Cool down

Need for gender perspectives in the climate debate
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 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. A stronger focus needs to be directed onto the concept of mitigation, that is, how can we 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 to 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

8 “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.

12 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?

15 Column: Gender equality – a top priority

Danish Ministers Inger Støjberg and Ulla Tornæs on gender and climate change.

16 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?

20 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 a woman, not allowed to be seen alone and in wet clothes among unfamiliar men.

26 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.

30 “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 Koehler from GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice – in an interview for NIKK magasin.

32 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.

32 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 and gender equality.

35 Editorial: Gendering the EU: opportunities and setbacks
**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. Alto 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 percent of all MEPs were men. Since then the proportion of men has slowly decreased. But before the current election, the men still held a strong majority forming 69 percent of the Members of the European Parliament. Now, the male proportion has gone down to 65 percent.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Before 2009 (members/per cent)</th>
<th>After 2009 (members/per cent)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>Women: 6/43</td>
<td>Women: 8/62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men: 8/57</td>
<td>Men: 10/66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total: 14/100</td>
<td>14/100</td>
<td>19/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47/100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>785/100</td>
<td>298/36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Home alone with quota**

Home alone with quota

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

**Global Gender Research: Transnational perspectives**

Global Gender Research offers a wide-ranging collection of feminist sociological insights around the world.

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

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

**New Books**

**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 Iceland presidency of the Nordic Council of Ministers organizes a Nordic conference on gender and power in Reykjavik. 19-20 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.norden.org

**Gender equality in education systems**

A Nordic conference will be arranged in Reykjavik, on 21 and 22 September 2009 on gender equality in education systems. 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 education and gender equality in schools was held 3-4 June, 2009, on the Faro 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 22-23, 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

---

**NEW BOOKS**

**Global Gender Research: Transnational Perspectives**

Global Gender Research offers a wide-ranging collection of feminist sociological insights around the world.

**Gender Delight: Science, Knowledge, Culture and Writing... for Nina Lykke**

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

Authors: Cecilia Åsberg, Katherine Harriss, Björn Pernrud and Mahesh Guttagoudar (eds.)

Publisher: Tama 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.
EU Director appointed

In 2005, the EU Commission decided to set up an institute for gender equality. Almost five years later, Virginia Langbakht 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 SIFO (Swedish Institute for Public Administration) focusing 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.

Irisa Erlingsdóttir (Director of RIKK for up to seven years)

Recently appointed director of RIKK (Centre for Women’s and Gender Studies) is Ms. Iriða Erlingsdóttir. She is also project manager for the new centre.

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 the Icelandic Parliament 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 emphasises, “does not work in isolation. It is first and foremost an intervention to educate and need 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 SIGURDARDOTTIR

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?
“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: TRUDJE TIENVOELD

“A large salad on the kitchen table, white wine, a sea food plait and then a rich chocolate cake to finish. Easy-going, uncomplicated girls 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 Spjärnor utan svindel (Stars without Deception) by the Swedish author Louise Boije af Gennas.

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, fish or vegetables?

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 Norlak 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 access,” Runar Døving says. “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’ 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 Kjøberød 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 intake 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.

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. 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 intake 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.

What is it about men and meat?

“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’ 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 Kjøberød 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 intake 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.
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.

— BUNAR DRIVING, SOCIAL ANTHROPOLOGIST

In addition, this feeds their “bestial” side. In earlier times etologists 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 code, while vegetables, fruit and sweet things are often not even if more and more people – including women in general seem to be saved”, he notes.

"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 Norutra.

However, this has not always been the case. Kumar Dewan points out.

“Before meat-mincers were invented, minced meat was very expensive. Since that took the 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 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”, Kumar Dewan says. 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 that others assumed he was gay or otherwise 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 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 a day. 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.
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 HVITD BREENG AARD AND HELENE OLD RUP

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 transport has increased, while the share of energy-conserving transport has not increased to the same extent (Oldrup & Breengaard 2009). Predictions show that energy-polluting and energy-consuming transport 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 daycare to work to shops, and back to daycare 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). This information points to the need to tailor 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.

There have been no studies on the different ecological footprints of women and men in terms of transportation choices, but their different transportation behaviours and patterns obviously have an impact on the climate. It is possible to say that, through their different use of transportation, women and men strain the environment differently. A Swedish report concludes that since women travel less than men, they may also cause less transportation-related carbon emissions than men (Johnsson-Latham 2007). This may include strategies that focus more on changing people’s behaviour than on assigning guilt.

