

# Behaviour, behaviour change and climate

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# Structure for the presentation



- What is behaviour?
- Food as an example
- How can change of behaviour be supported?

# What is behaviour?

- Patterns of acting
  - Routines
  - Repetition
  - Often decided by context
  - Often in relation to others
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- Martin, J.L. (2011). *The explanation of social action*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.
  - Southerton, D. (2012). Habits, routines and temporalities of consumption: From individual behaviours to the reproduction of everyday practices, *Time & Society*, 22, 335-55.



# Different social scientific assumptions about behaviour



- Individual choices
  - Action influenced by social group
  - Activities in everyday life
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- Friedman, M. (1957). *A theory of the consumption function*, Princeton, Princeton University Press
  - Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul
  - Warde, A. (2005). Consumption and theories of practice, *Journal of Consumer Culture*, 5, 131-53.

# Food in everyday life

- Embodied taken-for-granted routines
  - Social identity – you are what you eat
  - Shopping, providing for meals and eating is only one set of activities among many overlapping activities in everyday life
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- Gronow, J. & L. Holm (2019). *Everyday eating in Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. A comparative study of meal patterns 1997-2012*. London, Bloomsbury.
  - Warde, A. (2016). *The Practice of Eating*. Cambridge, Polity Press.



# Typical consumer reactions on demands for (green) change of routines



- Empowerment
  - already on the kitchen-table agenda, experience of support from society
- Resistance against disciplining
  - No experience of agency, irritation over interference from society
- Do-ability
  - Pragmatic adaptation and fitting in of yet another thing to do

Halkier, B. (2020). Mundane negotiations around official Danish dietary advice: connection, expert knowledge, and everyday agency, *Critical Public Health*, 30, 294-305.

# Different social scientific models for change of behaviour

- Models based on the individual:
  - Taxes/subsidies, communication campaigns and nudging
- Models based on institutions:
  - Regulation, new technology and infrastructure
- Models based on social practices:
  - Support for normalisation of changing routines

Keller et al (2016). Policy and governance for sustainable consumption at the crossroads of theories and concepts, *Environmental Policy and Governance*, 26, 75-88.

# Normalisation

- The normal is the expectable
- The expectable is about how much something is repeated and how widespread something is
- In other words: How often do you meet e.g. climate friendly food, and is it in several different contexts?
- Normalisation: Processes that support many experiences with e.g. climate friendly food across contexts

Halkier, B. (2022). Mundane normativity and the everyday handling of contested food consumption, *Consumption and Society*. 1, 51-66.





# Behaviour as policy tool in climate transition 1

- Individual tools - advantages:
  - Frame-setting
  - Relatively clear incentives (minus nudging)
  - Relatively cheap (minus subsidies)
  - Potentially in contact with all citizens
- Individual tools - disadvantages:
  - Negative social grade
  - Does not take into account cultural and social dynamics which drive routines

## Behaviour as policy tool in climate transition 2

- Institutional tools – advantages:
  - Frame-setting
  - Involves organised actors
  - Possibility for adapting via technology or infrastructure
- Institutional tools - disadvantages:
  - Potentially expensive
  - Implementation difficulties
  - Insecurity of technological development

## Behaviour as policy tool in climate transition 3

- Social tools - advantages:
  - Takes into account cultural and social dynamics which drive routines
  - Can specify where implementation difficulties may be
  - Connects the institutional level with the agency of all other types of actors (individual and organised)
  - Engages citizens/consumers
- Social tools - disadvantages:
  - Potentially expensive
  - Seldom "one-size-fits-all" solutions
  - Partly based on engagement of actors

# Potentials for changes of behaviour towards more climate friendliness



- Use both individual, institutional and social policy tools
- Only focusing on the individual tools is not going to bring about sufficient changes
- Success cases for change of consumer behaviour (in the food sector) builds upon frame-setting collaboration between public and private organisations

Halkier, B. (2018). Political food consumerism between mundane routines and organizational alliance-building, in M. Boström et al (ed.): *The Oxford handbook of political consumerism*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.