

# GENDER EQUALITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE:

DISCOURSES ON POLITICS, POWER, AND PROCESSES FOR  
TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE BETWEEN AND ACROSS SCALES IN SPAIN.

MARIA BORRÀS ESCAYOLA



Càtedra  
d'Agroecologia  
i Sistemes Alimentaris



# THE SEQUAL PROJECT – GENDER-NET PLUS

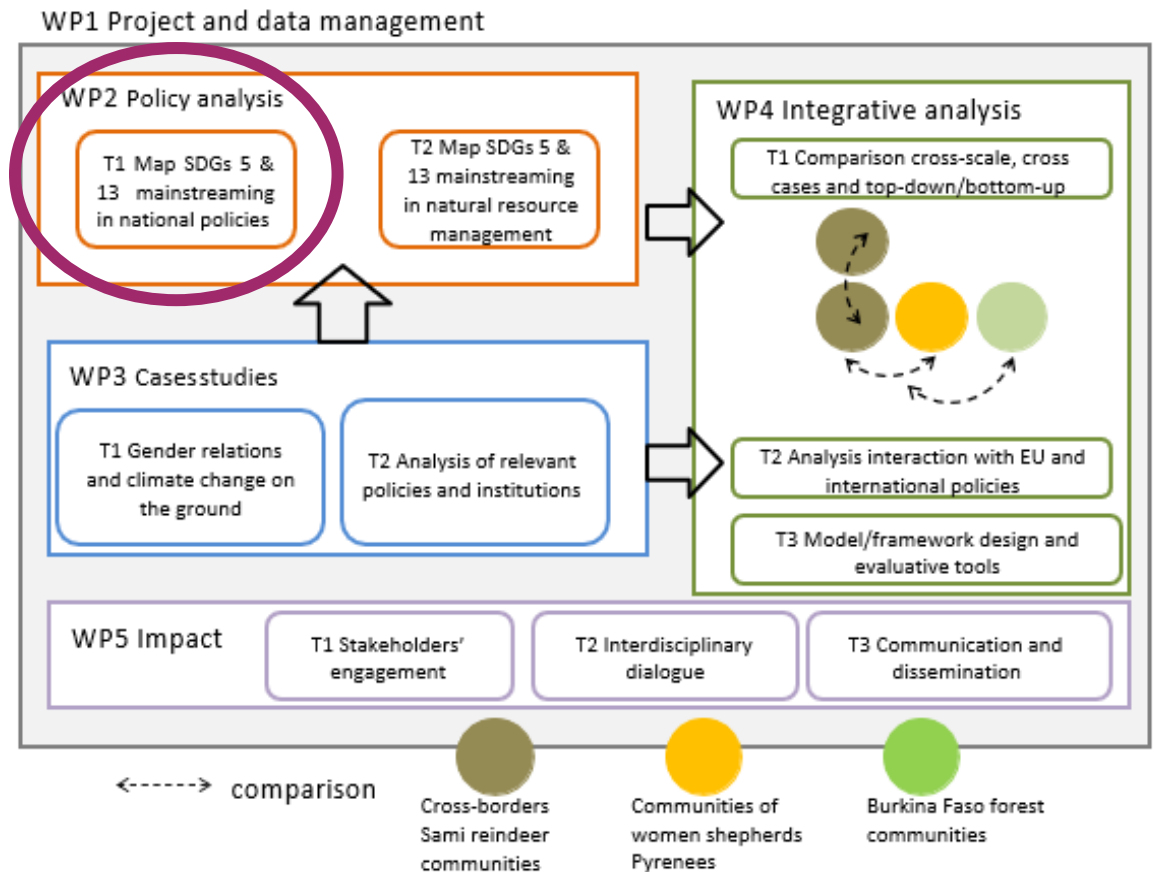
- Gender equality in research and innovation
- Understanding the cross-cutting issues of gender equality and climate change

**SDG5**



**SDG13**

**Understanding connections and flows of power to dig deep into processes of climate change and gender relations, and address these issues as social, ecological and political processes across borders and across scales.**



## OUR OBJECTIVE

- **How gender equality is mainstreamed in climate change policy?**
- Analyze from a feminist perspective the representation of the “climate change” problem and policy formulation of SDG 13 in Spain (national) and Catalonia (regional).

