

Determinants of the greening of households in Europe

Prof. Dr. Jens Horbach - June 2021

Private heating, electricity consumption or private transport can be important drivers to reduce the environmental households' impacts.

This research note aimed to explore the **determinants of green (consumption) behaviour** based on a literature review and econometric estimations relying on European survey data.



Key finding 1

Demographic factors such as **gender** or **level of educational attainment** are **positively associated with greener consumption**. Women are more inclined to vote for green parties and show a higher environmental awareness compared to men. Hence, interventions aimed at improving educational attainment and strengthening the role and political power of women might also lead to positive environmental effects.



Key finding 2

Income appears **positively associated**, in particular, with the **consumption of cost-intensive green products**. However, **experiencing unemployment or poverty is not necessarily a deterrent for greener choices** as people experiencing economic hardship still show positive attitudes towards green products in general. Therefore, interventions aimed at improving information by promoting social "green" norms may contribute to greener choices and financial incentives (e.g. subsidies) could support cost-intensive green consumption choices particularly for lower-income households.



Key finding 3

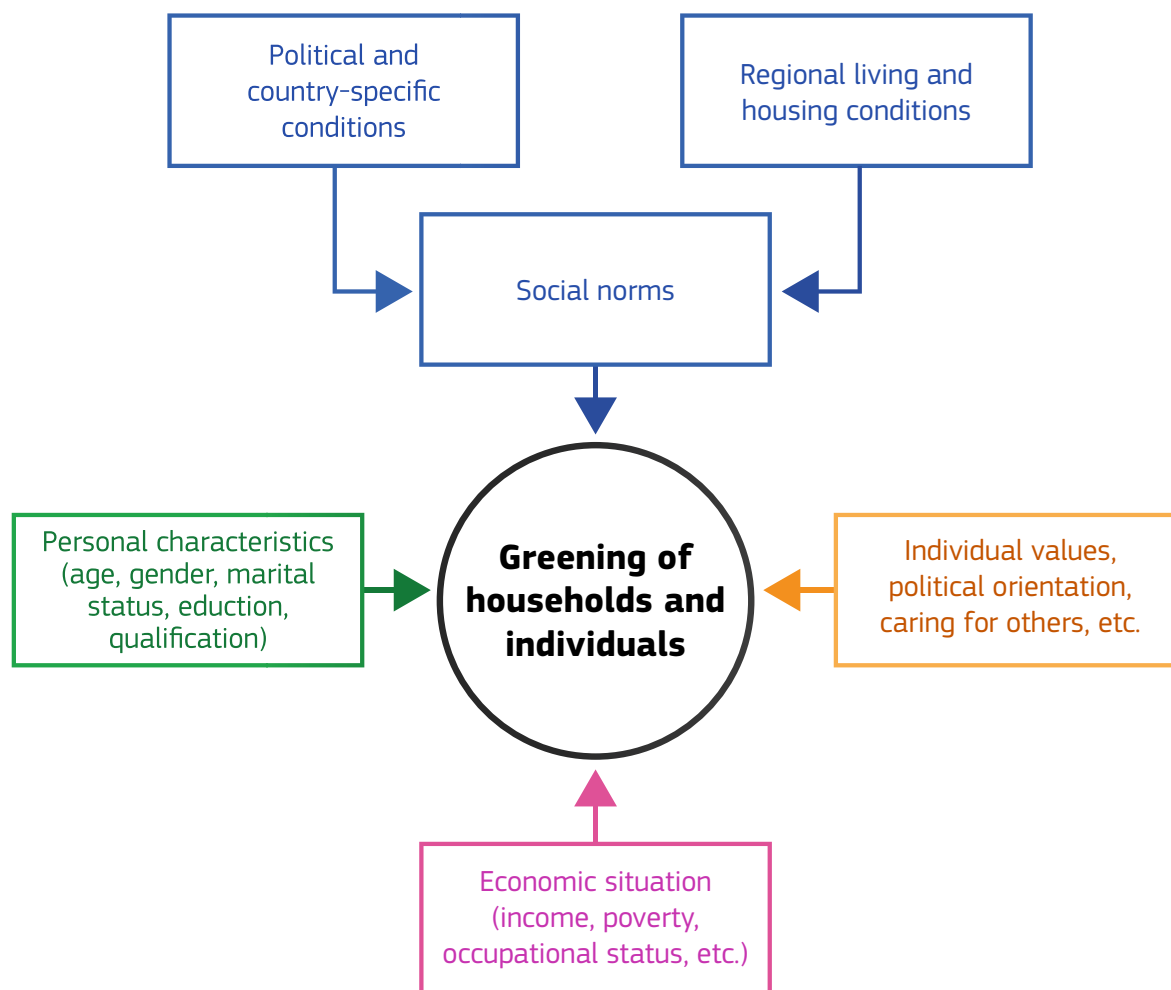
There seems to be an **interaction between gender and geography**. For example, gender plays an important role in green behaviour in Northern countries while experiencing unemployment or poverty are not significant for green consumption in the same region. In addition, women in the Northern countries prefer more environmentally friendly ways of travelling, this is not the case in the Southern countries.



Key finding 4

Regardless of the country of residence, high exposure to environmental pollution affects people's attitudes towards environmental issues. As they perceive the negative impact on their living conditions, they tend to **engage more in greener activities**. In contrast, **mobility behaviour and energy consumption differ significantly** by geographic location.

Figure 1: Determinants of green household behaviour



To download the full research note, please visit the [SSM website](#)

Contact details

Jens Horbach, Prof. Dr.
Organisation: University of Applied Sciences Augsburg
✉ jens.horbach@hs-augsburg.de
☎ +49 9571 9494066

This document has been prepared for the European Commission however it reflects the views only of the authors, and the European Commission is not liable for any consequence stemming from the reuse of this publication. More information on the European Union is available on the Internet (<http://www.europa.eu>).

© European Union, 2022

The reuse policy of European Commission documents is implemented based on Commission Decision 2011/833/EU of 12 December 2011 on the reuse of Commission documents (OJ L 330, 14.12.2011, p. 39).

Except otherwise noted, the reuse of this document is authorised under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International (CC-BY 4.0) licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>). This means that reuse is allowed provided appropriate credit is given and any changes are indicated.

For any use or reproduction of elements that are not owned by the European Union, permission may need to be sought directly from the respective rightholders. Icons © Flaticon (<https://www.flaticon.com/>)