Junior Management Science 10(2) (2025) 349-368

Junior Management Science

www.jums.academy
ISSN: 2942-1861

Unravelling Collective Action Frames Through a Temporal Lens: A Case Study of an Environmental Movement in Germany

Sebastian Lüpnitz

Dresden University of Technology

Abstract

Organizing collective action in the face of climate change is one of the grand challenges of our time. Social movements and their approach to framing climate change are pivotal, as they are tasked with the role of challenging and redirecting dominant beliefs and narratives. Recent research suggests that time is at the core of framing and sustainability. However, there is scant research at the intersection of social movements and time. This study responds to this gap by examining how the framing of the environmental movement Letzte Generation in Germany constructs temporality. My findings reveal how the movement frames climate change as a catastrophe, representing itself as a fire alarm to create a shared sense of urgency and advocate for a crisis mode. Temporally, the framing constructs a clear chronology between a dominant past and an undesirable future and aims to redirect the focus to the present. As a result, the movement had to actively orchestrate a balance between disruptive strategies aimed at attention and polarization, and alignment strategies to foster resonance and support. By conceptualizing temporality in framing processes my study illustrates the pivotal role of time in research on social movements and framing. Moreover, it contributes to the discourse on time and sustainability by showing how actors emphasize a present-time perspective.

Keywords: climate crisis; polarization; social movements; strategic framing; time and temporality

1. Introduction

> *"Time is no longer on our side. [...] We have a choice: collective action or collective suicide." (Guterres, 2022)*

In the face of climate change, crafting convincing frames that foster collective action is crucial for stimulating change (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014; Nyberg et al., 2020). Although the need for sustainable development has been a topic of extensive discourse for over three decades (World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987), substantive societal transformation is still far from sufficient and the time window of action for securing a sustainable future is rapidly closing according to the latest IPCC report (Pörtner et al., 2022). In response, scholars within the sustainability discourse have recently shifted their attention towards questions of how to craft and enact desirable futures (Gümüsay & Reinecke, 2022). Yet, research in organization studies revealed how organizations translate sustainability into a business case which has led society to remain trapped in a "business-as-usual" paradigm, ultimately impeding rather than facilitating sustainable development (Wright & Nyberg, 2017). Hence, it is of particular relevance to study actors that aim to achieve societal change by challenging dominant framings, such as social movements (Wright et al., 2018). In fact, it might be the "plurality of future-making practices that contributes to extending the debates on climate change" (Wenzel et al., 2020, p. 1448) and the frames of movement actors that create alternative pathways to (re-)organize society (Munshi et al., 2022).

First, I want to thank Prof. Dr. Blagoy Blagoev for providing me with the freedom to explore my research interests while offering invaluable guidance and support whenever needed. I am also grateful to the whole Chair of Organization for their encouragement and inspiration throughout all phases of my work. Lastly, a special thanks goes to Jonas Angles for sharing the journey of writing our first empirical research paper. His willingness to listen, challenge my ideas, and meticulously proofread has been indispensable.

DOI: https://doi.org/10.5282/jums/v10i2pp349-368

Within the context of collective action, the literature at the intersection of framing and social movements conceptualizes frames as strategic devices that serve as the cornerstone for mobilizing others (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). As a fundamental task, previous research emphasizes the importance of aligning frames with potential adherents to foster resonance and, consequently, ensure the effectiveness of framing (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988). Studies provided empirical support for the resonance mechanisms among individuals´ preference for frames (Giorgi & Weber, 2015) and how resonating frames facilitate change at an institutional level (Zeng et al., 2019). In sum, resonance is understood as a key determinant for the success of framing activities.

However, this study examines a social movement that appears to deliberately employ non-resonating, polarizing frames. *Letzte Generation* (LG) is a recently formed environmental movement in Germany that is most known for its more disruptive forms of protest, such as road blockades. The movement rapidly caused a major public debate and provoked sharply contrasting reactions to the protests, resulting in a noticeable degree of polarization. Despite the prevailing rejection of LG within society and the predominantly severe criticism directed at its disruptive protests (Statista Research Department, 2023), the movement appears resolute in adhering to its strategy while remaining committed to the imperative of peacefulness. Therefore, the apparent absence of the strategic objective of alignment and resonance contradicts prior literature on framing in social movements.

To unravel framing activities of social movements, I suggest adopting a temporal lens. Framing inherently carries a temporal dimension, as it is rooted in an interpretation of the past, present, and future, intending to challenge and influence dominant temporal beliefs (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Nyberg et al., 2020). Particularly in the context of climate change, time has been argued to be the central element of sustainable development (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014). The pivotal temporal challenge of climate change deviates from the need for broader changes in the future whilst simultaneously requiring immediate action in the present (Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Surprisingly, there is only little research that explicitly studies framing in social movements in relation to time. Moreover, I argue that a temporal perspective underscores the processual dynamics of framing and, therefore, counteracts the outcome-focused research due to the strong emphasis on the strategic aspects of framing in earlier literature (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). Following this approach, and puzzled by the polarizing framing strategy of the case, I ask the following research questions:

> ***RQ1:*** *How is temporality constructed within the framing of an environmental movement?*
>
> ***RQ2:*** *How does the movement employ its framing strategically?*

To address these questions, I draw on interview, document, and observational data I collected over a period of nine months. Adhering to the phenomenological nature of my research, I employ an inductive approach to data analysis using the thematic analysis method (Braun & Clarke, 2021). My data show that the movement aims to shift the temporal focus to the present by claiming a crisis mode in the face of the climate catastrophe. Therefore, the movement employs two distinct strategic framing processes to achieve its objective: to convey urgency, the movement consistently engages in *pushing* to disrupt the present while simultaneously endeavouring to convince potential supporters by *translating* the climate catastrophe framing. Thereupon, I theorize that collective action frames, particularly in times of perceived or actual crisis, must strike a balance between disruptive strategies deliberately designed to trigger non-resonance and polarization, and alignment strategies aimed at fostering resonance and garnering support.

The contribution of my analysis is two-fold. First, I enhance the literature on framing and social movements by demonstrating the centrality of time in collective action frames and, thereby, illustrating the complexity of (strategic) framing activities. This study shows how the temporal dimension shapes the strategic processes used to employ a frame. Based on the temporal construction of a frame, my findings illustrate how resonance may not always be the primary objective of framing activities. Instead, polarizing frames can be a strategy to disrupt the present and enforce a temporal shift in the debate. Moreover, I show how alignment processes are influenced by the temporal construction of the frame by introducing the process of *translating*.

Second, this study contributes to the literature on time and sustainability by showing how actors value a present-time perspective. While previous literature predominantly argues for organizations to adopt a long-term, future-oriented time perspective to be sustainable, this case represents an example of a movement fighting for a sustainable future and simultaneously claiming a present-time perspective.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1. Unfolding Social Movements through a Framing Perspective

The extensive literature on framing and social movements offers a rich foundation to build on. In contrast to earlier approaches to studying social movements with a strong emphasis on structural aspects, such as resource mobilization theory (e.g., McCarthy and Zald, 1977), the framing perspective provides a theoretical lens to unravel how collective action is socially constructed (Johnston & Oliver, 2000). The very existence of social movements indicates that there are different interpretations – frames – of the same issue, which in this study´s context is climate change and climate action.

2.1.1. Defining Framing and Collective Action Frames

Frames are defined as “schemata of interpretation” (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Thus, they serve as sensemaking de-

vices that provide an interpretation of *what is going on* by compressing information from the environment. Therefore, frames can be understood as the "principles of organization" (Goffman, 1974, p. 11) or "set of rules" (Gamson, 1975, p. 604) that govern the assignment of meaning and the appropriate type of activity. Framing, in turn, constitutes the active process of defining *what is going on*, thus identifying what frames apply to a given event or situation (Goffman, 1974, p. 21). Consequently, framing signifies the process of constructing and attributing meaning, "an active, processual phenomenon that implies agency and contention at the level of reality construction" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 614).

Framing processes occur across all levels of analysis. In their review of the framing literature in management and organizational research, Cornelissen and Werner (2014) outline the various concepts at a micro, meso, and macro level. At a micro level, research investigates cognitive frames and how they shape sensemaking processes of individuals within the context of managerial decision-making in organizations. At a macro level, framing has been studied in institutional contexts to elucidate the processes by which meaning structures become institutionalized as "taken-for-granted realities" and, in turn, how these macro-level structures influence individuals´ interpretations and actions. At a meso level, the concept of framing has been used to examine how meaning is constructed and negotiated within organizations. To study social movements, the meso level is most appropriate as it focuses on how "strategic actors attempt to frame courses of actions and social identities in order to mobilize others to follow suit" (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014, p. 183). Hence, this study conceptualizes social movements as organized groups that aim to foster change by raising awareness and establishing a collective understanding of a problematic situation through framing activities.

With the aim of mobilizing individuals to take action, framing in social movements inherently encompasses a strategic dimension (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). Snow and Benford (1988) identify three fundamental framing tasks that combined constitute the strategic facet: *diagnostic*, *prognostic*, and *motivational* framing. Diagnostic framing refers to the articulation of a problematic situation and the justification of why it is problematic in order to establish a consensus on the necessity of change. This task includes identifying the source of the problem by attributing blame and responsibility (Benford & Snow, 2000). Building upon the diagnosis of the situation, prognostic framing presents a proposed solution to address the problem. Lastly, motivational framing aims to provide individuals with a compelling reasoning for engaging in collective action. This encompasses providing a rationale through language that stirs motivation (Benford & Snow, 2000).

In summary, there are two key facets of framing within the context of collective action: framing as sensemaking, an ongoing interpretative process of meaning construction, and framing as a strategic tool for social movements to mobilize support and foster change. Consequently, frames in social movements have been referred to as *collective action frames* (Snow & Benford, 1988, p. 198) to emphasize the strong agentic nature of those frames in addition to their interpretative function, as they are "calling for action that problematizes and challenges existing authoritative views and framings of reality".