# UNDERSTANDING BACCHI (2009) – WPR APPROACH

## THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE METHODOLOGY

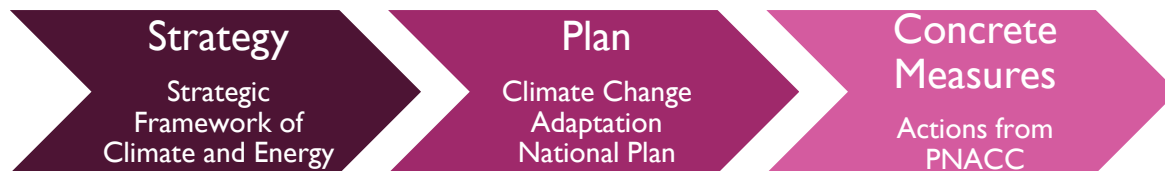
- **Social Construction Theory**
  - Our understandings of the world are the *products* of social forces (Burr 2003: 19-20).
  - ‘Knowledge’ in this understanding is a social construction.
- **Poststructuralism**
  - Power-Knowledge nexus (Foucault 1980)
  - Emergent political subject
- **Feminist Body Theory**
  - Representations have real and meaningful effects for lived/living bodies
- **Governmentality studies**
  - Broaden our understanding of government

## **WHAT’S THE PROBLEM REPRESENTED TO BE? (WPR APPROACH)**

1. What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
2. What assumptions underlie this representation?
3. How has the representation come about?
4. What is left unproblematic? Where are the silences? Can be the problem thought differently?
5. What effects are produced by this representation?
6. How/where has this representation been produced, disseminated, and defended? How could it be questioned, disrupted, or displaced?

# APPLICATION OF BACCHI'S ANALYSIS TO THE SPANISH CASE

- **Multi-level analysis:** national (Spain) and regional (Catalonia), looking at the
  - Official and the counter official discourse
  - SDG13 –Climate Action → divided into mitigation and adaptation\* policies



## FIVE MAIN STEPS

1. **Selection of relevant documents**
  - Official policy documents: laws, plans, strategies
  - Social-movements documents: manifests, allegations, declarations
2. **Semi-structured interviews (N=18) → 3 typologies:** technicians from institutions, social-movements activists and other key actors. Questions divided on key themes from Bacchi's Qs.
3. **Feminist Literature Review related to CC studies.**
4. **Mix inductive-deductive method for codification.**
5. **Grounded theory** for the analysis to capture the main narratives emerging from the policies.

# PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- Studying the Spanish policies (official and alternatives) on climate change (SDG13) diverse and ,sometimes opposite, **narratives emerge**
  - Official narratives – Institutions, EU, Corporations
    - *European Green Deal*
    - *Bioeconomy*
  - Alternative narratives – Social movements
    - *Degrowth*
    - *Ecofeminism*

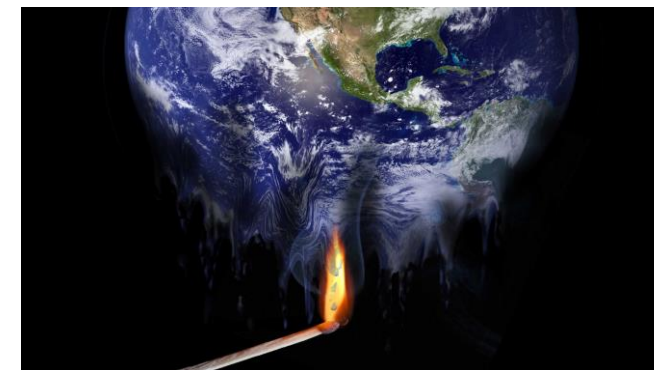
# ANSWERING BACCHI - PRELIMINARY RESULTS

