

NIKK

magasin 2.2009

Meat makes you a man and
an environmental sinner

Encourage both men and
women to use public transport

Climate change hits
poor women hardest

Gender equality in the new
UN climate agreement?

NORDIC GENDER INSTITUTE



Focus:
GENDER AND CLIMATE CHANGE

Cool down

Need for gender perspectives in the climate debate



BOSSE PARBRING EDITOR OF NIKK MAGASIN

Intro

Focus: Gender equality and climate change



The top politicians who will gather in Copenhagen in December 2009 are faced with great expectations. Crucial decisions need to be taken in order to handle and reduce climate changes which threaten to cause much suffering for large parts of the world's population.

The focus in encountering climate change has often been on technical development and research within the sciences. This is undoubtedly necessary, but yet not enough. More research and focus are also needed on both how people are affected by climate change and how they can contribute to stopping it.

Since the first UN Climate Change Conference, women's movement activists have pointed to the fact that climate changes are not gender blind. Slightly simplified, it can be claimed that men to a larger degree than women contribute to climate change, which, however, affects women to a larger degree than men. Men drive cars and fly more than women, who tend to use public transport. Men eat more meat than women, which, as we know, affects

the climate to the same extent as transport does. Poor women in developing countries are those hardest hit by climate change.

Naturally, the differences are based on unjust relationships not only between women and men, but also between people of, for example, different educational backgrounds, income, age and ethnicity.

A focal issue has been the concept of adaptation, that is, how people are to accommodate their lifestyles to climate change. A stronger focus needs to be directed onto the concept of mitigation, that is, how we can use various strategies in order to reduce the effects of climate change.

But the real revolution will have arrived only when we are prepared to organise our societies in a way that does not cause changes in the climate. To this end there is much to learn from people who are already living a sustainable life – both from those who have made this deliberate choice and from those for whom there simply is no other alternative.

– Bosse Parbring

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A male-dominated over-consuming class is creating significant hardship among women of the struggling class. But one-third of humanity belongs to the sustainable class. If they made it, it should be very much possible also for the rest.

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The future climate regime can neither ignore half of the Earth's population nor deem it vulnerable by nature, state Dr Minu Hemmati and Ulrike Roehr from GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice – in an interview for NIKK magasin.

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Finland is funding female delegates in climate negotiations as well as supporting activities focusing on gender issues in the negotiations.

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Gender equality should be integrated into the new UN climate agreement. This is the appeal from participants of a Nordic Summit on climate and gender equality.

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– SONDRÉ BÅTSTRAND, POLITICIAN

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Current

"If the athlete has always thought she's a woman or been a woman, it's not exactly cheating."

— IAAF DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION NICK DAVIES ON WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP GOLD MEDALIST CASTER SEMENYA, WHOSE SEX HAS BEEN TESTED

NORDIC CONFERENCES Gender and power

The Icelandic Presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers organizes a Nordic conference on gender and power in Reykjavik 18-19 November, 2009.

The conference presents results from the Nordic research project Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries carried out by NIKK and a Nordic research group on behalf of the Nordic Council of Ministers for Gender Equality. The conference is co-organized by NIKK. www.nikk.no

Gender equality education in schools

A Nordic conference will be arranged in Reykjavik, on 21 and 22 September 2009 on gender equality education in schools. Good examples of equality teaching will be presented, and gender equality work in schools will also be explored within a European context.

The conference is arranged by the Nordic Council of Ministers. A seminar on gender equality in legislation and gender equality in schools was held 3-4 June, 2009, on the Faroe Islands. The seminar discussed gender equality legislation in some of the Nordic countries and presented projects on gender equality in schools. www.norden.org

Parental leave and care policies

Nordic welfare systems are known for ensuring social security for all, with special emphasis on families with children. The Icelandic presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers arranges a conference on the subject on October 22, 2009, in Reykjavik. Preliminary results from a research project on parental leave and care policies will be presented at the conference. The research project looks at how parental leave is used in the Nordic countries and how it affects the relationship between parents and children and the status of men and women in the labour market. www.norden.org

Nordic women winners in the EU

The number of Nordic women has increased in the European Parliament and is now larger than that of Nordic men. As a result of the election on 7 June, the amount of female MEPs increases in all the Nordic EU member states.

The increase is largest in Finland, where the percentage of female MEPs went up from 43 in the old Parliament to 62 in the new one. Also Sweden sends more women than men to the EU Parliament: 10 out of 18 MEPs are women. In Denmark, women form a minority of the country's MEPs (6 out of 13), but the gender balance is nevertheless as good as it can be.

Since the first election in 1979, the European Parliament has been a male dominated assembly. At that point, 84 per cent of all MEPs were men. Since then the proportion of men has slowly decreased. But before the current election, the



Illustration photos: Colourbox

men still held a strong majority forming 69 per cent of the Members of the European Parliament. Now, the male proportion has gone down to 65 per cent.

The following tables show the gender distribution for the Nordic EU countries and the entire European Parliament:

Before the 2009 EU election (members/per cent)					
	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	Nordic countries	EU
Women	6/43	6/43	9/47	21/45	243/31
Men	8/57	8/57	10/53	26/55	542/69
Total	14/100	14/100	19/100	47/100	785/100
After the 2009 EU election (members/per cent)					
	Denmark	Finland	Sweden	Nordic countries	EU
Women	6/46	8/62	10/56	24/55	258/35
Men	7/54	5/38	8/44	20/45	478/65
Total	13/100	13/100	18/100	44/100	736/100



There is a difference between fathers being on paternity leave at the same time as the mother is on leave and fathers being on parental leave alone. In studies about fathers on paternity leave it is important to distinguish between these two situations. This is shown in

Home alone with quota

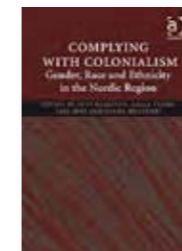
researcher Anita Haataja's study *Fathers' Use of Paternity and Parental Leave in the Nordic Countries*. The results of her study reveal that Finnish fathers are those who use most paternity leave, while also being those who in the least cases share the parental leave. Icelanders are best at sharing the parental leave, followed by the Swedes and the Norwegians.

Paternity leave refers to the period of time that the father is entitled to be on leave in connection with the birth of his child. During these weeks the father is at home together with the mother. Confusing paternity leave with the share of the parental leave that fathers use is counter-productive if one is interested in

finding out how the parents share the care of their child, Haataja writes. In this case, the interesting issue is fathers who are on parental leave, since they take care of their child alone while being at home.

When comparing the total number of days that the fathers stay at home with their children (both on paternity and parental leaves), Iceland tops the statistics – not just in the Nordic countries, but in the entire world. In Iceland, fathers use 31 per cent of all the days for which the parents receive compensation for staying at home with their children. The corresponding figure in Sweden is 22, in Norway 11, in Denmark and Finland 6 per cent.

NEW BOOKS



Complying with colonialism: gender, race and ethnicity in the Nordic region

The book introduces the concept of "colonial complicity" to explain the diversity through which northern European countries continue to take part in (post)colonial processes. The volume combines a new perspective on the analysis of Europe and colonialism, whilst offering new insights for feminist and postcolonial studies by examining how gender equality is linked to "European values", thus often European superiority.

Authors: Keskinen, Suvi, Salla Tuori, Sari Irni, Diana Mulinari (ed.)
Publisher: Ashgate



Global Gender Research: transnational perspectives

Global Gender Research offers a wide-ranging collection of feminist sociological inquiries around the world. Solveig Bergman, Director of NIKK, contributes with the article "Collective Organizing and Claim Making on Child Care in Norden".

Authors: Christine E. Bose and Minjeong Kim (ed.)
Publisher: Routledge



Gender Delight: Science, knowledge, culture and writing... for Nina Lykke

This publication mark the 60th birthday of the Danish/Nordic/European gender researcher Nina Lykke, Professor of Tema Genus, Linköping University, Sweden.

Authors: Cecilia Åsberg, Katherine Harrisson, Björn Pernrud and Malena Gustavson (ed.)
Publisher: Tema Genus

DENMARK Criticism by the UN

The UN gives Denmark both praise and blame in a recent evaluation of Danish gender equality politics. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women, CEDAW, notes that Denmark is advanced when it comes to, for example, a balanced gender representation in parliament and women's presence in the labour market. However, the CEDAW calls for measures to equalize salaries, to increase the number of women in local politics, in top positions within academia, authorities and business, and to stop discrimination of women from a minority background.



Swede chairs gender equality committee in the EU Parliament

Eva-Britt Svensson, a Swedish EU Parliamentarian from the Left group (GUE/NGL) has been appointed chair of the European Parliament's committee on women's rights. "This is a strategic post where we can finally have a role in defining the agenda and working towards stronger commitments for gender equality at EU level", states Eva-Britt Svensson. She will be working towards the appointment of an EU Commissioner responsible for gender equality, the development of a new EU action plan on gender equality, EU policies to combat violence against women, and protecting women's sexual and reproductive rights.

QUOTED:

“This book can help people stop feeling ashamed.”

— THE NORWEGIAN MINISTER OF CHILDREN AND EQUALITY ANNIKEN HUITFELD
IS EDITOR OF A BOOK ABOUT COMING OUT AS HOMOSEXUAL

EU Director appointed

In 2005, the EU Commission decided to set up an institute for gender equality. Almost four years later, Virginija Langbakk has been appointed Director for the European Institute for Gender Equality, which is to be established in Vilnius, Lithuania. The new Director has previously been employed as International Senior Consultant at SIPU (Swedish Institute for Public Administration) focussing on gender equality and HIV/AIDS. She has also worked with issues related to human rights and democracy development. The objective of the European Institute for Gender Equality is to assist EU institutions and member states in promoting gender equality and in preventing discrimination. The main task of the Institute will be to collect statistical information and to produce analyses for political decision makers. The Institute is also going to comprise a documentation centre and a public library.

ICELAND**New research centre**

A new “Centre of Excellence” at the University of Iceland will conduct research within Equality and Diversity Studies. The aim is to develop the Icelandic gender equality model. The Centre of Excellence in Equality and Diversity Studies at the University of Iceland has been awarded a grant from the Icelandic Science and Technology Council (Rannís). Funding will be provided for up to seven years. Irma Erlingsdóttir is director of RIKK (Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies) at the University of Iceland. She is also project manager for the new centre: - This outcome represents a major turning point in Gender, Equality and Diversity Research in Iceland. Centres of Excellence are a new model for research programmes in Iceland and it is a privilege to get the opportunity to establish such a centre in cooperation with specialists/scientists, institutions and businesses.

ICELAND

Buying sex punishable

Iceland has followed the Swedish path, as a majority of the Icelandic Parliament accepted an alteration of the criminal code, which now forbids the buying of sex in Iceland.

Thus, the nine-year long intensive parliamentary campaign for the criminalisation of the purchase of sex came to an end.

