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Inclusion of gender and intersectionality in land, food and climate change policy: A feminist institutional approach

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Abstract

Although progress in promoting gender equality within governments has garnered attention; gender and intersectional disparities in national agrifood and climate policies persist largely unaddressed. Recognizing the imperative of adopting an intersectional gender lens in policy assessment becomes paramount, as policies blind to gender considerations tend to cater primarily to the needs of men and dominant social groups, neglecting the diverse needs of women and marginalised populations. In this context, Colombia emerges as a compelling case study for addressing gender and intersectionality (G&I) integration in policy. With its international commitments and existing gender policies at national and sectorial levels (e.g., agriculture), the country is primed for transformative mainstreaming. However, despite these promising foundations, limited research has been conducted on the extent to which G&I are included into the climate, land, and agri-food nexus. This study aims to bridge this knowledge gap through an innovative methodology for assessing G&I integration within Colombia policies, drawing upon three key approaches and concepts: gender and intersectionality, gender inclusion, and feminist institutional framework. Our three-step method involves mapping and prioritising relevant policies and actors, analysing fifteen (15) policy documents related to food, land, climate change, and gender, and conducting discourse analysis through twenty-eight (28) semi-structured interviews.

Findings from the policy document analysis indicate that while land policies incorporate some G&I considerations, food policies tend to portray women stereotypically as mothers, prioritising children's rights over women's. Similarly, the technical approach to climate change often overlooks social aspects, resulting in limited G&I inclusion. Discourse analysis supplements these findings, highlighting factors constraining G&I inclusion, such as the wide gaps between social groups where G&I factors (gender, ethnicity, geography, age) combined exacerbate inequalities and a weak institutional gender position. Transversal issues like the sexist nature of the agricultural sector, the care economy invisibility, and the Colombian armed conflict further hinder G&I integration across land, food, and climate policies. Results suggest that strong international cooperation, the Peace Agreement, the role of women's social movements and the political will of the left-wing government create a historic window of opportunity for G&I inclusion in policy. These findings provide evidence for informed policy-making.

Keywords: Agri-food policies, Colombia, discourse analysis, gender mainstreaming, intersectionality, policy integration