

# **Conference on Gender and Forestry Dehra Dun 16th – 19th November**

Gender and climate change in sparsely  
populated municipalities

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# Purpose

- Making a literature review and raising questions on gender and forestry on the one hand and gender and climate change response on the other hand.
- What about gender, forestry and climate change?



# Purpose

- The central question is then whether municipalities in urban regions are more active in response to climate change compared to sparsely populated municipalities in regions with a lot of forestry where men are overrepresented both in a demographic sense and in decision making.



# Purpose

- Important input to the project:  
Another Climate: gendered structures of climate change response in selected Swedish municipalities
- Why have some Swedish municipalities responded actively to the issue of climate change, when the vast majority of municipalities in Sweden have not?
- We want to know more! Could gendered structures in municipalities be one answer?

# Hypothesis

- A few assumptions - generally confirmed in literature - lead to posing the researchable question
- **Firstly**, men are overrepresented in decision making processes and given more legitimacy in sparsely populated areas of Sweden (Berglund et al, 2005, Rauhut et al, 2008).



# Hypothesis

- **Secondly**, women generally live in more sustainable ways than men, cause less climate change and are more dedicated and engaged in environmental activities (Jonsson, 2007, Ianglais et al, 2008 forthcoming, Norgaard and York, 2005)

# Hypothesis

- **Thirdly**, women move from the sparsely populated areas to urban areas to a greater extent than men. Inevitably the sparsely populated areas of Sweden are facing huge challenges when it comes to attracting women who tend to move to the urban metropolis.

# Hypothesis

- A recent survey by Nordregio with Sweden's 290 municipalities will hopefully give an indication whether the assumptions lead to a positive answer of the researchable question
- Arora – Jonsson's (2005) work gives one example of a forestry community in sparsely populated Sweden from a gender perspective





# Hypothesis 1

- Equality between women and men in decision making is an issue of concern in the Nordic peripheries. The presence of women in local decision making is weak in many of the peripheral regions (Berglund et al, 2005).
- Traditionally the Nordic peripheries have had employment in basic industry have had great gender inequality, with men in paid work (Productive activities) and women in reproductive activities at home.

# Hypothesis 1

- Arora Jonsson's (2005) work:
  1. Gender structures in rural development. Are women subordinated in decision making? Are women having a somewhat different relation to the environment?
  2. Interviewed women express that there has been a clear division of labour between women and men (Arora-Jonsson, 2005).
  3. Division of labour between reproductive activities and productive activities but also within productive activities.

# Hypothesis 1

4. From 1800: reform and a general trend towards private ownership in forest communities.

Not until 1920 women were declared adult legal persons

Not until 1950 women had economic right to manage land

# Hypothesis 1

5. Forsberg (1997) shows that the most gender segregated labour markets were found in western forest communities.
6. Arora Jonsson (2005) shows that a large part of the social infrastructure is maintained by women – unpaid.
7. Today many women choose to stay in forest communities to work with development and the living countryside.
8. Women experience a necessity to organise informally or semi formally to raise there questions of interest – not always shared by men

# Hypothesis 1

- Shows that women and men could have a different approach to the environment and thereby also response to climate change.

Women tend to see the environment as a livelihood whereas men see it as a source of exploitation!

