

## **Does masculine forestry culture prevent us hearing women's voices?**

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Forestry in Finland has always been described as a men's world; the masculinity and manliness are the words defining the whole branch. Nevertheless, women have been able to educate themselves first as foresters in the university from 1918 on and then as forestry engineers and technicians from 1965 on. In my dissertation I'm studying the gendered experiences of both female and male forestry engineers after the legislation change of forestry schools in 1965. The change was gender-specific since it meant that the military service was no longer on the list of requirements to get into a forestry school. The effects of forestry's opening up for women are of my interests, which I'm considering in the research material consisting of forestry engineers' interviews collected in an oral history project 1999–2001. The interviews are biographical concentrating on how individuals have experienced the changes in forestry. I'm viewing the questions from the theoretical perspective of sex/gender –system; a theory of a gender as a social concept, which is constantly constructed and renewed in social interactions. The basics of the theory are gender dichotomisation, like segregation in working life, and hierarchisation, where man is a norm, and woman is an exception of this norm. Prevailing sex/gender -system in forestry reinforces the masculine constructions of the forestry culture, so that women either have to adapt to it or try to resist it and negotiate new gender-agreements. These are one of the main questions of my presentation: are the masculine constructions of the forestry so strong and static that women's knowledge and voices stay unheard and unseen? Have the sex/gender -system changed during the last 30 years and is it still changing?