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Designing and implementing innovative policy

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Policy capacity and organic conversion of kitchens in the Danish public sector: Designing and implementing innovative policy

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Summary

The Danish organic food policy is unique compared with other countries. It applies a wide range of policy instruments that affect both the supply and demand-side of the organic market. It is particularly in relation to the demand-side of the organic food market that the Danish policy has been innovative in terms of the policy instruments applied. In the Organic Action Plan 2020 (adopted in 2012), the government expanded the repertoire of demand-side policy instruments by launching a new initiative to convert kitchens in the public sector to serving organic food. The public kitchen conversion programme moved Danish organic food policy into new territory and displayed innovative capabilities. Previous demand-side policy measures had been directed at the private sector, particularly food retailers. The innovative aspects of the kitchen conversion programme was the scaling up of local kitchen conversion initiatives to the national level. While the original ambitions of the kitchen programme had been high, objects were watered down. Further, kitchen conversion was voluntary and could not be subsidised directly. Only soft instruments such as persuasion and information dissemination could be applied to affect the primary targets of the programme which were the municipalities, the regions and their kitchens. With vague objectives and only soft policy instruments available, the conditions for success looked dire. Despite these unfavourable conditions, the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) proved capable of designing and implementing an innovative kitchen conversion programme which had a significant impact in terms of increasing the use of organic food products in public sector kitchens and increasing kitchen certification under the organic cuisine label. This report argues that the governing arrangement within the organic food policy domain enabled the DVFA to draw on various policy capacities relevant for designing and implementing the kitchen conversion programme. The governance arrangement within the policy sector has developed over a number of years and is characterised by close collaboration between the DVFA and interest groups representing the organic food and farming sector. By pooling expertise and resources within the sector, it was possible for the DVFA to design an innovative and implementable programme for kitchen conversion within a relatively short period. It was the ability of the DVFA to map the capacities outside its organisation and combine these with its own capacities that enabled the design of a conversion programme which could be implemented and produce a significant impact. The combined policy capacities within the organic policy sectors were used to activate, motivate and enable a number of private actors within and outside the organic industry to engage in or to support the conversion of kitchens in the public sector. The ability to reach out to food wholesalers, which were a secondary policy target groups, to convince them to offer organic food products to kitchens was crucial. It brought about an important condition enabling the kitchens to convert. This highlights the importance of secondary target groups in pursuing policy objectives.

Introduction

Since the 1990s, the EU has supported conversion to organic farming and has maintained a set of organic standards with which farmers and other actors in the organic food value chain must comply to market their products as organic. EU member states have to varying degrees supplemented the EU organic support schemes with other schemes to grow the organic sector. Denmark is a frontrunner in developing and growing the organic farm and food sector, belonging to a group of four front-running countries including Austria, Switzerland and Sweden. In these countries, the organic share of food retail sales amounts to more than 8 percent in 2017 (Willer & Lernoud 2019, 72-73) with Denmark topping the list with 12 percent (Danmarks Statistik 2019a).[1]

The Danish organic food policy is unique compared with other countries. It applies a wide range of policy instruments that affect both the supply and demand-side of the organic market. Comparing the impact of national organic policies on organic food consumption, Daugbjerg and Sønderskov (2012) have shown that the Danish organic food policy with its relatively strong focus on demand-side policy measures had a significant positive effect on consumption. This conclusion is based on an analysis that controlled for the effects of many other factors that could potentially affect consumption.

It is particularly in relation to the demand-side of the organic food market that the Danish policy has been innovative in terms of the policy instruments applied. In the Organic Action Plan 2020 (adopted in 2012), the government expanded the repertoire of demand-side policy instruments by launching a new initiative to convert kitchens in the public sector to serving organic food. Kitchens in regional and local institutions would be eligible to government subsidised training of kitchen staff and advisory services for how to convert if they committed themselves to work towards using organic food products, preferably being certified under the organic cuisine label. The label had been introduced in 2009 and had had a low uptake amongst private restaurants and other food services. In the public sector kitchen conversion programme, the label could be used as an implementation tool to document that kitchens had increased the use of organic products. However, there was no requirement to obtain certification under the label, but if a kitchen obtained certification it was believed that the branding effect of the label would sustain certification in the future and it might even nurture an ambition to increase the share of organic products in the future (Niras 2014; *Økologi & Erhverv* 2013, issue 520, 2).

The public kitchen conversion programme moved Danish organic food policy into new territory and displayed innovative capabilities. Policy innovation is not a well-defined concept, but as Sørensen (2017, 6) suggests, it involves 'reformulations and elaborations of new political visions, goals, strategies and policy programmes that aim to guide the production of public value' which at the same time are implementable given the available administrative capacities (ibid., 9). Previous

[1] Willer and Lernoud (2019: 72) list Denmark with an organic share of 13.3 percent. This number was later corrected by Statistics Denmark to 12 percent after changing the method of calculation (Danmarks Statistik 2019a).

demand-side policy measures had been directed at the private sector. The innovative aspects of the kitchen conversion programme was the scaling up of local kitchen conversion initiatives mainly in the Municipality of Copenhagen to the national level.

Political pressure for swift action meant that the Danish Veterinary and Food Administration (DVFA) under the then Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (henceforth Ministry of Food), which had been assigned responsibility for the task, had to design a programme which could rapidly bring about the conditions for overcoming these challenges. While there was evidence from the Municipality of Copenhagen suggesting that kitchens in the public sector could be converted to using up to 75 percent organic food products without increasing catering budgets, the DVFA soon realised that for legal and political reasons only soft policy instruments such as persuasion and information dissemination could be applied in relation to the primary targets of the programme, which were the municipalities and regions and their kitchens. Therefore, the policy effort very much concentrated on affecting the behaviour of other actors who were essential for providing the conditions for kitchen conversion. These were secondary target groups, and were mainly the food wholesalers which supplied kitchens in the public sector, conversion consultants and educational institutions.

Further, the original programme objects had been watered down. With vague objectives and only soft policy instruments available, the conditions for success looked unfavourable. Nevertheless, the DVFA proved capable of designing and implementing an innovative kitchen conversion programme which had a significant impact in terms of increasing the use of organic food products in the public sector. Evaluating the programme, Sørensen et al. (2016, 3431) found that for 622 (of 666) kitchens enrolled in the conversion programme in autumn 2012 and spring 2013, procurement of organic food increased by 24 percent. Before enrolling in the conversion programme, only 352 of the 622 kitchens (57 percent) qualified for being certified under the organic cuisine label. The labelling scheme operates with three levels of certification: the bronze label can be obtained when 30-60 percent of the food products used are organic, the silver label when the organic share is between 60 and 90 percent, and the gold label when it is between 90 and 100 percent. After completion of conversion, the number of kitchens in the sample qualifying for certification at minimum bronze level had increased to 559 (90 percent). 342 of these (61 percent) applied for and obtained certification under the label (personal conversation with Veterinary and Food Administration 30 September 2019). Prior to the introduction of the conversion programme, only 138 kitchens had been certified under the cuisine label in 2011. The number had increased to 960 in 2014, and at the time of writing, 3157 kitchens are certified under the label; the vast majority (73 percent) in the public sector. Sales of organic food in the Danish food service sector more than doubled from 519 million DKK in 2010 to 1.3 billion in 2014 and almost doubled in 2018, reaching 2.35 billion (Fødevarestyrelsen undated; Danmarks Statistik (2019b). The positive impacts identified by Sørensen et al. (2016) reflected the conclusion of an earlier independent evaluation of the conversion programme based on 35 interviews with key figures within the organic sector. It

highlighted the positive impact of the kitchen conversion programme on the consumption of organic food (Operate 2014, 69).

Considering the unfavourable conditions for designing the conversion programme, the question is *why and how the Veterinary and Food Administration was able to mobilise the policy capacities to design and effectively implement the kitchen conversion programme?* This report argues that the governing arrangements within the organic food policy domain facilitated the DVFA's pooling of policy capacities available. The combined policy capacities were used to activate, motivate and enable a number of private actors within and outside the organic industry to engage in or support the conversion of kitchens in the public sector.

The existence of a collaborative governance arrangement in the organic policy sector developed over a number of years had generated considerable policy capacity which could be utilised to develop and implement the kitchen conversion programme. The DVFA had developed its own expertise and resources as well as gained access to important expertise and resources possessed by other actors. By pooling expertise and resources within the sector, it was possible to design an innovative and implementable demand-side policy for kitchen conversion within a relatively short period to respond to the political desire of the new Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries (henceforth Minister of Food) who wanted to grow the organic food and farming sector.