Actress Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir (the Left-Green Movement) was a relatively new Member of Parliament in March 2000 when she proposed a bill against gendered violence, including the buying of sex. At that point Sweden was the first country in the world to have criminalised the purchase of sex, but Kolbrún wants to thank a grassroots organisation – the Stígamót Crisis Centre – for their thorough preparatory work which enabled her to present her proposition. The proposition was not passed at the first attempt, but Kolbrún did not give in. For nine years she fought for her idea and managed to channel the proposition through assemblies and committees, until it was eventually passed as a law only a week before the parliamentary election on 24 April 2009.

After the election, Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir left the Parliament, but to her great satisfaction she can now note that nine years of struggle have borne fruit. But how does this amendment of the criminal code benefit prostitutes?

“The law”, Kolbrún emphasizes, “does not work in isolation. It is first and foremost an important admission that prostitution is defined as gendered violence. In addition a change

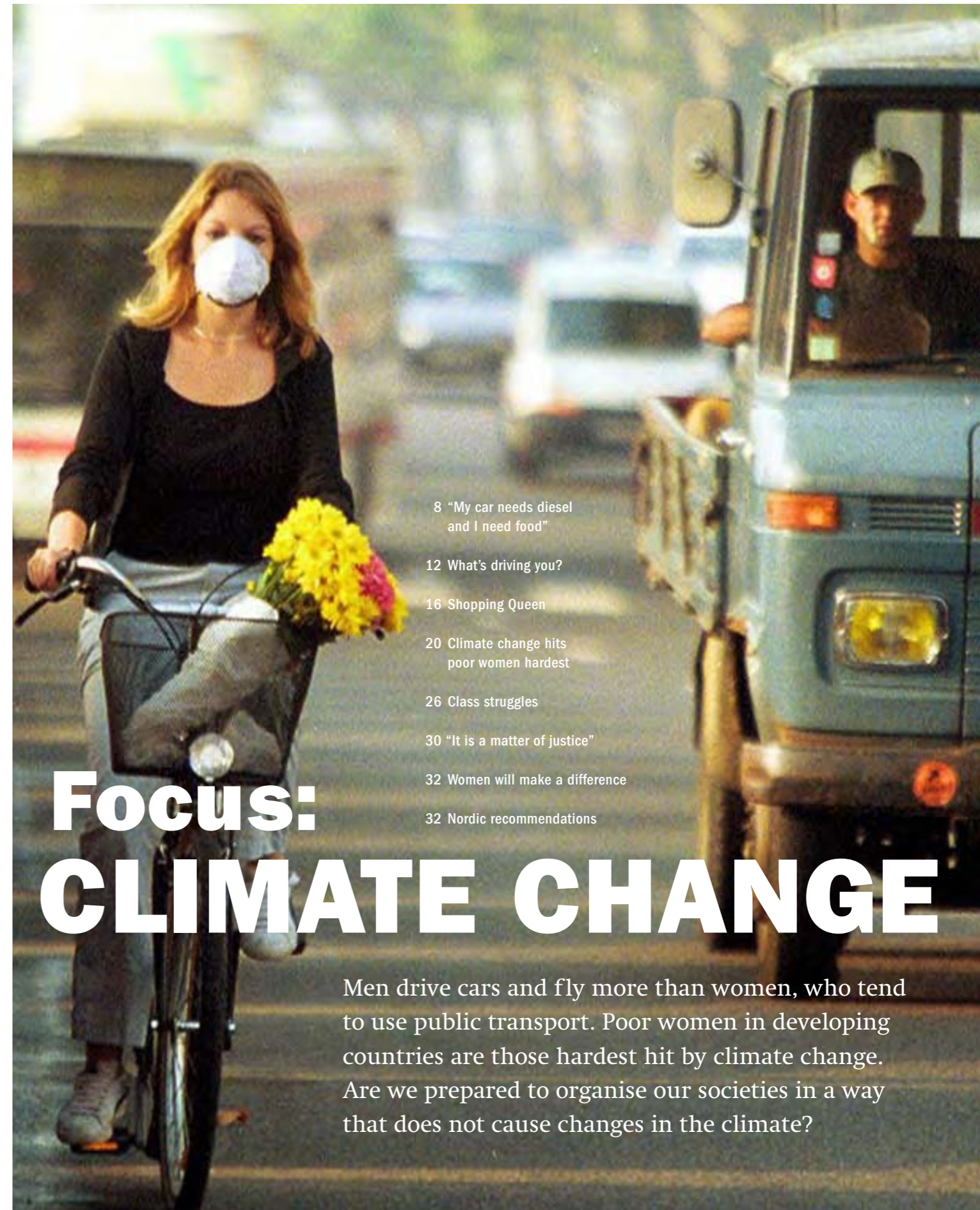


Kolbrún Halldórsdóttir led the long intensive parliamentary campaign for the criminalisation of the purchase of sex.

of attitudes is needed, and this can be achieved by, for example, teaching gender equality in schools.”

But how are victims of prostitution to be helped, regardless of whether they are Icelandic or foreign victims of trafficking? How is Iceland in its current crisis to live up to the grand words of the action plan against human trafficking from the Ministry of Social Affairs, approved a month before the election? Kolbrún admits that financial negotiations are difficult in times of recession, but thinks that a government that acknowledges gender equality also will do its utmost to secure social services for prostitution victims.

ERLA SIGURDARDÓTTIR



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Focus: CLIMATE CHANGE

Men drive cars and fly more than women, who tend to use public transport. Poor women in developing countries are those hardest hit by climate change. Are we prepared to organise our societies in a way that does not cause changes in the climate?

What is it about men and meat?

“My car needs diesel and I need food”

It's not only that meat fills your stomach. It also makes you a man – and an environmental sinner.

BY SIRI LINDSTAD ILLUSTRATION: TRUDE TJENSVOLD

“A large salad on the kitchen table, white wine, a sea food pâté and then a rich chocolate cake to finish. Easy-going, uncomplicated girly food and desserts packed with calories: that was the name of the game. For the men it was the other way round: bloody steaks, heavy red wines, coffee and no sweets, and we all adapted to that.”

That is the menu when a group of posh people from the Stockholm upper middle-class meet in the novel *Stjärnor utan svindel* (Stars without Vertigo) by the Swedish author Louise Boije af Gennäs.

And it is not just a fiction – it is a fact that men more often than women choose bloody steaks, in and outside of the Stockholm in-crowd. On the whole, men eat more meat than women do, not just quantitatively but relatively speaking, when taking into account the different energy needs of the genders. This turns men into greater environmental sinners than women, if we look at the price in climate terms for producing meat as compared to, for example, that of fish and seafood.

Figures also show that women to a larger extent than men are prepared to reduce their consumption of meat.

This makes one wonder: what is there about men and meat?

Emission problems

But first, some facts: the 2006 report from the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) shows that global animal husbandry is the source of nearly 18 per cent of all greenhouse gas emissions. This is more than the emissions of the total transport sector. The Norkost study, conducted by the Norwegian National Council of Nutrition and Physical Activity in 1997, for its part showed that men on average eat 125 grams of meat and meat products daily, while women eat only 87 grams. A study carried out by the Department for Nutrition at the Danish National Food Institute in 2006, revealed even greater differences: the meat consumption of men was 135 grams, that of women was 81 grams.

“Food is first and foremost a question of getting a full stomach.” This is the answer

given by many of the respondents in a study made by Gun Roos and Margareta Wandel at the Norwegian National Institute for Consumer Research (SIFO) in 2004. They interviewed 46 men in the Oslo area about food and eating, and the men had a clear opinion that food plays a completely different role for women than for men.

As one of them put it:

“Women have a, well, a thing about food. They want to make fancy food. They have many more cookbooks, and are much more interested in food. I'm not interested. I just want a lot and to eat it fast, and then I can go out and do something else. I think this is true of many men in general.”

Statements like these are supported by a numerous variety of consumer studies, which show that it is the women who are responsible for the food regime in heterosexual households. It is mainly they who write shopping lists and decide the dinner menus. But they do not do so without negotiating with their partners, as the Norwegian social anthropologist Runar Døving points out. He is Pro-



fessor at the Campus Kristiania Oslo School of Management and has done a lot of research into the consumption of food.

“As a rule, women carry the responsibility for the family's health and try to limit the consumption of meat from a nutritional perspective. But, at the same time, we see that women who cohabit with men eat differently from, for example, women who live alone. The same goes for men who live with women versus those living on their own. In other words, there are negotiations between the genders on the amount of meat, fish and vegetables consumed in these households”, Døving says.

Women rule

It was not a matter of the men not being aware of what kind of food they should eat, and what they should have limited their intake of. But the men in Roos's and Wandel's study found that there were sometimes a few too many rules concerning these foods. Several of them also thought that women's focus on healthy food and slimming was not always

a positive thing. Occasionally this might simply tip over into a tense relationship to food and weight loss hysteria. Their own relaxed relationship to food the men, consequently, interpreted as something positive.

In her thesis *Not Just a Matter of Taste – Disgust in the Food Domain*, Norwegian nutrition researcher Elin Kubberød showed that a negative perception of one's own body could lead to an antipathy towards meat among young women. Particularly red meat made the girls feel too “full”. Many of them also felt an aversion to meat as such – its smell, blood or texture. This was more a matter of antipathy to eating something that once had been alive, rather than sympathy and care for the actual animals. Marking the meat products with the animal's country and farm of origin and perhaps even its name, thus only created and increased feelings of disgust for the products, instead of a feeling of closeness and security, which was the intention of the producers.

In large parts of the world, meat is a luxury, something that is only eaten at big celebrations. In China, the average daily in-

Meat, fish or vegetables? *There are negotiations between the genders in the households, social anthropologist Runar Døving says.*

take of meat is 52.4 grams. In Ghana, the same figure is as low as 9.9 grams.

Power symbol

Such was the case for a long time also at our latitudes. And the one who was the first to help himself from the plate of meat was the man of the house, while the women and children had to make do with what was left after the men had had their share.

This is an indication of meat being more than just food. It is also a symbol of potency and power. The fact that humans hunt and eat animals shows our superior status in the hierarchy of nature, writes Nick Fiddes in his book *Meat. A Natural Symbol*. The position of men in the patriarchy is confirmed by the fact that they eat more meat than women do.



Photo: Scampix

Those who have everything, can always afford to have much more noble values. But if you travel to Tuscany to eat slow food, it's actually not very slow.

— RUNAR DØVING, SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

In addition, this feeds their “bestial” side. In earlier times sexologists therefore tended to recommend a diet low in meat for young boys, if their urge to masturbate was too strong.

In other words, meat bears a masculine code, while vegetables, fruit and sweet things symbolize femininity. “Real” men have a hearty appetite and need large portions, a perception which has not necessarily changed even if more and more people – including men – increasingly have jobs where they sit still. While women in general seem to be most focused on counting and limiting their intake of calories, men concentrate on getting enough energy. The male informants in Roos’s and Wandel’s study to a large extent confirmed the masculine metaphor of the body being a machine which needs fuel. As one of them put it: “My car needs diesel and

I need food.” And by food they mean meat and other products that fill the stomach well.

