

HOPE for reducing consumption-related GHG emissions?

Having a likely chance at keeping below 1.5°C warming could imply that high-income countries (HICs) might need to address consumption-related emissions, possibly also indirect emissions originating from outside of the territory of the country in question. While many HICs have experienced a reduction in production-related GHG emissions, consumption-related emissions have increased¹. The HOPE-project investigates household preferences for reducing GHG emissions in four high-income countries (Norway, Sweden, Germany and France) and four medium sized cities (Bergen, Umeå, Mannheim and Communauté du Pays d'Aix), given that households would have to cut their direct and indirect GHG emissions by 50 per cent within 2030. This poster presents the preliminary findings from our ongoing research.

Imposing GHG reduction targets

The novelty of the HOPE project lies in the imposed GHG reduction targets we operate with during a simulation game we play with households. While a number of sustainable consumption projects have been conducted², most of these have not used the kind of compulsive framing we apply. Current research tends to neglect lifestyle as a factor of change, or lacks ambition in setting reduction targets³. Research relying on opinion surveys faces the objection that for issues of public interest, like climate change, individuals tend to overestimate their capacity to act, and there is often a gap between discourse and action⁴. In this project we try to overcome this problem by confronting households with a 'forced' future climate policy regime that demands much stricter GHG cuts via changes in private consumption. We hypothesise that people prioritise differently with respect to acceptance of consumption changes in a context of 'forced' compared to 'voluntary' policy regime⁵. If this turns out to be true, we also hypothesise that policy-makers will come up with suggestions of other policy measures. Both hypotheses will be tested in the project.

What households say

We are asking around 75 households in each city case to imagine they are forced to reduce their emissions by 50 per cent by 2030 assuming such reduction should be on par with the 1.5 degree goal.