The case points to the importance of the governance mode within a policy domain and how this influences the generation of policy capacity which can be brought to bear when a new policy challenge emerges. With the exception of Howlett and Ramesh (2016), who identified the critical capacities within different governance modes, policy capacity studies tend not to situate capacity generation within a broader institutional context. A few studies consider how government agencies' relationship with the civil society groups can have a critical influence on the level of capacities available within a policy domain. These studies argue that governing arrangements in which government agencies and well-resourced interest groups closely collaborate can develop high levels of policy capacity (Daugbjerg et al. 2018; Peters 2005). It is argued here that the more institutionalised, integrated and collaborative the relationship between state actors and interest groups, the higher the policy capacity to design implementable innovative policies. The capacity generated in such a setting can be utilised to expand the repertoire of implementable instruments and to include additional implementation resources found outside the state.

To demonstrate the importance of the governing arrangement for policy capacity generation and its translation into effective and innovative policy making, this report analyses the generation and application of capacity in a governance setting within which interest groups are integral parts of the policy making process. Not only can this facilitate generation of capacity at policy system level, it also empowers the governmental organisation(s) by providing easy and regular access to capacities outside their organisation that they can draw on in pursuing their policy agenda.

Theory: policy capacity and effective policy innovation

Policy capacity has been defined as "the set of skills and resources — or competences and capabilities — necessary to perform policy functions" (Wu et al. 2015, 166; Wu et al. 2018, 3). While this is a very broad definition, its emphasis on performing policy functions indicates that capacity is important for designing as well as implementing public policies. However, the policy capacity literature has a tendency to focus on the ability to design policies (Wu et al. 2018, 2). This is particularly apparent in Painter and Pierre's influential definition. They define policy capacity as the ability of states "to marshal the necessary resources to make intelligent choices about and set strategic directions for the allocation of scarce resources to public ends" (Painter & Pierre 2005, 2). But as Wu et al. (2015, 167) suggest, the policy capacity concept "is not restricted to a particular function, stage or task in a policy process, but rather covers all policy processes, including agenda setting, formulation, decision-making, implementation and evaluation". It is a holistic concept which covers the whole policy process. From a policy capacity perspective, it makes less sense to distinguish sharply between the various phases of the policy process as they are interconnected. Making 'intelligent choices' enabling government to 'perform policy functions' entails that the conditions for successfully implementing the policy instruments to address a problem have been taken into account in the policy design phase and matched with the available implementation resources.

Though acknowledging the role of non-governmental actors, such as interest groups, in capacity generation, there has been a tendency in the policy capacity literature to underspecify their role. Policy capacity research tends to be state-centric in the sense that it theorises which specific skills and knowledge at individual, organisational and policy system level are required to develop capacity (e.g. Bali & Ramesh 2018; Howlett & Ramesh 2016, 304-306; Painter & Pierre 2005; Peters 2015). To bring attention to the role of NGOs and other organisations outside the state, recently Wu et al. (2015, 167) has suggested that:

> *the concept [of policy capacity] goes beyond the government in understanding capacity, recognizing that a wide range of organizations, such as political parties, NGOs, private businesses, and international organizations, as well as multiple government agencies, are involved in policy processes and thus their capacities affect the government's own capacity to perform.*

However, they do not specify in detail how NGO involvement in public policy process affect policy capacity. It is argued here that an important dimension of the concept is the state's ability to interact with interest groups to muster capacities in public policy making. What we know relatively little about, is how the involvement of interest groups in the policy design and implementation phases can contribute to the generation of capacity to pursue policies that the state could not otherwise have implemented. We can obtain an improved understanding of the way in which policy capacity is generated and applied by analysing capacity generation from a policy sector and interactive

perspective in which capacity is the outcome of the relations that the state is cultivating with non-government actors within a policy domain.

Recognising the important role of interest groups in public policy making, Peters (2005), Daugbjerg and Halpin (2010), Ćetković (2015) and Daugbjerg et al. (2018) include interest group (or associative) resources and expertise as an important dimension of policy capacity. Their argument rests on the public policy literature which has long recognised that interest groups control resources which are important for the ability of the state to formulate and implement its policies (e.g. Lehmbruch 1984; Maloney et al. 1994, 36; Rhodes & Marsh 1992; Richardson & Jordan 1985 [1979]; Schmitter 1974; Smith 1993; Williamson 1989).

Building on this insight, Peters (2005) argues that high levels of policy capacity is most likely to develop in policy sectors where both the state and civil society organisations possess considerable resources and skills. Whilst the state possesses a number of capacities, governing may be more likely to succeed where interest groups can deliver a number of capacities that are relevant for designing as well as implementing policy. Interest groups possess information and knowledge about the environment in which policy is to be implemented and legitimacy within the target group – capacities the state may find difficult to develop. Designing implementable policies that can deliver the expected outcomes requires that policy makers have access to information about the context within which the policy measures are to be implemented to ensure that they are sufficiently targeted. The consent of interest groups representing target groups can confer legitimacy on policy, which can help persuade the rank and file members of the target group to comply with and respond positively to policy. Sometimes interest groups also possess capacities which enable them to assist directly in delivering policy. Peters (2005, 82-83) suggests that in situations in which the state and civil society organisations possess considerable capacities, policy makers have a choice between different sets of implementable instruments.

However, it is not sufficient that both government and interest group capacities are present to achieve a high level of policy capacity; they need to develop a symbiotic relationship (Daugbjerg & Halpin 2010). This points to the importance of the way in which they interact. Pooling of capacities within a policy domain is most likely to take place when the interaction is characterised by collaborative governance which is a "governing arrangement where one or more public agencies directly engage non-state stakeholders in a collective decision-making process that is formal, consensus-oriented, and deliberative and that aims to make or implement public policy or manage public programs or assets" (Ansell & Gash 2008, 544; see also Ansell et al. 2017; Gerlak et al., 2013; Gunningham 2009; Scott 2015). In such a governing arrangement, the parties exchange resources on a regular basis. Though not using the term of policy capacity, a fairly similar argument can be found in Smith's (1993) work which argued that by working closely with interest groups the state could achieve infrastructural power in policy making. If the state and interest groups share strategic policy agendas and have developed a high level of mutual trust (Scharpf 1994), there are favourable

conditions for collaborative governance and thus for developing a high level of policy capacity (see also Coleman et al. 1996; Daugbjerg & Fawcett 2016).

When the state and interest groups share strategic agendas and mutual trust exists, they tend to be willing to pool their resources to generate policy capacity. Such close relationships between the members do not come out of the blue but are the outcomes of lengthy processes of interaction between the parties. Ongoing interaction and exchange of information and knowledge result in both government and interest group officials learning about the sector and the space for policy, i.e. what can potentially be achieved through policy measures and what must be left to the market or civil society. Capacity at this systemic level of policy also has a positive impact on capacity development within the core organisations of the sector. When information is shared on a regular basis, it can produce mutual learning effects in which organisations and individuals develop their expertise and knowledge about the resources available within the policy sector that can be mobilised in relation to new policy initiatives.

By utilising the knowledge and analytical capacities generated within the sector, policy makers tend to obtain a high level of understanding of the complexities involved in addressing a policy problem. It has been recognised for some time now that addressing complex policy problems often requires a complementary mix of policy instruments to address various aspects of the problem (Gunningham & Sinclair 1999). Policy instruments refers to “techniques by which governmental authorities wield their power in attempting to ensure support and effect or prevent social changes” (Vedung 1998, 21). Recent research argues that it cannot be assumed that target groups are homogenous and respond rationally and uniformly to incentives on the basis of their assumed preference for maximising their utility. There may be significant differences within a target group as to what motivates individual members to comply with policy, and their conditions for complying may vary significantly across individual members of the target group (Howlett 2018; Weaver 2014). While these recent insights are welcomed, the focus has been on designing instrument mixes addressing the heterogeneity within the group of policy takers whose change of behaviour would have an immediate impact on the conditions causing the problem (Gunningham & Sinclair 1999; Howlett 2009; Howlett & del Rio 2015; Howlett et al. 2015; Howlett 2018; Jordan et al. 2011; van Gossum 2010; Vedung 1998). These can be conceptualised as the primary target group. Another significant source of complexity is the existence of other groups whose behaviour needs to change to provide conditions for the primary target group to respond as expected. These can be conceptualised as secondary target groups. Indeed, secondary target groups may be vital to provide the conditions for the primary target group to respond positively to policy. In the policy instrument literature, it is often neglected that complex policy packages may not only use multiple instruments to address heterogeneity within the primary target group. They can also be used to influence the behaviour of secondary target groups to create conducive conditions for the primary target group to bring about the desired state of affairs.

