

Initial project duration – 36 months – with start dates ranging from December 2018 to December 2019.
New end date will range from June 2022 to June 2023, extended 6 months due to COVID-19

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Gender Studies, Critical Policy Analysis, Natural Resource Management, Pastoralism, Forest Governance, Sustainability Science, Feminist Studies

Overview

SEQUAL is a multi-country collaborative project of research organizations in Sweden, Norway, Spain and Finland. SEQUAL aims to carry out research on the intersections and interdependencies between climate change, natural resource governance and gender, focusing on discursive analyses of policies in the Global North (Sweden, Spain, Norway) and South (Burkina Faso), and place-based case studies in Norway, Spain and Burkina Faso.

The objectives of SEQUAL are to:

- Contribute to better understanding of how gender is framed and addressed within climate change and natural resource policies at different policy levels, and identify potential factors that can promote or hinder transformational change.
- Further our understanding of gender and power relations under changing environmental conditions within case studies of natural resource management at the local level.
- Provide critical analyses of the gaps and linkages between international and national gender and climate policies on the one hand, and local everyday gendered practices on the other hand.

Progress to date

The project has carried out policy and literature reviews, critical discourse analyses and interviews with policy and diverse stakeholders across all the countries. While field research is experiencing some delays due to COVID 19 restrictions, the project has managed to engage with science and practice through organised panel sessions in international science conferences such as Political Ecology Network (POLLEN) conference in 2020 (“The contested nature of climate change: convergence of feminist and decolonial approaches to explore intersectionality and transformative adaptation”) and the Swedish Development Research conference in 2021 (“Development for whom: Revisiting inequality and social injustice in sustainable development”). A special issue based on the POLLEN session will be published in Environmental Science and Policy journal in 2022.

Regular and well-organised coordination among the partners, with regular meetings and specific workshops to share advances in frameworks, methods and tools has enabled collaboration and facilitated good performance.

Impact of COVID-19

We anticipate minor delays in our planned deliverables, and while we do not expect this to significantly affect the plans within the overall project timeframe, we have requested 6-month extensions. In all the countries, we have had to make adjustments to our project activities due to COVID-19, for example by rescheduling and holding interviews with stakeholders online rather than in person. However, activities such as field research visits have had to be completely postponed, and information sharing workshops planned for 2020 and 2021 had to be cancelled in Burkina Faso, Norway, Spain and Sweden. With COVID 19 constraints, the team is identifying risk strategies and has adapted to new and creative ways of working and collaborating online.

Contribution to the achievement of UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

In the assessments of interlinkages between SDG5 and SDG13 in international (UN), European (EU), Nordic (Nordic council) and national (Burkina Faso, Norwegian, Spanish and Swedish government) policy documents, we highlight the strengths, gaps and weaknesses of gender mainstreaming in the actions proposed within policies and national strategies. We contribute to filling a knowledge gap in how gendered and power relations affect desired SDG outcomes,

and to increasing awareness among policy makers and the general public on the relevance and importance of including gender perspectives. As our fieldwork is linked to governance issues in terrestrial ecosystems, our work will also contribute to advance linkages between SDG5 and SDG15.

Differences/inequalities between women and men highlighted by the project

SEQUAL is unearthing existing inequalities between men and women in all spheres of life. Addressing those well-grounded inequalities requires a deep understanding of the roots and representations of the problem from the perspective of the multiple development actors. Our project through the innovative research approach and comparative perspective, is enabling such deeper analysis, hence making an important contribution to the knowledge of the perceptions of gender inequality in the global North and South.

Our findings from the critical analyses of climate change policies in Spain and Norway reveal that climate change is constructed as a market, technology and/or security issue. Thus, the problem of climate change and suggested responses to it are constructed in such a way that gender is irrelevant. On the other hand, our critical analysis of forest policies in Sweden find that gender equality is represented as a technical problem, and policy measures are designed to increase the number of women within a forest sector that maintains rigid conceptions about forestry production and masculine values. In Burkina Faso, our analysis development policies highlight that gender inequality is represented as a de-politicised problem of local culture, that is assumed to be static and unchanging. When the dominant representation of gender inequality is one of markets, technological fixes or numbers without considering underlying power inequalities, women and men will not have the same opportunity and power to shape society and their own lives.

Positive impact of the project on gender equality/scientific evidence on gender in the field

SEQUAL raises the importance of gender equality in relation to natural resource management, use of nature and practices related to human-animal/forest dimensions, SEQUAL brings in new perspectives among partitions and managers in the field that traditionally have not paid attention to gender roles, relations and inequalities, particularly related to access and rights. This is especially true at local level in the local cases studies of herder communities in the Sami region (Norway) and Pyrenees region (Spain), and in community forest groups in Cassou (Burkina Faso).

Swedish SEQUAL members have integrated and made visible issues of gender and intersectionality within the research themes of their institution, and have a newly funded project with a focus on intersectionality and social justice issues, FairFrontiers, 2021-2026.

Socio-economic impact; involvement of policy makers/civil society

Policy and civil society actors are key stakeholders in our interviews in Burkina Faso, Norway, Spain and Sweden, in addition to academic stakeholders. The project is getting high levels of interest from development actors from international cooperation agencies and civil society in Burkina Faso in particular, as we examine global North-South linkages. Discussions during the interview process are prompting self-reflection and a process of rethinking the strategies in use to address gender inequality.

SEQUAL researchers from the Nordland Research Institute were invited to present their research on gender and climate to the Norwegian Ministry of Culture (currently responsible for gender equality). As gender equality and climate will be a key issue for the UN's Commission on the Status of Women in 2022, the SEQUAL team's presentation "Norwegian climate policy – is a gender perspective relevant?" was aimed at informing and discussing with the Ministry on how they can approach this issue in their own work. SEQUAL researcher from Spain participated in the UN Women CSW66 meeting on climate change and gender (<https://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw66-2022>) and highlighted SEQUAL research findings in the context of gender, food systems and climate change.

Publications

- Fernandez-Gimenez, M. E., Oteros-Rozas, E., & Ravera, F. (2021). Spanish women pastoralists' pathways into livestock management: Motivations, challenges and learning. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 87, 1-11. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2021.08.019>
- Rivera-Ferre, M. (2021). Climate change is not equal to all: The contribution of feminist studies to climate change research. *Metode Science Studies Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.7203/metode.12.20508> (Available in Catalan, English and Spanish).