

# **Biodiversity, local participation and gender**

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# Local participation in the management of biodiversity

- At present: Local participation is a global fashion
  - An important element of a globally leading **discourse** on environment and development
- A question: Are **the practices** coherent with **the rhetoric**?
- If so: Local participation implies real influence in decision-making by local people.
  - And: Both men and women participate on equal terms.

Do local men and women take part on equal terms as “local participants” in the management of biodiversity?

# **A discourse**

**= a shared way of comprehending a phenomenon.**

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**A leading discourse**

= a way of interpreting a phenomenon that is powerful in its consequences.

# Discourses simplify!

- **For good**

*Embedded in language, it enables those who subscribe to it to interpret bits of information and put them together into coherent stories or accounts. Each discourse rests on assumptions, judgements, and contentions that provide the basic terms for analysis, debates, arguments, and disagreements, in the environmental area no less than elsewhere. Indeed, if such shared terms did not exist, it would be hard to imagine problem-solving in this area at all ... (Dryzek 1997:8).*

- **And for bad**

Dryzek, J.S. (1997): *The Politics of the Earth. Environmental Discourses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

# Two leading discourses globally on area conservation

## The Fortress Conservation Discourse

- Wild species must be preserved by reserving areas - keep people away from living there and using the natural resources.
- Long history
  - Forest reserves by the English colonial power
  - National parks first in the USA
- Also called the "fences and fines approach"

# Two leading discourses globally on area conservation

## The community-based conservation discourse

- Taken over as hegemonic discourse (privileged solution)
- Common today among most conservationists
- Roots back to the 1950s
- Contents:
  - Conservation of species, ecosystems and biodiversity main objective.
  - Local people in and around protected areas should be allowed to **participate** in the management of the natural resources.
  - They should **benefit** economically related to the conservation.

The two leading discourses are related to clusters of discourses on environment and development.

## **Four types of discourses on environment and development:**

- **Preservationist discourses**
  - **The fortress conservation discourse belongs here**
- **Win-win discourses**
  - **The community-based conservation discourse belongs here**
- **Traditionalist discourses**
- **Promethean discourses**



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## **Four types of discourses on environment and development:**

- **Preservationist discourses**
  - The fortress conservation discourse belongs here
- **Win-win discourses**
  - The community-based conservation discourse belongs here
  - The bioprospecting win-win discourse
- **Traditionalist discourses**
  - The biopiracy discourse
- **Promethean discourses**

# Main aspects of the four discourse types

	<b>Conser- vation important?</b>	<b>Needs and interests of local people important?</b>	<b>Positive to partnership local/ex- ternal actors?</b>
<b>Preservationist discourse type</b>	Yes	No	No
<b>Win-win discourse type</b>	Yes	Yes as means	Yes
<b>Traditionalist discourse type</b>	Yes in terms of sust. use	Yes	No
<b>Promethean discourse type</b>	No	Yes	Not relevant

Agder, W.N., T.A. Benjaminsen, K. Brown & H. Svarstad (2001): Advancing a political ecology of global environmental discourses. *Development & Change* no. 4, vol. 32:681-715.

Svarstad, H. (2004): A global political ecology of bioprospecting. In: Paulson, S. & L. Gezon eds.: *Political Ecology Across Spaces, Scales and Social Groups*. Rutgers University Press.

Svarstad, H., L.K. Petersen, D. Rothman, H. Siepel and F. Wätzold (2008): Discursive biases of the environmental research framework DPSIR. In print for *Land Use Policy* 25(1) 2008: 116-125, published by *ScienceDirect* 2007.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.landusepol.2007.03.005>.

# Investigation of claims by the community-based conservation discourse

- Are local people in and around the protected area allowed to **participate** in the management of the natural resources in a satisfactory manner?



Do local men and women take part on equal terms as “local participants” in the management of biodiversity?

# Investigation of claims by the community-based conservation discourse

- Are local people in and around the protected area allowed to **participate** in the management of the natural resources in a satisfactory manner?



Do local men and women take part on equal terms as “local participants” in the management of biodiversity?

