

Consumption | Individual communication

IC - (21092) - YOU ARE NOT ALONE: NEIGHBOURHOOD SENSE OF COMMUNITY AND COLLECTIVE EFFICACY AS POTENTIAL BOOSTERS FOR HIGH-EFFORT BEHAVIOUR CHANGE AND GHG REDUCTION.

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Background and objectives

Recent research on climate and energy-relevant behaviour shows that housing and mobility are among the dominant factors for individual climate impact. Empirically, housing and mobility are strongly interrelated, influenced by spatial and infrastructural parameters, publicly visible and an important part of people's personal lifestyle and identity. Hence, impact-relevant behavioural changes in housing and mobility are not only associated with high financial costs, but also with high personal and social effort. This imposes particular challenges for changes of behaviour, since earlier findings indicate that climate-friendly engagement often remains limited to low-cost/low-effort situations such as switching off lights or avoiding plastic bags.

Therefore, more research is needed on how to facilitate high-cost/high-effort climate-friendly behaviour. A promising entry point is on the level of neighbourhoods, where essential infrastructural and social factors converge. Similar spatial conditions and standard of living, low anonymity, as well as clear visibility and attribution of building features and mobility behaviour to individuals (including symbolic representation such as cars) make neighbourhood dynamics a potential lever for encouraging behaviour change. To realise these impact reduction potentials, critical dynamics need to be identified and translated into practicable and effective approaches for interventions.

Process and methods (for empirical research)

Drawing on recent work on social identity, collective efficacy, and measurement of climate-relevant behaviours, the project CLEANcultures presents an approach for (I) designing unconventional and specific interventions at the neighbourhood level (focused on joint processes of sense-making, learning and participation), and for (II) validating their effectiveness in terms of greenhouse-gas emission reduction.

Main results (or main arguments in the case of critical reviews)

Preliminary results from urban and rural Austrian neighbourhoods show a strong focus on locally observable phenomena (e.g. urban heat islands or overtourism) and their links to global climate change.

Implications for research and practice/policy | Importance and originality of the contribution

The approach translates recent research literature into real-world interventions and monitors their actual impact, providing a science-based guideline for practitioners, and a valuable feedback loop for the scientific community.

Palavras-chave : Neighbourhood, Collective efficacy, Sense of community, Lifestyle, Greenhouse-gas emissions, Case studies, Intervention strategies