- I. What is the problem represented to be in a specific policy?
  - Climate change is a biophysical problem of emissions and temperature rising – **threat to economy** → **Apocalyptic narratives**

*“Spain has a stable and accurate strategic framework for the **decarbonization of its economy**; a roadmap for the next decade, the 2021-2030 Plan, designed in coherence with the emission neutrality that we aspire to in 2050; and a strategy of supportive solidarity and just transition, to ensure that people and territories **take advantage of the opportunities** of this transition and no one is left behind.”* – Climate and Energy Strategic Framework, 2020

- CC is **seen as an opportunity for job creation and green modernization of economy** (decarbonization of the industry) – **techno-positivist view**

*“The purpose of this Law is to ensure compliance with the objectives of the Paris Agreement, to **accelerate the full decarbonisation of the Spanish economy** in such a way as to guarantee the rational and supportive use of our resources and **the implementation of a sustainable development model that generates employment of quality**”* – Art.1 Draft Law on Climate Change and Energy Transition



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS (II)

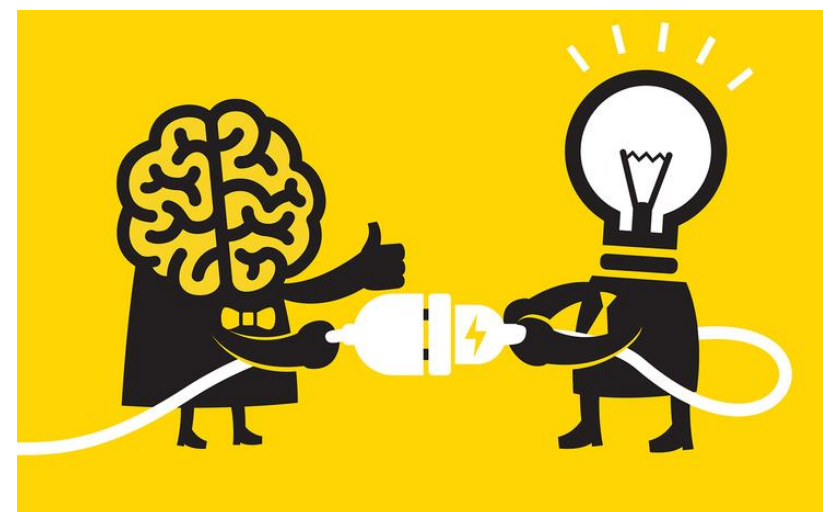
### 2. What assumptions underlie this representation?

- **Keep on growing** - green growth → keep the **same model** but with renewable energy

*“Spain, renewable power: The framework foresees that more than 70% of electricity generation in Spain in 2030 will be renewable, compared to 40% today, and that 100% be reached by 2050, a goal that will allow meeting the commitments of the Paris Agreement with the most **positive impact on both economic growth and employment and health**. (...) The national industry will fundamentally supply the demand for new renewables, which will give it **competitive muscle in the growth of the global renewables market**. (...) With ecological transition, the reindustrialization and the **greening of the economy** are the protagonists, offering new opportunities in rural Spain.”*  
– Climate and Energy Strategic Framework, 2020

- There is ONE valid knowledge, the expert knowledge (Bee, Rice & Trauger 2015)

*“A **large team of experts** has been set up with people from different departments of MITECO, which in turn has had the technical **assistance of academic and advanced research centers with extensive experience and knowledge** in the fields of economics, energy and climate change”* – Energy and Climate Integrated National Plan, 2019





## PRELIMINARY RESULTS (III)

3. How has the representation come about?
  - Mainly, by the **dominant models and international experts' groups** based on the **western conception of the world**.