Burger, not mussels

Thus it is perhaps not very surprising that two hungry lunch guests, a woman and a man, experienced the following at the gourmet restaurant Bølgen & Moi: One of them ordered mussels steamed in white wine, the other the restaurant’s “wild” burger with cheese, bacon and chips. When the food arrived, the waiter – as if automatically – placed the burger in front of the man. But it was, in fact, the woman who had ordered it.

A male vegetarian is regarded with suspicion by other men, claims Nick Fiddes. He refers to a young student who experienced that others assumed he was gay or otherwise suspect, since he did not eat meat.

Sondre Båtstrand, who has been a vegetarian for eight years, does not, however, feel less of a man just because he has chosen not to eat meat nor fish. On the contrary: he laughs at the question.

“Of course I know the stereotypical image of steaks being male food and salad female. But no, I’ve never been told that I wouldn’t be a real man because I choose vegetarian food. At the same time, it is a fact that more women than men are involved in environmental and animal protection, and that’s probably why more women are vegetarian.”

He engaged in animal rights in his late teens and as a consequence of that, he stopped eating meat and fish. The fact that meat production is not good from a climate perspective either, is also a golden argument for Båtstrand, today the spokesperson for the Norwegian Green Party.

“During the seven years that I’ve been a vegetarian, quite a few animal lives have been saved”, he notes.

Class differences

Nowadays, meat is available to all. Nevertheless, or perhaps precisely because of this, the consumption of meat to a certain extent varies according to social class. However, it is

no longer only the wealthy who gorge on meat, but “people in general”. The Norkost study showed that while female workers and professionals had the same intake of meat and meat products, the intake among men varied according to socio-economical status: male workers ate somewhat more meat than male professionals.

The men interviewed for Roos’s and Wandel’s study belonged to the occupational groups joiners/carpenters, engineers and drivers. Even if their relationships to food displayed many common traits, the joiners and the drivers focused more on food as a source of energy and satisfaction, while food for the engineers to a larger extent was a source of taste experiences, nutritional worries or a hobby. Food was also associated to a certain occupational identity, with eggs and bacon being defined as drivers’ food, along with sausages as snacks during long working days.

When arguing against the consumption of meat, either from a climate or a nutritional perspective, it is often the common sausages and hamburgers that are the objects of criticism; but those served in fast food chains, not those offered in gourmet restaurants.

For example, the newspaper Bergens Tidende recently wrote: “We are snacking our way to extreme weather. Norwegians stuff themselves with a hundred million sausages per year. This results in large climate emissions and wilder weather in Western Norway.”

“Sausages are very practical. And they are cheap and tasty to barbecue”, is the explanation given by Grethe Skundberg, Head of Information at the Norwegian meat producer Nortura.

However, this has not always been the case, Runar Døving points out.

“Before meat-mincers were invented, minced meat was very expensive, since it took a lot of effort to prepare. In other words, meatballs used to be a luxurious upper-class product.”

Distinctions

Today, McDonald’s hamburgers are regarded more or less as the symbol for vulgar food. In various lifestyle programmes on TV, where “common” people are scolded by experts for



MEAT AND CLIMATE CHANGE

18%
of all greenhouse gas emissions derives from the global animal husbandry.

135
grams is the daily meat consumption of a Danish man.

81
grams is the daily meat consumption of a Danish woman.

52
grams is the daily meat consumption of a person in China.

10
grams is the daily meat consumption of a person in Ghana.

their eating habits, minced meat foods are one of the first things to go.

“But it is as bad for one’s BMI to eat goose liver at a fancy restaurant as having a hamburger at McDonald’s”, Døving comments.

He shows how the middle classes use various foods distinctively, to distance themselves from the working class. And the middle class itself always manages to avoid criticism, within climate politics as elsewhere, he claims.

“It is not the ecological footprints that are scrutinized, but the values. The middle classes have larger houses and use more electricity to heat them, they drive cars more frequently, since they have cottages; they need two pieces of everything since they have several houses; they have more money and spend it on things that are not good for the environment. And those who have everything, can always afford to have much more noble values. But if you travel to Tuscany to eat slow food, it is actually not very slow.”

Veggie day

So far, it might seem far easier to be a meat eater than a vegetarian. There are sausage kiosks on each street corner, if one feels peckish.

However, in the Belgian city of Ghent, it will now be possible to be both healthy and environmentally friendly without too much effort, at least one day a week. The city has introduced a meat-free day as a measure to improve its climate policy. That day, all public canteens, schools and other institutions will have vegetarian food on their menus, and commercial restaurants are encouraged to do the same. This is a measure welcomed by Sondre Båtstrand.

“People must get to know vegetarian food and find out that it is both tasty and filling. And the more people ask for vegetarian products and meals, the better the supply will become. I think it is important to convey that summer barbecues are not threatened just because one cuts down on meat consumption. There is much else to be barbecued, from soy sausages to vegetables,” says Båtstrand.

Siri Lindstad is freelance journalist specialising in gender research.

A gendered approach to sustainable transport

What's driving you?

Men are more likely than women to drive a car, and women are more likely than men to use public transport. But will women take over the masculine mobility pattern? Or is it possible to encourage both men and women to use public transport?

BY MICHALA HVIDT BREENGAARD AND HELENE OLDRUP

Transport is a major factor in the emission of greenhouse gases. It is estimated that about 19 per cent of all global energy is spent on transport. In recent decades, polluting and energy-consuming transportation has increased, while the share of energy-conserving transportation has not increased to the same extent (Oldrup & Hvidt Breengaard 2009). Predictions show that energy-consuming forms of transport such as auto-mobility and air traffic will continue to

increase at the expense of public transport, and it creates challenges in relation to the goal of a sustainable society.

Transport is therefore an important focus area in climate discussions and policies and it is also a field where the gender differences are visible. Individual use of transport is connected to behaviour and different groups have different behaviour. By looking at transport patterns from a gender perspective it becomes clear that women and men are using different means of transport, that their

travel itineraries vary and that the lengths of their trips are different. Studies on gender and transport have shown the following differences:

- Men generally travel longer distances than women, where women take trips that are shorter.
- Men are more likely than women to drive a car, and women are more likely than men to use public transport.
- Men's travel patterns are characterized by travel from home to work. Women are more likely to travel to various destinations, for example, from home to day-care to work to shops, and back to day-care and home.
- Men have greater access to cars as a result of their greater economic power and their driver's licenses.
- This seems to be changing as women are increasingly participating in the labour market, and young women now have driver's licenses and can afford a car, compared with older women (The Coordination for Gender Studies 2007).



prevention strategies by taking into account women's and men's different travel patterns. This may include strategies that focus more on changing people's behaviour than on assigning guilt.

Structural explanations

Research on gendered transport patterns points to a variety of explanations for the different travel behaviours. One type of explanation focuses on the structural conditions of women and men in terms of work and home. Size of income and labour market position can help explain their different travel patterns. Studies show that people are likely to travel farther when they occupy a higher position in the labour market, and in this way women's shorter travel distances reflect the segregation of the labour market. But this inequality is changing as more women enter the labour market and as women are occupying higher positions. Thus, well-educated women travel farther than women

Cultural explanations: Control of technology and fascination with speed is associated with masculine competence. Photo: Istockphoto

with lower levels of education, which means that it is necessary to include education as a differentiating variable. Moreover younger women more often have a driver's license and a car at their disposal – a factor which is putting age on the agenda. Young and highly educated women nevertheless still travel less than men, but they do use a car more frequently than older women. Men's and women's different ways of using the transport system are also connected to the social division of labour between women and men. Role differences in the home are significant for women's preference to live closer to work. Women still bear more of the responsibility for house-hold duties than men, and it is this responsibility that affects their choice of workplaces that are close to home and results in women taking more numerous local trips, compared with men.

Spatial explanations

Another explanation is spatial and has to do with the location of workplaces, residential areas, and free-time activities and the kinds of transport patterns that their location requires. Studies show that in terms of locations, the labour market is divided by gender, with workplaces that employ mostly men (for example, the financial/white-collar sector) usually situated in city centres, whereas workplaces with predominantly female occupations (schools, kindergartens) are spread throughout suburban areas. This, too, contributes to the different travel patterns of women and men.

A third explanation concerns cultural conditions. Cultural conceptions of cars are linked to a gendered universe, where control of technology and fascination with speed is associated with masculine competence, while women's relationship with cars arises from use value, safety, and responsibility.

As the explanations show, choice of method of transportation is determined by gender, but also by other variables such as age, education, labour market position and urbanity. Studies on transport and travel behaviours



Changing patterns. Highly educated and economically better-off women increasingly imitate the same travel patterns as men. Photo: Istockphoto

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must therefore include intersecting factors in order to understand the complex picture of how travel patterns are formed.

When looking at transportation usage it becomes clear that women and men have different travel patterns. This means that we need information about the differences in their travel behaviours in order to target our efforts most effectively to meet existing needs and to utilize data to help design a sustainable transportation system.

As stated above, it seems that women – at least highly educated and economically better-off women – increasingly imitate the same travel patterns as men, i.e. they are inclined to take the car instead of the bike, go by foot or by public transport. This has implications for the challenges of creating a sustainable transport sector and for reaching the goal of a fossil-fuel free society.

Danish and Norwegian transport researchers have developed two scenarios for the future. The first points to a transport development with men's travel habits as a standard. That is, where women take over the masculine mobility patterns and where the design of traffic organisation will mainly be based on the growth of private transport. The second scenario adds women as the norm and encourages both men and women to make shorter trips, use public transport, take the bike or walk more. This also means a prioritization of a close-city structure rather than a spread.

By integrating the gender perspective in transport planning questions are rising about whether women's travel patterns still increa-

singly must assimilate to men's? Or if it would be more visionary if women's travel patterns were translated into a model for more environmental friendly transport development?

Michala Hvidt Breengaard is Research Assistant at the Coordination for Gender Studies, University of Copenhagen, Denmark. Helene Oldrup is researcher at SFI - The Danish National Centre for Social Research.

Conflict between gender equality and environmental targets

Women on the whole take a more critical stance on using the car and are more positive towards changing their car usage than men. This is a claim made by Merritt Polk who is a researcher into traffic at the University of Gothenburg in Sweden.

"Somewhat more women than men think that the car has a negative impact on the environment. Women are also more positive in attitude to measures for reducing the numbers of cars. Several factors indicate that women hold a larger potential than men for adopting an ecologically sustainable transport system in Sweden. This is interesting since in countries with a high degree of car usage, there is also a tendency that the differences between women's and men's travelling patterns are reduced with increased female travel.

There are, however, conflicts between gender equality and environmental targets that need to be emphasized", Merritt Polk points out.

"Gender equality requires both women and men to have access to a car. Today, men use cars more than women do. The idea of larger local regions is based on increased commuting, which, in practice, means even more travel by car. The environmental targets for their part demand a radical reform of the transport system – how can these objectives be fitted together? Are women, who already use cars to a lesser extent, to reduce their travel? Can gender equality be combined with long-term sustainable development?"

