

Climate impact of cleanliness norms and everyday practices

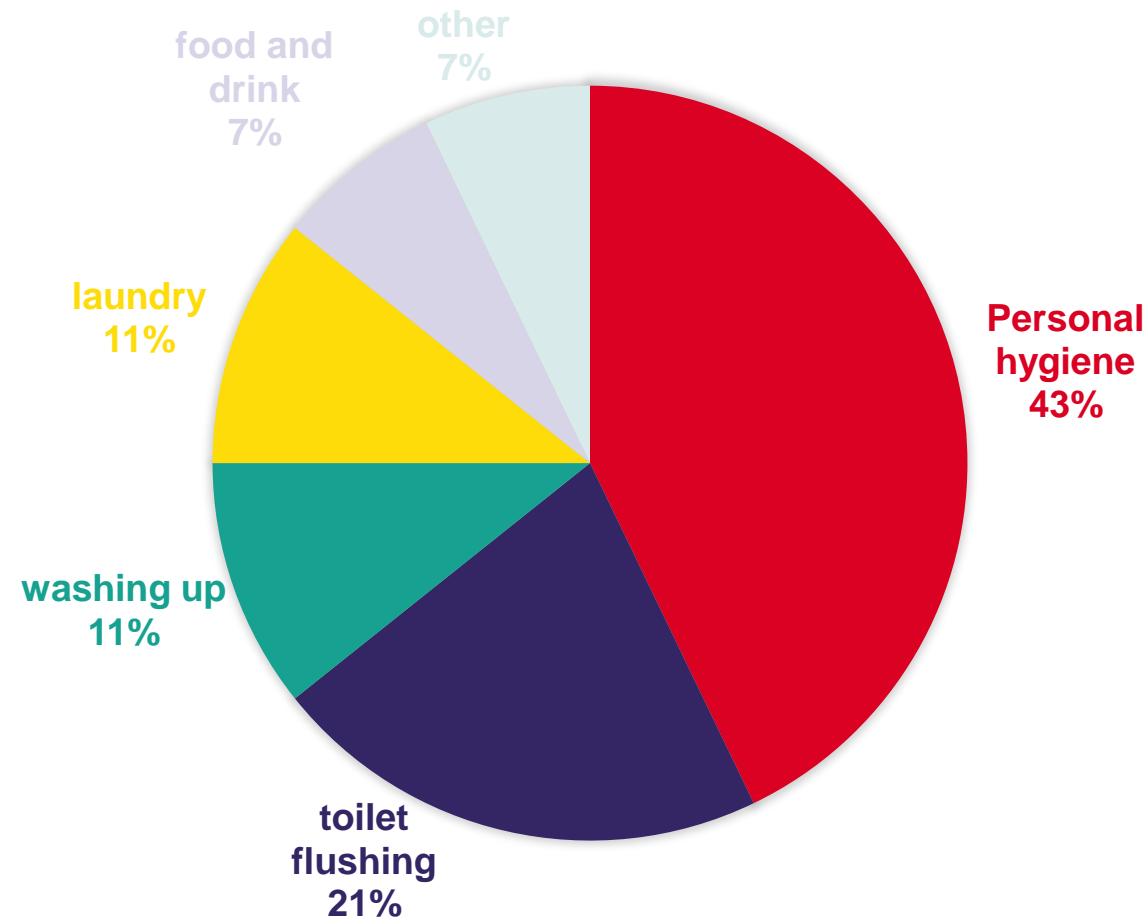
Sweden Water Research-dagen 2019, HELSINGBORG

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Why do we consume water?

- We consume water because of our **practices**
- **Changes** in practices involving water are rather responsible for changes in domestic water consumption
- People don't wake up and decide to use 140 liters of water - we decide to rinse the dishes, brush their teeth and flush the toilet

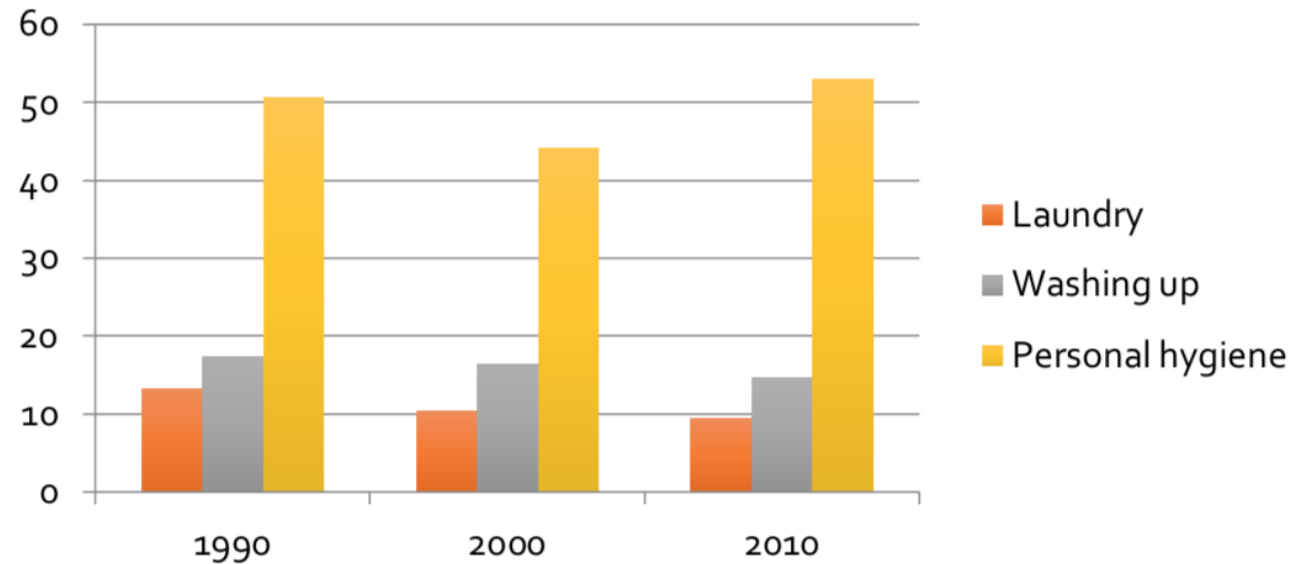
Swedish domestic water use currently at 140 litres/person/day (Svenskt Vatten, 2017)