Figure 1. 'Forced' round of the Climate Game

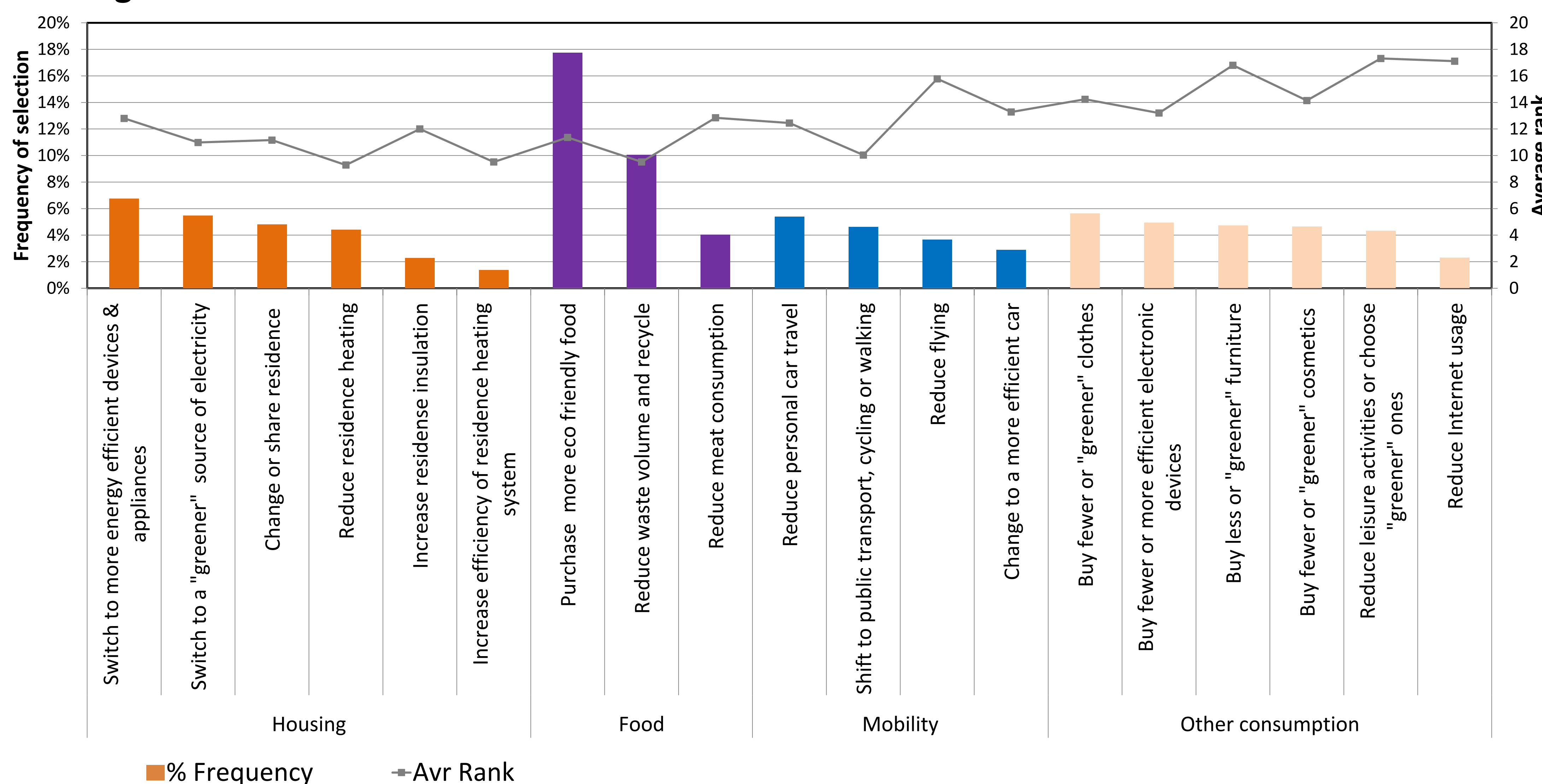


Figure 2. Carbon footprint reduction (N=117)

