

## **Understanding (Non-)Compliance with Mobility Related Measures Against Climate Change - Everyday Mobility Practices and the Perception of Legislation under Conditions of Social Inequality**

Project lead: Ass.-Prof.<sup>in</sup> Dr.<sup>in</sup> Katharina Hametner, Univ.-Prof. Dr. Konrad Lachmayer, Univ.-Ass. Dr. Markus Wrbschek

### **Project description**

Human-induced climate change requires fundamental changes in human behaviour. Not only policy, but also the legal system makes an important contribution to a normative framework for changing society's behaviour in relation to climate change. A variety of legal instruments exists to guide individual behaviour. While legal instruments can help us shape the socio-normative affordances that individuals encounter in their daily lives, the effectiveness of legislation – especially in the context of climate change – requires the acceptance of people in a democracy and the implementation in their everyday practice. However, the acceptance of restrictions or prohibitions depends on people's understanding of the need to change their behaviour as well as their ability and active effort to engage in the process of changing un-sustainable habits.

Changes in specific everyday behaviour depend critically on available knowledge about human-induced climate change, the perspectives on this topic as well as the resources to engage in behavioural change. Importantly, available knowledge, perspectives and resources are distributed unequally over different social groups, especially due to economic reasons. Furthermore, the perception of climate change as an abstract issue often does not relate to people's concrete practices. The interrelationship between the abstract and the concrete poses a challenge that often leads to the negligence of climate-conscious behaviour in the concrete everyday practice.

Because of its emission-intensity and continuous growth, the area of mobility and the question how to change unsustainable mobility practices is of particular interest in the context of climate protection. Several legal instruments for guiding individual behaviour concerning mobility already exist or are discussed. Thus, the question of their acceptance and understanding is highly relevant. Furthermore, climate-related regulations concerning mobility intervene specifically in everyday practices and are therefore suitable for focussing on the interface between everyday mobility actions and legal regulation.

The research project aims to analyse the topic of climate-related mobility legislation from a psychological and practice-theoretical perspective. In order to achieve a better and more accepted legal framework, subjective perceptions regarding concrete legal mobility provisions related to climate change that serve as behavioural guidelines will be observed and analysed. These perceptions of legal provisions will be related to concrete mobility practices, especially to understand how people comply with and practically promote these measures in the everyday. To take into account the unequal distribution of knowledge and resources concerning climate-conscious behaviour, the project focuses economically differentially situated groups.

### **Research questions**

- 1) What are key concerns of economically different situated groups in their everyday mobility practices?
- 2) How do they perceive climate related legal instruments against the background of these perspectives and orientations?

- 3) What role do economic inequality conditions play in this context?
- 4) What would be parameters to change their acceptance / behaviour?

## **Method**

Our research will be based on open group discussions with different groups of actors. Discussions will open with a broad exploration of the mobility related habits and concerns held by participants. In a second phase, we will use stimuli focusing on different mobility practices and related legal measures, which relate to prohibitions (1), contingency (2) and inflation (3) or the prioritisation of special groups of traffic participants (4) to explore the perception, acceptance and practice of the participants in relation to specific constraints.

We use a predefined sample of six group discussions from different social backgrounds. We will focus on the age group of 18-27 as part of this group is actively involved in activism around climate change and they will face the effects of climate change in their future. Previous research documents that climate related provisions in general and mobility law in particular affect different social groups differently. Thus we aim to include representatives of different social-economic milieus (lower and higher income), and different climate-related attitudes (pro and contra climate friendly measures). To include especially the perspective of people with legal knowledge, we will include two groups of jurists in the sample.

To analyse the group discussions we employ the Documentary Method, a state-of-the-art method for analysing group discussions because it provides two distinct steps to address communicative and practical knowledge.