2.1.2. Understanding Framing as a Process

A large part of research in social movement studies focuses on the strategic processes of framing, thereby investigating how movements deliberately construct and deploy frames to mobilize support and legitimize collective action. Key to this understanding is the theory of frame alignment (Snow et al., 1986) which states that through frame alignment processes social movements "link their interests and interpretive frames with those of prospective constituents and actual or prospective resource providers" (Benford & Snow, 2000, p. 624). In their review of the framing literature, Benford and Snow (2000) outline four distinct alignment processes: (1) *bridging* – forming linkages between at least two ideologically congruent but yet unconnected frames concerning an issue or problem; (2) *amplification* – idealizing or invigorating specific existing cultural values or beliefs in the frames; (3) *extension* – enlarging the initial frames to incorporate issues and concerns that are seen as important to potential adherents; and (4) *transformation* – reframing old understandings and meanings and generating new values and frames.

Cornelissen and Werner (2014), however, critique that the strong emphasis on the strategic use of frames in empirical studies has overall led to an outcome-focused and static research neglecting the processual and dynamic nature of framing as meaning construction, originally proposed in the broader concept introduced by Goffman (1974). Consequently, frames are not just strategic messages that need to be deployed, but interpretations that allow actors to make sense of the world and make choices grounded in that understanding (Kaplan, 2008). In response to the "top-down" strategic approach to framing, recent studies propose a "bottom-up" interactional perspective on framing (Gray et al., 2015; Kaplan, 2008; Reinecke & Ansari, 2021). This shift aims to counter the outcome-focused and static research and align with the dynamic nature of framing processes. Focusing on the microprocesses of framing, this stream of research argues that collective action frames may be "subject to spontaneous emergence, reorientation, and shifts in new situations through dynamic meaning-making on the ground" (Reinecke & Ansari, 2021, p. 382). However, I argue that this approach to some extent overlooks the pronounced strategic dimension of framing in social movements. Therefore, for this study, I primarily focus on strategic processes, as it aligns most with my case. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize that framing is neither merely "top-down" nor "bottom-up", but rather encompasses elements of both. Strategic alignment processes are necessary for mobilizing support but rely also on interactional and situated accomplishments (Snow et al., 1986).

In my research, I follow the call from Cornelissen and Werner (2014) for more empirical research on framing as an "ongoing process of meaning construction" (p. 206). To explore the dynamics of framing and how meaning is constructed, I apply a temporal lens to my frame analysis (Nyberg et al., 2020). This enables me to extend the strategic perspective and acknowledge the complexity of framing processes.

2.1.3. Determine the Effectiveness of Framing: Frame Resonance

If collective action frames aim to foster change by alignment processes to mobilize people – whether as an explicit strategic objective or a more implicit interactional emergence – the question arises whether any characteristics determine the effectiveness of a frame. The literature argues that the degree of frame resonance (Snow & Benford, 1988) is at the core of explaining why certain frames are more successful in mobilizing people than others (Williams, 2004). In this context, resonance is understood as "an audience´s experienced personal connection with a frame" (p. 716), and thereby differs from neighbouring concepts like legitimacy or justification (Giorgi, 2017). Audience refers to whoever the framing of the movement targets, including individuals, media, or politics. Empirical evidence validates that whenever frames resonate, especially with key decision-makers and strategic partners like the media, the likelihood of policy change is enhanced (Zeng et al., 2019). Moreover, when exposed to multiple framings over time, audiences tend to prefer framings that resonate with their values, concerns, and needs (Giorgi & Weber, 2015).

Research following the "top-down" approach argues that frame alignment processes are directed towards achieving resonance up front (Snow et al., 1986). Resonance is, therefore, understood as a key ingredient of effective framing. Benford and Snow (2000) outline two sets of interacting factors that influence the degree of frame resonance: (1) *credibility* – the frame´s consistency in terms of coherence between beliefs, claims, and actions; the empirical credibility of the frame; and the perceived credibility of those articulating the frame; and (2) *salience* – the centrality of the movements´ frame to potential adherents; the experiential commensurability in terms of how the framing resonates with everyday experience; and the narrative fidelity and, therefore, cultural resonance of the framing. Research taking on a "bottom-up" lens argues that resonance is "contingent and situationally produced" (Reinecke & Ansari, 2021, p. 403). Therefore, the appeal of a frame to external audiences emerges iteratively by actors leveraging resonating frames and is validated through interactional processes with key actors in the field (Lee et al., 2018).

Overall, resonance is viewed as a key determinant of framing success and non-resonance is considered a problem, as those frames may "fall on deaf ears" with potential adherents (Snow & Corrigall-Brown, 2005) and are unlikely to promote change at an institutional level (Zeng et al., 2019). Regarding the very objective of social movements, which is to create a shared (collective action) frame, this holds particular relevance, especially in the context of environmental movements where the core issue of climate change affects everyone. In a case study on nonviolent resistance campaigns in Thailand, the choice for polarizing frames was found to further antagonize societal segments triggering countermobilization (Sombatpoonsiri, 2023). To my state of knowledge, there is no research examining how and why movements deliberately choose to employ non-resonating or polarizing frames.

2.2. Unravelling Framing through a Temporal Lens

To further enhance our understanding of framing in social movements, I propose a temporal lens. Studying the temporal construction of collective action frames enables us to unravel the dynamic processes that constitute and develop the frame. Moreover, I argue that insights into the temporal patterns within interpretative framing processes will aid in elucidating and interpreting the movements´ strategic choices to deploy their framing. To my knowledge, with few exceptions (Munshi et al., 2022; Nyberg et al., 2020; Vandevoordt & Fleischmann, 2021), there is very little research that explicitly studies framing and social movements in relation to time. Additionally, as time is argued to be the central element in sustainability (e.g., Bansal and DesJardine, 2014) the temporal lens is especially appropriate for studying framing in environmental movements.

2.2.1. The Centrality of Time in Collective Action Frames

Framing is a temporally embedded process. Building on the agentic dimension of social movements, as their capacity to construct and employ a framing based on their interpretation of an issue, framing processes are inherently "informed by the past (in its habitual aspect), but also oriented toward the future (as a capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as a capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment)" (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998, p. 963). For example, prognostic framing suggests alternative ways into the future and diagnostic framing assigns responsibility for action (Snow & Benford, 1988), thus constituting the projective, future-oriented dimension of human agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). Consequently, framing is a process of making sense of the past, present, and future. Literature on time in sensemaking processes conceptualizes "time as the very medium through which actors address and translate their realities" with the present as the "locus of defining pasts and futures" (Hernes & Schultz, 2020, p. 4). For this, past, present, and future are not understood as separate and linearly aligned (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015) or as stable temporal categories but constantly negotiated in an ongoing present (Schultz & Hernes, 2013). Hence, actors face multiple temporalities simultaneously at any given moment and shift their temporal orientations dynamically according to the context (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). For example, Vandevoordt and Fleischmann (2021) investigate how social

movements are confronted with somewhat conflicting temporalities while having to switch their temporal orientation between a focus on the present, i.e., in situations of emergency and crisis, and need to expand their temporal horizon towards the future, i.e., to incorporate and actively shape broader changes in the future.

Derived from the strategic nature of framing, collective action frames challenge dominant temporal beliefs and aim to change perceptions and interpretations of time. Literature on temporal work examines how actors strategically construct, navigate, and capitalize frames (Granqvist & Gustafsson, 2016) to align (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013), but also influence and redirect (Bansal et al., 2022) temporal assumptions or patterns. This stream of research argues that the more actors engage in temporal work, the more likely they enable concrete strategic action and choice that diverges from the prevailing status quo (Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013). Consequently, framing in social movements can be understood as a form of temporal work with the objective of creating a shared belief of temporality to foster change (Granqvist & Gustafsson, 2016; Nyberg et al., 2020). In a study on framing contests in the UK debate on fracking, Nyberg et al. (2020) investigate how actors construct temporality in their framing to make them convincing. They introduce the theory of *temporal portability* (p. 189), stating that the construction of time within a framing makes it meaningful to act on. They argue that frames with a certain temporal linearity resulting from a clear chronology of connecting a dominant past with a recognized future are more convincing and, therefore, actionable. Thus, for environmental movements to be successful in challenging dominant frames, the counter-frames need to gain temporal portability through solidification processes of certainty, simplicity, and familiarity. While this study underlines the centrality of time in framing contests, it only provides limited insights into how temporality is actively constructed based on an actor´s interpretation of climate change and strategically employed.

2.2.2. Temporal Perspectives in Framing Climate Change

Research at the intersection of time and sustainability has highlighted how actors´ temporal perspectives matter in response to climate change (e.g., Lê, 2013; Slawinski and Bansal, 2012, 2015). In the literature, temporal perspective is characterized by its "degree of emphasis on the past, present, future" (p. 141) – the *temporal focus* – and "the distance looked into past and future" (p. 142) – the *temporal depth* (Bluedorn, 2002).

The long-term nature of climate change accounts for actors increasingly shifting their temporal focus to the future. In times of crisis surrounded by uncertainty, Wenzel et al. (2020) argue that "actors have begun to experience the future as a problematic, open-ended temporal category" (p. 1442). Actors struggle over different views on ecological futures and the complexity of the issue makes framing challenging. Climate change as a framing is abstract and lacks immediate actionable elements (Nyberg et al., 2020). Some research states that it is essential to partly decouple from the present and engage with distant futures as abstract, and potentially more radical, imaginations of "what might be", to collectively develop alternatives for a future in the face of climate change that, consequently, can become treated as as-if realities (Augustine et al., 2019). This is closely related to the notion of desirability, which allows actors to articulate desirable futures through acts of imagination and provide hope (Gümüsay & Reinecke, 2022). Hence, desirable futures are performative in that they actively shape the future in the present. However, research on future-oriented action presupposes that actors have sufficient time to develop, and craft shared collective futures. In moments of crisis that imply urgency and need for immediate action, those future imaginaries must be brought into the here and now to "disrupt present thinking" (De Cock et al., 2021, p. 470). While engaging with desirable futures invokes imagination for transformation, the construction of a shared sense of urgency by anticipating undesirable futures may be of equal importance to evoke collective action in the first place (Alimadadi et al., 2022).