There are two main reasons why considerable policy effort may have to be directed at secondary target groups. The nature of the policy problem may mean that a change of behaviour of the primary group to a considerable extent is conditioned on the change of behaviour of another group. For instance, persuading commuters to use public transportation requires that the providers of public transportation offer conditions for them to take the train or bus to work, such as running the services at the right times and that there are good connections between bus and train lines. The other reason can be restrictions on instrument choices. There may be political, legal or financial reasons why particular instruments, which would provide powerful motivations for the primary target group to change behaviour as desired, cannot be used. This may require that more emphasis is put on affecting the behaviour of secondary groups to provide enabling conditions for the primary target group that lower the threshold for changing behaviour. For example, if the frequencies of train services are increased and connections improved, a soft instrument, in this case persuasion and better information on train and bus services, may be sufficient to make a substantial number of commuters shift to public transportation.

The complexity of designing the policy tends to be high when achieving an objective necessitates a policy that is designed to affect both primary and secondary target groups and there are political, legal or economic restrictions on which policy instruments can be applied. Under such conditions, it requires a high level of policy capacity to design and implement an effective policy. Policy makers can increase policy capacity by working closely with interest groups who represent primary and secondary target groups and drawing on their knowledge and expertise. This can increase the skills and competences available at the analytical, operational and political dimensions of policy capacity (Wu et al. 2015, 167) and therefore enable the ability to address complexity. Firstly, working with interest groups can increase the analytical capacity to map incentive structures within the target groups. Secondly, interest group involvement in the design process can increase the operational capacity to develop a package of policy instruments that consists of multiple instruments directed at different aspect affecting motivations within the primary and secondary target groups. Further, drawing on interest group competences can expand the repertoire of measures which can potentially be applied. Interest groups also possess resources which are essential for policy implementation, for instance an organisational apparatus that is capable of reaching out to the rank-and-file members of target groups and expertise to assist these with complying with policy. Thirdly, when interest groups are involved in policy making, the political capacities can be increased. If interest groups give consent to the measures adopted, they confer legitimacy on policy amongst target group members and therefore these are more likely to comply with policy (Peters 2005, 80).

These theoretical considerations suggest that we would expect governance arrangements in which the members interact on a frequent and regular basis to generate high levels of policy capacity. This can be translated into multi-instrument policies directed towards primary and secondary target groups, increasing the chances of effectively addressing a policy challenge. The remainder of this report explores this theoretical proportion in relation to the Danish organic kitchen conversion programme. The focus is on establishing whether its design and its effective implementation can be

put down to the existence of a high level of policy capacity generated within the organic food policy sector.

After outlining the Danish organic food and farming policy to provide the historical policy context, a focussed outline of the kitchen conversion programme is provided. The first step of the analysis of the conditions enabling the generation of policy capacity is to establish whether a longstanding governance arrangement based on frequent and regular interaction existed. As the second step of the analysis, we examine how the DVFA utilised capacity within the organic policy sector to design an implementable and innovative kitchen conversion programme. The third stage analyses whether and how capacities were pooled in order to implement the policy.

Danish organic food policy and the kitchen conversion programme

Denmark is a forerunner in developing the organic food sector. Banning the use of mineral fertilisers and synthetic pesticides, organic farming is considered an environmentally friendly agricultural production mode. While this was one of the driving forces behind the Danish organic food policy, it developed differently compared with other countries.

Overview of the organic food policy

The Danish Government's engagement with the organic sector began with the Act on Organic Farming, adopted in 1987.[2] Unlike in other countries where the environmental aspect of organic farming has been a major foundation for policy, the Danish organic food policy also had a significant commercial dimension. Right from the early phases of the debate on how to shape the organic policy, it was emphasised that the demand for organic produce would be an important policy driver (Daugbjerg & Møller 2010). A mantra running through the policy formation over the years is that growth of the farming sector has to be 'market-driven' (*markedsdrevet*). On the basis of this principle, the organic policy model which took shape rested on both supply-side (push); policy instruments aimed at creating conditions for farmers to convert to organic farming and demand-side (pull); policy instruments designed to increase the demand for organic food. Such an organic policy model has been coined *active market development policy* (Daugbjerg & Sønderskov 2012; Halpin et al. 2011). The simultaneous use of demand-side and supply-side policy instruments has resulted in the Danish organic food policy developing very differently from those of other countries and contributed to a comparatively high level of organic consumption (Daugbjerg & Sønderskov 2012; see also Operate 2014, 69). Interviews with key organic policy makers who have been centrally positioned in the policy debates for up to three decades highlighted balanced use of both supply- and demand-side instruments as a significant factor explaining the growth of the Danish organic sector (Schvartzman & Daugbjerg 2016).

A number of supply-side policy instruments aimed at creating conditions for farmers to convert to organic farming have been applied over the years to increase the supply of organic food such as

[2] This paragraph is based on Halpin et al. (2011).

farm conversion subsidies, to varying extent subsidies aimed at maintaining organic production, government support for research and development and various subsidies for organic extension services and educational activities. A variety of demand-side policy instruments have been applied to increase the sales of organic food. These include support for export promotion activities, marketing and information campaigns and organic food product innovation. Not least, the introduction in 1989 of a government organic certification and labelling scheme proved vital for increasing organic sales as it has generated a high level of consumer confidence in organic food (Sønderskov & Daugbjerg 2011; YouGov 2017).

The 1990s, in particular the late 1990s, saw a significant increase in organic farm conversion and consumption[3]. To support the growth of the organic industry, the Social Democratic coalition governments of the 1990s increased spending on the organic food policy. Coming to power in 2001, the Liberal-Conservative government initially lowered organic subsidies but the two-pillared policy strategy was left intact. As a result of several years of considerable surplus production of organic milk and cereals, it was decided to abolish support schemes directed at selective commodity groups. It was believed that the market, rather than selective support schemes, was as a better mechanism to determine the level and type of organic production. Therefore in 2004, flat-rate conversion and permanent organic payments replaced the complicated and commodity differentiated subsidy system. Spending on demand-side policy measures was scaled down five-fold between 2002 and 2005 as a result of the change of government, but this did not halt efforts devoted to increasing demand for organic produce. After 2002, demand creation initiatives were still implemented but the source of funding was to an increasing extent the Land Tax Foundation (Promilleafgiftsfonden) and the Foundation for Organic Agriculture (Fonden for Økologisk Jordbrug).[4] Increased demand for organic food domestically and internationally in 2006 and 2007 persuaded the government to increase funding for marketing activities to levels just short of the highs of 2005.

In 2009, a government organic cuisine label was introduced as an attempt to facilitate growth of organic sales to the public and private food service sectors. Later that year, the government's Green Growth Agreement stated that the area farmed organically should increase from 6 percent of the utilised agricultural area in 2007 to 15 percent in 2020. It was emphasised that the increase should be market-based, meaning that farm conversion should be driven by increasing demand for organic food. Organic farm subsidies and extension services would be increased, but aligned with the previous policy trajectory, the growth in the organically farmed area would continue to be based on the two-pillared policy model by also emphasising market promotion, in particular export promotion (Miljøudvalget 2009, 5, 14).

[3] This paragraph is based on Halpin et al. (2011)

[4] The two Foundations were established to fund various activities in the agricultural sector (e.g. research, advisory services, education and sales promotion. Their revenue sources are land and pesticide taxes. The Minister of Food, Agriculture and Fisheries appoints their governing boards on which representatives of the agricultural sector form the majority. The Foundations are administered by the Agriculture and Food Council, which organises the farming and food industry. The administration of the foundations is supervised by Agricultural Agency under the Ministry of Food.

In the 2010s, there has been continued emphasis on facilitating growth in the demand for organic food and motivating more farmers to convert their production. The Organic Action Plan 2020 launched in 2012 by the then Social Democratic Minister of Food, Mette Gjerskov, had as its flagship policy measure a scheme that supported the conversion of kitchens in the public sector. It was estimated that if 60 percent of the meals served in the public sector were organic, this would require an additional 20,000-30,000 hectares of land farmed organically. The policy directions and priorities set out in the Action Plan were reaffirmed in the subsequent Organic Plan Denmark published in January 2015 (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2015). In 2018, the Growth Plan for Organics was adopted on the basis of recommendation from the Organic Business Team (Det økologiske erhvervsteam 2017). Similar to the preceding action plans, it maintained the mantra of market-driven development of the organic industry and the two-pillar policy model. Funding for organic farm conversion was granted as part of the Agricultural Plan which introduced a more site-specific approach to regulating nitrate leaching from farming. Organic farming was considered a measure to reduce nutrient run-offs. To support innovation, marketing, research and development, and education in the organic sector, the government provided 130 million DKK for the Foundation for Organic Agriculture for the period 2018-2021 (Miljø- og Fødevareministeriet 2018, 9).