Yes, we should assume that, in coherence with:

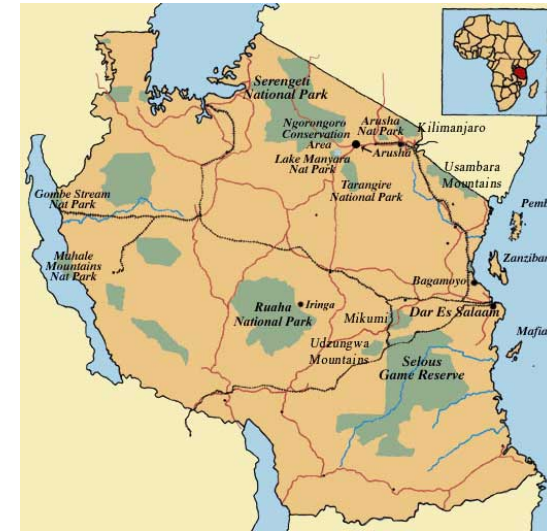
- the Convention on Biological Diversity;
- Agenda 21;
- the Johannesburg Declaration on Sustainable Development.

## Convention on Biological Diversity:

”affirming the need for the full participation of women at all levels of policy-making and implementation for biological diversity conservation”

# Do local men and women take part on equal terms as “local participants” in the management of biodiversity?

Ex. from a country in the South - a case study from Tanzania:  
Songorwa, A.N. 1999. Is community-based wildlife management gender sensitive? Experiences from Selous Conservation Programme in Tanzania. *Uongozi Journal of Management Dev.* 11(2):145-166.



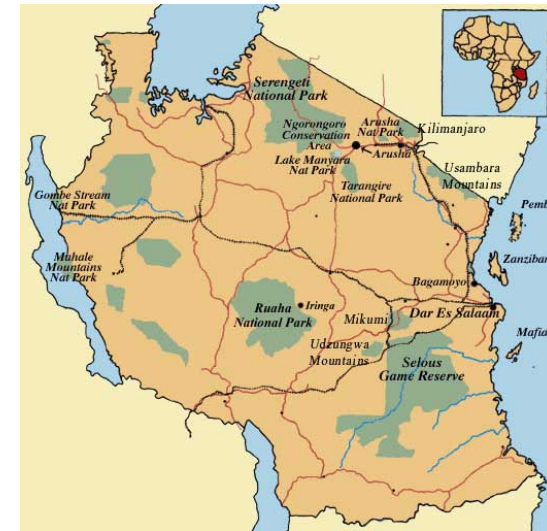
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Important finding:

Women had a low participation in decision-making.



Villages:	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i
Males	10	9	9	7	8	8	8	8	6
Females	2	3	1	3	2	2	2	2	4
% females	16,7	25	10	30	20	20	20	20	40

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Important finding:  
Women had a low participation in  
decision-making.

Nevertheless,  
There is a consciousness and concern  
about gender, environment and  
development in developing  
countries.





**What about the situation in Europe?**

**A study of two cases of establishment of new  
protected areas  
in Norway**

# The Norwegian context

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1. Norway's international image on gender, environment and development.
2. Local participation is central in present management of natural resources.
3. Norwegian policies and laws require gender equality (a 40% requirement)



**Thus: One should expect a high degree of gender equality when local participation today is implemented in cases of management of natural resources.**

# Two case studies: Establishment of protected areas in Norway





# Protection Plan for Dovrefjell – including Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park

Established 2002



# Protection Plan for Dovrefjell – including Dovrefjell-Sunndalsfjella National Park

<b>Members of the Dovre Mountains Council as of June 2005</b>	<b>Political representatives</b>	<b>Numbers of women among political representatives</b>	<b>Administrative representatives</b>	<b>Number of women among administrative representatives</b>	<b>Total number of representatives</b>	<b>Number (and %) of women among representatives</b>
<b>8 municipalities</b>	8	2	8	0	16	2 (12.5%)
<b>4 counties</b>	4	2	4	0	8	2 (25%)
<b>All together 12 memb.s</b>	12	4	12	0	24	4 (16.7%)