Consequently, the question arises as to how organizations should adjust their time perspectives in response to climate change. Research argues that organizations face inter-temporal tensions resulting from the different temporal horizons of economic and environmental logics (Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Thus, organizations must make trade-offs between benefits now, such as short-term financial profits, and benefits later, such as long-term sustainability targets. A present-time perspective favours pay-offs in the short-term at the expense of the long-term, therefore, contributes to short-termism (Laverty, 1996; Marginson & McAulay, 2008) which inherently prevents organizations from taking action towards sustainable development (Bansal & DesJardine, 2014; Slawinski et al., 2017). Thus, this stream of research emphasizes the need for organizations to adopt a long-term, future perspective that aligns with the temporality of the environment (Slawinski & Bansal, 2012, 2015). To be sustainable, organizations must be willing to make intertemporal trade-offs by balancing the different temporalities (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015)).

Surprisingly, with one notable exception (Kim et al., 2019), the present-time perspective has received little attention in the literature on temporality and sustainability even though it is commonly agreed that climate change is an urgent issue that requires immediate action (Wenzel et al., 2020). Kim et al. (2019) challenge the assertion that a present-time perspective is not compatible with sustainable development by introducing the concept of a *long present*. By framing the present as an extended duration, rather than a distinct moment with no temporal depth, actors were able to see connections among processes that enabled rather than hindered sustainable development.

3. Methods

My study follows a phenomenon-driven case study approach (Yin, 1993) to understand the dynamics present

within the environmental movement LG (Eisenhardt, 1989). Conducting a single-case study enabled me to engage deeply with the phenomenon and collect and analyze a rich set of data from multiple sources to ensure the robustness of my findings. Combining the lens of framing with a temporal perspective ensured a contemporary methodological approach to analyze my data and craft out insightful, new theory.

3.1. Data Collection

The data collection happened between December 2022 and September 2023 and included interviews with participants of LG, internal documents, and contextual observations. The triangulation allowed me to complement and contrast my different data sources, thereby providing robustness to my findings and theory (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989). Appendix A provides an overview of the empirical material I collected.

3.1.1. Interviews

To gain deep insight into individual perspectives on climate change and LG, I conducted ten interviews with eight participants of the movement over a period of two months. They were all explicitly interviewed as individuals involved in LG, not as official spokespeople of the movement (Munshi et al., 2022). In the sampling process I selected people with different demographic characteristics (esp. in terms of age and gender), different levels of experience (esp. in terms of history in climate activism and hierarchical level at LG), and different functional areas within the movement to limit bias and ensure a diverse range of perspectives (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). In the beginning, I approached individuals via Instagram and open chat groups of LG. From these initial contacts, I applied a snowballing principle and asked for further potential interview partners. In addition, one interviewee agreed to share my request in internal chat groups of LG. That way, I was able to reach out to individuals who acted more in the background or did not use social media.

The interviews followed a guideline that was adapted to the respective individual and to the thematic focus over time. Where possible, I collected information on my interviewees in social media postings or press releases before the interview. Initially, the guideline focused on understanding how the individuals frame climate change and climate action in general. To examine the role of temporality, I asked questions on their interpretation of the past and present in terms of political action and the role of environmental movements, and how they imagine the future in the face of climate change. Over time, the focus switched to the specific framing strategies of LG and the role of polarization. Afterwards, as the importance of networking activities emerged as a key finding, I conducted three interviews with a specific focus on understanding the mechanisms of networking.

Overall, a key challenge in the interviews was to create a safe space where the interviewees felt free to talk about their perspectives and experiences. The reason behind this was that because of the harsh criticism the movement faces, in interview situations the participants feel like they must continuously justify their actions. Early on I noticed that this would hinder me from getting individual and insightful responses. To address this challenge, I started the interviews with more open and personal questions, e.g., about the interviewees´ motivation to participate in the movement, how they feel about the current political situation, and their views on climate activism in general. By showing interest, I meant to create a pleasant atmosphere for the interview. Afterwards, I asked more specific and potentially critical questions, e.g., about the strategy and organization of LG. Furthermore, all meetings included informal talk before and after the interview. With two individuals, I conducted a second interview. One was motivated because of a different thematic focus, as the interviewee had two relevant roles at the time. The other one had the aim to understand how the attitude and understanding of a new participant of LG changed over time (seven weeks in between the interviews). Both interviews turned out to be very insightful as a certain feeling of trust was established.

In this thesis, I refer to the interviewees with the term “participants” (of the movement LG). This term emphasizes the active involvement of the individuals in the movement. I deliberately decided against the more common term “activists” as it may not accurately represent the self-identification of the interviewees. Some individuals explicitly criticized the term because it implies a kind of identity that suggests a social life of dropouts where activism is seen as an end in itself. Therefore, I argue that “participants” can be a more inclusive term that encompasses a broader range of individuals involved in the movement. In addition, it includes the diversity of different activities the interviewees engage in, ranging from “protesters” to “networkers”. To protect respondent confidentiality I do not assign pseudonyms as potential conclusions on the gender may harm their anonymity (Kaiser, 2009).

The interviews lasted between 39 and 70 minutes with an average length of 56 minutes. All of them were conducted in German. Nine interviews took place online via Zoom and one interview took place in person. All interviews were audio-recorded and subsequently transcribed verbatim. In total, the approximately 9.5 hours of recorded interview material (9h 21min) resulted in 128 transcribed, and fully anonymized, pages. All interview excerpts used to present my findings were translated from German to English. Table 1 provides an overview of the interviews I conducted.

3.1.2. Documents

In addition to the interviews, I collected internal strategic plans as well as information material, guidelines, declarations, and organizational charts from the internal wiki of LG. The movement is transparent about its strategy, structure, and organization and I was able to access relevant data online via the website. In addition, the interviewees provided me access to transcripts from their presentations on the strategy as well as scientific papers the strategy is based upon. The documents supported me in creating an effective guideline, to ensure that I do not include superfluous questions, and in the interviews, to be able to talk about the topic and

Table 1: Interviews

Code	**Role Description***	**Date**	**Length** (minutes)
LG_01	Protestant	05.06.	44
LG_02	Protestant, Coordinator of regional protest team	14.06.	52
LG_03	Supporter of protest and mobilization	15.06.	60
LG_04	Protestant, Supporter of protest and networking	22.06.	52
LG_05	Protestant, Coordinator of regional networking, Communicator of strategy	23.06.	70
LG_06	Supporter of public relations and mobilization	05.07.	39
LG_07**	Protestant, Coordinator of regional networking, Communicator of strategy	19.07.	67
LG_08	Coordinator of a nationwide networking pillar	24.07.	56
LG_09	Coordinator of a nationwide networking pillar	26.07.	57
LG_10**	Supporter of protest and mobilization	02.08.	64

* Roles in critical positions (i.e., leading roles with decision-making power and personnel responsibility – called *Coordinators*) are clearly defined. Nevertheless, it is not unusual for participants of LG to have multiple roles at the same time. For interviewees not having an explicit role I used the term *Supporter* and mentioned the primary areas they supported.
** Interviews with recurring interviewees

ask subsequent questions. Moreover, I used the documents to underpin and enrich my data but also to contrast them with the statements my interviewees made. In total, I analyzed 161 written pages.

3.1.3. Contextual Observations

Moreover, I followed the public discourse and the development of LG in detail by observing meetings and collecting other publicly available material. In December 2022, I participated in a regular mobilization process of LG, which consisted of two online meetings, where a participant of LG presented the strategy and gave room for discussion. In the following weeks, I participated in the weekly update meetings of LG, to get a gist of how the movement works and organizes. Moreover, I listened to two podcasts, one directly produced by LG and one from journalists who investigated the movement over seven months. Over the whole time, I followed three open LG chat groups, including update and discussion rooms and relevant Instagram accounts, including the official account of LG and accounts from key strategic individuals. This helped me to contextualize my data and enrich as well as contrast emerging findings. Due to timely constraints, this data was not analyzed systematically.

3.2. Data Analysis

My analysis followed an inductive approach going from data to theory (Eisenhardt, 1989). Due to the phenomenon-driven nature of my research, I approached the data with a broadly scoped research question to ensure flexibility in the analysis process (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). Puzzled by the societal rejection the movement faces and them holding on to their strategy, I initially entered the field with a general interest in how LG tries to foster change. Cycling between the literature and my data, framing emerged as a valuable lens to study social movements. The concept of framing and frame analysis (Gamson, 1975; Goffman, 1974), and the toolkit of framing tasks, framing processes, and framing features (e.g., Benford and Snow, 2000) provided me with a decent body of literature to comprehend my emerging findings. The role of time and temporality emerged as a core theme early in the analysis process. Consulting the literature, the temporal lens turned out to be a promising, yet mostly unstudied, perspective on framing, because it enabled me to unravel framing and framing strategies through a dynamic lens (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014; Nyberg et al., 2020). To craft out the themes and patterns of the temporal construction and the framing strategies, I broadly followed the methodological approach of reflexive thematic analysis suggested by Braun and Clarke (2021). Iterating between data collection and data analysis enabled me to adapt and specify my interview questions to emerging puzzles and findings. Following I describe the four main steps of my analysis process.

Step 1: Familiarize with the data. In the first step, I aimed to familiarize myself with the dataset and get a general overview of the various data sources. I skimmed through all the collected documents and thoroughly read and re-read through the interview transcripts to immerse and critically engage with the data (Braun & Clarke, 2021). I made textual and visual notes for every interview to get an understanding of the different perspectives on climate change and LG and afterwards compared the notes to look for recurring topics. The centrality of time as the constructing dimension of the framing of climate change and the resulting strategies from LG emerged in this step.

Step 2: Coding the data. Second, after uploading my data into MAXQDA software, I systemically coded the interview and document data employing an open coding approach. Following an inductive orientation, I shifted my attention to *asking questions* and *focusing on puzzles* (Grodal et al., 2021). For example, I noticed how the interviewees focused strongly on the present as a small time window for action, but highlighted the need for broad, systemic

transformation in the future. I iteratively went back and forth between data sources, making sure to go through every transcript at least twice (Braun & Clarke, 2021; Locke et al., 2022). To enhance coding quality and ensure reflexivity within the process, I created memos after every analysis session (Birks et al., 2008) to reflect on my progress, challenges, uncertainties or emerging candidate themes. In this step, I noticed how the codes revolve around two central topics, namely the construction of urgency by a present focus and the creation of a shared sense of urgency by polarizing and aligning framing strategies.