The kitchen conversion programme and the cuisine label

New EU[5] rules for organic production were adopted in 2007 and come into force by 2009. Large scale kitchens were not covered by the EU-regulation and hence national regulation could be adopted. In 2008, the DVFA initiated a process aimed at developing national organic regulation for large scale kitchens, which included considerations about introducing an organic cuisine label which would be designed for food services such as restaurants, private canteens and kitchens in public institutions, for example in hospitals (Fødevarestyrelsen 2008b). In late May 2008, there was a proposal for a cuisine labelling scheme on the table which distinguished between three levels of conversion. A food service entity could obtain a bronze label if the percentage of purchased organic food (including beverages) was between 20 and 50 percent, a silver label if between 50 and 95 percent and a gold label if the share of organic food was above 95 percent (Fødevarestyrelsen 2008a). The idea of differentiating organic shares triggered a heated debate within the organic food sector. Some were opposed to the idea as they saw it as a watering down of organic ambitions. In the food processing industries, as a minimum 95 percent of the food products had to be organic to label a food item as organic. Eventually, those opposed to more lenient requirements in the food service sector were persuaded that the differentiated model was important for food services to get started converting and that the model would by itself foster ambitions for kitchens starting at bronze or silver label level to obtain a higher level of labelling (silver or gold) (Interview Organic Denmark, June 2019). The differentiated model eventually agreed upon was 30-60 percent for bronze, 60-90 for silver and 90-100 percent for gold.

[5] 834/2007 Council regulation of 28. June 2007 on organic production

Another controversy was how to calculate the organic share of the food served – should it be calculated on the basis of the monetary value of the food products or based on weight? After intervention by the Minister in 2010, it was decided to change the regulation in order to allow both options (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 16; 2012c, 12; interview Organic Denmark, June 2019). Another important barrier to overcome was the requirement for the certified kitchens to calculate the organic share of purchased food every three months on the basis of all the invoices received in that period. To lower the administrative burden for the kitchen staff, food wholesalers supplying the kitchens were urged by the DVFA and Organic Denmark, which represented organic farmers, consumers, food companies with an organic production line and food retailers, to calculate the organic share. Organic Denmark played an important role in this effort as it had experience in dealing with private companies (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2009, issue 445, 9). The initiative was a success and now all major food wholesalers supplying organically certified kitchens calculate the organic share and operate warning systems alerting kitchens, when the organic share comes close to the lower limit of the label (interviews Organic Denmark, June 2019 and DVFA, May 2019; see also Fødevarestyrelsen 2012b, 6; 2012c, 11).

The organic cuisine label was a first step into new territory in government promotion of organic food. Up until then, the demand-side measures had focussed on food retailers and consumers. The cuisine label was initially seen as a simple way of offering an organic certification scheme for kitchens as well as a motivational device to help kitchens in the private or public sector to convert. When the kitchen conversion programme was launched in 2012, it was also considered as a tool to document conversion (Fødevarestyrelsen 2011, 4; Interview DVFA, September 2019; *Økologi & Erhverv* 2013, issue 518, 9). Though initially it was considered to make certification under the cuisine label mandatory for kitchens receiving government support for conversion, the conversion programme adopted did not include such a requirement.

The national kitchen conversion programme was based on earlier experiences with kitchen conversion in the municipalities and the regions. Already in the late 1980s and early 1990s, some municipalities experimented with kitchen conversion, and in 1997 the government allocated 39 million DKK for the promotion of organic procurement. This resulted in a number of regional and municipal organic procurement projects (Kristensen et al. 2002, 15-21). The Municipality of Copenhagen had emerged as a pioneer in public kitchen conversion in the late 2000s. In 2007, it had established The Copenhagen House of Food (Københavns Madhus) to improve the meals served by the municipality's kitchens, and in 2009 it was given responsibility for converting the kitchens to using organic food products. To ease operating outside the municipality of Copenhagen, it was transformed to an independent foundation in 2013.[6] The experiences in Copenhagen became the foundation of the proposal put forward for a national kitchen conversion programme. The appointment of the former social democratic Minister of Food and EU Environment Commissioner,

[6] https://www.kbhmadhus.dk/omos/voreshistorie , accessed 19 December 2019.

Ritt Bjerregaard, to Lord Mayor of Copenhagen in 2006 had provided a conducive political environment at the top of the municipal organisation to experiment with public kitchen conversion.

These experiments did not go unnoticed within the organic sector, and they later became an important knowledge base supporting the government's national level conversion programme. Organic Denmark persuaded the political parties to support a national conversion programme in the run up to and during the 2011 election campaign. It obtained support amongst the parties to the left (Interviews Organic Denmark, June 2019 and DVFA, May 2019). With the appointment of the social democrat Mette Gjerskov as Minister of Food in 2011 in a government consisting of the Social Democratic Party, the Socialist People's Party and the Social Liberals, the way seemed paved for introducing a national public kitchen conversion programme.

The Minister set out her intention to grow the organic food and farming sector in November 2011. As one of the three core initiatives she wanted the public sector to play a more prominent role in growing the organic sector by using its purchasing power (the two other components were partnerships and innovation, and effective use of the organic support scheme). The Municipality of Copenhagen had shown that it was possible to convert kitchens in the public sector to use a relatively high share of organic food within existing catering budgets. These experiences inspired the Minister when she put forward her initiative. Her aim at this time was that all kitchens in the public sector should have achieved certification under the silver cuisine label, and thus be serving at least 60 percent organic food, by 2020. It was estimated that public kitchens served 500,000 meals a day (Fødevareministeren 2011).

Already at this early stage of the policy initiative, the Minister anticipated some of the challenges ahead. The municipalities and regions had to be persuaded to engage in the initiative, and measures to support the conversion process in individual kitchens had to be developed (Fødevareministeren 2011, 2). The municipalities and kitchen staff were the primary target groups as change in their behaviour was necessary to reach the objective of converting all kitchens in the public sector. Not all kitchen managers would be easily persuaded to engage in the major changes to their work procedures that conversion would involve. Further, the municipalities and the regions had to sign up their kitchens to the programme. It was not self-evident that they all would want to do that (see Pedersen & Jensen 2017, 52).

It was realised relatively early in the process that food wholesalers were a key secondary target group to activate. It was a crucial condition for kitchen conversion that food wholesalers offered organic food products as part of their product assortment, which most of them did not at that time (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012d; 2012e; Interviews DVFA, May 2019 and Organic Denmark, June 2019). In addition, it was important to ensure that those who had expertise in managing and supervising kitchen conversion processes would engage as conversion consultants. This relatively small group of specialists could also be considered a secondary target group as they were essential for providing the conditions for kitchens to convert by sharing their expertise.

The Minister tasked the DVFA with designing the conversion programme and in early January 2012, the first draft plan for how to organise the process of designing the programme was ready and an elaborated version was ready two weeks later (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012d; 2012e). In early June, the conversion programme had been fully designed and ready to be included in the Organic Action Plan 2020 which was released a week later. The conversion programme figured prominently in the Plan as it was listed first amongst the 19 specific policy initiatives that the Plan set out to implement (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012).

In comparison with the intentions put forward in 2011, the objectives had been watered down as the conversion programme took form. In contrast to the original intention, it was no longer the aim to convert all kitchens in the public sector to serve at least 60 percent organic food. As it was stated, a bit cryptically, in the Action Plan, when receiving government support for kitchen conversion, state institutions, regional and local governments "were committed to work towards, and prioritise using the tools [of the conversion programme] for converting their kitchens to using as a minimum 60 percent organic products." Participation in the conversion programme was voluntary (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012, 12, *author's translation*). Nor was there a requirement for the kitchens to obtain certification under the organic cuisine label and it was not required to enlist all kitchens within a municipality (or region) in a conversion project. Making the participation mandatory was strongly opposed by the Ministry of Finance as it feared that local and regional governments would use such a requirement to demand that the state compensated them for any extra expenditure associated with participation in conversion projects (Fødevarestyrelsen 2011; Interview DVFA, May 2019). This resulted in serious restrictions on which instruments could be applied to motivate the municipalities and regions to convert their kitchens. This meant that a hard instrument such as a regulation making it mandatory for kitchens to convert could not be used. The fact that participation in the conversion programme was voluntary meant that only softer instruments such as information dissemination, persuasion and positive economic instruments (subsidies) supporting the persuasion effort could be used.

