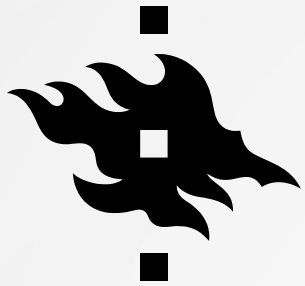


# BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE?

The Gender Inequality problem in the Swedish forest sector



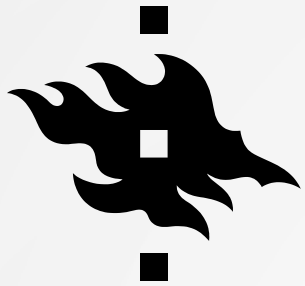
# RESEARCH AIMS

## IS POLICY BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE ?

“... rather than evaluate policies for their ability to ‘solve’ problems, we need to study the way policies *construct* problems”

WPR approach (Bacchi, 2009)

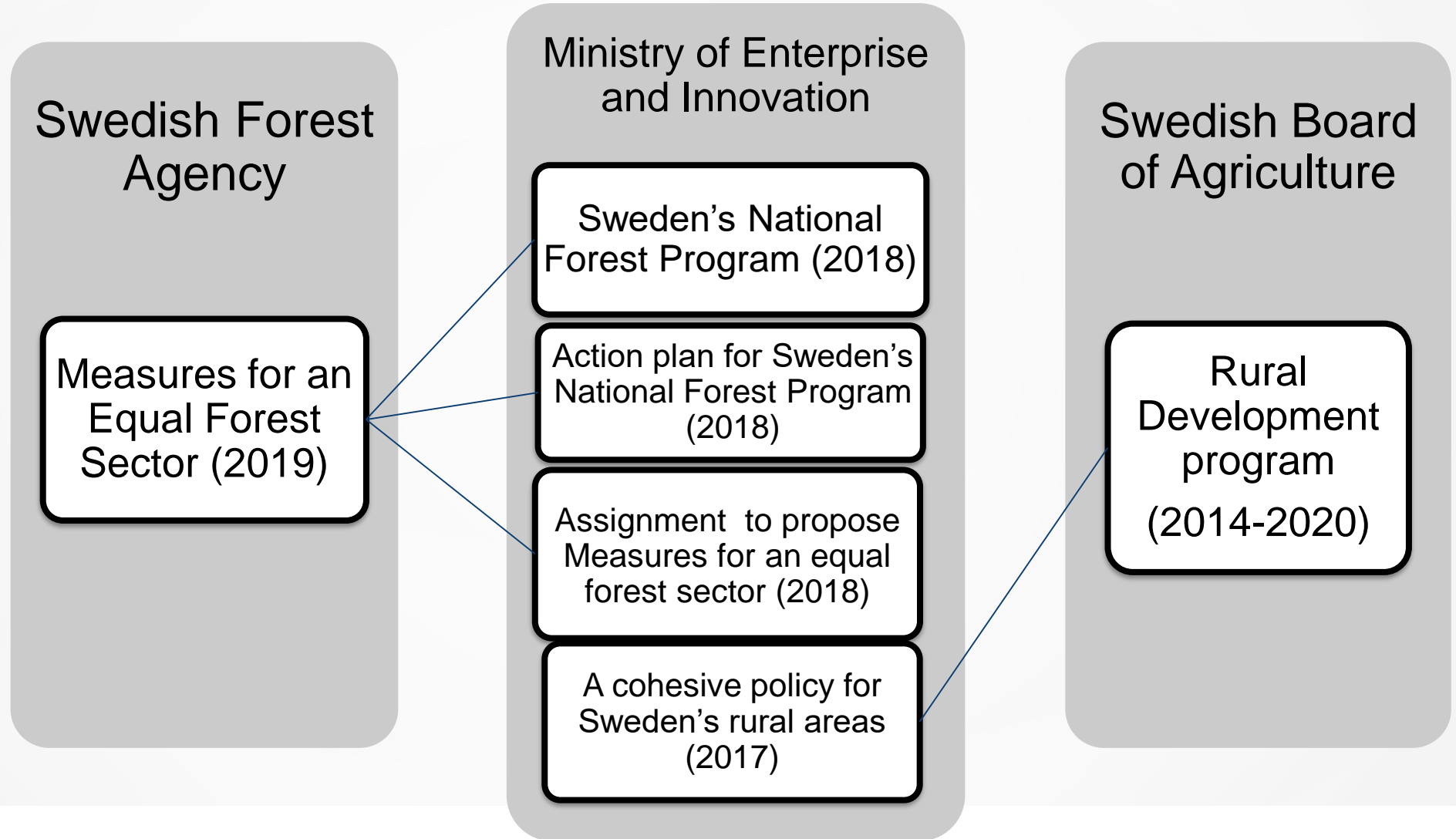
- (a) How is the problem of gender inequality **represented** in Swedish policy, in both forest and rural development?
- (b) What effects does this representation have on the expectations of women’s **roles and behaviors** regarding forestry and sustainability?
- (c) In what **spaces** does gender inequality exist in the forest sector, who does this **benefit**, and what opportunities does it have to evolve?