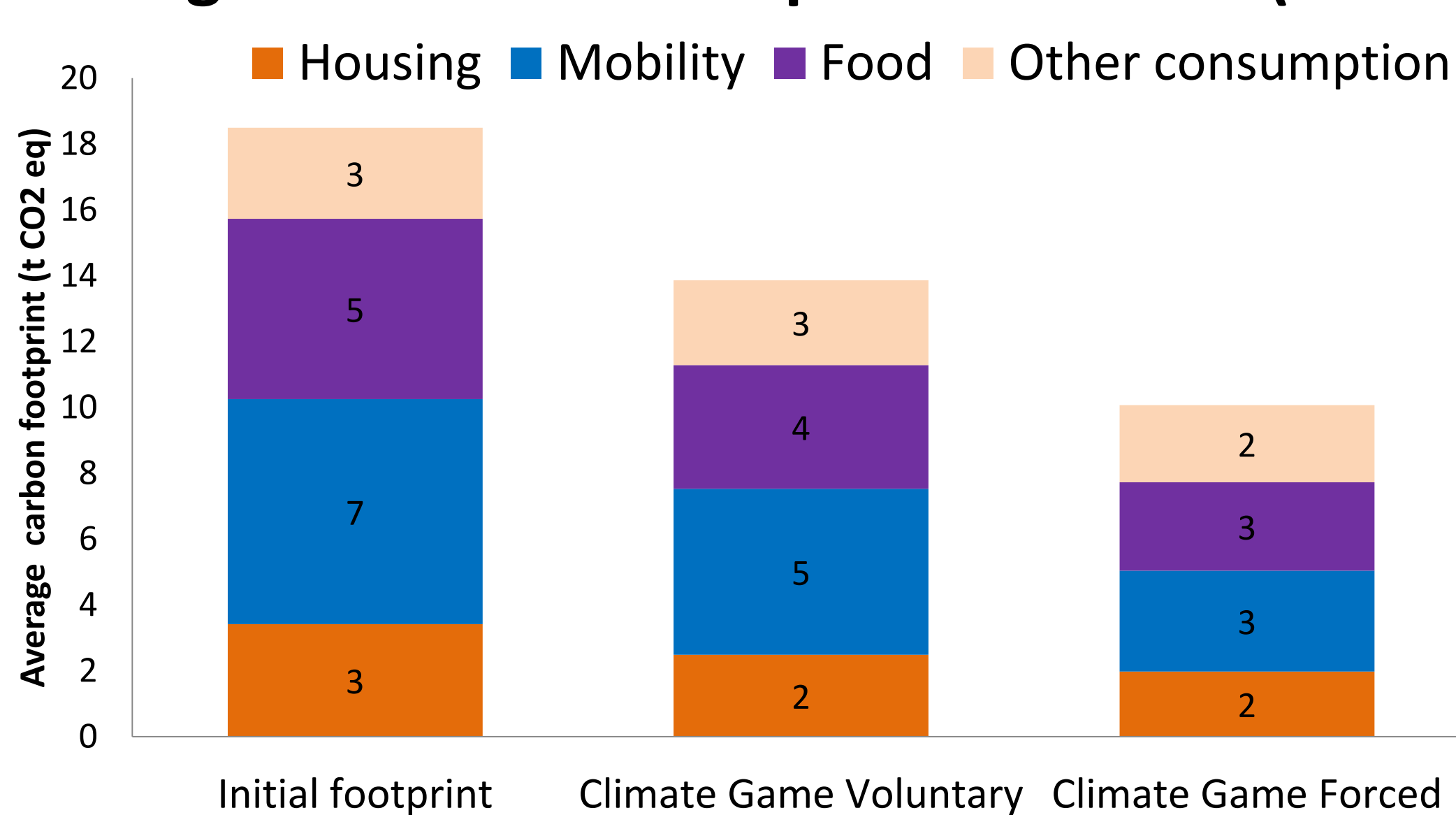


Figure 1 shows the measures chosen by HHs in the forced round of the Climate Game. The bars show the frequency of selection of the measure groups relative to all choices made during the game, in other words, how often the measures were chosen. The line shows the average rank of the measure, where '1' would be the easiest to implement, and '20' would be the most difficult to implement.

Figure 2 shows the development of the average carbon footprint reduction of HHs throughout the HOPE Climate Game. On average, when HH were pushed to reach the goal of halving their emissions, they accepted large-scale reductions in the area of mobility and food.

What current policies do

An initial mapping of existing policy measures directly targeting or indirectly affecting household (HH) consumption-related GHG emissions in the four country and city cases shows that:

- Housing:** For housing, several measures exist that seek to increase energy efficiency, reduce energy consumption and incentivise use of renewable energy in residential buildings in all four countries. They are to a significant extent regulative, supported by economic and information-based measures.
- Mobility:** For mobility, some measures exist that seek to leverage public transportation and increase the share of low- to zero emission motorised vehicles in all four countries. Measures are largely economic, however some also regulative (city planning, 'legal' emission levels etc.). Flying habits are hardly targeted (a small passenger tax exists in Norway and Germany).
- Food:** For food, few relevant measures exist. Those that exist are largely information-based labelling schemes for local and/or ecological produce. All four countries also have some form of gov't policy to increase the share of national ecological produce. Germany and Sweden have information campaigns on reducing meat consumption.
- Other categories of consumption:** For other categories of consumption, few relevant measures exist. Through the EU, an information-based labelling scheme on energy performance of electronic devices has been introduced in all four countries.

This is a rough overview of the initial policy mapping results thus far. It remains to analyse the differences between the four countries, and at the different levels of governance in each country.

What will policy-makers say?

The output from the household mapping of willingness to accept consumption changes will be presented to local, regional and national policy stakeholders. They will be asked to suggest changes in policy measures to enhance such changes.

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