The Minister had secured additional funding for the organic policy on top of the existing 45 million DKK already allocated annually for demand-side policy measures such as education and marketing of organic produce[7] (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012, 32). The government granted 28 million DKK annually for the activities supporting the conversion of kitchens in 2012 and 2013. An additional 29 million DKK were later granted for 2014. There were legal constraints on how the money could be used. They were allocated under the Organic Promotion Scheme which was co-funded by the European Union and the Danish government. Municipalities and other public authorities were not eligible to apply for subsidies under the scheme. Under the scheme, funding could be provided for information and educational activities, which meant that it could fund training of kitchen staff in preparing meals using organic produce as well as information activities related to the kitchen conversion scheme. As the Organic Promotion Scheme was mainly directed at farmers

[7] This amount also included the costs of providing advice to farmers on farm conversion.

and smaller food manufacturers, kitchen conversion projects in the municipalities or regions had to include such entities (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 4, 6-7; 2012c, 6; Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012, 12). Conversion of kitchens in state institutions was, in principle, covered by the programme, but it was considered inappropriate that state institutions would be eligible to apply for funding under the state's own scheme (Interview DVFA, September 2019). The design of the funding scheme meant that subsidies did not provide direct economic incentives for municipalities and public sector kitchens to sign up to conversion projects. This left the DVFA in a relatively weak position in providing incentives for kitchens to engage in conversion. Therefore, to a considerable extent it had to rely on changing the behaviour of secondary groups to provide conditions that would motivate the kitchens. The funding scheme allowed the distribution of subsidies to fund secondary targets such as conversion consultants for running conversion projects and vocational educational institutions offering courses for kitchen staff. Conversion projects would be run by consultants who would supervise individual kitchens and organise various educational activities for kitchen staff.

With policy makers left with only soft instruments to implement kitchen conversion in the public sector, it was important to utilise the capacities available within the organic food policy sector to design a programme that could create conditions favourable for kitchen conversion and to pool all available implementation resources. Since there were no strong legal or economic incentives for the primary policy targets, the municipalities and kitchens, to respond positively to the conversion programme, it could not be relied upon that they would have strong motivations to engage in conversion. Had they had strong incentives, their demand for training services and organic produce would have motivated providers of these services to deliver. Rather, the situation was the other way around; other groups had to provide the conditions that would ease conversion of kitchens. The kitchen conversion programme reflected this situation, and as a result it had a strong focus on persuasion and activation of secondary target groups who were crucial for providing conditions for kitchen conversion.

The conversion programme consisted of four interrelated focus areas. The *first focus area* was to designate so-called forerunner municipalities (or regions). The aim was that five would sign up in 2012 and 15 in 2013. The forerunner municipalities would be used as show cases. Under this focus area, various information activities would be directed at decision makers in local government, people with expertise in kitchen conversion and organic producers. The *second focus area* consisted of policy measures which would create the conditions for individual kitchens to convert. This involved generation and dissemination of knowledge on best conversion practices in kitchens and documentation of the policy impacts. On the basis of this, the second focus area would develop tools and methods for kitchen conversion. The *third focus area* of the policy aimed at ensuring supplies of organic food products for the kitchens. The core of this focus area was to influence food wholesalers to offer organic produce and related services to the kitchens. Food wholesalers had a crucial role as translators of demand from the kitchens to producers. The *fourth focus area* of the conversion programme focused on increasing the demand for organic food and increased

certification under the organic cuisine label. Conversion of kitchens in the public sector were seen as a new driver for growing the demand for organic food and increased farm conversion (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 13; 2012c, 12; Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012, 12).

Generating capacity in the organic food sector

In order to design and implement the conversion programme, the DVFA to a considerable extent had to rely on engaging other actors in the organic policy sector. The conditions for drawing on the capacities of such actors were favourable as a collaborative governing arrangement had developed over more than two decades.

The Danish government became involved in the organic farming sector in 1987 when the Act on Organic Farming was adopted. When preparing the Act, it was realised that to develop and implement policy measures to grow the organic sector, the government had to reach out to interest groups representing organic farmers and other groups with an interest in developing an organic food sector. Therefore, the Act set up the Organic Farming Council (later renamed the Organic Food Council, OFC) which, initially, was composed of representatives from the organic and biodynamic interest associations, the established farm unions, the Consumer Council, the Ministry of Agriculture and its agencies and the Ministry of Environment (Lov no. 363, 1987, article 2) Subsequently, representatives from the Agricultural Council, the Labour Movement, the Ministry of Family and Consumer Affairs, the food processing industry and the retail sector joined the Council (Lov no. 474, 1993, article 20). The Council advises the Minister of Agriculture and Food on proposals related to the promotion of organic farming, advises on certification and inspection activities and monitors research and development activities and the organic advisory service (Direktoratet for FødevareErhverv 2007; Lov no. 363, 1987, article 2). It was particularly in the 1990s that the Council developed into the major forum for organic farm policy making, most notably in the preparation of the two action plans for organic farming (Lynggaard 2001, 98) published in 1995 (Strukturdirektoratet 1995) and 1999 (Strukturdirektoratet 1999).

There were ideological cleavages between the farm groups represented in the Council. The National Association of Organic Farming pursued transformation of the whole Danish farm sector into an organic industry, wanting long term ecological concerns to be prioritised over economic concerns (Økologiens Hus 1999, 11; Økologisk Landsforening 2007). This objective was not acceptable to the mainstream farm unions since the vast majority of their members farmed conventionally. Though the Farmers' Union favoured an increase in the size of the organic sector as a result of increased consumer demand in the early 1990s (De danske Landboforeninger 1991, 120; Økologiens Hus 1999, 12), it opposed a purely state driven form of development based upon permanent subsidies for organic production. It considered this unfair competition in relation to traditional farming. Conversion subsidies were fully acceptable to the Union though (Vølver 1995). Despite ideological controversies, the members of the Organic Food Council have succeeded in agreeing on a shared principle to guide policy making. As the Council stated: "the underlying logic

is that the organic farming sector can best be developed in accordance with the market which is created by the demand for organic produce. Thus conversion is based on voluntary action and positive motivation." (Strukturdirektoratet 1999, 16; see also Strukturdirektoratet 1995, 8 for a similar statement). However, in practice this market orientation principle was somewhat relaxed as the Council accepted organic subsidies for maintaining organic production as long as these were considered a temporary measure that could be reconsidered at a future date (Strukturdirektoratet 1995, 22; Strukturdirektoratet 1999, 40).

There are several indications that the Council has been capable of engaging in open-ended dialogue. Interviews conducted with Council members in 1999, Lynggaard (2001, 98) report that there was broad agreement that discussions in the Council were characterised by pragmatism and openness 'in the sense that members of the OFC agree[d] that discussions were governed by the "best available argument" and not so much by predetermined interests and organizational powers'.[8] An important reason why the working relations of the Council developed this way might have been that the conventional farm unions initially gave relatively low priority to the Council (ibid., 97) and appointed representatives who themselves were organic farmers or very positive towards organic farming (Østergaard 2003, 25)[9]. This meant that the Council became pro-organic (Lynggaard 2001, 97). This positive attitude towards organic farming within the Council may have fed back into the conventional farm unions and made organic farming more acceptable within the broader farming community (Michelsen 2004, 231).

While the Council developed as a successful forum for discussing issues that related to the supply-side of the organic food policy, it did not develop into an important forum for discussing the demand-side measures which constitute the second pillar of Danish organic food policy. To promote organic food to consumers, food retailers played an important role, and therefore they were invited to join the Council in 2000. But only one of the retailers, the Coop, engaged in the debates within the Council. As a response to criticism by a leading public servant for not doing enough to promote organic food, the Organic Service Centre (Økologisk Landscenter), which had been founded by the Organic Farmer's Association in 1992 to promote marketing and sales of organic produce, established the Strategy Group. Its role was to create a forum for discussing organic marketing issues and putting forward recommendations for marketing activities. The establishment of the Strategy Group was warmly welcomed by the Food Industry Agency (Direktoratet for FødevareErhverv) which also helped ensuring funding for its work. The Group quickly developed into a forum in which the various market actors would coordinate their organic marketing and sales initiatives. In this endeavour, the Group was assisted by the marketing department of the Organic Farmer's Association. The Strategy Group was dismantled in 2003 after the Organic Farmer's Association had merged with the Organic Service Centre and became Organic Denmark. But the marketing

[8] Confirmed in personal conversation with Preben Mikkelsen who represented the Dairy Board in the late 1990s.