It also becomes clear that gender alone is not enough to explain differences within travel patterns, and that an intersectional approach is needed to fully understand how and why people travel as they tend to do.

There are several explanations for the different travel patterns of women and men. 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 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 can afford 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

what’s driving you?

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

A gendered approach to sustainable transport

Focus: Climate change

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

A gendered approach to sustainable transport

Focus: Climate change
Changing patterns. Highly educated and economically better-off women increasingly mimic the same travel patterns as men. Photo: Stockpoint

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: A report on equal travel

REFERENCES
Genderc: www.genderc.net
Danish study on sex, upbringing and young people (Danske studie om sex, opdragelse og unge) (Roberta study on gender, gender equality and climate change). Helene Strach, Gliwon and Michael McPherson were co-ordinated for the Nordic Council of Ministers, January 2008.

Focus: Climate change

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

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-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-
Focus: Climate change

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?

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)
Focus: Climate change

Equally unsustainable consumption and lifestyle patterns are 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. 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. “Men can now fulfill sexual emancipation have been co-opted by the market with third wave feminism and girl power. Emancipation and identity, instead of solidarity, 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. “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 feminism 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 men 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 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, ego-centric and vain consumer – as a modern Marie Antoinette. From an environmental viewpoint, it is not, however, as condemnable to buy a hundred 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 we ourselves, too. Soper thinks that today’s consumerism is characterised by an increasingly troubling relationship to unchecked consumption. She is disconcerted by the demand for new things stemming from the unwanted by-products of consumerism.

The theory of an alternative hedonism is based on new modes of desire rather than those that are characteristic of consumerism 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 those that are characteristic of consumerism.

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 capital 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.

“While there is media coverage every day of the irresponsible, ego-centric and vain consumer – as a modern Marie Antoinette – we have been co-opting the market with third wave feminism and girl power. Emancipation and identity politics allow us to create and maintain Hegemony of a consumerist lifestyle. 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.”

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.

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 men 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.

The shopping woman is characterised as the irresponsible, ego-centric and vain consumer – as a modern Marie Antoinette. From an environmental viewpoint, it is not, however, as condemnable to buy a hundred 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 we ourselves, too. Soper thinks that today’s consumerism is characterised by an increasingly troubling relationship to unchecked consumption. She is disconcerted by the demand for new things stemming from the unwanted by-products of consumerism.

The theory of an alternative hedonism is based on new forms of desire rather than those that are characteristic of consumerism 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 those that are characteristic of consumerism.

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 capital 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.
Focus: Climate change

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

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 as well 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, says Dr Helle Munk Ravnborg, who leads the research project “Competing 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 equality.
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 Jahang, 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 better 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 planting 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. It is not to disseminate 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. Several countries have also protected forest areas which are essential for reducing the greenhouse effect.

In this respect, due 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 Kempf Mer- cado 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 buy- ing land in the Amazonas for expanding the Noel Kempf 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. Also, the NGO leaders were men. Only a few women participated in the public meetings. And the jobs that were created were 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 house- hold. The men, for instance, decided that the local community should now establish large cattle ranches as a new earning model. However, the 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 ac- count, 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 coopera- tion partners is that climate change creates new female entrepreneurs. African women share now 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 household 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.

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

— NANA HVIDT, COMMISSION ON CLIMATE CHANGE AND DEVELOPMENT

Focus: Climate change

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

Gicero, 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 gen- der, senior researcher Grette Kaare Hovelsrud can see that climate change affects women and men in different ways.

“The sea Sámi in Finnmark in nor-thern Norway have a gendered division of labour. The men fish while the women pick berries and hunt by trapping. If cli- mate 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 wo- men 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 migra- tion. 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 Grette Kaare Hovelsrud.
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.

Basic argument is that incomes are directly related to greenhouse gas emissions: the richer the people are, the more they pollute. 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. 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 realized. 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. 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. 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.

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

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.

Select countries | Over-consumers | Share of population
--- | --- | ---
United States | 243 million | 84% |
China | 240 million | 13% |
India | 122 million | 12% |
Japan | 121 million | 95% |
Germany | 76 million | 32% |
Brazil | 58 million | 33% |
WORLD of which: | | |
Industrial countries | 1,728 million | 28% |
Developing countries | 816 million | 22% |


Figure 1: CO2 emission of income deciles in Sweden, 2002. Source: Statistics Sweden 2007.

