



Gender equality analysis of trends in the transport sector **Summary**
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Summary

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The trends discussed in this report are automation, digitalisation, the sharing economy, climate change adaptation, urbanization, increased affluence, deglobalisation, and population change. Automation, digitalisation, and the sharing economy receive particular emphasis. The results are based on documentation, including expert summary analyses, from a workshop involving invited experts. The report is also based on selected literature.

One general conclusion is that none of the analysed trends would unambiguously make it easier or harder to achieve Swedish gender equality policy goals. These trends present both opportunities and challenges. The feasibility of achieving these goals may be more directly related to how gender equality issues as such are addressed within the framework of the altered conditions that these trends create. An ongoing focus on gender equality issues is consequently needed in order to achieve the overall goals of gender equality policy, its secondary goals, and the goal of equality in the transport sector.

The identified trends could challenge traditional norms, possibly creating new conditions and assumptions for efforts to achieve gender equality. Digitalisation can create more favourable conditions for the sharing economy, which would affect the transport system in a way currently tied more closely to the ways women, as opposed to men, have traditionally chosen or been compelled to travel. Climate challenges are necessitating reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and car use, moving the development process towards the ways women have traditionally chosen to travel. Collectively, technological advances, digitalisation, and climate challenges can be said to challenge so far dominant transport sector norms emphasising car ownership and travel patterns more closely tied to the traditional travel patterns of men. Providing that potentially norm-breaking trends are taken into account, this could create greater opportunities to address climate challenges and to achieve a more gender-equitable transport system.

These trends appear, in several respects, able to shift power from individual users to those who design system solutions. In the case of autonomous vehicles, this concerns power over how such vehicles are permitted to behave. In the case of shared vehicles, this concerns who has power over how the vehicles can be used, for example, in terms of applicable routes and schedules. In growing cities, this concerns who has power to influence land use when land is becoming an increasingly scarce resource, while in the case of digitalisation, it concerns who is involved in designing digital systems and applications. A gender imbalance currently exists in several areas in which such systems are being designed, such as the information technology (IT) field. This is unfortunate, as household technologies and IT are playing increasingly structural roles in people's lives. From this standpoint, more equal representation of women and men in decision-making, improved knowledge, and greater ability to pose relevant questions about social consequences and gender equality assume importance in terms of making progress toward gender equality goals.

Regarding the move toward vehicle automation and increased digitalisation, the anticipated development process could help both hinder and enable certain types of

violence. If vehicles are autonomous, it may be more difficult to use them to frighten, injure, or disturb others. In cases in which autonomous vehicles replace public transport and travel by taxi, they could also help prevent sexual harassment by fellow passengers or drivers. Digitalisation offers new means of obtaining information, for example, via mobile applications, making it possible to avoid potentially risky situations. At the same time, it is also important to be aware that this is a case of relieving the symptoms rather than attacking the root cause of violence and harassment. Better information dissemination may contribute to a degree of individual protection, but it has no direct impact on the structural problem of male violence toward women. On the negative side, digitalisation and autonomous vehicles could make it easier to stalk others, such as acquaintances and relatives. Harassment and assaults in the virtual world are already a major social problem. Both digitalisation and autonomous vehicles could also create new opportunities for more dubious or illegal activities such as stalking and prostitution.

Automation, digitalisation, and the sharing economy are expected to increase transport system accessibility and to help enable more people to satisfy their needs and desires. Autonomous vehicles could make it easier for more people to travel where they want to, and to participate in public life more than at present. Digitalisation and the sharing economy could provide greater accessibility through options such as shared mobility services. However, this assumes that those wishing to use such services can access the requisite technical aids and know how to use them, which can be economic issues, and there is also the matter of being able to learn new technical systems and understand the associated language and symbols. In other words, it is not self-evident that the positive effects will accrue to everyone. Because women generally have lower incomes than men and assume greater responsibility for managing trips made for healthcare, school, and personal care purposes, it is also important to consider potential equality-related impediments to using these new technologies.

Growing cities, increasing climate awareness, and challenges to the car norm could lead to densely populated and environmentally friendly cities. Population densification offers greater intra-regional access to public services, workplaces, and other options, such as businesses, which could also be beneficial in terms of greater gender equality. Given traditional gender patterns, women tend to travel shorter distances than men and would be better served by the generally shorter travel distances in densely populated cities. Densification could simultaneously force economically more vulnerable groups, including women, to peripheral locations where access to public services and workplaces may be limited, which could reduce equality.

Part of the climate change adaptation and urbanization process appears to be a greater need for bicycle use, which could lead to reduced congestion and more efficient urban land use in the long run. However, here again it is important to consider the types of cyclists any investments or initiatives will benefit. Transport Analysis has previously demonstrated that cycling is decreasing among children and young people. Certain barriers to cycling, such as perceived risks, affect women in particular. Updated knowledge is lacking, but older studies have shown that cycling is less prevalent among foreign-born women. If the potential benefits of greater opportunities for cycling are to accrue to as many as possible, these factors must be taken into account. The perceived risks associated with cycling are particularly exclusionary.



Trafikanalys är en kunskapsmyndighet för transportpolitiken. Vi analyserar och utvärderar föreslagna och genomförda åtgärder inom transportpolitiken. Vi ansvarar även för officiell statistik inom områdena transporter och kommunikationer. Trafikanalys bildades den 1 april 2010 och har huvudkontor i Stockholm samt kontor i Östersund.