[9] Troels V. Østergaard served in the Council as the representative of the Consumer Council from 1987-97.

coordinating activities continued under the auspices of Organic Denmark (Schvartzman 2012, 141-147).

The early developments within and around the Organic Food Council cemented a close relationship between the organic policy actors and resulted in collaborative governing arrangements within both pillars of the Danish organic farming policy. In interviews with key figures within the organic food sector conducted in 2016, it was highlighted that policy making was still characterised by a high level of collaboration between the organic industry and the government, and that this was a key factor in growing the organic market (Schvartzman & Daugbjerg 2016). Recently, a similar conclusion was reached by the organic business team which was an ad hoc committee consisting of organic industry people set up by the government in 2015. The team concluded that an important factor explaining the growth of the organic market is "the close collaboration between the organic industry and public authorities." (Det økologiske erhvervsteam 2017, 9, *author's translation*).

Pooling resources in designing and implementing the conversion programme

With the strong collaborative tradition in organic food policy making, the conditions for pooling resources in relation to the designing and implementing of the kitchen conversion programme were favourable. Government policy had long been facilitating and promoting the growth of the organic sector. The previous Liberal-Conservative coalition government's goal of doubling the area farmed organically was the major driving force behind the kitchen conversion programme (Fødevareministeren 2011; Fødevarestyrelsen 2012e). With the incoming Social Democratic led government in 2011, the scene was set for a more active role for the government in stimulating growth of the organic sector (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012, 3). In the DVFA, which had been strongly engaged in developing and implementing the demand-side measures of the organic food policy over the years, there was strong support for growing the organic food sector. The DVFA was keen to use the conversion programme as a means to promote the organic cuisine label as stated in the fourth focus area of the conversion programme.

There was a branding aspect to the DVFA's engagement in the conversion programme. As it stated, "A positive effect is expected as the Ministry of Food to a greater extent will step into character and promote its own brand" and that the communication related to the conversion programme should "contribute to make visible and strengthen the Ministry of Food's ownership of the organic labels and the messages associated with them" (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012c, 13-14, *author's translation*). These political and organisational agendas indicated a strong strategic policy agenda on promoting organic food and farm sector which the DVFA shared with the leading interest groups in the organic sector. Working with groups representing interests in the organic sector, most notably Organic Denmark, was seen by the DVFA as an important pre-condition for successfully implementing the conversion programme (Interview DVFA, September 2019).

Designing the conversion programme

Relying only on soft instruments to motivate kitchens to convert, the programme had to be designed in a way which would provide the conditions for these instruments to have maximum impact. This necessitated a complex design in which secondary target groups had to be identified, and it had to be analysed and decided how they could be influenced to provide the conditions which would enable kitchens in the public sector to use more organic food products. Since the conversion programme was new territory for the DVFA, there was a need for overviews of what was already known about kitchen conversion processes and what new knowledge had to be generated. It was also necessary to identify who could provide the knowledge and who could assist in designing a programme which to a large extent would be relying on persuasion as the main measure to activate both primary and secondary target groups.

The collaborative style characterising organic food policy making was reflected in the Minister's statement that Organic Denmark and organisations with specific expertise on kitchen conversion would be involved in designing the programme (Ministeriet for Fødevarer, Landbrug og Fiskeri 2012, 12). As longstanding core actors in organic policy making, Organic Denmark and the Agriculture and Food Council were considered partners when designing the conversion programme. The latter is the main association for farmers and food industries but it also organises and represents organic farm interests. Actors with specific expertise who had not been involved in organic food policy making on a regular basis were also invited to take part in relevant parts of the process. While the range of partners listed in the project plan was expanded from the initial to the final version, the core partner remained Organic Denmark. It was involved in eight of nine tasks specified in the project plan. The Copenhagen House of Food was involved with specific expertise in three of the tasks and with involvement in seven tasks, the Food Culture (which is an institution affiliated to the Ministry of Food, but with an independent status) also figured prominently as a partner (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012d; 2012e). However, as things developed the latter came to play a more marginal role (Interviews DVFA, May and September 2019). The DVFA had the leading role in the design process, but the Agricultural Agency (then NaturErhvervstyrelsen, now Landbrugsstyrelsen) also had a significant role as it administered the funding scheme and therefore had control over the interpretation of the rules and how to dispense the money.

The other partners included research institutions (The Technical University of Denmark and University of Copenhagen) which were involved in establishing the state of the art in terms of knowledge on kitchen conversion (including change of menus and food waste) and in generating new evidence in collaboration with the other partners. In relation to developing the communication strategy (which was one of the nine main tasks), the Dietary & Nutrition Association, which organises dietary, nutrition and public health professionals was part of the task team. To engage the food wholesalers, the project plan also set out to work with representatives from this industry. While not assigned specifically to one of the nine tasks, the list of partners also included the National Association of Local Governments, the Association of Hotels and Restaurants, the public sector

union organising kitchen staff, so-called pioneering municipalities (including the Municipality of Copenhagen), individual kitchen consultants with experience in conversion projects as well as people with public procurement expertise. The list of partners had evolved quickly in early January 2012, indicating an important capacity within the DVFA to identify relevant capacities not, or only partially, available in-house and not least to gain access to these (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012d; 2012e).

In October 2011, the Copenhagen House of Food and Organic Denmark put forward a joint proposal for organic conversion of kitchens in the public sector which influenced the design of the government conversion programme. The joint proposal was based on the two organisations' expertise in supervising kitchen conversion. It envisaged that a government subsidised conversion programme would be running over a ten year period and would cost 440 million DKK. This amount was way above what was politically acceptable and in the end 'only' less than a quarter of what they asked for was granted. The proposal suggested a subsidy scheme for covering up to 70 percent of the municipalities' cost of converting kitchens. These costs included training of kitchen staff and consultancy services. It highlighted the need for collecting experiences from local kitchen conversion projects and developing various tools for conversion. It also identified a need for communication of knowledge through information dissemination and courses for kitchen staff and managers and assistance to municipalities to support their considerations on kitchen conversion. The proposal listed a number of requirements that the municipalities and regions had to meet to receive conversion support, including that individual kitchens should be certified under the organic cuisine label to document that they used at least 60 percent organic food products after the conversion period (Københavns Madhus & Økologisk Landsforening 2011).

The DVFA was positive in relation to the idea and main components of the proposed conversion programme though questioning some of the economic estimations, estimates on the conversion potential and the environmental impact as well as the proposed institutional set-up to assess the subsidy applications. The DVFA recognised the two organisations' expertise in kitchen conversion and considered the proposal a realistic policy model to meet the Minister's original aim that 60 percent of the food served in public institutions should be organic by 2020 and agreed that certification under the organic cuisine label should be mandatory to document that this aim had been achieved. It also agreed that there was a need for collecting local experiences with kitchen conversion, producing and disseminating information material, and that it would be useful to offer start-up assistance to municipalities to enable them to make informed decisions on whether to apply for conversion support (Fødevarestyrelsen 2011).

The project plan for designing a kitchen conversion programme was prepared by the DVFA in early January 2012. It set up a steering group consisting of staff from the DVFA, the Danish Agricultural Agency, the Ministry of Food (the department), the Food Culture and the National Food Institute at the Technical University of Denmark. The majority of the steering group members came from the DVFA. The project plan restated the Minister's original objective that all kitchens in the public sector should achieve a conversion rate of at least 60 percent and certification under the silver organic

cuisine label by 2020. The plan provided an overview of the need for evidence and how to organise the analytical work. This part of the plan was inspired by the joint proposal prepared by the Copenhagen House of Food and Organic Denmark a few months earlier. The first step of the analytical work set out in the project plan was to clarify the opportunities and conditions for subsidising conversion processes. Secondly, it was necessary to obtain an overview of the state of the art in terms of knowledge about kitchen conversion, catering practices and policies in the municipalities, including local policies for organic conversion, supply of and expected demand for organic food products and public procurement practices and opportunities. Thirdly, on the basis of this analysis, it was considered important to provide knowledge on and documentation of all aspects of kitchen conversion through evidence collection in three to five so-called model municipalities and state institutions. Fourthly, if needed, an information kit for the municipalities would be produced (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012e). It was suggested that a working group composed of the Copenhagen House of Food, Organic Denmark, the Agriculture and Food Council and other relevant actors was set up by the DVFA to develop methods and procedures to convert kitchens (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012c, 9).