# ***Protection Plan for Dovrefjell: Numbers of local women in the reference groups***

<b>Members of reference groups</b>	<b>Nr of local members</b>	<b>Nr of women</b>
<b>Dovre municipality</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Lesja municipality</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Oppdal municipality</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Tynset municipality</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Folldal municipality</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Municipality members in co-operation group from the county Møre &amp; Romsdal (Nesset, Rauma and Sunndal municipalities)</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>%</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>7.5</b>

**Only 7,5 %:**

**Women are totally  
marginalised.**



# Geiranger - Herdalen

**Geiranger-Herdalen  
Landscape Protected Area  
- Established 2004**



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**Local representatives and county representatives:**

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# How are the situation in other cases?

## The Norwegian National Park Plan

1992-2008: Establishment of 54 new protected areas in Norway. In at least 45 of these: Reference groups at work. **Purpose:** to get local participation and thereby local support for conservation.

On-going study:

We have so far obtained data from 18 of the 45 cases.

Findings:

Totally 279 men and 41 women

87.2 % men and 12.8 % women.

Many reference groups without any women at all.

Only one reference group in one municipality with a majority of women (6 women, 3 men).

# Findings from the case studies in Norway

**Theory:**

**Gender equality**



# Findings from the case studies in Norway

**Theory:**

**Gender equality**



**Practice:**

**"The local participant" is most often a man**



Svarstad, H., Daugstad, K., Vistad, O.I. and Guldvik, I. (2006):  
New protected areas in Norway: Local participation without  
gender equality. *Mountain Research and Development*  
26(1):48-54.

# Local participation in the management of biodiversity:

Do local men and women take part on equal terms as “local participants” in the management of biodiversity?

Answer: No!

Question 1): What is at stake?

Is it **important** to involve women among local participants in decision-making and management of biodiversity conservation?

**If yes: Why?**



Dustin Heirdt 1998 - Kikuyu Women



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**Local and practical knowledge is often gendered**

