

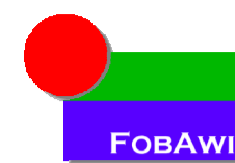
# Forest services as a male domain: evaluation of corporate culture and the possibilities for gender-sensitive reforms

Siegfried Lewark, Maria Hehn, Till Westermayer, Eva Wonneberger

IUFRO Pre-Congress Meeting of IUFRO Unit "Gender Research in Forestry", Australia, 2005



ALBERT-LUDWIGS-  
UNIVERSITÄT FREIBURG  
INSTITUTE OF FOREST UTILIZATION AND WORK SCIENCE



Werderring 6  
79085 Freiburg  
Germany  
http://www.fobawi.uni-freiburg.de

Prof. Dr. Siegfried Lewark, + 49 761 203-3768  
siegfried.lewark@fobawi.uni-freiburg.de

Dr. Maria Hehn, + 49 761 203-3773  
maria.hehn@fobawi.uni-freiburg.de

Till Westermayer M.A., +49 761 203-3761  
till.westermayer@pluto.uni-freiburg.de

Dr. Eva Wonneberger, + 49 761 203-3773  
eva.wonneberger@fobawi.uni-freiburg.de

## Project organisation and objectives

"wa'gen" (**W**ald = forest and **g**ender) is a joint research project of the German Universities of Lüneburg and Freiburg. It focuses on the role that gender relations and perceptions of nature have on forestry and environmental education. Main questions are:

- Which influence have perceptions of nature on forestry organizations, the practice of forestry and the transfer of knowledge in the field of forestry?
- Which influence have perceptions of nature and forests on gender relations in forestry organizations?
- How can we recognize gender-specific aspects and how can we incorporate these into knowledge transfer, into the management of forests and into the organization of the state forest services?

