

**Summary:**

## **Gender equality in transport**

In connection with the National Transport Plan (NTP) for the period 2010-2019 the Norwegian Ministry of Transport and Communication has commissioned a study about the impact of transport policy on gender equality. Differences in the need for transport services are to be illuminated in this study, and how equality between the genders can be ensured in the formulation of transport policy is to be discussed.

### **Transport need has to be related to a societal context**

Transport is primarily a derived need. It is mainly a facility used to achieve other goals and satisfy other needs. To study the conditions for gender equality in transport, it must be related to a societal context of significance for both men and women. In this report three social areas are focused; the labour market and topics related to paid work, unpaid household work and caring for children.

Characteristics of the labour market and the working conditions, including salary etc, are one of the most important basis for a person's resource situation, related to both economic and temporal aspects. Differences at the labour market very often also imply variations in access to transport resources and need of transport. Positions in working life often determine the amount of fringe benefits, also related to transport. Women have in average lower income than men, and they more often work in the public sector and have occupations related to health and social work than men.

Household work are primarily the daily "management" of the family. Planning the activities, shopping groceries, preparing meals, washing etc are part of this management. Travel activities and as such need of transport resources are connected to the household work. How this work is distributed between the partners in a household influences both time use and time constraints, that again conditions the transport need. The Norwegian time use studies show that women still have the main responsibility for the household and management of the family, even though there has been changes towards less differences between the genders during the last 20 years.

Caring for children also imply need of transport, often within fixed time-frames. Children have to be taken to day car or school. They very often participate in various organized leisure activities during the week. The temporal and spatial constraints connected to these activities are often stronger than for the working life. The need of transport that these activities arouse are often related to both time pressure and the necessity of a means of transport. The time use studies

reveal that women still spend more time caring for children than men do, even if changes have occurred.

The development on these social areas and the differences between men and women have spatial, temporal and economical consequences for men's and women's daily travel. Changes in men's and women's positions on the labour market and in the family might also change the conditions for transport needs.

## **The conditions for travelling are different**

When it comes to private transport resources the differences between the genders are significant. More men than women have a driving licence, 92 vs 82 percent, but the differences among the young groups (25-45 years) are rather small compared with the elderly groups. When these young generations reach the age of 60-70 years the difference of holding a driving licence between the genders has probably disappeared. On the other hand we see that younger people (18-24 years) postpone or do not obtain a driving licence, and young women more often than young men.

In all age groups women have less access to a car than men. In average 74 percent of the men have always access to a car, while 62 percent of the women are in the same situation. The group who have the poorest access are single women, women with low income and people living in the largest cities, especially in Oslo.

A lower level of driving licence and poorer access to a car among women than among men indicate that women have a greater need for an alternative to private transport than men. A public transport supply are more necessary for women than for men in the situation of today.

Fringe benefits like company cars and other forms of subsidies related to buying and using the car, including free parking, are more common in men's working positions than in women's. Rules of taxation will therefore be important in the discussion of distributional gender effects.

## **Men's and women's travel pattern are different**

When comparing results from travel behaviour studies from twenty years ago with results from 2005, there is still significant differences between men and women. Women have more accompany trips than men, also when controlling for education, income and age. The differences are rather small, but the change has been very little, which indicates that this is gender-divided tasks connected to norms that change slowly. It is therefore reason to believe that women will have the main responsibility also in the (near) future for these tasks and the related trips.

Women use the car less and the public transport more often than men. In 2005 62 percent of men's trip were done as a driver vs 47 percent of women's trips. In the near future a substantial amount of women will not be car users as drivers, and will therefore dependent on other means of transport.

Men and women have different opinion of the car and the public transport. They are not emphasising the same qualities. In general men are more preoccupied by the car than women are, while women have a more positive perception of public transport than men have.

Women have shorter journey to work than men, 10,3 km vs 16,3 km. The difference between the genders has changed very little during the last 20 years. However, there are variations between groups of women. Women with low education settle for jobs in the vicinity, while women with high education travel further to get a type of job according to their qualifications and interests. Men seem to be less sensitive to distance and choose jobs independent of travel length on all educational levels.

## **Policy measures for increasing gender equality in transport**

Both lack of driving licence and poor access to a car among a greater share of women than of men, indicate that women to a larger degree have a need for alternative to private transport. Public transport supply is necessary to those who can not or will not buy a car. In addition to the distributional effects related to gender, there are also good environmental reasons to give priority to investments in public transport.

Taxation rules of fringe benefits related to transport, which men have more of than women, will have gendered distributional effects. For instance there is no tax on free parking, but if the employer wants to benefit their employees with a subsidized season card on public transport, this will be taxable. It might be useful to examine the different taxation- and allowance rules in transport in regard to gendered distributional effects.

The authorities that plan the traffic system have to be aware of the differences in the age distribution of men and women in the elderly groups, especially in the future, when elderly people will account for a larger part of the population. The majority of this group will be women. In the short run many of them will be without driving licence, so an adjusted public transport supply will be most important for some of them. In the longer term most women (and men) will have driving licence and probably also access to a car. For both men and women in these ages courses to brush up their driving skill are to be desired, and adjusting the traffic system to elderly users essential.

In cost-benefit analysis the time values on trips varies. The time value on trips related to production are much higher than trips related to unpaid household work. As the situation is today men's travelling is more worth than women's travelling. To have a more equal transport system, there is a question whether input to this method should be considered.

Infrastructural schemes to enlarge the labour markets will not necessarily benefit women. Spatial and temporal constraints can be barriers which means that women do not have the same possibilities to make use of the same geographical labour market supply. More knowledge is needed on this topic.

When the travel patterns of men and women slowly are converging, one question is if their attitudes related to transport also are becoming more alike. There are

indications, however, that there are differences in men's and women's values that is reflected in their political voting and orientation in environmental questions. In an environmental perspective it can be claimed that it is better to use women's transport behaviour as a model than men's. Their travel practice and perception of the transport means have a better "environmental profile" than that of men. Means against "over-consumption" of the car and simultaneously making the public transport supply better will probably encourage gender equality in transport.

The experience of insecurity related to the use of public transport is more usual among women than among men. Improvement of the physical environment, the design of terminals and stations and security control on the bus, tram and train are schemes that both facilitate gender equality and accessibility for all users.

## **The need of knowledge**

The analysis and discussion presented in this report are based on available data and statistics. An important data source is the national passenger travel survey (NPTS), which is repeated every fourth year. This survey gives a very good presentation of transport resources and travel pattern for all groups. This monitoring of the development of travel behaviour is very important. It gives essential data.

The NPTS, however, does not give information about potential trips or trips that would have been done if resources, time and supply had been available. Studies from other countries suggest that women to a larger degree than men do not get their transport needs satisfied due to different types of constraints. In Norway there is a lack of such studies. Compared with the NPTS there is a need to go deeper in this type of study to examine which constraints people meet in organising activities in their everyday life.

One aspect of this problem is distance as a barrier. As discussed above this is important for women in relation to the labour market. In Norway there is very little knowledge about the effect of distance to women's possibilities for jobs and employment.

The NPTS does not give direct information about why different groups choose the car instead of public transport or vice versa. Which motives and arguments have men and women for their choices? Results from the few studies that includes some of these question indicate that men and women differ in their attitudes toward traffic and environment. Comprehensive knowledge about both the actual situation and attitudes related to the use of different transport means among men and women are missing. This is information which is important in the effort to increase gender equality in transport.