*“The special report of the **Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change** published on October 8, 2018, regarding the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C on pre-industrial levels and the trajectories of greenhouse gases to limit said warming, makes an **unequivocal call to action (...)** The Secretary General of the **United Nations** periodically recalls the need to urgently respond to the threat of climate change and rectify the current situation in order to effectively comply with the obligations in terms of climate and sustainable and inclusive development. His request coincides with the warnings made by the **main international financial organizations** and the **European Commission** in their Communication on the European Green Deal and in the European Decarbonisation Strategy to 2050” - Draft Law on Climate Change and Energy Transition*



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS (IV)

4. What is left unproblematic? Where are the silences? Can be the problem thought differently?
  - No-one is proposing a change of the socio-economic model in which we are all inserted.

*“Actually, it is a problem of model in the background, therefore of socioeconomic model, and of how we relate to the environment and what kind of model we have built together. And of course, therefore, **you will hardly solve a problem that is of conception of social or socioeconomic model if you do not make an approach in this field**”.* – Interviewee 1, Climate Change Catalan Office, 2020.

- Lack of spaces for alternative types of knowing

*“Well, there is still a **lack of spaces for dialogue** where people who are experts in “x” and people who are experts in “y” ... who can meet and can ... it is clear that a person who is an expert in gender may not have the necessary knowledge to land everything on legal concepts, but perhaps they have not been given the spaces for this dialogue to occur, which at the end is what is needed if you want to cross over and want to cover all the complexity”* – Interviewee 5, InspirAction, 2020.



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS (V)

5. What effects are produced by this representation?
- **Gendering policies: women as a homogenous group, vulnerable and agents of change** at the same time (Arora-Jonsson 2011)

- Vulnerable → need to be taught how to do things

*“Enable national incentives to promote the **participation of women in training programs** on low carbon technologies and particularly on renewable energies” - Gender and Climate Change: a situation diagnosis, Spanish Women’s Institute, 2020*

- Smart economy → include women on the new green works and market

*“it is deduced that **the participation of women** under conditions of equality **will be reinforced in the renewable energy sector**” - Energy and Climate Integrated National Plan, 2019*

*“The framework opens up **(green) employment opportunities** that will have a special impact on young people, the long-term unemployed and women, which will be promoted through active employment and **vocational training policies** designed specifically for this purpose” - Climate and Energy Strategic Framework, 2020*

- Leaders

*“It is a new space in which **women must actively participate**, leading the decisions and proposed solutions” – Gender and Climate Change: a situation diagnosis, Spanish Women’s Institute, 2020*



## PRELIMINARY RESULTS (VI)

6. How/where has this representation been produced, disseminated, and defended?  
How could it be questioned, disrupted, or displaced?

- Power of some disciplines over others (techno-scientific sciences over social sciences)

*“I guess **because of the training of the people we are dedicated to**, and even within the collective of scientists we have reflected on it, but it **dominates the scientist of the science band**, the technique (techno-scientific) and no, they are scarce, does not mean that there is none, but they do not have the researcher or the scientist of the most social part. In other words, we have biologists, chemists, economists, engineers ... but we don't have what they are psychologists or all the people who are dedicated to these elements” – Interviewee 1, Climate Change Catalan Office, 2020*