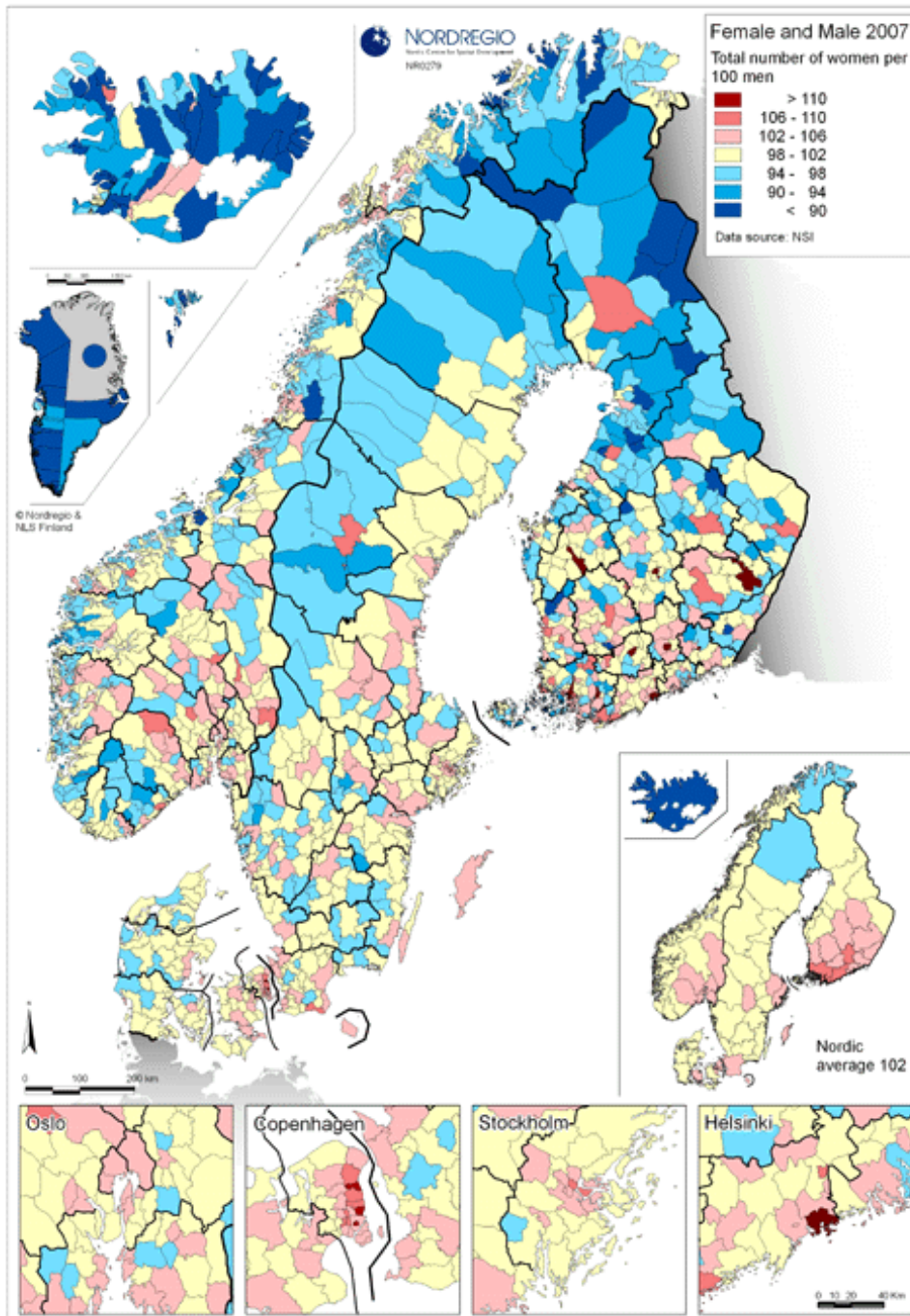
# Hypothesis 2

- Swedish government has produced an idea paper for the UN Commission for sustainable development, may 2007 (Johnsson – Latham, 2007).
- In Sweden it is widely understood that women and men have different ways of experiencing and living everyday life.
- But how do different lifestyles affect emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> (Johnsson – Latham, 2007, United Minds, 2007; Transek, 2006ab, Dymén, 2008)?
- Women have a more sustainable way of living and adapt more easily to new situations and lifestyles