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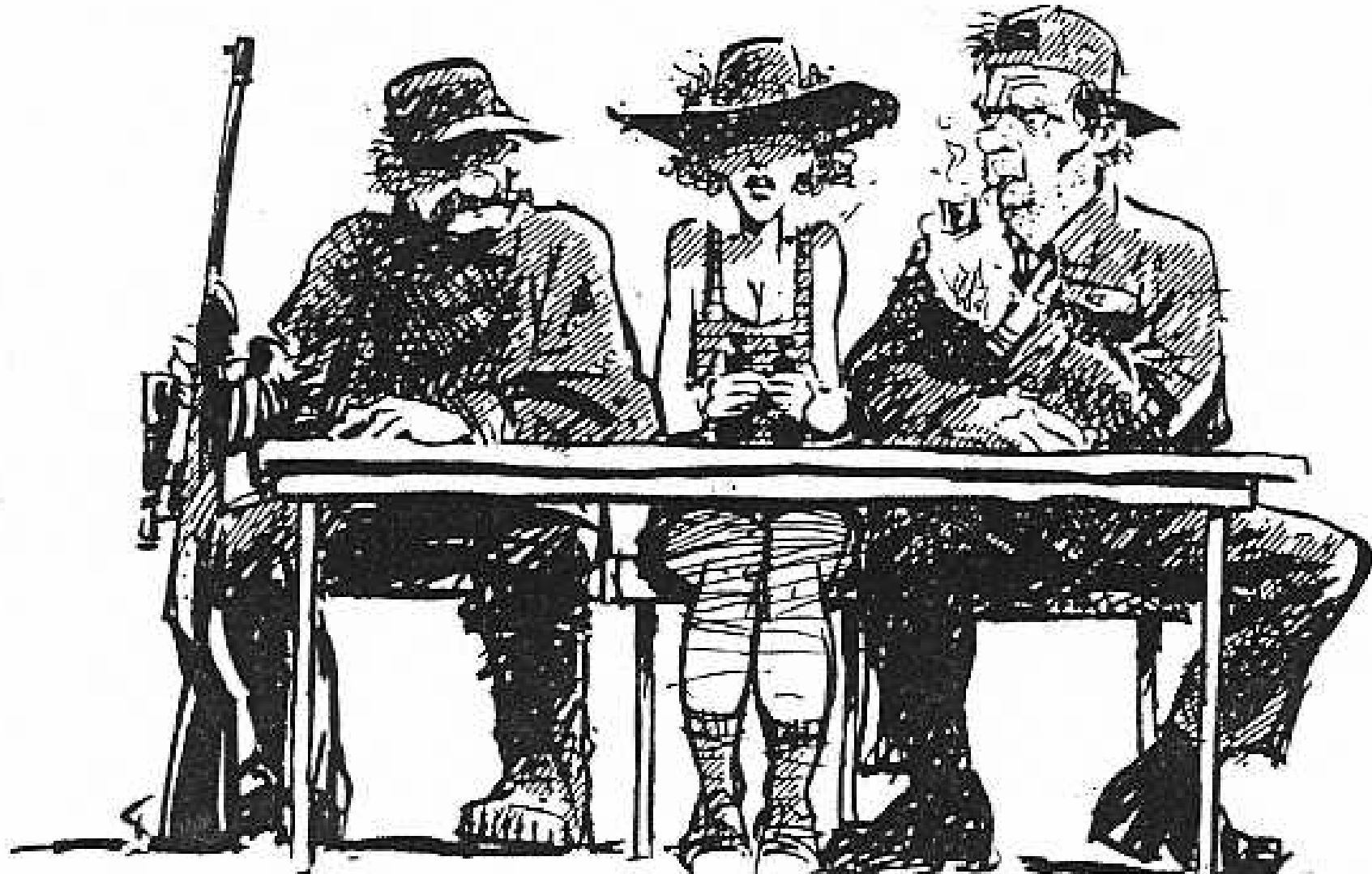
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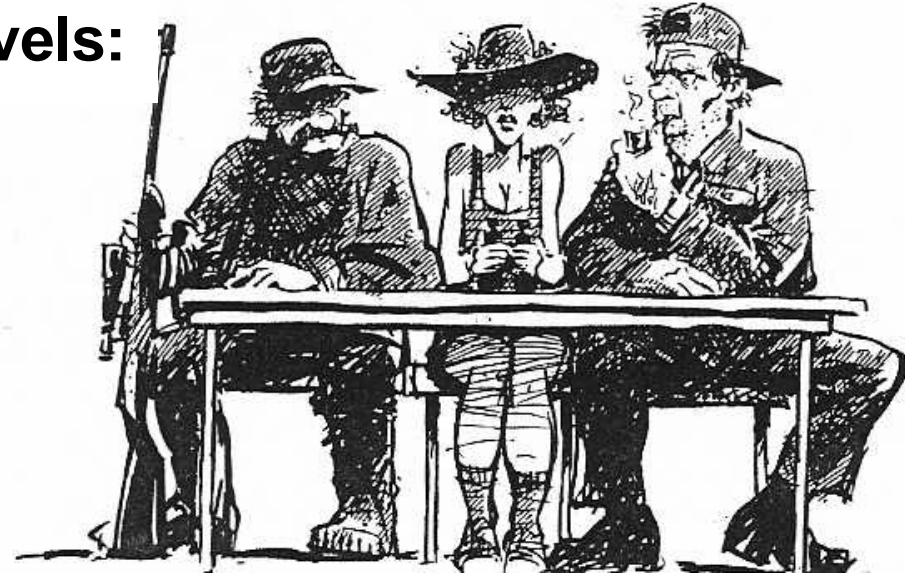
Question 2): What can explain it?

