

# Gender, lifestyles and climate change

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## Content

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### Part 1: Gender issues in sustainable consumption and climate change research

- Gender, lifestyles and climate change – findings of sustainable consumption research

### Part 2: Gender impacts in actions and solutions combating climate change:

- What kind of gender knowledge is needed for analyzing the science/policy interface?

# Part 1: Gender, lifestyles and climate change – a question of gendered organization of everyday life



- Consumption activities like eating, heating or bathing are closely related to the way in which people organize their everyday lives.
  - Like other social practices, these consumption practices are more or less institutionalized collective phenomena.
  - They are governed by habits and routines rather than by deliberate and rational choice and are embedded in a social context.
  - The way we consume is framed by the context of the households, family and community life. **The way we consume is a gendered process.**
- Gender studies analyzed the **gendered division of labor** – which finds its expression in **time budget analysis**:
  - In Germany, the relation of paid – unpaid work in 2000/2001 was about one third (paid work) to two thirds (unpaid work, housework) for women and two thirds to one third for men.
  - Other European countries show similar data (Belgium, Estonia, France, Hungary, Slovenia, Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom and Norway) (EUROSTAT 2004).



### Gendered allocation of income preferences and consumption goods:

- Women spend their financial resources more for basic essentials than men do. They buy more frequently food, clothing and household articles, while men tend to buy expensive capital goods such as homes, cars and electronics and consume more alcohol and tobacco (Johnsson-Latham 2007: 39; SEAC 2007).
- Consumption areas like health and nutrition are more closely connected to women. Others like car dependent transport are more closely connected to men (Schultz/Stieß 2009: 27).

### Gendered patterns of environmental and climate awareness:

- Women show higher **environmental awareness** than men (for Germany: Kuckartz 2000, Preisendörfer 1999; for Finland: Niva et al. 1997).
- Women show a **greater willingness to act** to preserve the environment and to take personal action to mitigate climate change (EC 2008).
- They tend to advocate **integrated social solutions**, changes in life-styles and consumption behaviour, whereas men favoured more **technological solutions** for mitigating greenhouse gas emissions (WEN 2007; EUROSTAT 2008).



## Gendered consumption patterns

- Women buy more environmentally sound products, eat more organic food, less meat (OECD 2008).
- They drive cars less often, they walk more and use public transport more often than men (Johnsson 1997; Preisendörfer 1998; Niva et al. 1997).

But – consumption patterns are shaped by the interplay of gender with other socio-demographic factors, attitudes and lifestyle orientations

- Consumption patterns vary according to **income and different lifestyles** (ISOE 2001), **different life stages, age** (SEI 2007; ISOE 2001), **household form** – single women show a higher awareness for the environment than men in single person households (Empacher et al. 2001: 15).
- **Single mothers with children** are a social group which suffers economic vulnerability frequently. They show a high engagement towards sustainable consumption but cannot put this attitude into practice due to a lack of financial resources.



- **Gendered stereotypes** as for example ‘the male breadwinner’ and ‘the female carer’ have to be avoided (even if the reality seems to be that way): it is important to address *specific* gender groups.
- Women and men of different social groups have to be analyzed as **citizen-consumers** in order to promote their active role within collective actions for climate justice and sustainable production and consumption patterns.
- Women as well as men (of different social groups) have to be analyzed as everyday life **actors, not as victims.**

## Part 2: What kind of gender knowledge is needed for analyzing gender in actions and solutions combating climate change?



Shaping knowledge – intervening knowledge – transdisciplinary knowledge:

- Orientation knowledge
- Systemic (analytical) knowledge
- Strategic knowledge

Two ways of asking:

1. Asking for gender impacts **which are promoting gender equality and gender justice**
2. Asking for gender issues **which are promoting the sustainability effects of the policy strategy/instrument**



### Asking for gender impacts **which are promoting gender equality and gender justice**

- *Orientation knowledge*: Is gender equality and climate justice explicitly addressed in EU strategies and instruments to promote sustainable consumption and to combat climate change?
- *Systemic knowledge*: What do we know – which elements of the political strategy/of the political instrument will probably promote or hinder gender equality/gender justice?
- *Strategic knowledge*: How can we avoid the analyzed hindering effects of the strategy/the instrument on gender equality? How can we promote the probably furthering effects of the policy strategy/instrument?

## Part 2: Asking for gender issues which are promoting the sustainability effects of policy strategies and instruments



Asking for gender issues which are promoting the sustainability effects of the policy strategy/instrument

- *Orientation knowledge:* How can gender equality/gender justice and climate justice/sustainability be twinned explicitly in EU strategies and instruments in order to promote sustainable consumption and to combat climate change?
- *Systemic knowledge:* What are the most relevant gender dimensions and gender issues of political instruments which promote or hinder sustainability effects? What do we know about 'gender responsiveness to political instruments'?
- *Strategic knowledge:* How can different gendered groups be integrated into the decision-making of strategic goals of combating climate change? How should they participate in the elaborating and auditing processes of policy strategies/instruments in order to strengthen their sustainability effects?