

IUFRO Conference on Gender and Forestry
November 16th till November 19th 2008

Mapping spatial differences in forest conditions and forest activity between Swedish male and female forest owners

Lina Holmgren ¹⁾, Gun Lidestav ¹⁾ and Siv Nyquist ²⁾

Key Words: Gender order, forest ownership, productivity, land layout

Abstract: In Sweden, sons and daughters have had equal legal inheritance rights since 1845. However, full legal capacity also of married women was not introduced until 1921 and before that they had no right to manage their own affairs, e.g., a forest property. At the end of the 20th century, two thirds of the forest owners who had acquired the forestland from their parents or relatives were men, and the average size of forest properties held by men was 18% larger than those held by women. This unequal situation can today not be explained by legal discrimination based on biological sex. On the other hand, by introducing the concept of gender and gender order, these differences in property size and ownership distribution can be understood.

With reference to the historical dimension of the unequal legal capacity and the differences shown in property size today, this paper addresses the question if the past discrimination based on biological sex shows traces in the forest landscape of today. More specific, are forest properties held by women less productive as a result of poorer site productivity index, inferior forest land layout when it comes to e.g. division of forest land form and location to each other, and less share of mature forest? Further, do female forest owners harvest less and perform less silvicultural measurements?

The questions addressed will be answered by analysing National Forest Inventory data divided on sex regarding land use, site productivity index, growing stock and growth, forest age and structure, the condition of forest sites and vegetation, harvesting and other forestry measures, as well as prerequisites for biodiversity. Results will be presented by means of maps displaying regional spatial differences between women's and men's forest ownership, and further discussed in relation to the concept of gender and if a gender order is physically discerned in the forest landscape of today.

Address:

¹⁾ Department of Forest Resource Management
Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
Umeå, Sweden

²⁾ Department of Law
Umeå University

Umeå, Sweden

Email of corresponding author: lina.holmgren@srh.slu.se