**Why is "the local participant" – in investigated cases – usually a man?**



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Explanatory factors on various levels:

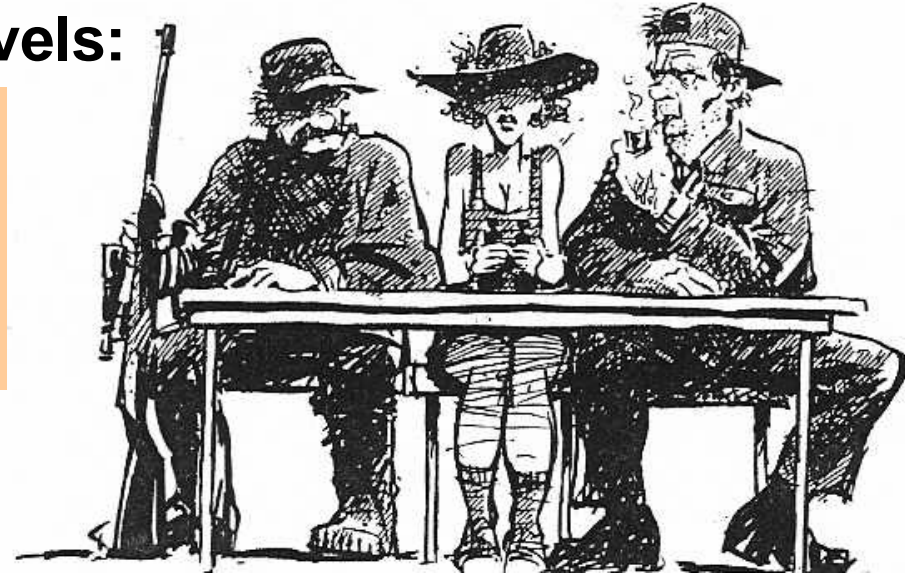


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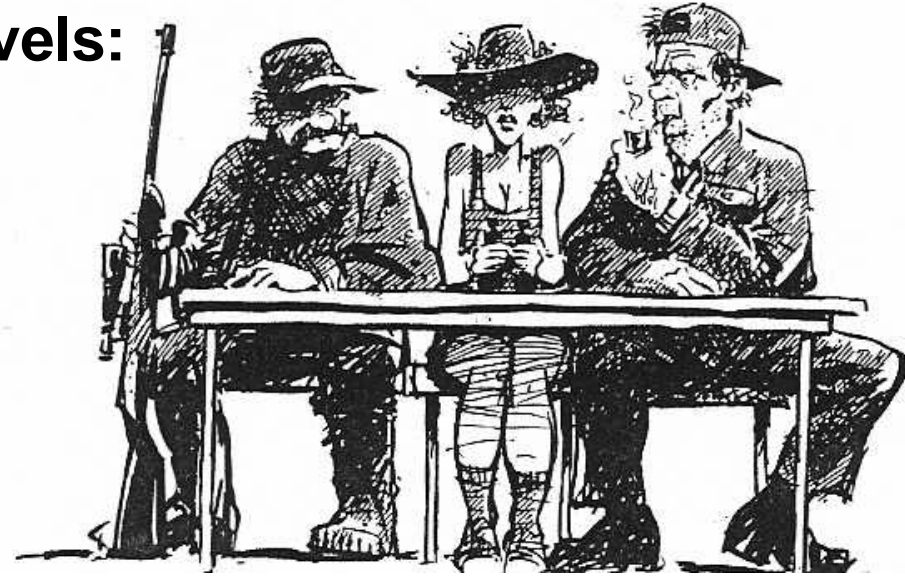
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2. Characteristics of the selection situations for local participants?

E.g. "Demand factors"? Yes, few women were asked to be local representatives.

And some structural explanations



# **Ex: Structural features of the Dovrefjell Council**

- **Half of the participants in the Dovrefjell Council consists of administrative representatives.  
Among these: 0 women**
- **Political representatives from municipalities: One from each municipality – usually the mayor.  
There are hardly any women among mayors in these municipalities**