Step 3: Develop themes from overarching patterns. Third, I organized the codes to overarching patterns across the data. Following an abductive approach, I iterated between data, literature, and emerging findings. To enhance my understanding of the findings on temporality, I consulted the literature on inter-temporal tensions (e.g., Slawinski and Bansal, 2015), desirability in temporal work (e.g., Alimadadi et al., 2022) and the small body of literature available on temporality in framing (e.g., Nyberg et al., 2020). Moreover, I contrasted my findings on polarizing as a framing strategy to the literature on frame resonance (e.g., Lee et al., 2018; Snow et al., 1986). To organize my thoughts, I moved away from textual memos and continuously developed and modified models to visualize my findings. In this step, I developed meaningful categories for the construction of temporality and the framing processes.

Step 4: Integrate and reflect on findings. In the last step, I used post-it notes and mind-mapping to integrate my findings into a conceptual model. I specifically looked at the interrelations between my two core findings, thus how the specific framing strategies resulted from the temporal construction of the initial frame on climate change. Finally, I reflected on my findings and contrasted them against my contextual observations and data sources.

4. Findings

4.1. Introduction to the Case: We are *The Last Generation!*

LG focuses on disruptive forms of protest. The start of the movement can be traced back to September 2021, before the federal election in Germany, where a few individuals initiated a hunger strike in pursuit of a public dialogue on the climate crisis with the candidates for chancellor. To date, some of these individuals form the core group of LG being responsible for the strategic orientation of the movement. The first protest under the name of *Last Generation* took place in January 2022 as a road blockade in Berlin. Since then, LG initiated various campaigns (e.g., turning off oil pipelines, soiling famous art paintings, spray-painting a private jet, and, more recently, larger unannounced protest marches), while the main and most frequent form of protest is still road blockades in all major cities in Germany. To achieve maximum disruption, the protesters usually glue themselves to the streets, prolonging their removal by authorities. The strategic foundation behind those protests builds on the idea of peaceful civil disobedience. The movement itself defines peaceful civil disobedience as "the strategic use of peaceful means by citizens who want to make a difference socially, politically, or economically" (Letzte Generation, 2023b). In practice, this includes deliberate acts of rule-breaking or violation of the law under the imperative of peacefulness to disturb the public and build up political pressure. Civil disobedience gained popularity in climate activism in recent years. An early, well-known example is the British movement *Extinction Rebellion* (XR). Interestingly, LG was predominantly initiated by individuals with prior involvement in the movement XR, who split off because of a perceived missing strategic and organizational clarity. Furthermore, together with several other environmental movements practicing civil disobedience, LG formed the international *A22 Network*.

Because of their disruptive protest, LG polarizes the public. Despite the young history and relatively small number of members (e.g., in comparison to *Fridays for Future* (FFF)), the movement has received great media attention and triggered a debate on climate activism in Germany. While the majority agrees on the importance of climate protection (Lehmphul, 2016), there are sharp divisions on the legitimacy of the protest of LG. The media uses fierce rhetoric, e.g., branding the participants of LG as *Klimakleber* (Climate-Gluers) or *Klimachaoten* (Climate-Anarchists). Also, leading politicians criticize the protest as inappropriate, e.g., the chancellor of Germany Olaf Scholz called the actions "completely crazy" (dpa, 2023), or even counter-productive, e.g., vice chancellor Robert Habeck argues that "this process prevents a majority in favour of climate projection" in (dpa & epd, 2023). Furthermore, the protests of LG are largely rejected in society (Statista Research Department, 2023). In addition, there is a lack of clarity on whether the protests of LG, particularly the road blockades, are legal. Many protesters face major legal repressions including temporary custody and monetary fines. In May 2023, the repressions culminated in a nationwide raid, where the homes of several key individuals of LG were searched, based on the suspicion that LG forms a criminal organization.[1] Despite the criticism and repressions, the movement to date continues with their strategy.

To ensure the ability to act in the face of criticism and repression, LG organizes itself in a centralized and hierarchical structure. A core team of three individuals, who are also referred to as the 'founding team´, owns the decision-making mandate and is responsible for the strategic direction of the movement. Together with three other individuals, they form the core group. The core group discusses strategic questions and provides strategic orientation for the regional groups. While they are not directly involved in operational tasks like campaign plannings, they do own the power to veto if decisions do not align with the broader strategy. Overarching operational decisions are delegated to a coordination

[1] As of the time of the writing process (October 2023), the suspicion has been temporarily dropped. However, the discussion persists, and the possibility of an indictment has not yet been ruled out.

group of ten. Significant tasks, including finance, press, IT, legal, organizational development, integration, networking, protest planning, and social support, are organized into independent nationwide teams that follow the strategic orientation of the core group. As the movement grew, additional regional teams were established. All roles require specific training, e.g., how to act and react in critical protest situations or how to speak to the media. The founding individuals of LG implemented the hierarchical structure in response to what they perceived as a lack of organizational clarity in prior movements, particularly from their experiences in XR. This approach is unconventional within the broader climate movement where many groups tend to adhere to a grassroots democratic approach, as seen in the case of FFF:

> "[...] that's something you don't have in any other movement following this grassroots democracy approach. [...] If someone is sick, if someone goes to jail, if someone has a burnout or doesn't feel like it anymore, or if there are massive conflicts. We have a structure to deal with that. And I had previously experienced at XR what it's like when suddenly everyone is gone. If suddenly people with key functions either fell out with someone or were no longer convinced of the cause or were sick and moved away or something. Of course, this can also happen at LG. But the structures prevent that." (LG_05, Pos. 11)

The movement claims transparency about its strategy and structure. Strategic plans and organizational charts including detailed role descriptions are provided publicly on the website.

The movement sees itself as a *fire alarm*. LG frames climate change as a catastrophe, that has not yet been understood as such by politics. The movement emphasizes the urgency and the need to act now. As one participant concluded, while all interviewees agreed on this, "right now, the urgency of the climate catastrophe is the most important thing" (LG_04, Pos. 33). LG directs all actions towards creating a shared sense of urgency. This aspect is also evident in the movement´s early agenda, featuring claims that may appear as too small and, therefore, insufficient (e.g., speed limit 100 on highways, 9-Euro public transportation ticket), but underscore the necessity of transitioning into a crisis mode. The framing of LG addresses politics and the current government directly, stating that "the federal government is leading us into climate hell and continues to press on the gas pedal" (Letzte Generation, 2023a).

Overall, LG provides a valuable case for studying framing and temporality for two reasons. First, as the movement centres its framing activities around creating a shared sense of urgency it emphasizes the temporal dimension of climate change. Studying how individuals involved in climate movements construct urgency offers the possibility to unravel the importance of time and temporality in crafting a convincing frame. Second, due to the major public discourse and the polarizing impact of the movement, it provides an interesting case for examining how a movement strategically provokes polarization while also managing it in practice to enhance resonance for their framing, and thus, promote rather than impede change. Below, I describe in detail (1) how urgency is constructed in the framing – *the temporal construction of the fire alarm* - and (2) how the movement employs its framing through protest and networking to create a shared sense of urgency – *the mechanisms that trigger the fire alarm*.

4.2. Constructing the *Fire Alarm* Temporally

My data show that the temporal construction of the climate catastrophe framing revolves around two core themes: *constructing a temporal chronology* between the past and the future, zooming out and providing a convincing framework for the need to change, and *focusing on the present*, zooming in and triggering a present-moment emergency call for immediate action. Table 2 provides an overview of the data structure including the first-order codes my analysis relies on.

4.2.1. Temporal Chronology

The participants of LG constructed a clear temporal chronology by declaring that society is continuing on a wrong path, thereby linking the past to the present, and projecting that the current path will lead to an ever-worsening catastrophe, thereby linking the present to the (near) future.

Linking Past to Present

LG highlights political inaction in the past and argues that effective climate protection should have started much earlier. While speaking about the motivation to become active in the movement, one interviewee argued that "from a political point of view, we have failed to take many decisive measures. This is addressed above all to the last Federal Government and also before (...)" (LG_02, Pos. 7). This is amplified by political inaction despite progressive political agreements in the past:

> "And I had to realize that nothing happened. And the final push or decision was the moment when I realized that they were not even going to stick to the Paris Agreement." (LG_04, Pos. 3)

Whereas the interviewees acknowledged the successes of earlier movements, especially FFF, in terms of raising collective awareness of the topic of climate change, they declared that these approaches have fallen short in creating a sense of urgency for change. One interviewee pointed to the need for more disruptive forms of protest because of this situation:

> "For me, this is the conclusion from FFF. They have activated millions and put them on the streets, but nothing really happened in politics and society. Of course, the climate issue has moved more into focus. But real change just hasn't happened." (LG_06, Pos. 17)

The framing of LG addresses the current government and blames it for not acting but ignoring the climate catastrophe in the present. In a key internal strategy document LG assessed Germanys' long-term goal of climate neutrality by 2045 as follows: "The fact is, the government won't save us. Their actions are objectively insufficient." (TheoryofChange, Pos. 15-16). One participant argued that the course taken by the government reveals the wilful ignorance of politics against the backdrop of scientific evidence:

> "And at the moment, the optimism that is being tried there is so far away from the realistic situation that in my opinion it is utopian. Things are being said that simply no longer match with the scientific state as I perceive it, or even with many scientists I talked to, and do not cover the reality at all." (LG_09, Pos. 35)

Linking Present to Future

When the interviewees talked about the future, they usually projected the disastrous consequences of climate change. The framing revolved around the narrative that "everything that makes life possible, or the life of future generations, is threatened by the climate crisis". (LG_02, Pos. 7). This involved framing climate change as a complex issue by connecting the climate crisis to other crises, e.g., social crisis, refugee crisis, democracy crisis, and food crisis. Climate change is emphasized as the central challenge upon which the exacerbation or mitigation of other crises depends. One participant described how this plays a fundamental role in the framing:

> "I think with LG or what I notice, the narrative changes insofar that more and more these social consequences are also taken into account. What does it mean when we have water scarcity and food scarcity? What does it mean when large parts of the world are no longer habitable for our society? Because somehow people didn't understand, okay that means war in many parts of the world. That means extreme refugee flows. This means extreme pressure on Europe. That also means civil war in our country if there is no more water and no more food." (LG_01, Pos. 21)

Nevertheless, the climate catastrophe is not depicted as a temporally and spatially distant future. To substantiate the framing, interviewees often refer to close and recent extreme weather events like the *Ahrtahl* flood disaster in 2021, wildfires in Europe, and droughts in Germany. One interviewee emphasized how climate catastrophe is a near future as "disasters are becoming increasingly visible here in Europe" (LG_02, Pos. 19). The participants highlighted the temporal proximity of this undesirable future and how it will affect everyone:

> "And that's what we're going to see. This closeness in time, but also as a picture, that it's not about some polar caps melting or the glaciers in our mountains, but really on our doorstep, in our supermarket, where we go shopping every day, there won't be enough food for everyone. I think that distinguishes the framing of LG because that future vision is temporally closer." (LG_01, Pos. 21)

LG points to the fast-closing time window for action to mitigate the catastrophe. Therefore, the movement argues that our action now determines our future. This becomes apparent in the name of the movement, which in the complete version is *Last Generation before the climate tipping points*. After those tipping points, the catastrophe the participants projected can no longer be mitigated.