The subsequent steps of the project plan were aimed at activating primary and secondary target groups. Firstly, the need for training of kitchen staff had to be mapped and a national training programme would be established. In this process, the DVFA had meetings with the Dietary & Nutrition Association as it had an important say on course offerings in adult vocational education programmes across the country. The Association was supportive and even surveyed their members. The survey showed that there was a considerable interest in organics amongst their members (Interview DVFA, September 2019, *Økologi & Erhverv* 2012, issue 508, 11).

The second step was to prepare the launch of the conversion programme. This included a 'roadshow' directed at political decision makers in the municipalities, network meetings and inspiration events aimed at kitchen staff. The latter was an important primary target of the programme as kitchens could not be converted unless the kitchen staff was motivated to use organic produce and was educated on how to change menus and work practices in order not to exceed existing catering budgets when shifting to organic products. It was necessary to target municipalities as another primary target group since they would decide whether or not and with which kitchens they would participate in the conversion programme. Thirdly, a media and communication strategy and action plan to promote the organic cuisine label would be prepared. The DVFA argued that the cuisine label should be an integral part of the conversion programme as a tool to document whether or not a kitchen had achieved using at least 60 percent organic products (Fødevarestyrelsen 2011). The Agricultural Agency, as the funding body, was less concerned about labelling, being focussed on ensuring that EU funding rules were complied with and that documentation for the spending was provided. It considered a requirement to be certified under the organic cuisine label an extra bureaucratic obstacle for the payment scheme (interviews DVFA, May and September 2019). Fourthly, the plan set out to activate secondary target groups to provide the conditions for the kitchens to convert. These included organic producers, food wholesalers, the State and Municipal

Procurement Service (SKI) and industry associations. It was important that these assisted in increasing supply and accessibility of organic produce for kitchens in the public sector. The food wholesalers held an important role in providing administrative services for the kitchens to document the organic share of the food products procured (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012e). Food wholesalers were therefore identified as the key secondary target group as they provided an important condition for the kitchens to access a variety of organic products (Interview Organic Denmark, June 2019; Fødevarestyrelsen 2012b).

There were some concerns within the DVFA whether it was possible to spend the money granted for the conversion programme wisely. Though the amount granted was well below what the joint proposal from the Copenhagen House of Food and Organic Denmark had asked for, the DVFA considered the 56 million DKK the government had granted a considerable amount (interviews DVFA, May and September 2019). Since the conversion programme was not ready to be rolled out until June 2012, there would only be 18 months to spend the money. Though it was the Agricultural Agency which was responsible for the payment scheme, the DVFA had a strong interest in it as its main concern was that the money would contribute to as much conversion as possible. Therefore, there were many considerations and consultations with the partners on how to design the payment scheme to ensure that there would be strong incentives to deliver a high level of conversion. The payment scheme was designed so that conversion projects granted funding would not receive payment until they had been successfully concluded, which was considered by the DVFA as an extra motivational factor to deliver (Interviews DVFA, May and September 2019; Operate 2014, 108).

Pooling implementation resources

The strong reliance on information dissemination and persuasion as the means to activate and engage both primary and secondary target groups to change their behaviour in ways which would work either directly towards the aim of conversion or provide the conditions enabling conversion efforts required significant assistance from the DVFA's partners in the implementation stage. The messenger organisations engaging with the target groups had to have the expertise to convey the messages and had to be seen as legitimate amongst the individual target group members. This required that the DVFA mobilised its longstanding partners within the organic policy sector as well as organisations with specific expertise. Organic Denmark had a pivotal role in the implementation stage and therefore the DVFD coordinated a number of activities with it (personal communication DVFA 21 November 2019).

In contrast to earlier policy initiatives aimed at increasing demand for organic food, the conversion programme was entirely aimed at the public sector. Previous domestic demand-side initiatives had been directed at increasing consumer awareness and taste for organic produce and at food retailers to assist them with marketing organic produce (Schvartzman 2012, 141-147). The public sector focus gave the DVFA a stronger role in the implementation of the first focus area of the conversion programme – organic forerunner municipalities. An indication of this is the Minister's letter to the mayors of 16 potential forerunner municipalities already in March 2012 to inform them about the

new programme and to invite them to collaborate on kitchen conversion. The DVFA and the Food Culture organised two meetings for municipal decision makers, people with expertise in kitchen conversion and kitchen managers in east and west Denmark respectively. The purpose was to inform about the implementation activities, to promote the organic cuisine label and the opportunities associated with using it, to inform about the opportunities for obtaining subsidies for conversion projects, to motivate kitchen managers and to establish networks to share experiences (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 5; 2012c, 7; *Økologi & Erhverv* 2012, issue 503, 8-9). People with expertise in kitchen conversion were important secondary targets since they had to be engaged as conversion consultants to provide practical advice and organise and lead conversion projects which could obtain government funding for the training of kitchen staff (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 5-7). The DVFA also engaged its central and regional nutrition teams to promote the conversion programme in relation to individual municipalities (Fødevarestyrelsen 2011; 2012e; Interview DVFA, May 2019).

As mentioned, food wholesalers were singled out as a key secondary target group. The importance of this sector was shown by the fact that the DVFA for the first time reached out directly to private firms in an attempt to persuade them to fully engage in the implementation of the conversion programme. The DVFA and Organic Denmark jointly met with food wholesaler executives. As an official in the DVFA said, 'this was the difficult part'. It was essential that the wholesalers offered an organic product assortment and that they agreed to assist kitchens in calculating the organic share to document that they increased the share of organic food procurement or met the requirements of the organic cuisine label if certified under the label. Not only were they expected to offer organic produce, the DVFA also hoped that they would actively promote organic produce to the kitchens and provide administrative services in relation to the organic cuisine label (Interview DVFA, September 2019). Though it did not become the official objective of the programme, the initial statement by the Minister in 2011 that 60 percent of the food served in the public sector should be organic and that the programme was backed by 56 million DKK to be spent in 2012 and 2013 was an important motivational factor for the food wholesalers to engage in implementing the programme (interviews DVFA, May and September 2019). It conveyed a message that the government was serious about converting public sector kitchens and that there would be a new potentially large market for organic produce. Despite the relaxation of the objective, a high ambition had prevailed and there was a desire to reach 6000 organic cuisine labels by 2020 (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012c, 13). This objective included certification in the private sector as well. While smaller suppliers of organic produce found it difficult to obtain contracts with the municipalities, the three major food wholesalers all integrated organics in their product range and were seeing it as an important aspect when competing for contracts (Pedersen & Jensen 2017, 60). Already by early 2013, a spokesman for Organic Denmark stated that it was possible for kitchens to source all the food products that they demanded (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2013, issue 518, 9; Operate 2014, 109).

The DVFA performed the leading role in coordinating the second focus area of the conversion programme – support measures for conversion of kitchens in the public sector. The core of this focus area was to generate and disseminate knowledge on best conversion practices and to document their impact. The last mentioned activities would be undertaken by the Food Culture and the Technical University of Denmark.[10] On the basis of these activities, the second focus area would develop tools and methods for kitchen conversion. For this task, the DVFA relied on its longstanding partners in, Organic Denmark and the Agriculture and Food Council as well as the Copenhagen House of Food (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 9; 2012c, 9). The last mentioned organisation had relevant practical and specialist knowledge obtained when supervising the conversion of public sector kitchens in Copenhagen to an average organic share of 75 percent in 2012.[11] Its transformation to an independent foundation in 2013 meant that it would ease taking on conversion projects outside Copenhagen, for instance for the Municipality of Aarhus in 2013. A qualitative evaluation conducted in 2014 reported that municipal decision makers and kitchen managers found that there were lots of information available to guide decisions on conversion. The DVFA, Organic Denmark and the Copenhagen House of Food were the main providers of such information (Niras 2014, 6). Food fairs were an important venue for information dissemination to kitchens and food wholesalers and for connecting the two parties (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2012, issue 503, 8; 2012, issue 511, 7; 2013, issue 518, 8-9). The DVFA took part in various food fairs to promote, inform and advise on certification under the organic cuisine label. At the fairs, the DVFA also hosted ceremonies where kitchens were awarded certification under the label and recognised for their achievements. It was considered unusual for a public authority to promote its policy in this way. A public servant in the DVFA believed that the high level of visibility was important in conveying the message that there was considerable political and administrative determination to make the conversion programme successful (personal communication DVFA 21 November 2019).

