriented transformative communities are of high interest to understand how collective sustainable behavior could be enhanced. Hence, the present study develops a framework on the relation between varying temporal orientations and sustainable engagement, specifically looking at the context of sustainable communities. More specifically, the framework conceptualizes both future and past temporal orientations as important anchors for cognitive and affective processes which thereby exhibit a strong influence on motivations for pro-environmental attitudes and behavior.

To further investigate the framework, answers of N = 609 members of German community-supported agricultures, who reported reasons for joining the community in an open answer-format, will be analyzed as a next step. Based on their responses, it is planned to systematically categorize references to future and past temporal frames to evaluate the role of these frames for motivations to engage in a community-supported agriculture. Furthermore, these references (e.g. *nativeness*, *naturalness*) will be assessed in the context of the framework.

Taken together, the suggested study is unique in considering the role of differing temporal orientations, especially towards the past, for motivations behind sustainable engagement. In addition, the influence of temporal perspectives is studied beyond individual differences, in the context of collective engagement in sustainability-oriented transformative communities. Understanding to which degree the differing temporal perspectives motivate sustainable engagement provides the basis for strategically employing these perspectives to enhance sustainable action, e.g. by applying a certain temporal framing to messages on sustainability or in the context of micro-interventions.

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