Source: The Swedish National Road Administration's report on equal travel *Res Jämt – Tankar kring ett jämställt transportsystem* (Vägverket, 2005:110)



INGER STØJBERG
Danish Minister for Gender Equality

ULLA TØRNÆS
Danish Minister for Development Cooperation

Gender equality – a top priority

Men and women are affected differently by climate change. Therefore both women and men must be involved in the struggle against the global climate changes.

A gender perspective on the climate issue is particularly relevant when looking at the situation in the developing countries. Here, climate change has the direst consequences. According to the UN Climate Panel, close to 250 million inhabitants in Africa will face increased problems with water provision in 2020 because of climate change, and the crop yield will decrease as a result of the exhaustion of agricultural land.

Thus, climate change creates harsher living conditions for the inhabitants of developing countries. This pertains not least to the women, who form a majority of the world's poor people. However, the women hold a potential, which must be utilised in the struggle against poverty, and the women also play an important role when their countries are to adapt to climate change. Therefore gender equality and the opportunities of women are given top priority in the Danish contribution to combating climate change.

More women than men die in natural disasters. A report from the British organisation Oxfam estimates that the probability for women and children to die in natural

disasters is 14 times bigger than that for men. In parts of Aceh in Indonesia more than three quarters of the deceased during the Asian tsunami in 2004 were women and girls. Why is this the case? One of the reasons is that the norms for women's dress limit their opportunity to move away quickly. In a catastrophe it can also be a fatal problem that women and girls are not taught to run and swim to the same extent as men and boys are.

But it is not only in Asia that gender roles and the lack of gender equality mean more negative consequences for women. In Africa it is often the women who cultivate the crops, fetch water and firewood, and carry the overall responsibility for the daily survival of the family. The consequences of climate change include contaminated wells, flooded or dried out land, ruined houses and spreading diseases. All this means comparatively harder everyday conditions for millions of women in developing countries.

In our development cooperation we therefore make a point of granting support for climate measures in developing countries in addition to the current aid, and assure that climate and gender equality form integrated elements in our efforts to create development and combat poverty. Gender equality will be a central element in the measures pertaining to the adaptation to climate change.

Women play an important role when their countries are to adapt to climate change.

Future measures in the climate field can be very concrete. One example are flood proof wells which are installed just over sea level. In areas with frequent cyclones, this will decrease the possibility of wells being flooded and contaminated. This makes the women's workload of fetching water easier and means that less people fall ill. The installation of such wells ensures that the solution benefits women.

We must, however, not only look to the concrete workload of women when we try to reduce the effects of climate change. Women must basically be granted equal rights and equal access to financial resources. In other words, women in the whole world must have equal opportunities to influence their own lives. Thus they can gain influence on the ways in which the efforts to reduce climate change can be enhanced.

Gender and consumption

Shopping Queen

In the rich and egalitarian West both women and men contribute to a level of over-consumption which is unsustainable for the climate. But who is to take responsibility for stopping this? Have the women's movement and feminism let down the environment?

BY JENNIE WESTLUND ILLUSTRATION: TRUDE TJENSVOLD

Consumption has traditionally been regarded as a typically female pastime. The stereotypical shopper is a woman, either portrayed as a conscientious housewife providing her family with what it needs, or as an irresponsible, vain and conspicuous consumer. The link between women and consumption is based on the traditional division of labour between men and women, where men stand for production and work in the public sphere, while women stand for reproduction and consumption in the home. Men are breadwinners and women are spenders. But this does not hold true anymore. Women are increasingly acting as breadwinners and men take on the role as consumers. Furthermore, a large proportion of today's households consist of a single person who does both the wage earning and the consumption.

Who, then, are Mr. and Mrs. Consumer? What are their consumption habits, and how sustainable are their lifestyles? In order to be able to make statements on how women and men may be overtaxing the environment in

different ways through their respective consumption, a Swedish study mapped single households and their energy usage. The results showed that single men with no children spend 20 per cent more energy than women in the same situation do. Men have a higher energy intensity (mega joule per SEK) in their shopping compared to women – in all income groups. The difference is explained by single women and single men consuming energy in different ways. The most obvious example is transport, i.e. mainly car usage.

“40 per cent of the total energy usage of men is spent on energy intensive transports, while the corresponding proportion for women is only 25 per cent. Women, on the other hand, spend more energy on clothes and consumer goods, but these are not as energy intensive”, says Annika Carlsson-Kanyama, one of the researchers who conducted the study.

The more wealthy the consumer, the more harmful they are.

So, despite the stereotypical image of the female shopper, men and their consumption

habits are actually the greatest harmers of the environment. However, the same study also shows that energy consumption is directly related to income; the higher one's income the higher is also one's energy usage. That is: the richer, the more harmful for the environment. And this pertains to both women and men.

The fact that the rich countries are responsible for most of the world's environmental destruction as compared to the poorer parts of the world has been proved. Researchers have also noted that women leave smaller ecological footprints than men, both in rich and poor countries. This is explained by the traditional division of labour between the genders and by women having access to fewer resources; they simply do not have the opportunity to maintain a lifestyle and consumption pattern similar to men. The traditional woman's role does not allow for many practices that would burden the environment.

But with the traditional division of labour changing and women's independence and income increasing, they adapt an (almost)



equally unsustainable consumption and lifestyle pattern as men. A deeper ecological footprint seems to be a consequence of gender equality for women.

Empowerment through consumption

This is so because the feminist movement has not succeeded in challenging the economic systems and seriously questioning consumerist culture, says Professor Kate Soper, who spoke at the conference Gender, Climate and Sustainability in Copenhagen in March 2009. Although movements for gender and sexual emancipation have removed social oppressions, Soper thinks they have done little to challenge the consumerist model of the 'good life'.

"Freedom from domesticity and the patriarchal division of labour has not led – as many feminists had hoped it would – to greener and fairer ways of approaching human prosperity."

Soper thinks that the movements in certain respects have even strengthened the hegemony of a consumerist lifestyle.

"Consumerist culture is closely associated with freedom and democracy, an association the market and the global economy is dependent upon. In the emancipation of women freedom has been linked with an increase in commodification and the expansion of the 'shopping mall' culture", she says.

In the name of equality, women are given the right to consume, the right to be rich and the right to do as men do. Soper uses, for example, images from the TV series "Sex and the City" to illustrate how aspects of the feminist movement have become an issue of identity politics and self styling instead of solidarity.

"Movements for sexual emancipation have been co-opted by the market with third wave feminism and girl power. Emancipation and identity politics allow us to create and stage ourselves through consumption. We gain freedom and identity by consuming."

Hard to criticize

She also criticizes the postmodern wave of feminism for celebrating shopping far too much instead of issuing warnings about its consequences.



Shopping Queen. *The shopping woman is characterised as the irresponsible, egocentric and vain consumer – as a modern Marie Antoinette.* © 2007 Sony Pictures Home Entertainment. All Rights Reserved.

"Feminist cultural theorists are often critical of the implied disparagement of women because of their association with shopping as opposed to 'higher' forms of cultural activity. But the theorists tend on the whole to counter that disdain, not by challenging the actual connection between femininity and consumption, but by instead recasting women's shopping practices as a form of empowerment", says Soper.

For those who do not want to celebrate shopping and hedonism in the name of gender equality, it is hard to find a standpoint that is not also seen as conservative, puritan or essentialist. The impact of eco-feminists has not been all that great and the criticism they have voiced has been questioned as being based on the assumption that women, by nature, would possess a special concern for

the environment, which is not only problematic in its essentialism, but which also gives women the signal that it is not that important for them to take responsibility for nature. Such 'back-to-nature' ethics, to use Soper's expression, puts the responsibility for saving the world and the environment on the shoulders of women. And it is difficult to present such criticism without it being assumed that the most environmentally friendly solution would be for women to remain by the stove.

Moral panic by female culture

At the same time, the criticism of the burgeoning and hedonistic consumer culture, particularly among women, can be seen as a statement against objectionable luxuriousness and vanity. Extravagance and frivolity does not fit the profile of a Protestant and

Buying a car is not thought of as shopping, whilst buying clothes, shoes, makeup, decorative objects and other consumer goods is.

economically minded Scandinavian. Shopping is thus the form of consumption which seems to be easiest to criticize. And buying a car is not thought of as shopping, whilst buying clothes, shoes, makeup, decorative objects and other consumer goods – that is, the kind of consumption mainly done by women – is.

The shopping woman is characterised as the irresponsible, egocentric, vain and conspicuous consumer – as a modern Marie Antoinette. From an environmental viewpoint it is not, however, as condemnable to buy a handbag for 60,000 SEK – which started the so called bag debate in Swedish media in the spring of 2007 – as buying a car for the same amount of money is. It is, on the other hand, morally condemnable. And the immorality of women tends to be more upsetting than that of men.

Alternative hedonism

When it comes to solutions for the problems of both men's and women's over-consumption in our wealthy countries, Kate Soper wants to challenge the whole consumerist lifestyle and the financial logic it is based on. It is not only the environment that pays the price for our uncontrolled consumption, we do so ourselves, too. Soper thinks that today's western societies are characterised by an increasingly troubled relationship to unchecked consumption. She is discerning a growing dissatisfaction stemming from the unwanted by-products of consumerist lifestyle.

"There is media coverage every day of this new climate of disenchantment, with its concerns over the stress, pollution, ill-health, childhood obesity, car congestion, noise, excessive waste and the loss of the 'art of living'", says Soper.

The impacts of a consumerist lifestyle also include having to work more in order to maintain our standard of living and then not having the time to enjoy what we have consumed, which, in turn, makes time a commodity in short supply that we are also prepared to pay for.

This time, we are not to hope for a change at production level or through the mobilisation of the working classes. The solution lies with consumption and the consumer. Neo-liberal arguments, such as "the consumer's free choice" or the opposite criticism of capitalism as "the consumer's total subordination to the obligation to purchase" must, according to Soper, be discarded. Nobody is free from either the desire or the obligation to purchase. Instead, she points to a way based on the relatively autonomous circumspection, which is now appearing in the encounter with the negative impact of consumption on well-being. She is hoping for the "alternative hedonist" who not only feels threatened by environmental destruction, but also regards the consumerist lifestyle as unpleasurable and self-denying. The alternative hedonist seeks pleasures to be gained by pursuing a less work-driven and acquisitive way of life. The theory of an alternative hedonism is based on new forms of desire rather than fears of ecological disaster being likely to have most impact in any move towards more sustainable modes of consuming.

According to Soper, it is possible to use the promise of "more time" as a sales argument in order to switch development onto a new track. In that case perhaps the Nordic women's movement's old demand of a 6-hour working day could be dusted off again.

Jennie Westlund is Adviser at NIKK.

Developing countries

Climate change hits poor women hardest

When rivers dry up in Africa the journey to the nearest water post becomes longer – which means less time for girls to go to school. When villages are flooded in Asia, you die if you are, as a woman, not allowed to be seen alone and in wet clothes among unfamiliar men.