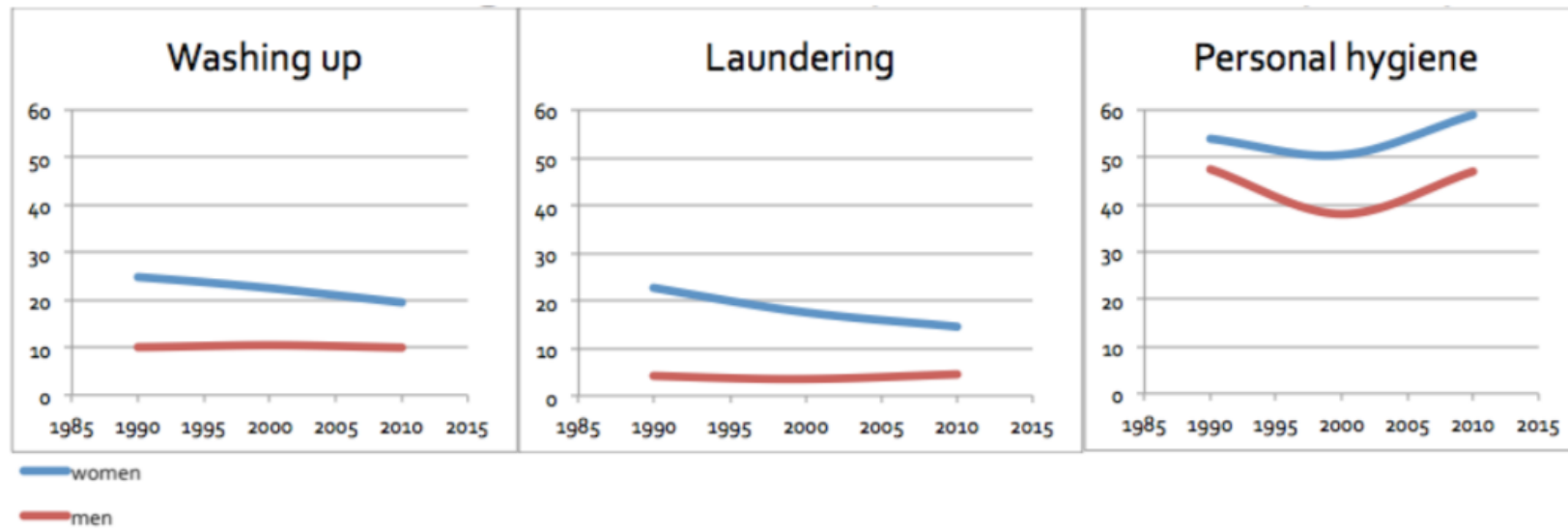
<https://www.svensktvatten.se/fakta-om-vatten/dricksvattenfakta/>

Domestic water consumption

Absolute changes in cleanliness time use - min/day



Domestic water consumption



Domestic water infrastructure timeline

- Swedish capital cities started building sewerage systems in the **1870s**
- By the **1970s** nearly 100% of urban and 80% of rural population had bathrooms
- It was common to share a communal laundry *tvättstuga* for residents in an apartment block from the **1960s**
- Recently washing machines have moved into individual homes, in **2007** 74% of Swedes had their own washing machine (SCB)

Domestic water consumption

- What do people want?



Domestic water consumption

- **Narratives** play a leading role in domestic water consumption
- Notions of **the good life**, respectability and self presentation are all bundled together with our practices
- Narratives can increase **unnecessary consumption**
- They can also be inclusive and egalitarian. Narratives can create space for caring, space for imagining, participation. Space to be more Sustainable.

Cleanliness and domestic water consumption

- People negotiate a myriad of **meanings** in everyday life practices, both calibrating and resisting varying discourses
- Practices are context driven and relational, so unsustainable increases in discourses that have led to intensifying water and energy consumption could be **reversed** by changing conventions
- Rather than informing consumers about how much water (or money) they can save it might be easier to emphasise that **other people** don't shower everyday

Questions? Comments?

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