- Trying to create new imaginaries

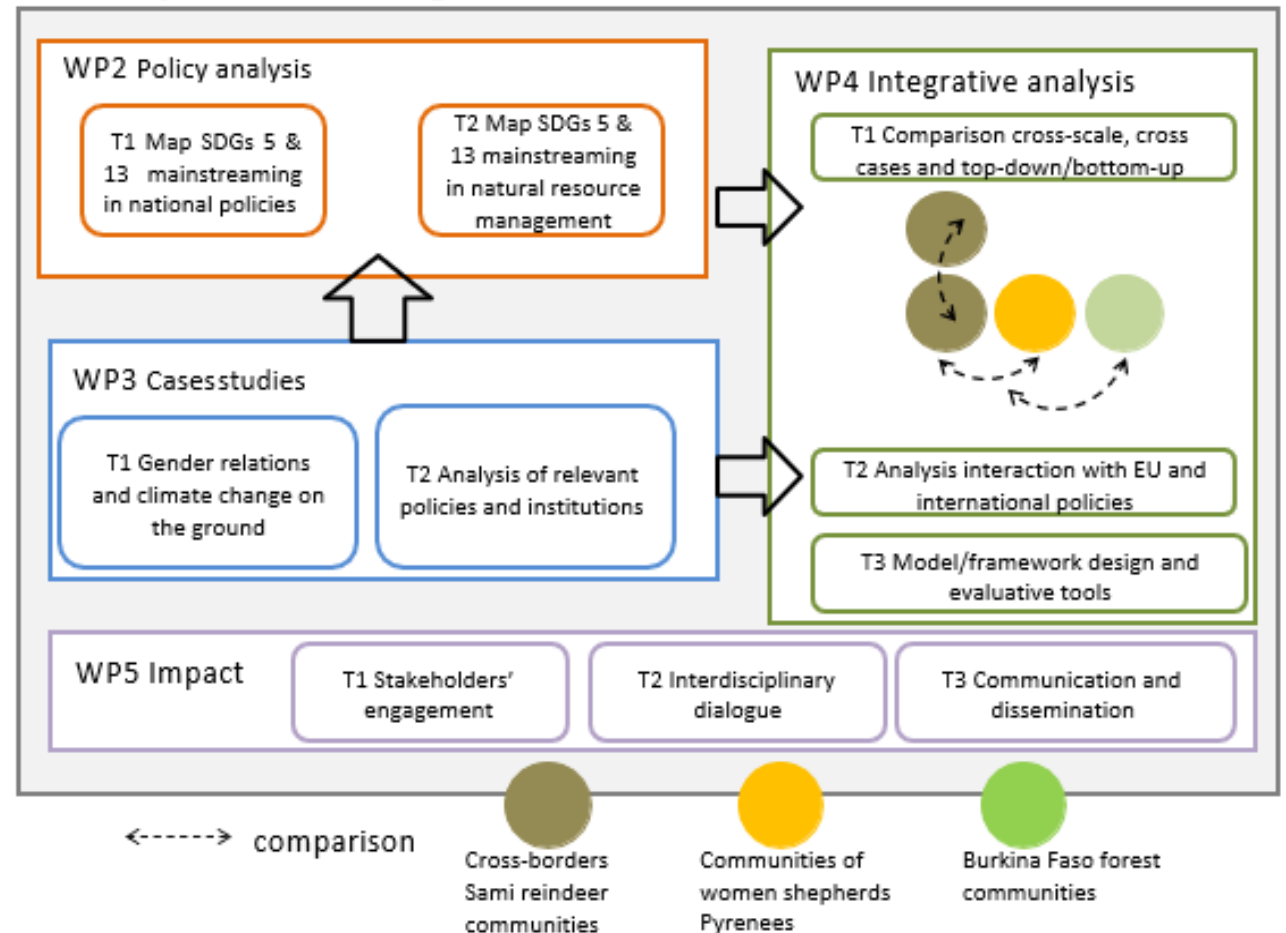
*“What we have to do is a **change of mentality**, a change of vision, **decrease, give importance to what is important**, happiness, friends, parks, being with your dog, beautiful things, but ... of course, stop this consumerism and of course the machinery of the state... they want to sell us the economy” – Interviewee 6, Red Ecofeminista, 2020*



# WHAT'S NEXT?

- **Multi-level – Spain and Catalonia**
- **Top-down and bottom-up integration**

## WP1 Project and data management



---

*Feminist perspectives allow us to question the appropriateness of adaptation (and mitigation) policies, practices and analysis in terms of gender - understood not as the binary opposition of women/men, but as the set of personal and social possibilities that define complex power relations - and also in the **different epistemologies that inform current approaches to adaptation to climate change.***

Ravera & Iniesta, 2017

- Not gender equality but feminist perspective
  - Disentangle existing power relations – new ways of living and being
- Theoretical gap between mitigation and adaptation policies
  - European Green Deal – job creation opportunities (renewable energy) + green-smart economy
  - Decreasing impacts on the environment – degrowth?

THANKS FOR  
YOUR  
ATTENTION



¡A la lucha!  
Ni capitalismo  
Ni patriarcado.