BY ULRIKKE MOUSTGAARD

They were waiting for their husbands to return from work at sea or on the land, when a gigantic wave suddenly appeared on the horizon, swelled in overland and changed their lives in the course of a few minutes.

When the tsunami hit the coasts of Indonesia on 26 December 2004, thousands of houses, villages and human lives were smashed to smithereens. By far most of the lives that were lost were the lives of women. More than 75 per cent of the deceased in Aceh, the worst hit area of Indonesia, were women, as is shown in studies by the British organisation Oxfam International.

According to Oxfam, it was more difficult for women than for men to flee from the massive bodies of water, and in contrast with the men, they were mostly in their houses.

New role models. *“Women can be real agents for change in their homes, their communities, and in the society as a whole”, states Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission.*

The tsunami underlined an old problem: men and women have different living conditions, and it follows that incidents such as natural disasters have different affects on the two genders. The impact of global climate change has now made this basic problem more topical than ever.

Women among the most vulnerable

The future prospects for the earth warn of significantly changed weather. Many more natural disasters are lying in wait, according to the crystal balls of climate researchers. In addition it is predicted that the weather in general will become more extreme. Droughts, heat waves and floods are some of the forms that the changed climate will take.

This will have a negative impact on the poor areas of the world particularly for two main reasons.

Firstly, because a large proportion of the extreme weather changes and natural disasters will take place in these areas. According to Oxfam, countries in the third world were hit by as many as 94 per cent of the globe's natural disasters between 1990 and 1998.

Secondly, because the main source of livelihood in the developing countries is farming and farming will be direly affected by droughts and floods.

Poor people who live off farming will, in the worst case, have crops neither to sell nor to eat, and they will not have a social security to fall back on.

Furthermore, climate change will affect individuals in these poor areas in various ways – all according to their gender.

“Since there is a disproportionate number of women in poverty in developing countries and societies which are very dependent on local natural resources, women will also be disproportionately affected by the impacts of climate change”, says Ulrike Röhr, spokeswoman for Gender cc, a global network for gender and climate, established during the UN Climate Conference COP12 on Bali, and consisting of NGOs and UN organisations.

In many developing countries the women are the main actors in the home and in the production of food in agriculture. Therefore their workload will grow as the weather changes. If the mountain area where a South

American woman grows potatoes changes, she will likely have to go even further up the mountain to find new areas to cultivate. If a river where African women fetch water for their households dries up, they might have to walk several kilometres to the next one. This can imply danger.

“We already see in countries with conflicts, such as Congo and Sudan that most sexual assaults on women take place when they are outside cultivating their crops or fetching water. If they are to go even further away from home in future, their safety is at risk”, says Maria Glinvad from the Danish NGO KULU, which cooperates closely with particularly African women’s organisations within the field of gender and climate.

The battle over water

It is not, however, only in the countryside that women will feel the impact of climate change. In towns also and everywhere where water is used, climate change presages a new era. If there is less water to use, there will, correspondingly, be more conflict over the water. And the losers will be those with the least financial and political resources – the poor, and particularly poor women.

This is shown in an extensive research project run by the Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS). Researchers have explored both conflicts and cooperation over water during ten years in five regions in the world; for example in Nicaragua. Although Nicaraguan water legislation says that drinking water is to be prioritized over water for irrigation of land and watering cattle, the competition for water often in practice ends in the opposite being the case. Large cattle and vegetable producers win the battle for water over poor women, who wish to use water for washing clothes or cooking.

“So women must make do with less water or water of a poorer quality. If climate change is going to mean larger variations in the amount of water, the challenges faced by women will also be harder to solve. As, for example, in the case where the river where they fetch water is fenced in by a competitor for the water”, says Dr Helle Munk Ravnborg, who leads the research project “Competing



A gender perspective must urgently be integrated into the climate debate.

— ISMAT JAHAN,
BANGLADESHI UN AMBASSADOR

for Water” and is head of the DIIS research unit on Natural Resources and Poverty.

Gender equality endangered

Many fear that the particular effects of climate change for women will have long-term consequences for gender equality.

“When there is less time to do the chores, a woman typically keeps one daughter at home from school to take care of the work in the household she herself cannot do because she, for example, must walk a longer distance to fetch water. Regardless of where in the world you look, boys are being prioritized when it comes to education”, says Maria Glinvad of KULU.

More work results in less access to education and the labour market outside of the home.

And if climate change also makes more people ill, this will mean extra work for women, who traditionally take care of the children, the sick and the elderly.

In some developing countries women also run a greater risk of falling ill than men,

since they have poorer health and less access to health care services.

According to the World Bank, in Bangladesh, which has experienced several natural disasters, the average length of life is shorter among women than among men, since their state of health is poorer. Therefore women in the country are also hit harder than men by natural disasters.

The consequences of gender roles

Bangladesh is one of the countries in the world that has both widespread poverty and a high probability of being affected by the threat of climate change, as well as by natural disasters. The country is already regularly hit by tropical cyclones and is periodically flooded. The UN Climate Panel has issued a warning that the situation will get worse if the water level of the sea rises and the ice melts in the Himalayas. This would be a fatal development for women.

Of those who died during the 1991 cyclone in Bangladesh, 90 per cent were women. According to experts, this is due to religious habits and attitudes to women in the mainly Muslim society.

Oxfam has published a report entitled *Gender, Development and Climate Change* (2002), which explores the high mortality rate among women in Bangladesh. It claims that many women died during the cyclone because in consideration of codes of honour they could not go outside without a male relative to seek cover in shelters such as madrasahs (Koran schools), where they would have had to be in the company of unknown men. Therefore many women died in their homes, where they were waiting for a male relative to come and fetch them.

Women could also not be seen in public spaces such as shelters or other places where they could have sought help, as they were dressed in wet clothes, which they naturally were as a result of the flood. Their clothes also made it difficult for them to flee from the floods, and in addition very few women can swim, since it is not considered to be an activity appropriate for females.

Therefore the Bangladeshi UN Ambassador was one of those who demanded gender



In many developing countries the women are the main actors in the home and in the production of food in agriculture. Therefore their workload will grow as the weather changes.

to be included in the global climate debate, as the UN Women's Commission gathered for its 52nd meeting in 2008.

"Climate change is not a gender neutral phenomenon. Women and children are generally more vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Therefore a gender perspective must urgently be integrated into the climate debate", said Ismat Jahan, the Bangladeshi UN Ambassador.

The experiences of Bangladesh showed how great a role gender plays in the survival process during a natural disaster. But they also showed how important it is to wear gender glasses when preventing disasters; the women in Bangladesh had not received any prior warning of the approaching cyclone. The official warnings never reached the women, since they were given to men in public places and seldom communicated on to the women and the rest of the family.

The need to be better informed

Access to knowledge, information, warnings and meteorological weather forecasts is precisely what several climate experts point to as one of the most important things for poor people in the world, if they are to be able to adapt to a changing climate.

The international expert group Commission on Climate Change and Development, which was appointed by the Swedish Government in 2007, has published its final report in 2009. The Commission has, among other things, investigated how poor developing countries can adapt to future climate changes and reduce the risks of humanitarian catastrophes. Their conclusion was that the poor must have access to knowledge. They must be empowered so that they are better prepared for the climate changes.

In Mali, for example, farmers are used to the rains starting when the storks have returned from Europe. But what will happen if the storks no longer arrive? How are people then to get information on what the weather will be like? And what about the crops that cannot stand too much drought or water?

"I have a garden, and I can go to a nursery to find out what flowers I should plant when the meteorologists say it's going to be a wet



Women have less access to information and historically fewer rights than men.

— NANA HVIDT, COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

summer. The poor don't have access to this kind of information – for example to regional weather forecasts or to expertise as to which crops they can start growing that can withstand droughts," says Nana Hvidt, Director of DIIS and member of the Commission on Climate Change and Development.

Some information does already exist in these countries, but it is not being passed on to those that would benefit from it.

"This naturally affects women, since they, as it is, have even less access to information and historically fewer rights than the men."

Included in decision making

Women should, on the whole, be much more involved in the decision making processes in the climate battle, if society is not to disintegrate when the climate changes occur – this is demanded by both NGOs and female politicians. But so far this has not always been the case.

As a step forward in the climate battle, all countries have established particular policies to reduce CO₂ emissions by, for example, investing in alternative energy sources. Seve-

ral countries have also protected forest areas which are essential for reducing the greenhouse effect.

But this has consequences for the women, if they can no longer fetch fuel in the forest as they are used to. They must then walk even further – or find alternative ways of earning money. And even if some of the projects designed to mitigate the effects of climate change include the creation of new jobs to make up for lost income, women's needs are not always thought of.

In Bolivia, a large and prestigious climate project was started in 1996 in San Ignacio de Velasco, Santa Cruz. The Noel Kempff Mercado Climate Action Project is the world's largest forest based CO₂ project. Its aim was to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases and create sustainable development by buying land in the Amazons for expanding the Noel Kempff National Park.

But the women were left out of all the important decision making bodies, as shown by a study from the University of East Anglia in Norwich, where Dr Emily Boyd examined the project from gender perspectives. The board set up for the National Park included no female members. All of the NGO leaders were men. Only a few women participated in the public meetings. And the jobs that were created when the area was to be turned into a national park, were almost all given to men.

This meant that it became difficult for the women to make ends meet, not least if they were the only wage earner in the household. The men, for instance, decided that the local community should now establish large cattle ranches as a new earning model. However, the households with women as single breadwinners could not participate in the project, as they could not contribute with male labour for the hard physical work.

Their problems were not taken into account, either. Several women complained of contaminated water in the water pumps. This is an issue with a widespread general impact. But the men simply listened to the complaints and then instead chose to discuss cattle and boat loans, so the water problem was never solved.

Climate change poses great challenges for women in developing countries. But it can also be a source of inspiration for renewal – and in the end perhaps for gender equality.

"The positive story that we are now increasingly hearing from our African cooperation partners is that climate change creates new female entrepreneurs. African women share new knowledge and experiences across country borders – if something works in Mali, it will certainly work also in Tanzania or Kenya", says Maria Glinvad from the Danish organisation KULU.

Positive developments

In South Africa women have learnt to make solar energy cells, so they can produce their own energy. This knowledge they pass on to other women. The cells are both used in their homes and can be sold to others.

In Mali women who live off farming have successfully experimented with a new crop that can stand extreme weather conditions: they are now growing nut bushes. The bushes can be used as firewood; the nuts are ground to a cream and sold to be used for beauty products.

"The women become independent and participate in starting a sustainable consumer product. But this requires that they must receive financing, if the positive development is to continue", says Maria Glinvad.

When Margot Wallström, Vice-President of the European Commission, spoke in Liberia in West Africa in March, her message to the women was also that they can become new role models in a world where the climate is changing.

"Women can be real agents for change in their homes, their communities, and in the society as a whole. They can take over new renewable forms of house hold energy, such as biomass, biogas, solar. They tackle climate change as consumers, as educators. Through their specific role in educating their children, they can promote behavioural change in human or economic and environmental activities", she said.