# Hypothesis 3

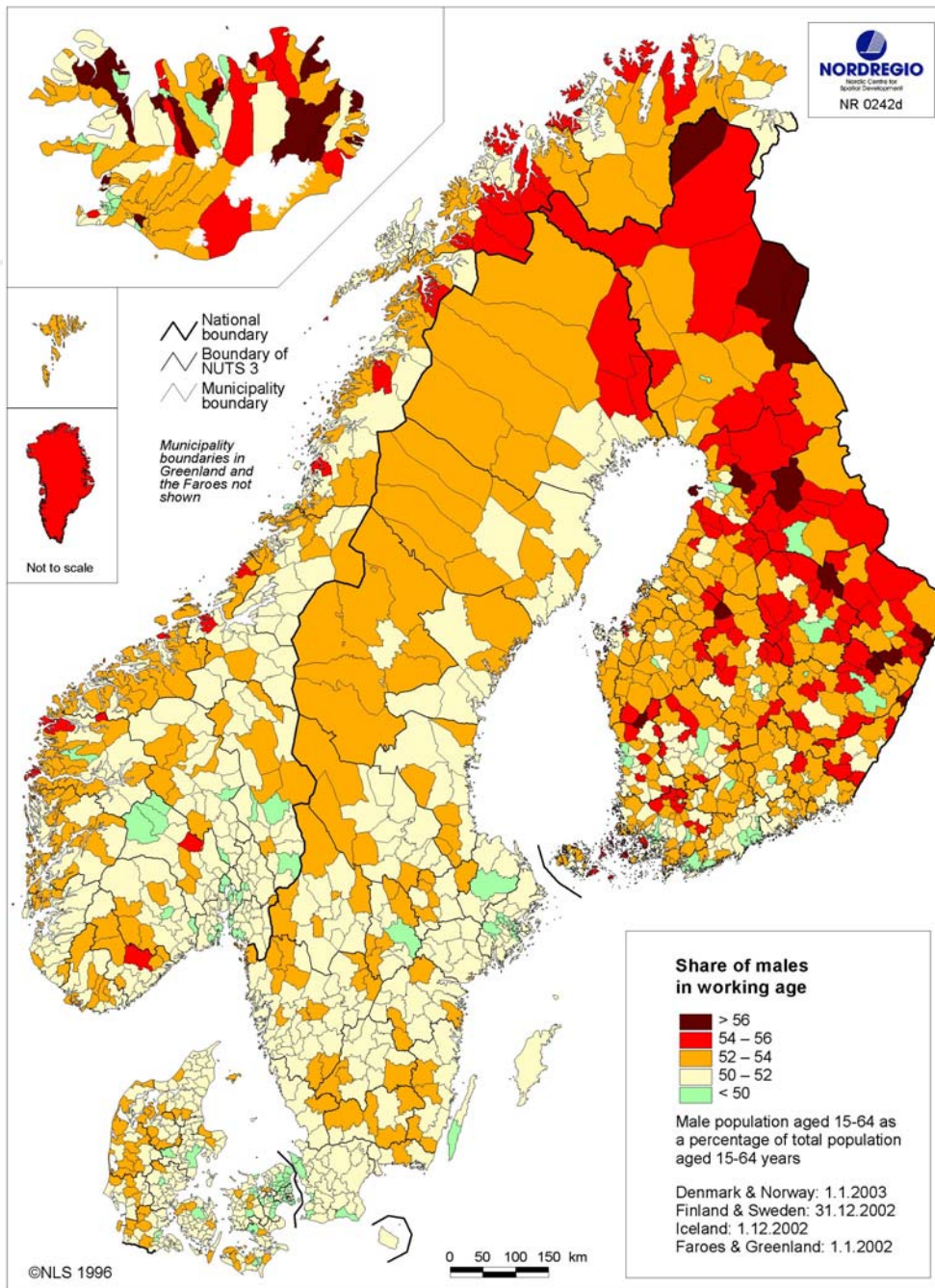
- The Nordic sparsely populated areas are facing drastic demographic changes – depopulation!
- Research alerts that women to a larger extent than men move to urban centres (Rasmussen, 2005; Rauhut et al 2008; Neubauer et al 2007)
- However there has been a turning point! Even men move (Berghlund et al, 2005)



Men and women  
in the Nordic  
countries (total  
number of  
women per 100  
men, 2007)