The movement deliberately emphasizes the undesirable future states that will result from not acting appropriately in the face of climate change to construct urgency. One participant mentioned that "we actually have a world to win if we change the direction to a world that is so much better and more beautiful and more solidary and more fair", but right after argued that now "you have to stress the crisis, that´s clear" (LG_08, Pos. 25-27). Another interviewee explained the need to emphasize undesirable futures because "the scale of the crisis is simply being completely underestimated" (LG_09, Pos. 31).

4.2.2. Present Focus

The participants of LG shifted the temporal focus to the present by highlighting that climate change and time for action is now, thereby prioritizing the present, and arguing that now is not the time to pivot action around (desirable) futures, thereby de-prioritizing the future as a temporal category.

Prioritizing Present

Central to the framing of LG is that the climate catastrophe has already started. A participant described the situation as "an absolutely urgent emergency situation right now" (LG_09, Pos. 9). Most interviewees stressed the importance of a present focus by emphasizing how a lot of people, especially those living in the global south, suffer from the consequences of climate change in the present:

> "And given what's coming to billions of people and what's already a reality for millions of people, I think. . . for me it's a matter of conscience. How can I look myself in the eye if I'm not trying to do everything? When I see that human rights are already being trampled underfoot daily." (LG_08, Pos. 11)

The movement claims a crisis mode by shortening the time horizons for action. The participants pointed to the need for immediate action in the face of the impending catastrophe and argued that "it is really already too late" (LG_05, Pos. 9). One interviewee described the importance of the present focus as follows:

> "Because if we don't act now, we're losing a lot, a lot. And very few people are aware that this temporal component simply exists and because of that in ten years a lot is just too late and that's why I think it's such a major thing at LG. You just want to have done as much as you can in the decisive moments and have tried everything to foster this change." (LG_09, Pos. 31)

LG emphasizes the importance of taking the first steps for action by bringing smaller claims like a speed limit on highways or an affordable public transport ticket to the fore. While the participants are aware that "we need a lot more" (LG_05, Pos. 13), they highlight that those measures are "effective and quick" and show that "we understood the crisis as a crisis" (LG_02, Pos. 17). Moreover, according to one interviewee, the focus on the first steps addresses tangible responsibility amidst the extensive transformations required, thereby ensuring that action is initiated and maintained:

> "[T]hat is a completely different lever compared to always having this huge catalogue of demands. And some say that, and others say that. And the government does what it wants, and so does the economy. Everyone can continue on their course. And always say yes, yes, we do a part of it, we contribute, for example, to the *construction turn 2045*. It just doesn't get so concrete, like you could do it now, that would be right, but you decide not to." (LG_05, Pos. 13)

De-Prioritizing Future

In the framing of LG, climate change is "not a question of the future, but a question of the present or even the past" (LG_01, Pos. 25). Most participants highlighted the tension between the "need for a systemic change" (LG_03, Pos. 39), a long-term perspective that includes major transformations and a lot of time to craft visions, and the urgency of the climate catastrophe as a present issue where the time window for action is continuously shrinking. LG deals with this tension by focusing on the present, under the rationale that discussions about the future fail to address the pressing crisis at hand:

> "If we all fall over a cliff into the abyss, it doesn´t matter if we had a great vision before." (LG_04, Pos. 35)

Moreover, the movement criticizes a long-term perspective. One participant pointed out that the prevailing time horizon practiced in politics is far too long-term oriented, deliberately neglecting the urgency for immediate action:

> "And when Friedrich Merz argues that we still have ten years to spare, then even today there is very little opposition from the media - So ten years to set the course, then we can start with the change, which from a scientific perspective is total nonsense." (LG_09, Pos. 35)

Consequently, LG deliberately excludes "bigger" questions, like the system question, from their framing. Not because the movement assesses the discussion as unnecessary in general, but because is not the immediate priority at this juncture. On the contrary, I had the impression that most interviewees desire a system shift in the long term. However, it is also a strategic consideration as topics such as criticism of capitalism carry significant political implications:

> "So, about the System Change. It is indeed a strategic decision not to emphasize this. I think, simply in order not to have broad conservative masses against it immediately." (LG_08, Pos. 51)

The interviewed participants suggested a step-by-step approach for sequentially working towards a desirable future. For this, the first step is to create and agree on the urgency of the climate catastrophe and the need for immediate action by establishing a crisis mode. Taking the first steps implicitly sets the course for a path from which a desirable future can gradually emerge. For the participants, after agreeing on the urgency, explicitly crafting visions of a desirable future will gain importance in a second step:

> "I believe that we must first bring society to the point where the need for change is seen. And only when the necessity, when the necessity is discussed seriously, the visions of the future will become more relevant." (LG_03, Pos. 13)

As an initial step towards shaping a socially just path into the future, LG proposes the establishment of a *Gesellschaftsrat* (society council), tasked with developing a comprehensive plan for Germany to get out of fossil fuels by 2030. By doing so, LG effectively delegates all future inquiries and concerns to this foundational claim:

> "This means that citizens are selected, who are brought up to date by scientists, and then draw up a plan for how we manage to get out of fossil fuels by 2030. And 2030 is not what we have come up with either, but what is derived from the IPCC report of 2022 - and that is our vision. So, we want a plan to be there." (LG_06, Pos. 29)

Although the long-term goal is embedded in LG´s overall strategy, it received limited attention in the interviews and, based on my observations, was not prominently emphasized in the public framing, particularly during the early stages.

4.3. Triggering the *Fire Alarm* through Protest and Network

My data show that LG employs the climate catastrophe framing by engaging in two processes: *pushing*, deploying the framing through disruptive protest, and *translating*, aligning the framing through networking activities. Triggering the metaphorical fire alarm is directed towards creating a shared sense of urgency in society. The movement faces the

Table 2: Data structure temporality

First-order codes	Second-order themes	Aggregated dimensions
Highlighting political inaction in the past	Past → Present *We are continuing on the wrong path*	Past → Future *Constructing a Temporal chronology*
Declaring past approaches as failed to create urgency		
Blaming politics for inaction and ignorance in the present		
Projecting catastrophe by connecting climate crisis to other crises	Present → Future *The current path leads into a catastrophe*	
Pointing to the fast-closing time window for action to mitigate catastrophe		
Emphasizing undesirable, near futures		
Highlighting that the climate catastrophe has started	Prioritizing Present *Climate change and time for taking action is now*	Present Emergency Call *Focusing on the present*
Shortening time horizons for action by claiming a crisis mode		
Prioritizing first steps as crisis measures		
Excluding "bigger" questions	De-Prioritizing Future *Now is not the time to pivot our action around (desirable) futures*	
Suggesting that desirable futures will & can only emerge out of a crisis mode		

tension of having to focus on disruptive forms of protest to convey the urgency for change, which in turn has polarizing effects, and having to gain resonance for its framing to foster collective action and change. To succeed in both objectives, the movement engages in two processes that the participants described as "parallel" and "equally important" (LG_07, Pos. 11-15). These processes operate through distinct mechanisms but build upon each other to ensure the effectiveness of the fire alarm. Figure 1 illustrates the interactions of the framing processes that emerged from my analysis.

4.3.1. Pushing

The movement engages in disruptive forms of protest to display the urgency for change. The objective is to build up and uphold political pressure. While discussing the intensity of the protest, one participant described that consistency is essential:

> "So that would flatten out immediately I think if you didn't keep it up. And I think you must put some pressure on the government. Above all, just to make clear that contrary to what is being said we´re not on the right track with the government's current measures." (LG_08, Pos. 33)

LG argues that because of the urgency of the climate catastrophe, it is necessary to interrupt everyday life. When talking about the street blockades in podcasts or press interviews participants often utter that they do not want to do or like the protests at all. However, as one participant told me, they see no other way to stop the crisis from being displayed:

> "That's why we interfere with everyday life. That's why we make our blockades. And we say watch out, the house is on fire, we must extinguish it. We must do something. And that is exactly what I see as our task. That we point out that we must do something about it." (LG_06, Pos. 15)

The underlying mechanism of the disruptive protests lies in their confrontational nature. This approach enables the movement to capture (media) attention and stimulate a discourse. By the high frequency and unwavering consistency of the protest, LG compels the public to actively engage with and take a stance about the movement. One participant highlighted the importance of being unignorable to enforce a debate in the present:

> "No one's ignoring us. That's the ultimate target. We must be unignorable. That was also what immediately became clear to me. We must no longer allow ourselves to be ignored. We're a fire alarm." (LG_05, Pos. 17)

In doing so, LG deliberately triggers polarization. To ensure that the discourse receives the necessary critical attention, the "protest in general is just enormously important to create a certain social tension" (LG_09, Pos. 11). Moreover, one interviewee argued that due to the impending catastrophe polarization might be necessary to foster fast and comprehensive change:

> "But above all, I think that without this polarization we will not succeed in shifting the social discourse in time to one of the two poles, namely the crisis, crisis, crisis - pole." (LG_10, Pos. 7)

The strategic objective of the disruptive protests is to deliberately elicit emotional responses among those affected by the actions. To achieve a "state of shock", the movement actively evokes emotions of "anger" and "rage" (LG_01, Pos. 29). Thereby, emotionalization is used to convey a heightened sense of urgency but also to amplify the discourse:

> "And to arouse these extremely strong emotions by simply blocking people on the street, and specifically as many as possible and as much as possible. And again, and again. That generates clicks. That garners attention." (LG_03, Pos. 17)

In all public actions, LG maintains a uniform and static framing, repeatedly emphasizing the urgency of the climate catastrophe and the imperative for immediate action. The attention and polarizing discourse from the protests provide the participants of LG with access to public stages to push their framing (e.g., press interviews, talk shows, and court hearings). The movement strategically leverages these moments to raise awareness about the climate catastrophe. One interviewee pointed out that "we just have to fight to stay present in the media and push our framing" (LG_03, Pos.17).

