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

Overview

The SEQUAL project (Social-ecological relations and gender equality: Dynamics and processes for transformational change across scales) investigates gender differences in participation and leadership in natural resource management and climate related processes. Addressing SDG 5 and SDG 13, SEQUAL examines the discourses and proposed actions around gender and resource governance in policies, everyday practices and adaptation strategies. The project 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 research 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.

Project Outcomes

The project has advanced the use of feminist theoretical methods to provide deeper understanding of how gender inequalities are represented in climate change, natural resource governance and development policies in the Global North and South. We applied the 'What's the problem represented to be?' (WPR) approach to a critical discourse analysis of how gender is problematized in policy.

The project has also catalyzed critical thinking on gender in research, and is contributing to shaping the discourses around gender issues in the research centers involved and hopefully in the national policy arena. Data was collected and analysed in 4 different countries (Sweden, Spain, Norway and Burkina Faso), and the generated databases of policies documents and literature on policies of gender equality, climate change, NRM are an important contribution of the project.

Further, the project has also carried out field research of gendered and intersectional relations in everyday practices of natural resource management in case studies of shepherding in communal pastures and forests in the Spanish Pyrenees, community forestry in Burkina Faso and Vietnam and reindeer husbandry in northern Norway.

The project is also advancing critical reflections among stakeholders and different audiences engaged through its implementation (particularly in the choice and design of methods and approaches) and presentations at different academic and science-policy fora. This will contribute towards the expected societal impacts of our research.

Some of the key lessons from this research include:

- The importance of bringing new information and perspectives related to gendered inequalities, access and rights to brokers, such as extension agents, local government actors, development workers, as they are in the 'frontline' of working with everyday gendered practices (Spain, Burkina Faso).
- Women networks in forest land ownership and forest industry practitioners (Sweden) and pastoral labor-sharing (Spain) are critical support structures for learning/testing alternative models of sustainability and for enabling progressive leadership.
- Loss of local knowledge systems and diverse practices due to industrial agriculture (Spain) and forestry (Sweden) has negative implications for adaptive governance and social-ecological resilience that will be



required for sustainability and climate change mitigation and adaptation.

- Integration of global norms such as decentralization and participation into national and regional policies are very important for more inclusive governance (Norway, Burkina Faso, Vietnam) but can be hollow processes if they do not tackle imbalances in power and authority relative to local and indigenous institutions.

Team members

	Woman	Man	Other
Gender balance in the whole consortium	15 (94%)	1 (6%)	0 (0%)
Presence of women as lead researchers/PIs	5 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Gender Experts in the team	10 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
Subsequent team members trained (Gender equality and/or IGAR)	7	0 (0%)	0 (0%)

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

Gender equality is critical to mitigating climate impacts and women’s inclusion in climate discussions and decisions can lead to more gender-sensitive projects and policies, and to potentially improved outcomes for all.

The analysis of our research contributes many of the cross-cutting governance variables in SDG 5 and SDG 13 by assessing whose voice, agency, participation and representation are considered in decision-making processes at local and national levels, and to provide insights to understanding how gendered and power relations could be better considered in policies. These findings often do not fit neatly within the narrow scope of the SDG indicators – and one of our expected project outputs will be the identification of alternative indicators for monitoring climate change and natural resource policies through a feminist perspective.

Differences/inequalities between women and men highlighted by the project

The project 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.

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

Raising the importance of gender equality in relation to natural resource management, use of nature and practices related to human-animal/forest dimensions, we bring 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).

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.

Workshops with policy and civil society stakeholders are being planned for 2021 in all countries, depending on the COVID-19 situation. The pandemic has challenged our ability to hold in-person workshops with national stakeholders and smaller workshops and meetings were instead held with regional stakeholders during field research. In addition, presentations of our research were given at various science-policy fora such as DevRes2021, co-organized by the Swedish International Development Agency and Swedish Research Council; and the IUFRO (International Union of Forestry Research Organizations) conference 2022. Further, the material from our research has been used in teaching graduate courses on gender, forestry and climate change at Stockholm Resilience Centre and University of Helsinki.