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Sami fishermen in Lofoten. Painting by Milton J. Burns.

Climate change in arctic areas

Climate changes affect people not only in southern developing countries – people living in or close to arctic areas in the Nordic countries are also affected.

Cicero, the Norwegian climate research centre, has carried out a study on how inhabitants in arctic areas handle climate changes. Many people in the arctic areas are dependent on natural resources for their livelihood and thus highly affected by climate change. Although the researchers did not put a special focus on gender, Senior Research Fellow Grete Kaare Hovelsrud can see that climate change affects women and men in different ways:

"The Sea Sámi in Finnmark in northern Norway have a gendered division of labour. The men fish while the women

pick berries and hunt by trapping. If climate change results in berries growing further away, the women must walk a longer distance to be able to pick them."

Fishing, too, is climate dependent, but the men are not as convinced as the women that the climate is undergoing a permanent change.

"For the men, enduring changes and various weather conditions is part of life."

Similar to all sparsely populated areas, the arctic areas are influenced by migration. Women move away to a larger extent than men, since women wish to get an education. Those who stay are men with a low level of education.

"When, in addition to this development, the climate changes, society becomes very vulnerable", says Grete Kaare Hovelsrud.

BOSSE PARBRING



Class, Gender and Climate Safety

Class struggles

A male-dominated over-consuming class is creating significant hardship among women of the struggling class. But one-third of humanity belongs to the sustainable class. If they made it, it should be very much possible also for the rest.

BY JARNA PASANEN AND MARKO ULVILA

A male-dominated over-consuming class is creating significant hardship among women of the struggling class. But one-third of humanity belongs to the sustainable class. If they made it, it should be very much possible also for the rest.

Most of the climate debates focus on the emissions of nation states or their average levels on a per capita basis. In this article we point out that a much more interesting and useful perspective would be to look at the greenhouse gas emissions from a class perspective, including a clear gender aspect, too. We argue that the way of life that is led by an over-consuming class is the major cause of the looming climate chaos, and that solutions which would arrest the destructive behaviour of that class are desperately needed.

Our basic argument is that incomes are directly related to greenhouse gas emissions: the richer the people are, the more they pollute.¹ This fact is illustrated by figure 1 below from Sweden, presenting the carbon emissions of households according to their incomes in deciles (groups of one tenth of the population in the order of incomes).

In this case from Sweden, the members of the richest deciles cause almost four times more CO₂ emissions than the poorest. In countries with larger income inequalities the difference would be higher.

Three cultural classes

We have defined three cultural classes based on a combination of environmental sustainability and human dignity.² Following the *environmental sustainability principle*, our focus is on pollution and resource use on an industrial scale. The justification for this is that in the context of climate change, the emissions from using land for food production or firewood for cooking are different from the burning of fossil fuels in three important ways.

As for the *human dignity principle*, our consideration is twofold. On the one hand, we look at the fulfilment of basic material human needs such as food, shelter and health. On the other hand, we consider also the socio-cultural needs of humans such as respect, freedom and meaning. When both these

aspects are met, human dignity is realised. When either one is missing, human dignity in the concerned culture is questionable.

The starting point for our definition and calculation of the cultural classes is the work of Matthew Bentley and his definition of a member of the consumer class as a person who has an annual income exceeding 7,000 USD in terms of purchasing power parity.³ This is a group that we call *the over-consuming class*.

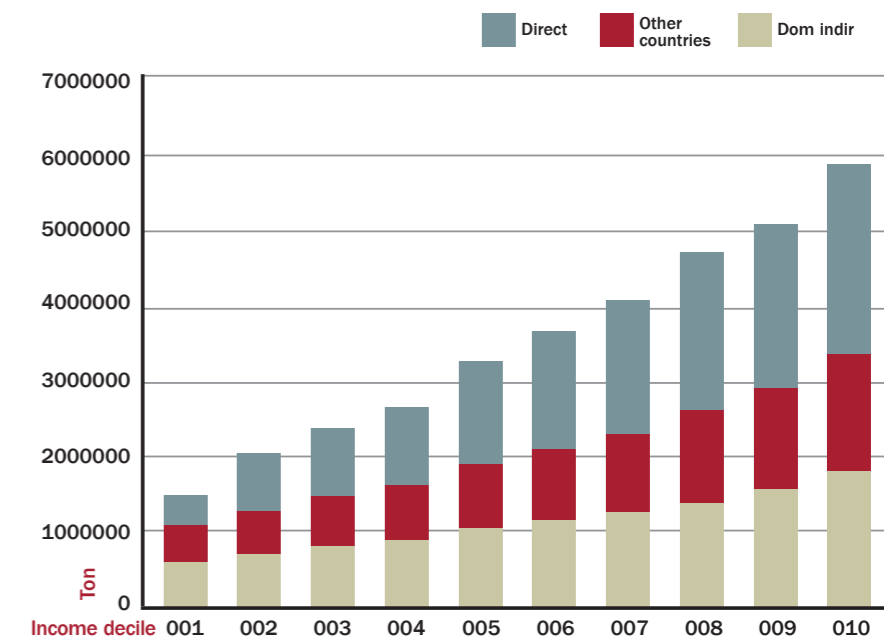
The numbers of the over-consuming class in selected major countries are indicated in Table 1. An important element to note here, is the sizeable over-consuming class in populous countries such as China and India. On a global-scale, an almost equal number of over-consumers are found in the developed and developing groups.

The second set of data is for the group that we call *the struggling class*. It is roughly the people who try to survive with less than USD 2 per day.⁴ For the industrialised regions, we have calculated on the struggling class forming a minimum of five per cent of the population, as homelessness, unemployment and inadequate access to health care deny dignified life for at least this large a proportion also in the high income societies.

Selected countries	Over-consumers	Share of population
United States	243 million	84%
China	240 million	19%
India	122 million	12%
Japan	121 million	95%
Germany	76 million	92%
Brazil	58 million	33%
WORLD Of which: • In industrial countries • In developing countries	1,728 million 912 million 816 million	28%

Table 1: Over-consumers in selected countries and regions 2002. Source: Worldwatch 2004.

Figure 1: CO₂ emission of income deciles in Sweden, 2000. Source: Statistics Sweden 2007



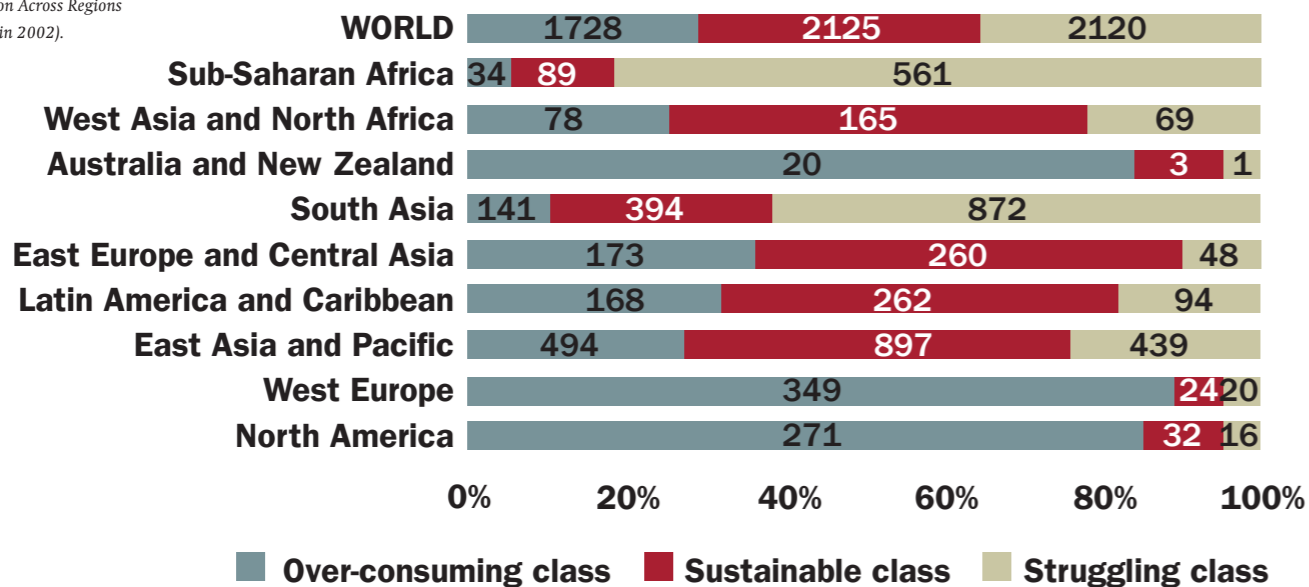
Geographically the gender differences among the three classes are clearest in regions where the sustainable class is large.

What is left between these two groups, we have named *the sustainable class*. The members of the sustainable class have their basic needs met by livelihoods that do not cause excessive industrial greenhouse gas emissions. And they lead ways of life that are not consuming excessive amounts of energy or non-renewable resources. By discovering this sizeable class between annual per capita incomes of around USD 750 and 7,000 we hope to bring optimism to the gloomy picture of the future: one-third of humanity has made it, and it should be very much possible for the rest to do so also! In reality, this class faces constant challenges with the appeal of the 'consumer paradise' on the one hand and precarious existence in the lower ladders of power structures on the other hand.

The number of people belonging to these classes and their relative share in the world and its regions are indicated in Figure 2.

Looking at the figures we can see that Western Europe and North America are dominated by the over-consuming class, while the sustainable class has the largest share in Latin America, Eastern Europe, Central Asia, West Asia, North Africa and East Asia. Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia have members of the struggling class as the most dominant group.

Figure 2: Cultural Class Formation Across Regions (Million in 2002).



Gender and cultural classes

The presentation of the three classes above did not pay attention to gender, as the income statistics used did not readily have gender specific data. As that is difficult to find, we will now discuss the gender aspects of the sustainable culture and classes using some rough estimates.

According to Hemmati and Gardiner, 70 per cent of the poorest 1.6 billion people, which we call the struggling class, are women.⁵ We can assume that about the same proportion holds for our 2.1 billion members of the struggling class.

Concerning the over-consuming class, we can benefit from the estimate that 99 per cent of the world's wealth and 90 per cent of the world's income is with men.⁶ Therefore, the over-consuming class would be predominantly male.

In Table 2 below, we present a scheme for the gender division of the three classes, based on the figures presented above. Our estimate, then, is that two out of three members of the over-consuming class are male, and similarly two out of three members of the struggling class are female. The sustainable class would have an equal share of both genders.

The purpose of this scheme is to point to the fact that the consumption patterns in classes differ considerably in gender terms. Geographically the gender differences among the three classes are clearest in regions where the sustainable class is large. Thus in regions where the sustainable class is sizeable, such as Latin America, much of Asia and North Africa, there are women and men within the same household belonging to different classes because of variations in the disposable income and the subsequent ways of life. Men travel long distances by private car, women go by foot or by public transport, for example. In industrial countries most of

	Male	Female
Over-consuming class	2/3	1/3
Sustainable class	1/2	1/2
Struggling class	1/3	2/3

Table 2: A Schematic Estimate of the Gender Division Among the Cultural Classes.