Class, Gender and Climate Safety

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

- **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. 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. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Over-consuming class</th>
<th>Sustainable class</th>
<th>Struggling class</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
<td>1/3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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

- **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 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 created through competition for the limited resources of both genders. The women typically lack access to essential resources, but at the same time they are responsible for the food, fuel and water supplies of the whole household. Environmental loss and degradation considerably increase women’s responsibility for securing these essential resources. This increased pressure also places heavy emotional and psychological burdens on women and family relationships.12

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

**Notes**

1 See Kempf 2008.
5 Hemmati & Gardiner 2002.
7 Hemmati & Gardiner 2002, p. 34.
8 Johnson-Latham 2007, p. 50.
10 Hilgers et al. (2008).

**References**

- Uutela Marko & Janna Pasanen (eds) (2009) Degrowth Symposium: Introduction to Degrowth. New Delhi: Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in the context of European Commission. The aim of the project was to find new ways of preserving the cultures of sustainable lifestyles and transforming unsustainable lifestyles by engaging in debates with concerned people in Finland, India, Kenya, Nepal and Tanzania. The final report and related papers can be obtained from www.sustainablefutures.fi.
- The article is based on the study Sustainable Futures, commissioned and funded by the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland in the context of European Commission. The aim of the project was to find new ways of preserving the cultures of sustainable lifestyles and transforming unsustainable lifestyles by engaging in debates with concerned people in Finland, India, Kenya, Nepal and Tanzania. The final report and related papers can be obtained from www.sustainablefutures.fi.
- 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 would be a political solution, given the increasing number of scholars and actors. Degrowth, defined in French, is defined as “a voluntary transition towards a just, participatory and ecologically sustainable society.”13
- 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 changes in the democratic and incremental manner, rather than through collapse and unfair burden on the least powerful. According to Fabrice Hilger, degrowth is a coming together of several policy sources which currently coincide without even being convergent. Of such sources, the dominant one is the Extremal Policy with its tradition of limits to growth debates. Another related is neo-economic, as established by Niccolo Guarnaschelli. The others 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.12
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 discussions 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 their appearance: some civil society representatives commented on the important role women played in the negotiations although their presence in delegations actually numbered only 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 commitments, or horse-trading commitments on otherwise unrelated issues. Some argue that nothing else could 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 NGOs 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 to 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 distinctive in organizational and environmental psychology. She is working as an independent adviser. Ulrike Roehr, an engineer and sociologist by background, is co-ordinating the network GenderCC – Women for Climate Justice (www.gendercc.net).
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 process. The 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) supported 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.

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 recommendations. 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.

- 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 those that 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.

- The major event for raising the awareness of the decision makers on climate and gender was the Women Leaders Colloquium in Mon- rovia, Liberia on 7–8 March 2009. The convos 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.

- Finland has also supported activities focusing on gender issues in the negotiations. Further support has been given to the organisation of training activities for the delegates 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 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/Gender 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

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 recommendations. 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 differently and contribute differently to solutions. In order to secure diversity, men and women have to be equal to have access to equal development and utilising investments in climate measures.

- A clear Nordic development aid profile on gender equality and climate should be created. It is a right that both 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 those that 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 inventive- ness, 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 Gender, Climate and Sustainability, hosted by the University of Copenhagen on 13-14 March 2009, also launched recommendations aimed at governments and research communities on 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 in the theme Gender, Climate and Sustainability.

- Launch of a European Programme focused on sustainable environmental and social developments.

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.
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 Silisius, Professor of Women’s Studies at Åbo Akademi University, Finland, and his vier der Tec, Assistant Professor of Gender Studies at Utrecht University, will share the presidency of the new organisation.

“People 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 Silisius points out.

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 emphasised sound competence within research and politics in their choice. Sari Pikkala will head the new Finnish centre.

“Gender equality work here in Sweden has been somewhat hushed up the last few years, and the field has not been as politicised 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”, Jaiformit summarises.

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.

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 Jaiformit. 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 politicised 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”, Jaiformit summarises.

And, as the only man 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 Sørd 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 contests 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

Gendering the EU: opportunities and setbacks

T

he 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 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 racism/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.
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.

Would you like to have a copy of your own?
Order a free subscription at www.nikk.no!