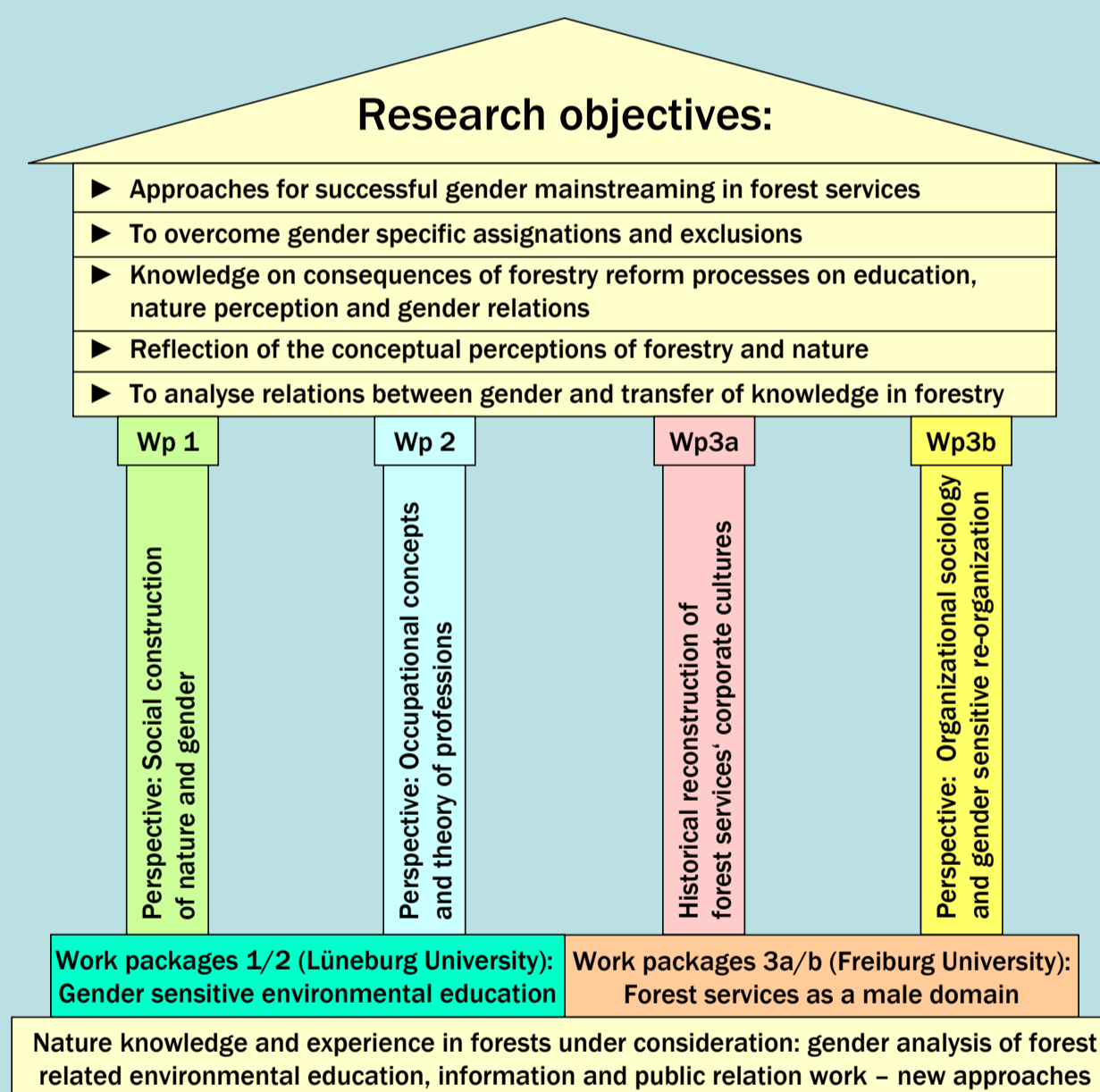


Fig. 1: The organisation of project "wa'gen"

At *Lüneburg University*, the main focus is on the perceptions of nature and gender, respectively, on the one hand and the dialectics of occupational images and their reality in environmental education, on the other hand. — At *Freiburg University*, research is focused on gender proportions and gender relations against the background of the stated political goal of equal opportunities for both sexes and the ongoing structural reform of the state forest services. The project also aims specifically at developing recommendations for a gender-sensitive implementation of the ongoing reform processes in the forest services.

For more information on the project, see [www.wa-gen.de](http://www.wa-gen.de).