Training and motivating kitchen staff to use organic produce without exceeding existing catering budgets were important components in supporting kitchen conversion. In addition to providing kitchen skills, an important dimension was to change the mindset of the kitchen staff (Interview DVFA, September 2019). In 2012, there was not much teaching material available. Therefore, Organic Denmark engaged with three educational institutions to provide such materials (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2012, issue 494, 3). Evaluating the conversion programme, Sørensen et al. (2016, 3242) found that the conversion projects had included a range of course components, including introduction to organics, lessons learned from past conversion projects, practical cooking, menu planning, nutrition and budgeting, food waste management and reuse of leftovers, introduction to the organic cuisine label, networking with suppliers and visits on organic farms and processing facilities (see also Niras 2014, 49-50).

[10] For list of and access to report, see https://www.oekologisk-spisemaerke.dk/om-spisemaerket/rapporter/
[11] https://www.kbhmadhus.dk/omos/voreshistorie , accessed 23 September 2019.

The conversion projects were run by conversion consultants. As the funding model required that the conversion contractor shouldered the expenditure until the project was successfully delivered, conversion consultants partnered with organisations which had the financial capacity to meet this requirement. This meant the Organic Denmark and the Agriculture and Food Council became the main contractors often in collaboration with the Copenhagen House of Food but also with other conversion consultants (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2012, issue 506, 8-9; 2013, issue 529, 8; interview DVFA, September 2019).

The third focus area of the programme – ensuring supplies of organic food – also relied on expertise from the partners. Engaging food wholesalers and ensuring continued farm conversion to meet the expected increase in demand for organic food products were seen as essential in this focus area. Therefore, the DVFA engaged with its long standing partners in promoting organic farming – Organic Denmark and the Agriculture and Food Council. Organic Denmark and the Agriculture and Food Council provided extension services to organic farmers and had means to reach out to the farm sector to motivate more farmers to farm organically and supply organic produce to meet the new demand from the food wholesalers in order to supply the kitchens in the public sector (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 12).

In addition to the DVFA's efforts to inform and persuade food wholesalers to offer organic produce to their customers, including kitchens in the public sector, Organic Denmark launched a new tailor made initiative. It set up the School of Organics which organised short courses for wholesalers aimed at their sales agents and managers to motivate them to develop organic sales strategies offering organic products and services to their customers[12]. The conversion programme resulted in an increase in Organic Denmark's food service expertise through a staff increase to three advisors.[13] To engage the food wholesalers, Organic Denmark built on its expertise previously obtained from demand-side activities directed at food retailers over a number of years (interview Organic Denmark, June 2019). Organic Denmark had been instrumental in engaging food retailers in promoting organic food. The engagement with food retailers involved market coordination with the organic food manufacturers and suppliers to ensure that the products the food retailers wanted to market could actually be supplied (Schvartzman 2012, 163-174). Organic Denmark used its market coordination expertise in a similar fashion in relation to ensuring that the food products which catering firms wanted to market could be supplied. They also helped food wholesalers introducing tools to calculate organic shares for their customers (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2013, issue 520, 2). An indication of the food wholesalers' engagement in promoting organic food is that the major firms of the sector are now industry members of Organic Denmark.[14] It was not only the DVFA who addressed municipalities and regions to persuade them to convert their kitchens. Organic Denmark also held meetings with them and used these events to match municipalities with conversion

[12] The Organic School continued to exist long after the conversion programme initiative (Økologi & Erhverv 2017, issue 619, 20)

[13] https://okologi.dk/virksomhed/foodservice/kontakt, accessed 23 September 2019.

[14] See https://okologi.dk/virksomhed/medlemsvirksomheder

consultants who would be organising conversion projects including applying for funding (interview Organic Denmark, June 2019).

The fourth focus area of the conversion programme focused on increasing the demand for organic food and increasing certification under the organic cuisine label. Kitchens in the public sector were seen as a new driver for growing the demand for organic food and increased farm conversion. The general organic label had contributed to increasing people's knowledge of organics. It was believed that increased knowledge of the organic cuisine label would contribute to further growth in the demand for organic food and that it would also make it more attractive for kitchens in the public sector as well as in the private food service sector to be certified under the label (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 13-14). In turn, this was expected to impact positively on household consumption of organic food products (*Økologi & Erhverv* 2012, issue 503, 8). In promoting the label, the DVFA relied on its traditional partners, Organic Denmark and the Agriculture and Food Council, but also the National Association of Hotels and Restaurants. The DVFA had already been involved in joint promotion of the organic cuisine label with Organic Denmark, following the introduction of the label in 2009. These activities were funded by the Innovation Foundation (Fødevarestyrelsen 2012a, 15-19). The DVFA also gave sessions on the label in courses for kitchen staff (personal communication DVFA 21 November 2019). The close collaboration between the DVFA and Organic Denmark is indicated by the establishment of the organic cuisine label website which is operated jointly by the two organisations[15]. It contains information for kitchen managers in the public and private sectors who consider applying for certification under the label and lists the kitchens which have most recently obtained certification. The latter underlines that the cuisine label was also seen as a branding tool. The expertise obtained from these previous promotion activities enabled the DVFA to prepare a new detailed campaign strategy for the cuisine label and to identify who could contribute to the implementation of the campaign.

Conclusion

The kitchen conversion programme was a new initiative for which there had been no national policy and thus moved the organic food policy into new territory. The analysis above has demonstrated that the DVFA could rely on considerable policy capacity within the organic sector when designing and implementing the kitchen conversion programme. This capacity was the outcome of the collaborative governing arrangement within the policy sector which has existed since the late 1980s. The Ministry and its agencies has been collaborating closely with interest groups representing various interests within the organic sector for more than two decades. In contrast to organic policies in other European countries, the Danish policy model is distinct as it rests on two pillars. It balances measures directed at the supply-side of the organic market by providing conditions for farmers to convert to organic production with demand-side measures aimed at increasing demand for organic produce. Within the organic policy sector, capacities in running organic marketing campaigns and

[15] See https://www.oekologisk-spisemaerke.dk/

undertaking market coordination to support such campaigns has developed within the organic association Organic Denmark in particular.

With vague aims and only relatively weak policy instruments available to persuade the primary targets of the programme, the prospects of converting the kitchens in the public sector were far from optimal. As demonstrated in this report, it was the ability of the DVFA to map the capacities outside its organisation and combine these with its own capacities that enabled the design of a conversion programme which could be implemented and produce a significant impact. It was in particular the ability to reach out to food wholesalers to convince them to offer organic food products to the kitchens which provided an important condition for the kitchens to convert. This highlights the importance of secondary target groups in pursuing policy objectives.

Rather than analysing policy capacity from a state-centred perspective, this report has applied a policy sector perspective in which capacity is understood as the ability to pool and coordinate the relevant resources available within a sector. It has shown that a sectoral policy capacity perspective is a useful analytical approach to explain how the kitchen conversion programme was designed and implemented with a significant impact despite weak instruments and vague aims. Applying a sectoral perspective highlights that generating high levels of capacity is closely associated with the existence of collaborative governing arrangements integrating the capacities available within a sector. Generating capacities within the state may not be sufficient to develop a high level of capacity as resources outside the state may be key to perform policy functions. Therefore, sectoral policy capacity is the outcome of state's ability to engage all relevant capacities within a sector in a coordinated manner to achieve maximum impact.

Another important contribution of this report is that it demonstrates how policy capacity can be translated into innovative policy design and effective implementation. Unless, it is shown that capacity can be translated into intelligent and implementable policy choices, the concept would have limited value beyond academic debates. Hence, future research should have greater focus on how policy capacity translates into instruments choices and implementation processes. In relation to instrument choices, the question is to what extent and how capacity affects the ability to deploy a package of complementary instruments to address a policy challenge. While the scholarly focus has been on instruments directed at the primary target groups, this report has highlighted that in more complex policy designs, affecting secondary target groups can be important. This can provide the conditions for the primary groups to respond optimally to policy. For effective implementation to take place, it is important to pool the available resources in a coordinated manner. This report has demonstrated that it is not only groups representing the primary targets of policy which can possess such resources. It can be equally important to activate groups representing secondary groups or being in a position to influence such groups.

Future research should pay more attention to improve our understanding of how a high level of capacity can be used to activate actors possessing resources which are essential for delivering policy to individual target group members. This includes the role of secondary target groups and how they

are targeted by the instruments and how they shape implementation conditions. This report has taken a step towards addressing these issues by analysing how sectoral policy capacity generated within the Danish organic policy sector was utilised successfully to activate policy actors possessing resources relevant for designing and implementing policy. By applying generic policy concepts, the report demonstrates, more generally, how the concept of policy capacity can be used as an explanatory factor to understand policy choices and implementation processes.

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