



# Climate, Gender and Consumption

KEY TAKEAWAYS from a research overview of gender perspectives on sustainable lifestyles



## Gender perspectives on sustainable lifestyles

How can we make it possible to live sustainably in the Nordic countries? How can we better understand how differences in lifestyle that affect sustainability arise? Responsible production and consumption, Goal 12 of the 2030 Agenda, has been identified as one of the areas where the Nordic countries face the biggest challenges in their sustainable development work. This area is also the focus of the NIKK project *Sustainability, lifestyles, and consumption from a gender perspective*, which is part of the Nordic Council of Ministers' programme *Sustainable lifestyles in the Nordic region*.

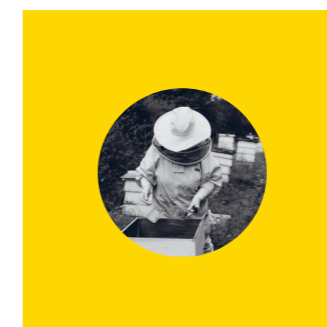
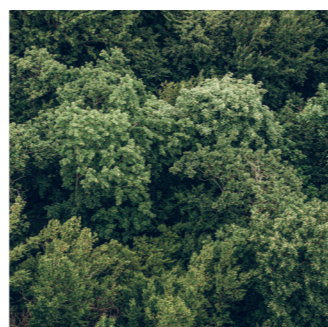
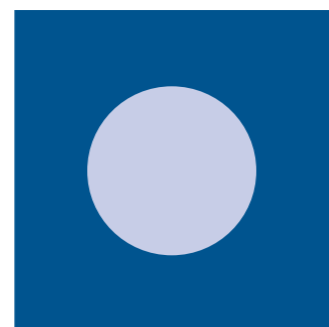
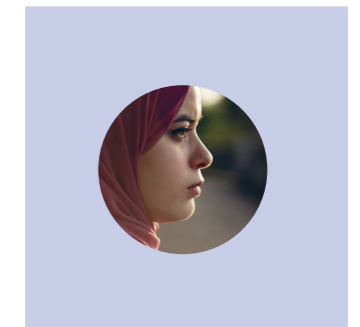
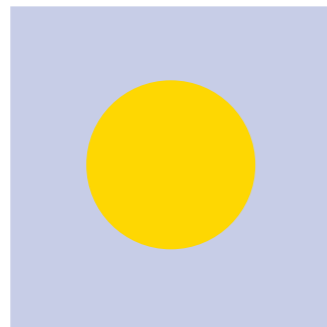
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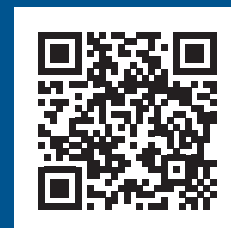
The new research overview entitled *Climate, gender and consumption – a research overview of gender perspectives on sustainable lifestyles* summarises the state of international research in seven different areas: Food, Housing and energy, Clothing and consumer goods, Transport, Work and time use, Culture and tourism, and Activism and influence. The report aims to reveal and challenge gender stereotypes as they relate to consumption and lifestyles, and to contribute to a better understanding of how gender differences arise and are strengthened and reproduced in these areas.

## Key takeaways

1. Gender, understood as social norms, is often more important than sex as a statistical variable. Individuals oriented towards caregiving – an ideal often associated with femininity, regardless of sex – are more engaged with sustainability and show more sustainable behaviour patterns.
2. The uneven distribution of unpaid domestic and care work, for which women as a group take a greater share of the responsibility than men as a group, and the normative coding of technology as a male domain, have consequences for the different impacts of individuals on the climate; and consequently for what efforts should be made to reduce this impact.
3. Women as a group are ascribed a greater responsibility for the environment as consumers than men as a group due to social norms concerning fashion consumption, but also because women more often than men are responsible for cooking the meals in households and for washing and buying clothes for the family members.
4. Traffic planners, vehicle manufacturers, food producers, energy companies, the fashion industry, etcetera, all have great power to influence the climate impact in their spheres, and thus bear a great responsibility for the green transition. When responsibility is placed on consumers instead, it risks being individualised. Due to norms of femininity and masculinity, the unequal distribution of unpaid domestic and care work and the feminisation of consumption, where men's behaviour patterns in this space are rendered invisible, may entail a particular burden of responsibility on women as a group.
5. If reducing working hours with associated changes in consumption is to be used as a strategy to achieve more sustainable lifestyles, it should be based on efforts to influence the preferences of men as a group, and to support the ideal of caring among men.



Read the full report



NIKK is a co-operation body under the Nordic Council of Ministers and its task is to contribute to the achievement of the objectives of the Nordic Co-Operation Programme on Gender Equality and its supplement for the LGBTI area, and to the realisation of Nordic Co-Operation's Vision 2030. NIKK's areas of activity all deal with one or other of the major challenges of our time, and are linked to the global sustainable development goals.

NIKK co-operates with national and other Nordic actors, for example through joint events where we share knowledge and contribute a cross-sectoral perspective. By highlighting the gender perspective on various urgent questions, NIKK is contributing to sustainable solutions for the development of society in the Nordic countries.

**NIKK** Nordic Information  
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