The disruptive protests turned the majority of society against the movement. When I asked participants how this makes sense strategically, the interviewees stated that mobilizing as many people as possible is in fact "not the main goal" (LG_04, Pos. 14-15). To gain support and solidarity, the movement relies on *Backfiring Moments*. The protest triggers over-reactions (e.g., home searches, major legal repression, exaggerated political rhetoric), that raise the question of whether those reactions are adequate to a movement fighting for climate action: "Why is she in jail now? Why isn't she sitting on the organ bench with us? Okay, she resisted. Why? What's going on? It's a climate catastrophe." (LG_05, Pos. 11). When society perceives the reactions as inappropriate, it amplifies the resonance for LG. Moreover, the movement strategically makes use of backfiring moments to confirm and reinforce the framing that politics did not understand the crisis:

> "By these overreactions the government then exposed itself and more and more people realize okay, it is not willing to end the injustice of the ongoing destruction of the world. And the government prefers to fight peaceful people who stand up for us all." (LG_02, Pos. 29)

By triggering backfiring moments, the movement indirectly fosters support and solidarity. Most participants described powerful examples to underline the success of the strategy:

> "At the moment of the house searches and the huge shock, so many people came to us at the same time. Unbelievable how many people showed solidarity." (LG_04, Pos. 5)

Nevertheless, participants acknowledge that "just disturbing is not enough for initiating a change process" (LG_09, Pos. 11).

4.3.2. Translating

To directly foster support and resonance, the movement aligns the framing by engaging in networking activities. LG practiced networking from the beginning, but it gained relevance over time as the attention from the protest acted as a door-opener: "Because we are so well known, it works extremely well that at the moment we are able to talk very easily, especially with very well-known and renowned scientists and institutions." (LG_09, Pos. 9). Compared to the protest, participants described networking as relatively invisible because it "primarily takes place behind the scenes" (LG_07, Pos. 31).

The objective of networking is to engage in discussions about climate change with all key actors in society, including religious institutions, political entities, law enforcement, and the scientific community. Besides explaining the strategy of LG, participants involved in networking aim to educate about and raise awareness for the climate catastrophe. The short-term goal is to gain support from institutions and individuals through public solidarity statements or resources that enable the protest, such as accommodation or legal assistance: "So please, you have to position yourselves in society right now and say that they are right, this is a fire alarm and not a false alarm." (LG_07, Pos. 7). The long-term goal is to stimulate transformational processes within these institutions, with the overarching goal of reorienting their actions to revolve around the climate catastrophe. One networking coordinator described the vision in networking with scientific institutions:

> "In the long term, together with Scientists Rebellion, we plan lectures at universities throughout Germany. Lectures where we try to call for more active science, where we argue that it is no longer enough to just keep on publishing while they are completely ignored by the general public anyway, not noticed at all. And politics do not refer to them either. And that more needs to be done to bring these scientific publications to the public. And that neutrality does not contradict - neutrality and passivity are not the same thing." (LG_09, Pos. 9)

In networking, participants translate the climate catastrophe framing of LG to the different pillars of society: "Networking means I translate, it's a fire alarm." (LG_07, Pos. 13). In the process, participants tailor the language used in networking discussions to align with the language common in the specific pillar. A senior participant leading a local networking team described this as follows:

> "This is not our normal LG lecture, but very specifically adapted for church contexts I´d say. Although - not adapted, it is rewritten. So, it is written differently now with a theological argumentation. Because basically within every area we address, there are always people who are

> well informed within the specific context and who have a clue." (LG_08, Pos. 5)

Translating means connecting the undesirable futures resulting from the climate catastrophe to the context of the specific pillar and making it tangible. Therefore, in networking talks, the participants "highlight what impact this can have for you and your area, in which you work." (LG_09, Pos. 13). For example, in networking with healthcare organizations LG frames "climate protection as health protection". In a strategy document that suggests various framing possibilities for networking with healthcare organizations, LG projects how the climate catastrophe will have direct, disastrous consequences on the pillar: "The health system is already at its limit – how is it supposed to survive the climate collapse?", but also how the pillar is specifically responsible to act: "Our job is to save lives!". While the portrayal of these undesirable futures is deliberately realistic and proximate, they are not framed as inevitable. Rather, participants underline the agency vested in the various actors to actively engage in mitigating the impending catastrophe, emphasizing the imperative of initiating immediate action. Appendix B provides a more extensive overview of strategically employed framings in the process of translating by presenting compelling examples sourced from internal documents.

Translating the catastrophe framing to the different pillars of society aims to create an emotional connection to climate change. Contrary to the protests, which primarily employ emotionalization to trigger anger and rage to intensify the discourse, emotionalization in networking focuses on "building connections" and displaying that "we actually want the same" (LG_07, Pos.21) to foster resonance for the framing of the climate catastrophe. According to the participants involved in networking, evoking emotions, especially emotions of fear and regret, is necessary to display urgency and foster immediate action:

> "[...] I think a partial emotionalization of the problem is necessary. Of course, it is always important to stick to the facts. But this is, I think, an important point because people in their everyday life are entangled in a displacement society where you simply get along with it and you don't necessarily want to deal with it because it's just a stupid subject. And I think that's why it's quite necessary to emotionalize it in parts." (LG_09, Pos. 13)

5. Discussion

This study investigated how time and temporality are constructed within and shape the framing of social movements. For this purpose, I examined the collective action frame of the environmental movement LG in Germany. I found that the movement frames climate change as a catastrophe and claims a crisis mode, thereby seeing itself as a fire alarm. To create a shared sense of urgency the movement seeks to shift the temporal focus to the present. Applying a temporal lens enabled me to unravel the initially puzzling framing strategy of polarization that contradicts earlier literature on frame resonance. Therefore, my findings enhance theories on frame alignment processes by proposing a temporal lens that underlines the complexity of framing. Below, I theorize my empirical findings and discuss their contributions. First, I integrate my findings in a theoretical model that links the temporal construction of the frame to the strategic framing processes and their primary objectives in terms of the degree of resonance in what I call *crisis frames*. Second, I discuss the contributions of my findings to the literature on framing in social movements and to the literature at the intersection of time and sustainability. Finally, I elaborate on the limitations of this study and propose potential avenues for future research.

5.1. A Theoretical Model of Temporality in Crisis Frames

Reflecting on the interrelations between the temporal construction and the framing processes, I integrate my two core findings into a conceptual model of temporality in framing processes, especially in crisis frames. Figure 2 illustrates how the framing processes reflect the construction of time in the initial framing of climate change and highlights how the interpretation of time determines the strategic framing processes.

In the face of the pressing climate crisis, the framing of LG is directed towards shifting the temporal focus to the present. Therefore, the movement challenges dominant temporal beliefs reflected in the past and present climate action of politics for being inadequate to the current situation. In doing so, the framing constructs a temporal chronology between a dominant past and a projected, undesirable future. The connections made between the dominant past and the undesirable future serve as diagnostic framing by addressing blame to politics in the past and present and assigning responsibility to the current political decision-makers for immediate action (Snow & Benford, 1988). By anticipating and strategically emphasizing undesirable futures the movement constructs urgency and emotionalizes the issue to increase actionability because the frame directly connects the need for action in the present to the possibility of undesirable states in the near future (Alimadadi et al., 2022). The constructed chronology has limited temporal depth. Thus, LG emphasizes the near future and the near past to make explicit connections to the present. Building on the constructed chronology, the framing temporally focuses on the present. The present-time perspective serves as prognostic framing by claiming a crisis mode as the proposed way to act in the face of the climate crisis (Snow & Benford, 1988). However, the diagnostic dimension predominates the framing, with the movement only offering a partial delineation of the desired crisis mode. The claimed first steps primarily function as symbolic claims that should display how present political action does not reflect a crisis mode. The present is framed as a limited, fast-closing time window for action that determines the future and as

