



**KTH Architecture and  
the Built Environment**

## Just Sustainable Futures

### *Gender and Environmental Justice Considerations in Planning*

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#### **Akademisk avhandling**

som med tillstånd av Skolan för Arkitektur och Samhällsbyggnad vid Kungliga Tekniska högskolan i Stockholm, för avläggande av teknologie doktorsexamen, kommer att offentligt försvaras i sal F2, KTH, Lindstedtsvägen 26, fredagen den 10 juni 2011, kl 13.00.

Avhandlingen försvaras på engelska.

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## Abstract

This thesis contributes and deepens knowledge on long-term planning for sustainable development through exploring environmental justice and gender discourses in planning and futures studies. It also suggests ways of working with those issues.

Environmental justice is explored through discussions with planners in Stockholm, Sweden, and through looking at images of future Stockholm and the environmental justice implications of these. These studies show how environmental justice issues can be manifested in a Swedish urban context and discuss how sustainable development and environmental justice can be increased, operationalised and politicised in planning. One key contribution of the thesis is in identifying the need to address procedural and outcomes values in both planning and futures studies.

Gender discourses are explored through analysing papers published in the journal *Futures* and through an examination of Swedish Regional Growth Programmes. The feminist criticism of futures studies mainly relates to the field being male-dominated and male-biased, which means that the future is seen as already colonised by men, that futures studies generally do not work with feminist issues or issues of particular relevance for women, and that they often lack a critical and reflexive perspective. There is therefore a call for feminist futures as a contrast to hegemonic male and Western technology-orientated futures. The case of the Swedish Regional Growth Programmes shows that gender inequality is often viewed as a problem of unequal rights and possibilities. This liberal view on gender equality has made it rather easy for gender equality advocates to voice demands, e.g. for the inclusion of both women and men in decision-making processes, but the traditional male norm is not challenged. If a different response is required, other ways of describing the problem of gender inequalities must be facilitated. One way to open up different ways of describing the problem and to describe desirable futures could be the use of scenarios.

Planning for just, sustainable futures means acknowledging process values, but also content (giving nature a voice!). It also means politicising planning. There are a number of desirable futures, and when this is clarified the political content of planning is revealed. These different images of the future can be evaluated in terms of environmental justice, gender perspective or any specific environmental aspect, e.g. biodiversity, which indicates that different futures are differently good for nature and/or different societal groups.