The Social Shaping of Canteen TakeAway activities

During recent decades, the prevalence of overweight and obesity in the world has been increasing. Many factors are influencing this development, one of which is nutrition. In order to improve dietary intake, interventions have been carried out in different settings. Such interventions have shown that the worksite can be an effective setting for influencing dietary intake.

Lack of time is found to be perceived as a barrier for preparation of healthy meals in the households. Based on the findings that the worksite has been found to be an important setting for health-promoting initiatives, and that people find it difficult to find time to prepare healthy meals, the concept of Canteen TakeAway (CTA) was developed. CTA is offered by worksites to their employees as ready-to-heat meals they can take home. The aim of this thesis has been to gain knowledge of how such CTA schemes are shaped, and to understand the processes and results related to the shaping. The thesis is based on case studies at two hospitals, a financial company and an industrial worksite. Theoretically, the thesis draws on theories about design as the interaction between developers conceptions about potential users and the users’ rejection or adjustments to solutions (inscription and domestication), together with theory about political processes, in order to capture both user perspectives and production perspectives of CTA.

The results show that in all four cases CTA is established as an attempt to create a better work-life balance for the employees. Furthermore, in two of the cases, CTA is also linked to providing employees working irregular hours with a meal solution. The shaping of the scheme is thus decisive for who that can integrate the scheme into their everyday life. It is found that number of users of CTA are limited, which could be a result of a discrepancy between the identified problem and the related solution. Particularly the ordering deadline and the price seem to be crucial for whether the employees choose to become CTA users. Users also consider healthiness of the meals and culinary aspects to be important. In three cases this has primarily importance after the employees have become users. The wish for big portions and a great amount of meat was important for the acceptance of the scheme at the industrial worksite.

The production of CTA is integrated into the existing food production by a reduction in other services for the employees, sale of CTA few days a week or by using the lunch meal as CTA meal. The strategies influence how many times a week CTA should be offered and what type of meals should be prepared. Finally, it is concluded that the CTA schemes are co-shaped by the CTA-concept and the local context and its norms and values about health, employee rights etc. The Ph.D project can be used to assure that focus is kept on particular local conditions when local CTA schemes are designed. This can be done through a user oriented design course where potential users is involved in the planning of a scheme, and by continuously discussing the scheme’s performance with the purpose of adjusting the scheme to meet the potential and present users needs in relation to ordering, portion size, different options and so on.