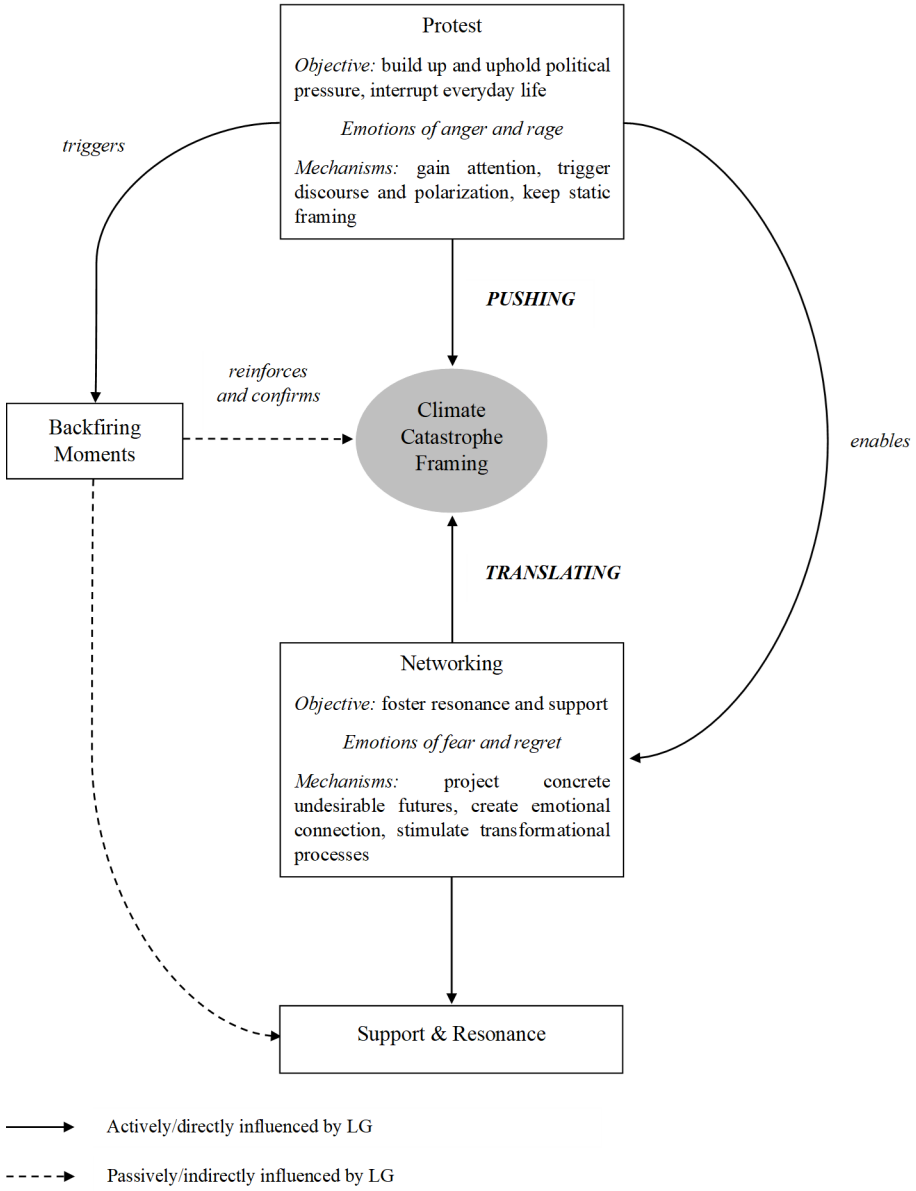

Figure 1: Strategic framing processes

the last possibility to prevent undesirable futures. Consequently, a better, desirable future can only emerge out of the crisis mode in the present. The movement intentionally deprioritizes the future as a temporal perspective to accentuate the sense of urgency and thereby strategically excludes questions for broader changes in the future. The way the movement constructs time forms the foundation of the framing and determines the processes through which the movement deploys its frame to foster collective action.

To convey the constructed urgency LG actively manages the balance between disrupting the present by keeping a static framing and aligning its framing to achieve a certain degree of resonance. This balancing act is reflected in the two interrelated but in practice decoupled processes of *pushing* and *translating*. While the movement utilizes synergies between the processes, such as leveraging the attention from the protest for access to networking partners, they build on fundamentally different mechanisms. Disruptive strategies, including all public activities like protests, press interviews, and court hearings, are employed to push the present focus. Therefore, the movement aims to disrupt the present and strategically trigger a certain degree of polarization. On the one hand, polarization is used to gain attention, be unignorable, and provoke a discourse in the here and now. This logically emanates from the framing of climate change as a catastrophe, emphasizing the limited time window for action. While specific campaigns, such as protests targeting affluent individuals or oil companies, garnered significantly greater resonance among the public audience, the movement observed a stark disparity in the level of attention received by

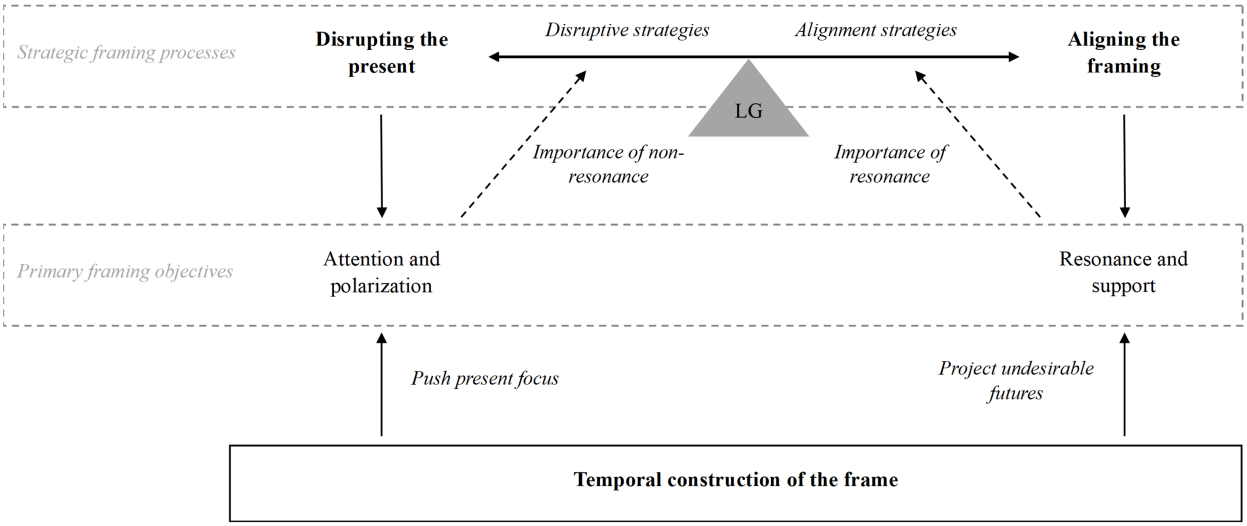

Figure 2: A theoretical model of temporality in crisis frames: Balancing disruption and alignment

these actions compared to the road blockades. On the other hand, the framing inevitably generates polarization due to its present focus, implying direct and immediate influence on the actions of political and economic actors, rather than in the future. Thus, the temporal construction of the frame limits the margin in which the framing can be aligned with potential adherents. Consequently, within the context of a crisis, attaining a high degree of resonance may not necessarily be the primary objective of strategic framing processes, and triggering some degree of non-resonance might be crucial.

However, the movement endeavours to foster resonance by engaging in networking activities. LG aligns the climate catastrophe frame to persuade prospective supporters of the framing. By translating the climate catastrophe frame to the various pillars of society the movement projects concrete undesirable future states that will inevitably result from inaction in the present. To provide a tangible perspective, the complexity of crises intertwined with the climate catastrophe is deconstructed and contextualized within the framework of the institution or actor. Thus, networking also focuses on conveying the urgency and the need for immediate action in the here and now but partially aligns the framing to achieve that objective. By especially highlighting undesirable futures in the context of the respective networking partner, the movement triggers feelings of fear and regret and, therefore, aims to create an emotional connection to the climate catastrophe that in turn fosters resonance for the framing of LG and stimulates support. In the short term, the movement focuses on strategically powerful partners that can support the movement in public through solidarity statements and function as trustworthy carriers of the catastrophe framing in their specific context. In the long term, the movement engages in transformative processes within the institutions or actors by emphasizing that another future is possible.

In summary, the case illustrates how the strategic framing processes are linked to the temporal construction of the framing. For crisis frames that aim to create a shared sense of urgency, aligning the framing to achieve resonance may not constitute the primary objective of all strategic processes because of the inherent present focus. Instead, the movement deploys its framing in a dialectic process, actively orchestrating an intricate equilibrium between disruptive strategies, aimed at triggering non-resonance, and alignment strategies, aimed at fostering resonance. To shift the temporal focus to the present the case demonstrates that movements may strategically employ polarizing framing tactics. However, also for crisis frames resonance is necessary. The movement recognizes the importance of creating resonance within society to foster change. Nonetheless, for frames with a strong present focus, generating resonance and conveying urgency presents an enormous challenge. To partially align the framing, the case indicates how movements may initiate alignment processes independently, which subsequently take place decoupled from the main and visible public campaigns.

5.2. Contributions and Implications

The theoretical contribution of this study is twofold. First, it contributes to the research on framing in social movements by illustrating the fundamental role of time and temporality in framing processes and providing an in-depth temporal perspective on a unique, contemporary case. Second, it contributes to research at the intersection of time and sustainability by emphasizing the relevance of a present-time perspective in the face of climate change and, therefore, enhances theories on inter-temporal tensions and future-oriented action.

This study reveals how framing processes cannot be studied isolated from their temporal construction. Especially for collective action frames that serve an interpretative and a strategic function (Snow & Benford, 1988), time plays a fundamental role in how actors make sense of the past, present, and future but also aim to challenge and change dominant

temporal beliefs. By unravelling how the movement strategically constructs a temporal chronology and tries to shift the temporal focus to the present, this study shows how framing can be understood as a form of temporal work (Bansal et al., 2022; Kaplan & Orlikowski, 2013; Nyberg et al., 2020). A temporal lens provides outcome-focused research on strategic framing processes and the somewhat static framing literature in general with a dynamic character to come up with the complexity of framing as an ongoing, interpretative process of meaning construction (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014).

However, this study extends beyond how actors construct time (Granqvist & Gustafsson, 2016) and mobilize temporality (Nyberg et al., 2020) by examining how the temporal construction and the strategic framing processes are inextricably intertwined. Building on the theory of temporal portability introduced by Nyberg et al. (2020) this case illustrates how a movement seeks to construct a temporal chronology to make the framing more convincing and actionable by for example "reducing the time frames for climate action" and "linking climate change to what are seen as legitimate and immediate concerns" (p. 192). The present-time perspective resulting from the movements´ interpretation of climate change as a catastrophe that requires immediate action affected the framing processes and objectives. The present focus posed a two-fold challenge, requiring the simultaneous cultivation of resonance and compelling conveyance of urgency, which in turn constrains frame alignment possibilities. Moreover, polarization is employed as a framing strategy in the process of pushing to display and enforce the present focus. While the framing literature conceptualizes resonance as a key mechanism for effectiveness (Benford & Snow, 2000; Cornelissen & Werner, 2014), this study illustrates how a movement had to balance strategies that aimed to create non-resonance and resonance to create a shared sense of urgency. This advances our understanding of frame resonance (Lee et al., 2018; Snow & Benford, 1988; Snow et al., 1986; Zeng et al., 2019) insofar as resonance might not always be the primary objective of all framing processes and employing polarizing frames can be a strategy to display the temporal perspective of the framing.

Furthermore, this study introduces the process of translating as an alternative form of frame alignment. Building on the theory of strategic alignment processes (Benford & Snow, 2000; Snow & Benford, 1988), translating contains elements of frame bridging because it involves making connections between two unconnected but ideologically related frames (e.g., networking with other climate justice movements or scientific institutions), and frame extension because it expands the scope and relevance of the frame by associating it with other issues or interests (e.g., networking with health organizations or church). However, it introduces a unique element in that it focuses specifically on the context of the different institutions or actors and tailors the framing to resonate with their specific concerns and values. The emphasis on creating an emotional connection to the issue in line with the temporal construction of the catastrophe framing distinguishes translating as a distinct process in the broader frame alignment theory. Translating, in this context, involves not only conveying but also persuading potential supporters to adopt the movement´s temporal beliefs, aiming to establish quick common ground during moments of crisis.