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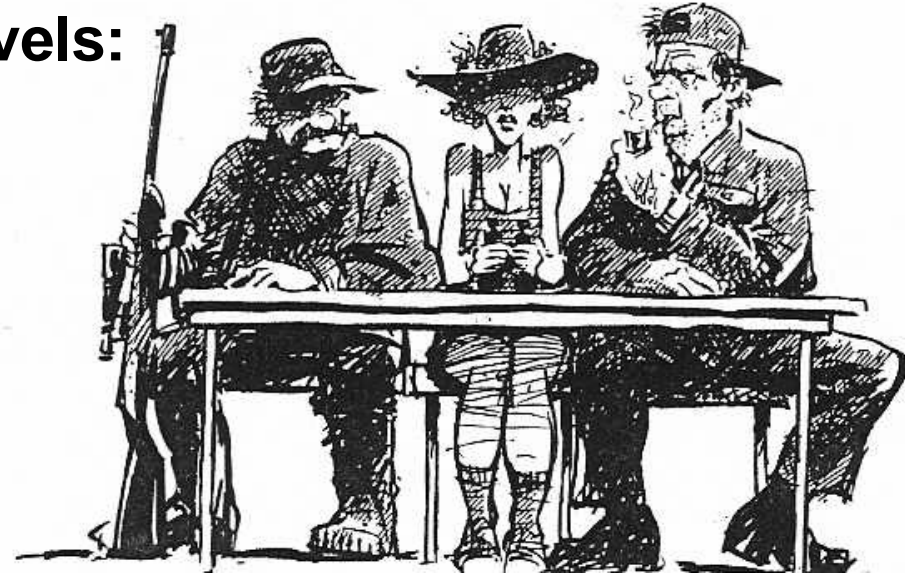
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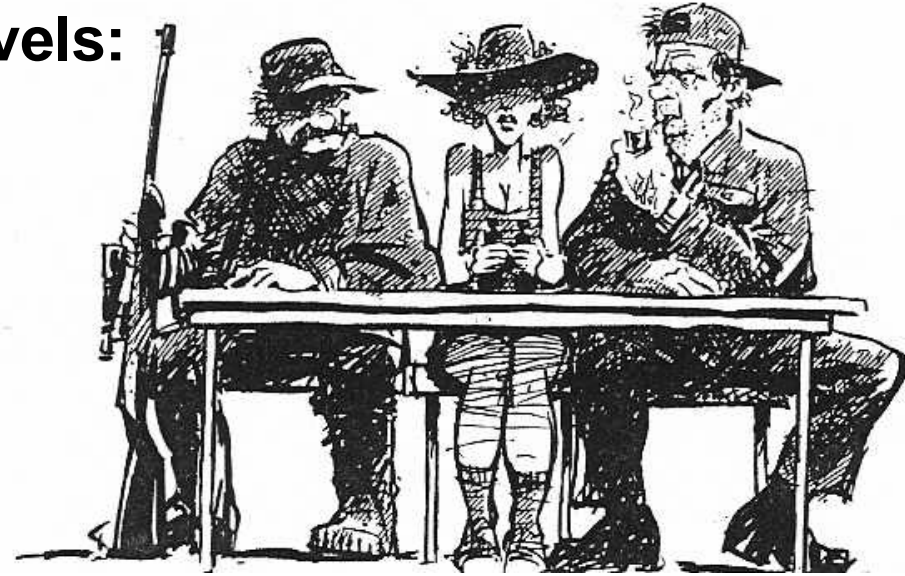
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4. National level factors?

- . Legal loopholes? Probably not
- . The Norwegian authorities on natural resources management has a sector responsibility to ensure gender equality on all levels. This responsibility has been neglected.



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What should be done?



## Gender focuses in Alter-Net:

1) A workshop April 2007.

Klok, Chris and Rob van Apeldoorn eds. 2007: Gender and Biodiversity Management and Conservation in Europe. Workshop proceedings. Wageningen: Alterra.

2) Empirical research to explain degrees of gender equalities in local participation of biodiversity management. Comparison of cases from Norway, Austria and Scotland.

3) Examination of policy level explanations – in EU and on country level (the “R1 gender task”).



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- Research knowledge needs
- Policy inputs



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- Research knowledge needs
- Policy inputs

Experiences from Norway:

The research focus and suggestions for improvements are popular among many local people – especially women - but extremely unpopular among some of the local men currently in power positions who may feel this focus as a threat.

But the main challenge is on the national level where administrators in the state sector of the environment and natural resources neglect the sector responsibility to enforce gender equality.