The challenge is to work out degrowth politics that are just and bring about changes in a democratic and incremental manner.

the women fall in the over-consuming class, and in poor countries most of the men fall in the struggling class.

Male-dominated over-consumption is creating significant hardship among the women of the struggling classes. It is the poor women in developing countries who bear the heaviest burden of environmental degradation. These women typically lack access to essential resources, but at the same time they are responsible for the food, fuel and water supply of the whole household. Environmental loss and degradation considerably increase women's workloads in obtaining these essential resources. This increased pressure also places heavy emotional and psychological burdens on women and family relationships.⁷

Gerd Johnsson-Latham has made pertinent observations about gender and consumption. She points out that women and men have different social conditions and lifestyles and consume differently, and man-the-polluter emerges both among the rich and among the poor. Even though the family is often taken as a single socio-economic unit, she observes that it seldom represents a balanced distribution unit and the differing access to resources and consumption is most pronounced in poor families. She concludes that "if women's consumption levels were to be the norm, both emissions and climate change would be significantly less than today".⁸

Johnsson-Latham makes two proposals on gender and sustainable future. The first one is to make clear how women live more sustainably for the benefit of others, but often at the cost of ill-health to themselves and take action on this. The second proposal is to question male roles or forms of masculinity that lead to unsustainable ecological and social development. She also calls for an analysis examining the patterns relating to gender-specific consumption on the basis of four prototypes: a rich man, a rich woman, a poor man and a poor woman. This would introduce data concerning the actual consumption of these classes, which is now missing.⁹

Degrowth is the solution

A logical step from the analysis above would be to pursue a policy of contraction of the monetary income of the over-consuming

classes to protect the climate from a dangerous destabilisation. Such a degrowth scenario is being welcomed by an increasing number of scholars and actors. Degrowth, *decroissance* in French, is defined as "a voluntary transition towards a just, participatory and ecologically sustainable society".¹⁰

Proponents of degrowth argue that the current economic growth is not sustainable in the long run because it depletes natural resources and destroys the environment, and because it fails to help populations improve their welfare significantly. The challenge is to work out degrowth politics that would be just and bring about the changes in a democratic and incremental manner, rather than through collapse and unfair burden on the least powerful.

According to Fabrice Flipo, degrowth is a coming together of several policy sources which currently coincide without even being convergent. Of such sources, the dominant one is environmental policy with its tradition of limits to growth debates. Another related one is bio-economics, as established by Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen. The other three are culturalist sources led by Serge Latouche, democratic sources in the spirit of Ivan Illich and a crisis of direction in modern societies, as noted already by M.K. Gandhi.¹¹

Marko Ulvila was Research Director and Jarna Pasanen Researcher for the research project *Cultures of Sustainability – Sustainability of Culture: Africa-Asia-Europe Dialogue on the Future of Low Ecological Footprint Communities*.

The article is based on the study *Sustainable Futures*, commissioned and funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in the context of development co-operation. The aim of the project was to find ways of preserving the culture of sustainable societies and transforming unsustainable ones by engaging in dialogue with concerned people in Finland, India, Kenya, Nepal and Tanzania. The full report and related papers can be obtained from www.sustainablefutures.fi.

NOTES

- 1 See Kempf 2008.
- 2 For a longer presentation of the class assesment, see Ulvila and Pasanen (eds) 2009 (forthcoming)
- 3 Worldwatch 2004, pp. 6-7.
- 4 World Bank 2007.
- 5 Hemmati & Gardiner 2002.
- 6 Robbins 1999, p. 354.
- 7 Hemmati & Gardiner 2002, p. 24.
- 8 Johnsson-Latham 2007, p. 50.
- 9 Johnsson-Latham 2007, p. 32.
- 10 Flipo & Schneider (eds.) 2008.
- 11 Flipo 2008.

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Women activists in climate negotiations:

“It is a matter of justice”

The future climate regime can neither ignore half of the Earth’s population nor deem it vulnerable by nature, state Dr Minu Hemmati and Ulrike Roehr from GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice – in an interview for NIKK magasin.

BY BOSSE PARBRING

How did issues of women’s participation and gender perspectives get into the UN climate negotiations?

“Parallel to the first conference of the parties (COP1), held in Berlin in 1995, an international women’s forum, ‘Solidarity in the Greenhouse’ attracted 200 women from 25 countries. Over two days, they talked about mitigating climate change, and how they perceived the official debates and recommendations. During the following COPs, women’s issues were not reflected in the discussions, either inside or outside the official process. Then, at COP6 in The Hague, women’s perspectives made another appearance: some civil society representatives commented on the important role women played in the negotiations although their presence in delegations actually only numbered a few. At subsequent conferences, various side events addressed gender issues, in particular those related to energy and adaptation.

Starting at COP9 in Milan, a gender and climate change network was initiated that called for “mainstreaming gender into the climate

change regime”. This has ultimately developed into the network and organisation we have today: GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice. We are convening daily women’s meetings at every COP (Women’s Caucus). We raise awareness and build capacity among negotiators and observers using information booths, side events, and campaigning actions. We make interventions in plenary and submit written inputs to the UNFCCC process (United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change). In our global network, we have been developing a research agenda and work on pilot projects to really learn what makes the change to realize women’s rights and gender justice in the context of climate change.

It is interesting to observe the increase in attention over the years: as long as gender perspectives focused on mitigation issues, the reception in the negotiations was poor. It was only when adaptation came more into the centre of the negotiations that women and gender issues gained more recognition. Until today, it is mostly ‘women as victims of climate change’ that have found their way into the

negotiations texts. Women’s knowledge and recommendations regarding mitigation of climate change and in particular regarding gender aspects of climate protection mechanisms are not well recognized even until now.”

What difference can it make if there are women in government delegations?

“Principally, women’s participation is a question of equality and justice and does not need further justification. And we should keep in mind that it doesn’t automatically lead to a growing recognition of women’s rights and gender justice if there are women on a delegation. That’s why we are asking for delegations to include gender experts and for the whole process to include gender expertise at every level. Establishing a high level expert advisory group on gender, for example, might help to achieve this – but only if the official process is obliged to consider the group’s input.”

Are NGOs better than the UN Member States when it comes to women’s participation in delegations?

“The debate on climate change has been very narrow, focusing on the economic effects of climate change, efficiency, and technological problems, and has attracted mostly men. This also goes for governments, intergovernmental organisations or nongovernmental organisations. Perhaps what is more significant is how a country and its political culture views gender issues. Another factor seems to be how countries – governments and civil society – perceive climate change: if social and economic issues play a key role for a country that is under great pressure to adapt, for example, then gender issues might come into view more easily. Sometimes, such factors may be mirrored in the compositions of delegations.”

You have participated in the recent preparatory meeting for COP15 which took place in Bonn. What are your impressions from that meeting?

“The official process did not make much progress at all. We note that the usual tactics seem to be played out here just as anywhere else – such as waiting until the last few minutes to make commit-

ments, or horse-trading commitments on otherwise unrelated issues. Some argue that nothing else should be expected of a UN negotiation process – in which case we say that the international community urgently needs to look what kind of fora and processes can be created to deliver what the world needs: urgent action on climate change.

Women’s organisations and gender experts from some IGOs worked hard to lobby governments and develop submissions. So, while the process is not delivering, there’s been some progress on integrating gender. In the beginning of 2009, GenderCC applied to the UNFCCC Secretariat to acknowledge women and gender NGOs as a distinct observer constituency. This might be approved before COP15, and we have started developing the structure and governance of the constituency. This certainly marks a new era in women’s involvement in the climate negotiations, and we are delighted to see it.”

What are your expectations for COP15 when it comes to women’s participation and gender issues?

“Gender must form an integral part of the whole process and its outcomes. We know from other policy processes that only if gender aspects are integrated in the documents will there be a chance hold governments accountable to their commitments. The whole climate change debate needs to be set firmly into the context of human rights and sustainable development. The Principles of the Rio Declaration should serve as the overall framework for developing fair and effective policies for mitigation and adaptation – we have these agreements, we need to use them! The future climate regime can neither ignore half of the Earth’s population nor deem it vulnerable by nature. This is a matter of justice. And it is a matter of achieving climate policies and actions that actually work.”

Minu Hemmati is a clinical psychologist with a doctorate in organisational and environmental psychology. She is working as an independent adviser. Ulrike Röhr, an engineer and sociologist by background, is co-ordinating the network GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice (www.gendercc.net).

Nordic countries in climate negotiations

Women will make a difference

Finland is funding female delegates in climate negotiations as well as supporting activities focusing on gender issues in the negotiations.

BY AIRA KALELA

Finland, together with the other Nordic countries and some other partners, has taken the lead in the ongoing negotiations aimed at drawing the attention of the delegations to the positive role women can play in the climate change. Our aim has been to encourage more women to participate in the negotiations and to include gender provisions in the new agreement on climate change.

In order to achieve these targets Finland has 1) established a supplementary travel fund for female participants in the negotiations; 2) planned and implemented a programme of awareness raising, cooperating with forums of political decision makers; 3) sup-

ported the organisation of training activities for delegates on gender and climate change, and 4) networked with interested governments and intergovernmental and non-governmental partners.

Travel fund for female delegates

Finland has established a fund of 500,000 euros to support wider participation of women in the negotiations on the new climate agreement. This amount will cover the travel and DSA costs for more than 100 travels. Funds are available for female delegates from the developing countries. Finland would welcome other Nordic countries to join this initiative.

The major event for raising the awareness of the decision makers on climate and gender was the Women Leaders Colloquium in Monrovia, Liberia on 7–8 March 2009. The convenors of this meeting were the Presidents of Liberia and Finland. One of the main themes of the colloquium was climate change and gender. The colloquium adopted a Call to Action on Climate Change and Gender. This initiative calls upon the governments and other partners in the negotiations to do their utmost to include more female delegates in the negotiations and incorporate gender considerations into the new agreement and its implementation by planning for information sharing, training, and other forms of capacity building, as well as making the necessary resources available for these activities.

Finland has also cooperated with the Female Environment Ministers Meeting on this issue. More than 40 Environment Ministers are female and they are meeting two or three times a year in connection with major environment meetings. The ministers have discussed the role of women in climate change during their two meetings last year. UNEP also organised a forum for the female ministers in connection with the Governing Council this February.

Side events

Side events during the latest Conference of the Parties in Poznan in December 2008 and the negotiations held in April 2009 in Bonn attracted a wide interest among the participants and some two hundred of these received updated information on climate change and gender. These events were organised in cooperation with the Global Gender and Climate Change Alliance. Finland has given financial support to the activities of this powerful alliance, which was established some two years ago by UNEP, UNDP, IUCN and WEDO (Women on Environment and Development) and now represents more than 30 UN and other organisations.