This study also contributes to the literature on intertemporal tensions in sustainable development (e.g., Bansal and DesJardine, 2014; Reinecke and Ansari, 2015; Slawinski and Bansal, 2015) by illustrating how a present-time perspective may be more valuable than previously assumed. The literature argues that organizations have to apply a long-term perspective to be sustainable and examine how actors navigate different temporalities and make trade-offs (Reinecke & Ansari, 2015; Slawinski & Bansal, 2015). Surprisingly, the case of LG represents an example of an actor who fights for a sustainable future and simultaneously claims a present-time perspective. Therefore, this study provides insights into how actors assess a long-term, future perspective as problematic in the face of climate change. First, because the undeniable urgency of the climate crisis requires immediate action to mitigate the ever-worsening situation and prevent the tipping points. By prioritizing the present, the movement underscores the idea that a socially just future can only be secured through immediate action in the present. Second, adopting a long-term perspective on climate change implies that there is enough time for change. As a result, actors might not perceive the urgency or "hide" behind long-term goals and, therefore, deliberately postpone climate action as a question for the distant future.

Thus, this study contributes to the discourse on how actors imagine collectively dealing with the tension between the need for immediate action because of the urgency and the need for broader changes in the future inherent in climate change (Slawinski & Bansal, 2015; Wenzel et al., 2020). The proposed crisis mode suggests that by prioritizing short-term goals, such as the implementation of first steps as crisis measures, concrete action and responsibility can be assigned. This enables a more effective evaluation compared to complex, long-term goals, determining whether society perceives the urgency and necessity for change. The short-term goals can further function as the starting point through which a catastrophe can be mitigated and a better, desirable future can emerge from. By perceiving the present as interconnected to the future rather than a distinct moment, the present-time perspective provides an alternative view of sustainable development that is not about trade-offs (Kim et al., 2019). Consequently, this study reveals how movements may not assess the missing long-term perspectives but the unwillingness to act in the present as the key issue that hinders sustainable development.

Moreover, this study contributes to research on future-oriented action by illustrating how actors make connections between the present and the future to construct urgency. While prior research focuses on how distant and desirable futures are imagined to invoke transformation (Augustine et al., 2019; Gümüsay & Reinecke, 2022), this study shows how actors deliberately project near and undesirable future states to emotionalize and create a shared sense of

urgency (Alimadadi et al., 2022). To foster collective action the anticipation of undesirable futures directly connected to present states might be crucial to achieve a sense of urgency for change in the first place. Furthermore, this study advances research on future desirability (Alimadadi et al., 2022; Gümüsay & Reinecke, 2022) by showing how actors strategically exclude the amplification of desirable future possibilities. By not making connections between the present and a distant, desirable future the movement tries to avoid the discourse from derailing to political future imaginaries and thereby not tackling the actual urgency of the crisis in the present. The case depicts the challenge of connecting future social imaginaries to the present (De Cock et al., 2021; Nyberg et al., 2020) in urgent situations. In the face of a pressing crisis, the question arises as to how to achieve resonance for a framing that depicts a future vision that may be radically and ideologically different from the present, e.g., anti-capitalism. Therefore, the present-time perspective is used to deliberately distract from broader changes in the future to foster actionability in the present (Vandevoordt & Fleischmann, 2021).

On a practical note, movements trying to foster change need to craft collective action frames by constructing temporality in a convincing way (Nyberg et al., 2020). In times of crisis, movements may need to employ a strong focus on the present to construct urgency. However, focusing on the present and excluding broader future questions may result in a perceived imbalance between the movement´s claims and the action of the movement. While a simultaneous focus on the present and future might pose a risk for movements, potentially shrinking its power (Vandevoordt & Fleischmann, 2021), it is important to make strong connections between the present and the future and explain the temporal focus to achieve resonance, e.g., by engaging in networking activities.

5.3. Limitations and Future Research

An inherent limitation of this study stems from the single-case research design. LG provides a highly interesting and relevant case for studying social movements and the organization of time in framing because it is critical, in that the unusual framing strategies challenge existing theory, and is unique, in that the approach is new and triggered major discourse (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 1993). Therefore, conducting a single case study that allows immersion and a rich description of the phenomena can be a powerful example for extending existing theory and inspiring future research (Siggelkow, 2007). However, as a single case study only investigates one specific example the quality of the emergent theory is limited in terms of robustness, generalizability, and testability (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007). To enhance and strengthen my findings, future research could conduct multiple case studies (Yin, 1993). Specifically, I see great potential in comparative case studies that investigate polar types (Eisenhardt, 1989) of movements that seemingly have similar objectives but employ different framing strategies. Studies could examine how and why environmental movements construct time differently in their framing while agreeing on the urgency of climate change. FFF, for example, has a strong temporal focus on the future and explicitly claims systemic change. Research could then investigate the implications of diverse temporal constructions for collective action in the broader climate justice movement. Nonetheless, I also encourage future research to test the applicability of my findings in other contexts, such as social movements where there is less obvious temporal tension between urgency and broader chances in the future.

The short time horizon of the data collection process represents another limitation of this study. Derived from the processual and dynamic understanding of framing, it is certain that frames and framing strategies will change over time (Cornelissen & Werner, 2014). Although the strong and deliberately transparent strategic component of framing in the movement as well as observing the development over nine months enabled me to analyze and contextualize framing processes, the time horizon in which the interviews were conducted (two months), being the primary source of my findings, represents a rather short snapshot of time. If and how the framing of LG will change over time and how the movement will assess whether the claimed crisis mode is established requires further observation. An interesting question would be whether the temporal focus will shift back to the future once the movement perceives that a shared sense of urgency is achieved and how this affects framing strategies. While one plausible scenario could be that LG acts as a temporary organization that disbands upon completing its mission, an alternative scenario is that the movement significantly changes and takes on a new role in the climate change discourse. Furthermore, I see the need for studies that investigate the societal outcomes of polarizing framing strategies, e.g., in terms of policy change (Zeng et al., 2019) or the mobilization of counter-movements (Sombatpoonsiri, 2023). Future research could for example analyze framing contests to study the effectiveness of non-resonating frames (Nyberg et al., 2020). In times of crisis, the question arises as to how much resonance is needed to foster change and whether it is sufficient to solely address resonance on an emotional level, e.g., by activating emotions of fear and regret (Giorgi, 2017). In sum, I encourage future research to critically evaluate resonance as the key mechanism for frame effectiveness, particularly within ideological and political contexts (Giorgi & Weber, 2015).

Another limitation stems from the lack of observational data to capture the complexity of the phenomena. The observations I conducted solely had the objective to contextualize and contrast the emerging findings. I did not observe how the participants pushed their framing in actual situations like protests or court hearings and how participants translated the framing in networking talks to create an emotional connection. Future research could, therefore, benefit from collecting first-hand experiences by attending protests, internal plannings, or networking talks to further nuance the relation of temporality and framing processes. Moreover, contrasting emerging findings with perspectives of critics or fellow climate movement participants could provide valuable insights

into the external evaluation of the strategy. Consequently, and building on the call from Cornelissen and Werner (2014), I encourage future research to conduct ethnographies over a longer period to come up with the complexity of framing processes and to enrich my findings.

Overall, this work should also be a call for management and organizational studies to incorporate more strongly atypical, other than business-related cases in their research. Especially in contexts like climate change that imply a need to change in the near and distant future, research should put a stronger emphasis on actors who challenge dominant beliefs and fight for change, like environmental movements (Gümüsay & Reinecke, 2022; Wenzel et al., 2020). Moreover, this case is a powerful example of how highly organized social movements can be, especially when they play a strong counterpart to dominant beliefs. Future research could investigate how movements in times of crisis reach this level of organization that goes beyond temporarily achieving 'organizationality' through identity claims (Dobusch & Schoeneborn, 2015) to establishing boundaries and constant actionability through structure that enables actors to build resilience to societal criticism and negative evaluations (Roulet, 2020).

6. Concluding Thoughts

Humanity is currently facing a self-induced yet existential crisis. Facing such a crisis requires a radical transformation of society, particularly our economic system. Scholars and practitioners are confronted with the pressing question of how societal change and political action can be organized in time to ensure a sustainable future. Although the necessity for change has been acknowledged for quite some time, there is still an underlying perception that progress remains insufficient. While the imperative of transcending the familiar paradigms of "business as usual" is apparent (Wright & Nyberg, 2017), especially within social actors like environmental movements, climate change as an actionable framing is "indeed foreign to our very sense of being" (Nyberg et al., 2020, p. 193).

This thesis sought out to unravel the framing activities of the environmental movement LG in Germany puzzled by the seemingly static and counterproductive strategy. By applying a temporal lens, this study illustrated the complexity of (strategic) framing processes. Framing climate change as a catastrophe involved a strong focus on the present and near undesirable future states among participants of the movement. My findings show how the temporal construction shaped the strategic framing processes. To convey the sense of urgency, framing activities were in parts deliberately targeted at triggering polarization by non-resonance. Therefore, the findings enhance research on framing in social movements by demonstrating the centrality of time and its consequences on strategic framing processes.

Moreover, the study holds valuable implications for the discourse on time and sustainability, highlighting the primary challenge of cultivating a collective sense of urgency to foster action in the face of the escalating climate crisis. Certain academic discourses within the field, such as those focusing on long-term perspectives or desirable futures, found limited applicability in this case. Instead, concepts of undesirable futures and emotionalization that resulted in a present-focused approach to climate action were far more prominent. On a final note, referring to the introductory quote by the Secretary-General of the United Nations António Guterres, "[t]ime is no longer on our side". This is further amplified by powerful and affluent actors who attempt to slow down sustainable development for their own gain, leading to a precarious situation where "delay is the new denial" (p. 2) in the discourse on climate action (Shue, 2023). Against the backdrop of scientific evidence, the urgency to redirect our discourse on sustainability, both in academia and practice, to the present and the means of immediate action has likely never been more pressing. I hope this study can inspire future research to embrace the present-time perspective and recognize the relevance of societal actors like social movements more strongly.

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