# FOREST AND RURAL POLICY

Policy actor

Policy document





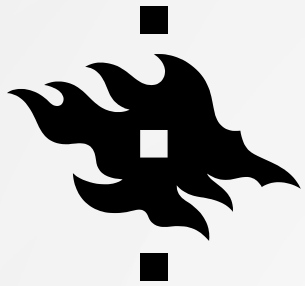
# HOW IS THE PROBLEM OF GENDER INEQUALITY REPRESENTED ?

The problem of gender inequality is represented as a **technical problem**, a matter of *recruitment* in private forest companies, which can be solved through an arithmetic increase in *female representation*.

**This problem is tied to the forest industry** (*skogsbruk och skogsindustrin*), rather than the “forest sector” (*skogssektor*) (Swedish Ministry of Enterprise and Innovation, 2018, p.7).

**Where policy aims at recruitment**, as “Being able to recruit staff both today and in the future is one of the most common motives for the forest sector's efforts.” (SFA, 2019, p.26)

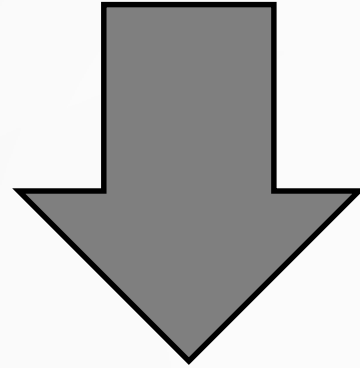
**For the needs of the industry**, as “gender equality is strongly linked to the industry's need to secure both the supply of skills and competition.” (SFA, 2019, p.47)



# ASSUMPTIONS

Women are not attracted by the forest sector, because:

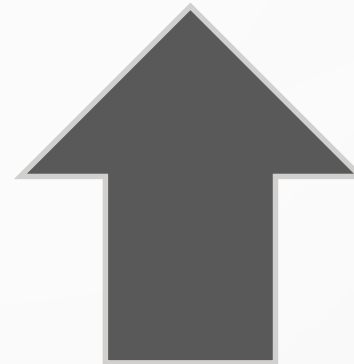
- discrimination, including sexual harassment, are widespread and
- women “behave in ways that differ from the majority.” (SFA, 2019, p.27)



Women are not attracted to the forest sector



Women are expected to improve industry performance and attractiveness



Women are necessary to the forest sector, because they:

- “create more dynamic, pleasant, creative and thus profitable workplaces [...] which also leads to more profitable companies” (SFA, 2019, p.47)



# HOW IS THIS PROBLEM CONSTRUCTED?

A homogenous forest sector,  
born from a homogenous  
forest education:

The fear of a  
dwindling rural sector:

“No, the sector doesn't particularly strike me as diverse. It's partly because they all come from SLU. I mean, it's the one place in Sweden where they all study and they all have closed networks to each other. And even the girls [...] they have a difficult time getting internships in these forestry companies because you know, they like men who look like themselves.” (Interview 1).

“This is worrying, as the success of [gender] equality work in sparsely populated areas in general is more decisive for the survival of the local community than is the case for urban areas. (...) Without increased equality, the countryside is dying out.” (Swedish Ministry of Agriculture, 2004, p.65).



# FOR WHOM ?

Strong links between  
forest education and the industry:

While women are unable to formulate  
their own expectations of the  
forest sector :

“the forest education is very interconnected with the industry itself. So our students very much listen to how the sector itself frames these kinds of issues, and so in that way, that perspective is quite influential also in the educational setting but I don't think, it's not originating exclusively from our education itself. And I think it very much comes down to the influence that the sector has on our students.” (Interview 6)

“we don't pose a threat [..] women are not threatening the power structures when they work in nature conservation or in sustainability in this industry.” (Interview 8)



# SEQUAL PROJECT

## Our project

Investigates gender differences in participation and leadership in climate change related processes, with a focus on natural resource management, through examining discourses (politics and power) and processes (translations and retranslations of discourses to measures) operating in social-ecological systems.

## Partners

SRC (Sweden), Nordland Research Institute (Norway), University of Vic-Central University of Catalunya (Spain), University of Helsinki (Finland)

Funder: EU GENDER-NET Plus ERA-NET Cofund

Website: <https://www.stockholmresilience.org/research/research-themes/stewardship-transformation/social-ecological-relations-and-gender-equality.html>

## Social-ecological relations and gender equality



Female shepherd in Spanish Pyrenees. Photo: D. Tarrasón

Social-ecological relations and gender equality: Dynamics and processes for transformational change across scales (SEQUAL)

SEQUAL is a multi-country collaborative project of research organizations in Norway, Spain and Sweden, funded through the [EU GENDER-NET Plus ERA-NET Cofund](#).

GENDER-NET Plus is a consortium of 16 organizations from 13 EU countries, which aims at strengthening transnational collaborations and supporting gender equality through institutional change. The funding programme supports research that integrates a gender dimension to addressing urgent societal challenges, particularly in interactions and

### Related info

Funding details

Project timeframe: 2

Project members:

Grace Wong (Stockholm Centre)

Andrea Downing (Stockholm Centre)