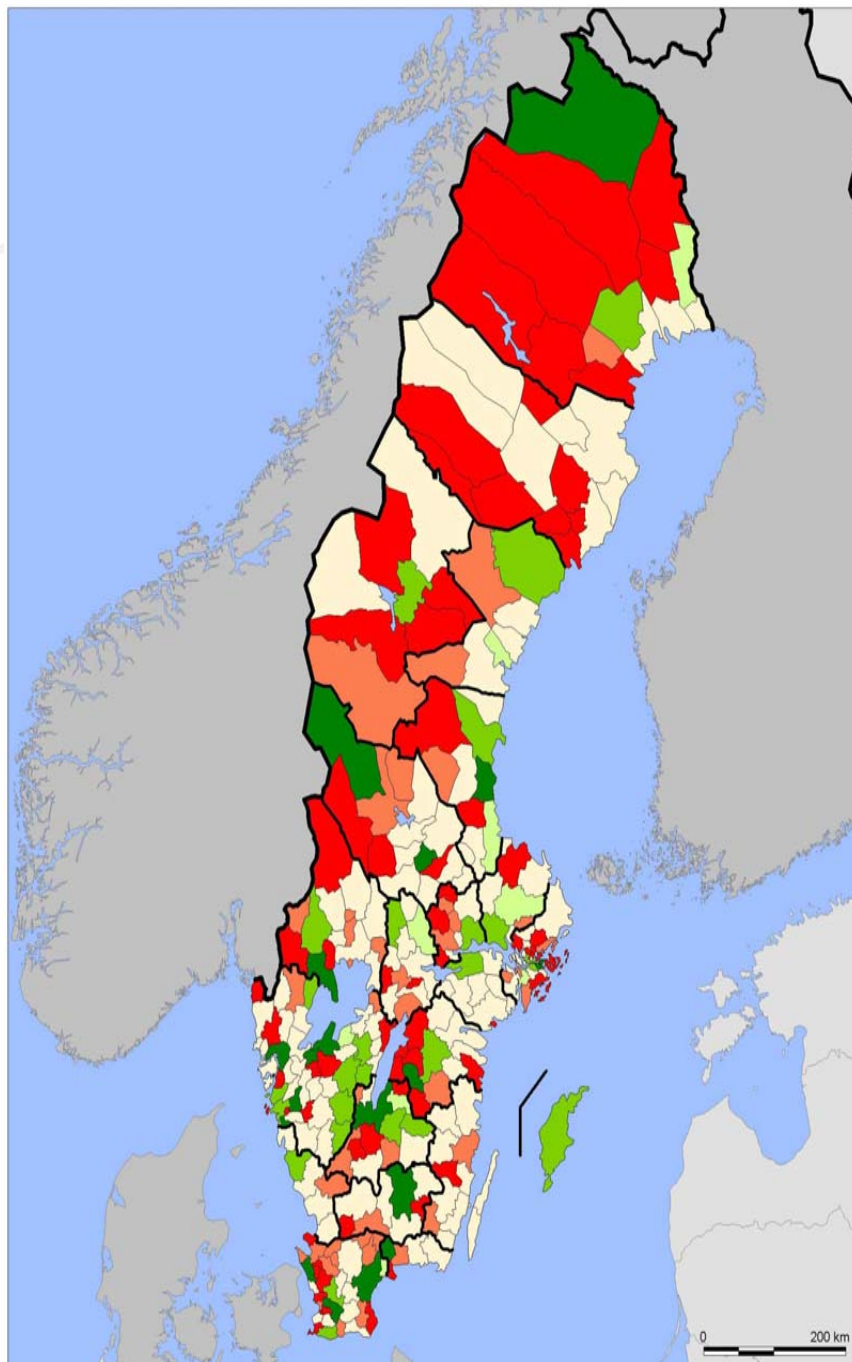



# Share of men in working age (2003) in the Nordic Countries



# What does the survey say?

- The response to climate change in sparsely populated municipalities in forestry regions – is lower than in urban municipalities in urban regions.
- 22 sparsely populated municipalities 13 scored 1 regarding municipal response to climate change. This equals 59% of the municipalities in this category.
- This can be compared to urban municipalities in urban regions where only 29% of the municipalities scored 1.
- This could be an indication that women's engagement in climate change issues is crucial!



	Cat. 6	(18)
	Cat. 5	(25)
	Cat. 4	(9)
	Cat. 3	(120)
	Cat. 2	(43)
	Cat. 1	(75)



# What does the survey say?

- Survey in 2007
- Only some municipalities were responding concretely!
- Why are only some municipalities motivated?
- Can the gendered structure of decision makers, citizens, NGOs and the labour market explain an increasing work for climate change in municipalities?

# What does the survey say?

- Norgaard and York (2005) point out that, even if the positive correlation between the ratio of women in parliamentary positions and the degree of environmentalism are clear, and even if Sweden is a leader in that situation, the effect of that on the development of climate change response at the municipal level remains unclear.
- A gender sensitive question was added to 2008 years survey!

# What does the survey say?

- 50% of all municipalities have not reflected on the issue
- Other municipalities have in many cases been reflecting on the issue but not undergoing any active measures.
- A few municipalities are involved in projects where gender and climate are key perspectives, often in transport and travel pattern questions.
- The argument that the climate change issue is completely gender neutral is found among the municipalities.



# What does the survey say?

- Furthermore, some municipalities have highlighted the fact that the climate change issue has gotten priority on the agenda only when male decision makers have realised that the question is important.
- This indicates that there is a bias towards men's values in decision making.
- Is men's engagement crucial in order to acknowledge women's more sustainable ways of living?
- Some municipalities have responded that women generally are more committed to climate change issues. Women develop a better understanding of climate change issues.

# What does the survey say?

- Is it possible that, if women had the same representation and legitimacy in decision-making, the climate change issue would then have a more prominent position in municipal debate?
- It is also possible that the turning point for climate change response in municipalities might have started much earlier.



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