Finland's financial support will make extensive awareness raising and training activities possible. In connection with the negotiation

Our aim has been to encourage more women to participate in the negotiations and to include gender provisions in the new agreement on climate change.

process two training courses for the delegates have been organised.

Regional training courses will now be organised. More than 800 experts have applied for this training, which will strengthen the capacities of the climate experts to understand the role of women and act for enabling the active participation of women in climate change decision-making and the implementation of the new agreement.

Special web pages of the Finnish Ministry for Foreign Affairs will also serve as a source of information and awareness raising. Please see: www.formin.finland.fi>International cooperation>Cooperation on Climate Change>Climate Change and Gender.

Finland is looking forward to continuing to cooperate with interested parties and stake holders for strengthening the participation of women in all climate activities, which will make these activities more effective.

Aira Kalela is Special Representative for Gender and Climate Change at the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Finland

Nordic recommendations

Gender equality should be integrated into the new UN climate agreement. This is the appeal from participants of a Nordic Summit on climate, gender and equality.

The participants from all the Nordic countries, invited by the Nordic Council of Ministers and the Nordic Ministers for Gender Equality, have contributed to the composition of concrete, practical requirements. All the recommendations can be downloaded at www.lige.dk; below is a presentation of some of them:

- Gender equality should be a basic principle in the negotiation process and an integral part of the new climate agreement. Gender equality will pave the way for a more efficient solution to the acute adaptation problems within, for example, farming and water supply, which are usually female domains in developing countries.
- Investments in gender equality should motivate innovation and sustainable development. There is a need for access to all human resources and talents. Men and women think diffe-

rently and contribute differently to solutions. In order to secure diversity, men and women are to have equal access to influencing and utilising investments in climate measures.

- A clear Nordic development aid profile on gender equality and climate should be created. The Nordic countries are to decide that a considerable percentage of the development aid is to be earmarked for gender sensitive climate projects.
- Equal access to sustainable technology for women and men should be created. It is a basic right that women and men have equal access to technologies which can reduce their emission of greenhouse gases. Women must have direct access to given technologies rather than access mediated by men.
- Technology, innovation and design must include both a climate and a gender equality

perspective. We should make use of women's and men's different access routes, knowledge and competencies in technology development and implementation.

- The public sectors in industrial countries should take the lead in CO₂ reduction. The public sector has the size and financial power to create the market needed and thus to create and affect demand. A new trend will be set when the products and the services are there and the public sector can pay for them. It will also "de-gender" the debate, so that what is the right kind of action is the main issue – regardless of gender.
- It must be secured that the local knowledge, experiences and needs of both genders are included in the application of all interventions and all political decision processes concerning adaptation.

- By 2014, the boards and top managements of public and private enterprises are to have a gender balance of a minimum of 60–40. The reduction of climate gases is a global challenge. It requires a great deal of inventiveness, a range of competencies, support from the public and willpower. Therefore we must make use of all the available resources in society. Women and men have different experiences and both are to be considered in the decision making process. Women and men are to carry the same responsibility for the future development of society.

Recommendations to the EU

The international research conference on Gendering Climate and Sustainability, hosted by the University of Copenhagen on 13-14 March 2009, also launched recommendations

aimed at governments and research communities at national, regional and global levels. The following recommendations are intended for the European Commission and the European Parliament:

- Explicit integration of gender and equality in upcoming FP7 research programmes, in particular programmes related to transport, energy, food and nutrition.
- Issue of a Parliamentary Report and a Parliamentary Hearing on the issues of gender, climate and sustainability.
- Launch of a European Programme for research and innovation with the theme Gender, Climate and Sustainability.
- Launch of a European Programme focused on sustainable environmental and social developments.

Research news

SEND TIP-OFFS TO BOSSE.PARBRING@NIKK.UIO.NO

New European organisation for gender research

The aim of ATGENDER – European Association for Gender Research, Education and Documentation – is to create a permanent structure for the growing field of gender research in Europe. The founding was marked at the seventh European gender research conference in Utrecht on 4–7 June. The earlier networks AOIFE, WISE and ATHENA3 are fused into ATGENDER which will be an extensive organisation for academics, practitioners, activists and institutions within the field of gender research and equality. Harriet Silius, Professor of Women's Studies at Åbo Akademi University, Finland, and Iris van der Tuin, Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at Utrecht University, will share the presidency of the new organisation.

"Persons working in the field of gender equality and who hold a feminist attitude and want to support our activities are welcome as members. We want to strengthen the co-operation with the policy making field concerning, for example, issues of research funding", Harriet Silius points out.



Sari Pikkala



Kerstin Alnebratt

New directors in Finland and in Sweden

The Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research and the new Finnish Gender Equality Information Centre have appointed new directors. Both institutions have emphasized sound competence within research and politics in their choices. Sari Pikkala will head the new Finnish centre. She is currently researcher in Public Administration at Åbo Akademi University and specialises in local government democracy and gender equality. In Sweden, Kerstin Alnebratt will take on the post as Director of the Swedish Secretariat for Gender Research starting 1 September. She is finishing her doctoral thesis on the development of gender research in Sweden from a research policy perspective by studying the funding for gender research from the 1970s until today.

A continued political struggle

Norway and Sweden are flagships when it comes to gender equality within the academic world in a European context. But even here, political work is needed to achieve gender balance goals.

"Gender equality work is politics. We mustn't forget that", says Lars Jalmert.

He is Professor of Education and Chair of the Gender Equality Committee at Stockholm University, which in August 2009 arranged the European Conference on Gender Equality in Higher Education.

The reminder that political work must be done in order to achieve gender equality goals was the red thread running through all of the presentations. The same idea was emphasised in a number of parallel sessions.

"Gender equality work here in Sweden has been somewhat hushed up the last few years, and the field has not been as politicized as it was earlier. At the same time it is obvious that there is still a great deal of opposition to the goal of gender equality, both internally in academia and also generally. Several parts of the conference dealt with this opposition", Jalmert summarizes.

Academic journeys

Visions of the future was one of the general themes of the conference, and Louise Morley was invited to talk about universities of the future, in a climate geared towards thinking in terms of business. She is Professor of Education at the University of Sussex. Solveig Bergman, Director of NIKK, for her part warned against the negative consequences of an increasingly elitist ideology within the universities.



Photo: Bosse Parbring

And, as the only male on board, Jeff Hearn, sociologist and researcher into critical studies on men and masculinities at Linköping University, spoke on men in academia.

Diminishing funding

Many European countries, particularly some of the new EU member states, have been active during the last few years when it comes to gender equality in research and have received EU funding for their work. The problem is that such funding is usually project-based and does not involve long-term financing, says Gerd Bjørhovde, Chair of the Committee for Gender Mainstreaming – Women in Science in Norway.

"Now several of them are finding that the funding is coming to an end, and they are facing severe problems. This is a concern, for example, for the network European Platform of Women Scientists, which might now be forced to end all its activities. Their situation is different from ours here in Norway, where for quite a few years and in many contexts we have been able to cooperate with the parliament and ministries. Many of these countries are both surprised at, and perhaps a little envious of our circumstances."

SIRI LINDSTAD



SOLVEIG BERGMAN

D.Soc.Sc. and Director of NIKK

Gendering the EU: opportunities and setbacks

The June 2009 elections saw the representation of women in the European Parliament rise to 35 per cent. The three Nordic EU-members stand out with respect to this development: Finland and Sweden having a majority of women in their MEP groups and Denmark following close behind.

Women's presence in the European Parliament has increased over time – and is certainly higher than in many member states. Yet, there is still a way to go before reaching parity or even a 40 per cent threshold. Moreover, women are largely absent or a small minority in key leadership positions both in the EP and in other institutions of the Union.

Earlier there was a tendency amongst Nordic feminists to think that the EU has very little to offer with respect to gender equality. For a long time, gender policy within the EU was restricted to equal opportunities on the labour market. Over time, the scope of the EU's gender equality agenda has expanded.

Today, the Union is persuaded to take action where it previously insisted it had no authority. Reconciliation of paid work and the family has become an important issue and gender mainstreaming is endorsed as the EU's official policy approach to gender equality. More recently, questions such as trafficking, violence against women, sexual harassment and gay/lesbian rights have entered the EU agenda. Moreover, EU directives and policies require member states to expand the scope of gender equality to encompass intersecting axes of structural power, such as race/ethnicity, sexuality, economic class, disability or age.



Many Nordic feminists recognise today that gender and sexual politics have a place in EU policy-making. Important decisions affecting gender relations are being taken in Brussels and gender politics can no longer be confined to a nation-state level. A feminist presence in European institutions is crucial. The strategy of gender mainstreaming recognises the need to integrate a gender dimension into all policy areas both within the European Union and in the nation-states. Yet, gender mainstreaming can also have negative impacts and contribute to a "de-gendering". In the name of gender mainstreaming, institutions or units that specialise on gender can risk being marginalised or even closed down. The result can be that nobody takes responsibility for the gender dimension, or that gender is "everywhere and nowhere".

History shows that there is no automatic progress in gender equality development. Instead, there are often halts, setbacks and backlashes. We need permanent institutions both within the EU structures and in civil society. Loose and ad-hoc networks are important, but not enough.

The recently established European Institute for Gender Equality provides a promising new discursive and political platform for policy-makers, NGOs and feminist researchers. The Institute can hopefully develop into a resource for feminist advocacy seeking to exert pressure on national governments.

This role of the EU to enforce gender policies is important in the current political climate, when many European states are becoming increasingly indifferent and even hostile to gender equality, women's autonomy, anti-discrimination policies or sexual rights.

Next issue 18 November 2009

Focus:

Gender and power in the Nordic countries

While the development of gender equality is rather advanced within politics in the Nordic countries, it is less so within the world of business. The next issue of NIKK magasin will give examples from both politics and business and present the results from a comparative Nordic research project. The issue will be in the Scandinavian languages, but English articles will be published at nikk.no.

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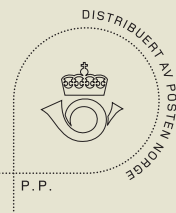
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Why Gender?
International academic conference in
Jyväskylä, Finland
[http://research.jyu.fi/strategicpractices/
Seminar2009.html](http://research.jyu.fi/strategicpractices/Seminar2009.html)

22.10

Parental Leave, Care Policies & Gender
Equalities in the Nordic Countries
Reykjavik, Iceland
<http://formennskadansk2009.forsaetisraduneyti.is>

4-6.11

24orMore
International conference on increasing female
labour participation
Amsterdam, Netherlands
<http://talentclasses.org/>

17-18.11

Gender differences in educational achievement
Conference arranged by the Swedish Presidency
of the European Union
Uppsala, Sweden
www.se2009.eu

18-19.11

Gender and Power in the Nordic Countries
Reykjavik, Iceland
www.nikk.no

2-4.12

Gendering Violence
International conference at Uppsala University,
Sweden
<http://genderingviolence.soc.uu.se>

**MORE CONFERENCES AT
WWW.NIKK.NO**