## Gender in German forestry: an example

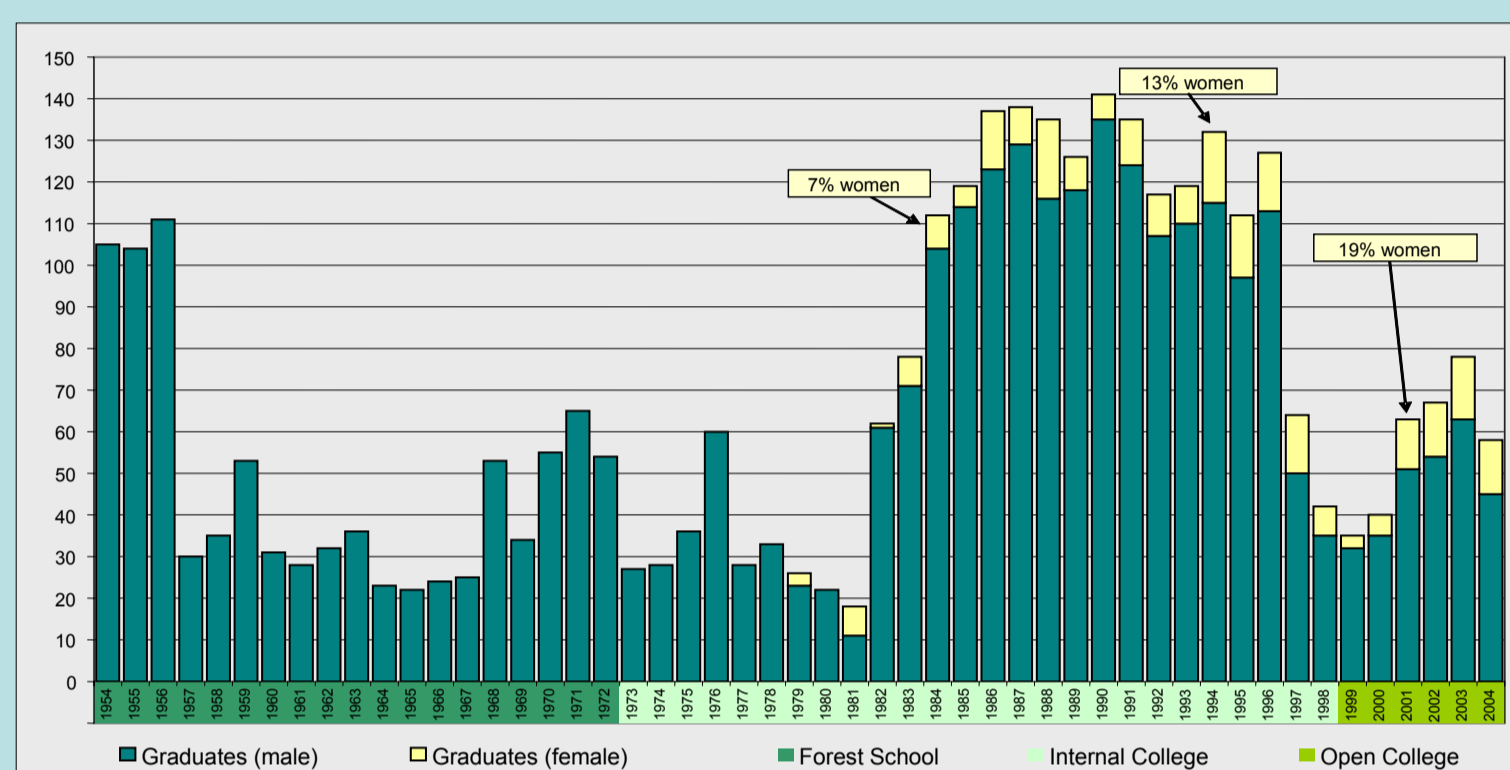


Fig. 2: Proportions of male and female graduates from the Applied Forestry School of Rottenburg from 1954 till 2004 (Source: B. Kaiser, Rottenburg)

The gender situation in the German forest services is exemplified by the proportions of male and female graduates in a German Forestry School in the last 50 years (fig. 2). From 1954 till 1972 this School educated foresters employed by the Baden-Württemberg state forest service. No women were admitted in this period. In 1973 the school gained the status of a university of applied science ("internal college"). From then till 1998 students were recruited exclusively from the state forest services of Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz, Saarland and from the federal forest services. The first females graduated in 1979. Since then, an average of 10 % of the graduates was female. Since the mid-nineties, job opportunities in the state forest services declined dramatically, continuing till today. From 1998 on, the university has an open admission policy ("open college"). Nowadays, 20 to 25 % of the students are female. In combination with the difficult employment situation, the forest services in essence remain a male domain.

## Gender research in project "wa'gen"

To understand current gender relations, patterns of corporate culture in state forest services will be identified and analyzed, using an historical approach to reconstruct underlying mechanisms. We assume that these patterns not only led and still lead to the exclusion of women, but also to an utilitarian view of nature, both restricting the potential for change. This approach will be complemented with the study of current gender relations in the forest services, with the help of theories and methods of organizational sociology. The processes of daily work and communication will be reconstructed by means of qualitative interviews. The results of both approaches will then be used for workshops to improve sensitivity for gender issues in selected groups within the forest services.



Research project "Nature Knowledge and Experience in Forests under Consideration: Gender Analysis of Forest Related Environmental Education, Information and Public Relation Work, Evolving New Approaches" (wa'gen)



Funded by the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research as part of the programme "Sustainable Forestry" (No. 0330607)