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What lies ahead in time? Temporal frames of reference in Germany and Sweden

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Abstract: Time as an abstract domain is hardly tangible for us. So in order to think about time-related issues we have to refer to spatial concepts or characteristics. At the moment there exist different theories about the spatial conceptions used in time. In the presented study the theory of temporal frames of reference (t-FoR) builds the theoretical framework. In order to test this specific model cross-culturally a short priming-experiment was conducted. After spatial priming 149 German and 130 Swedish students were presented four target scenarios in the manner of McGlone and Harding (1998): Next Wednesdays meeting has been moved forward two days. The results indicate the applicability of the model and showed strong preferences for a specific t-FoR in each culture: Germans mainly applied the intrinsic t-FoR whereas Swedish students used the absolute form. Because of such strong culture-specific preferences new ways of spatial priming need to be discussed.

Keywords: time, space, frame of reference, Germany, Sweden