Gender and Climate Change

An Analysis of the Climate Change Policy of Kenya

Sarah Gyrithholm Jensen

International Relations / Global Refugee Studies

Supervisor: Danny Raymond

Abstract

Climate change disproportionately affects marginalized groups, particularly women, due to social, economic, and political inequalities. Recognizing this, Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016) incorporates gender considerations within its climate governance framework. However, the way gender is framed and problematized in the Act influences how gender-responsive climate action manifests in practice. This thesis critically examines how the Act problematizes gender and explores the implications of this framing for climate policy and governance.

Understanding how gender is represented in climate legislation is crucial for assessing whether policies empower marginalized groups or reinforce existing inequalities. By analyzing the Climate Change Act through the lens of Feminist Political Ecology and Intersectionality, this research explores whether the Act sufficiently addresses structural gender inequalities. The study contributes to broader discussions on gender, problem representation in policy, and climate governance in Kenya.

This thesis applies Carol Bacchi's "What's the Problem Represented to Be?" (WPR) approach, which is a policy analysis framework that examines how problems are constructed within legislation. Using a qualitative research approach, the study conducts a document analysis of the Climate Change Act (2016). By integrating Feminist Political Ecology and Intersectionality, the analysis explores how gender-related challenges are framed and what assumptions, silences, and power dynamics underpin this representation.

The analysis finds that the Climate Change Act (2016) frames gender equity as an important consideration in Kenya's climate governance but does so in a way that reinforces traditional gender roles. While the Act promotes gender-responsive decision-making through its provisions, it still constructs women primarily as vulnerable groups needing protection rather than as active participants in shaping climate action, as it does not address or challenge the structural barriers affecting women's inclusion and participation in climate governance. The Act also fails to fully integrate an intersectional approach, overlooking how multiple factors such as class, ethnicity, and land ownership structures intersect with gender to shape climate vulnerability. Furthermore, although the Act includes provisions for gender-sensitive

adaptation and finance, it lacks clear mechanisms for enforcement, making it uncertain how these commitments translate into concrete action.

This thesis argues that while the Climate Change Act (2016) takes steps toward gender inclusion, it does not fully address structural barriers that limit women's participation and influence in climate governance. Strengthening gender-responsive climate action requires moving beyond gender mainstreaming toward an intersectional approach that ensures women and marginalized groups actively shape climate policies and decision-making.

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List of Abbreviations

CCAP – Climate Change Action Plan

CCA – Climate Change Act (2016)

CRMF – Climate Risk Management Framework

DRR – Disaster Risk Reduction

FPE – Feminist Political Ecology

GDP – Gross Domestic Product

GCF – Green Climate Fund

IPCC – Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

KDMECC – Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change

NAP – National Adaptation Plan (2015–2030)

NCCAP – National Climate Change Action Plan (2018–2022)

NCCRS – National Climate Change Response Strategy (2010)

NCCC – National Climate Change Council

NDCs – Nationally Determined Contributions

NGO – Non-Governmental Organization

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UN - United Nations

UNDP – United Nations Development Programme

UNFCCC – United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change

WPR – What's the Problem Represented to Be?

1. Introduction

It is well known that climate change is an undeniable reality for many around the world, and has severe consequences as it transforms and affects ecosystems and, therethrough, most aspects of life for the people affected (IPCC, 2021). These changes are caused primarily by human activities such as burning fossil fuels, deforestation, and unsustainable agriculture. As global tempatures rise, weather patterns become affected, which leads to extreme events like floods, heatwaves, and droughts, impacting agriculture, water resources, and biodiversity (IPCC, 2021). These disruptions threaths vulnerable communities, particularly in developing countries with limited capacity for adaptation (UNDP, 2020, p. 3).

Climate change impacts are not uniform, as marginalized populations face disproportionate risks. Low-income communities, Indigenous peoples, and women are especially vulnerable due to socio-economic and political disadvantages. Research shows that communities that depend on natural resources are more exposed to climate- induced events and have fewer means to cope (UNDP 2016, p. 3). Within these communities, women face additional burdens as a result of gender inequalities. Women often manage household resources like water, food, and fuel, which are directly affected by climate-related crises (UNDP 2020). As climate change worsens access to resources, women spend more time collecting water and fuel, which further limits opportunities for education and economic participation.

Gender-responsive climate policies acknowledge the distinct ways in which men and women experience climate change and aim to provide equal opportunities in decision-making, resource access, and adaptation strategies (UNDP 2020; Leach 2007). These policies empower women by recognizing their leadership roles and traditional knowledge in environmental management. Studies show that "gender equality and women's empowerment are central to economic development as well as environmental sustainability" (UNDP 2016, p. 6). Thus, this reinforce the importance of integrating gender considerations into climate policies. Futhermore, studies demonstrate that when women participate in climate governance, communities develop stronger resilience to climate impacts (UNDP 2016; UNDP 2020). Gender equality is not only a human rights issue but also a strategic component of effective climate action. Empowering women enhances long-term sustainability and ensures more equitable climate adaptation and mitigation strategies (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014).

1.2 Climate Change and Gender in Kenya

Kenya is among the most climate-vulnerable countries in Africa, with its economy and social structure deeply tied to climate-sensitive sectors, particularly agriculture (UNDP 2020). Over 80% of Kenya's land area is arid or semi-arid, making it highly susceptible to prolonged droughts and erratic rainfall (KIPPRA, 2021). Agriculture provides income for over 75% of the rural population and accounts for about 33% of Kenya's GDP (Scientific Research Publishing 2018, p. 2). However, unpredictable weather patterns have caused significant agricultural losses, leading to crop failure, livestock deaths, and declining soil fertility (UNDP, 2020).

Kenya has taken important steps to address climate change through national and international frameworks. In 2016, Kenya ratified the Paris Agreement, committing to a 30% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (UNFCCC 2020). The country's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) focus on adaptation and mitigation measures in agriculture, water, and energy (UNFCCC 2020). The Climate Change Act (2016) further provides the legal framework for coordinating climate change efforts at a national level (Government of Kenya 2016). Despite these efforts, Kenya remains vulnerable to extreme weather events such as floods. Women and children are the most affected, often losing homes, livelihoods, and access to services (UNDP 2020, p. 6). These crises shows the need for gender-sensitive policies that prioritize vulnerable groups. Women, who are heavily involved in subsistence farming and natural resource management, are disproportionately affected by these climate challenges (UNDP 2020). They are primarily responsible for collecting water, fuel, and food - resources that are increasingly scarce due to the shifting weather patterns (UNDP, 2020). This further limits women's opportunities for education and economic advancement, worsening existing socio-economic inequalities affecting women (World Bank, 2020). Additionally, women's reliance on rain-fed agriculture makes them particularly vulnerable to erratic rainfall and extreme weather events (UNDP 2016).

Despite their critical role in climate adaptation, women in Kenya face systemic barriers to resilience. Land ownership is a major challenge, as many women lack legal rights to land despite constitutional guarantees (McCormick & Schmitz, 2009). The exclusion of women from climate governance and decision-making spaces means that their needs and expertise are often overlooked in policy formulation, leading to ineffective adaptation strategies (UNDP, 2020).

1.3 Aim of Study

This study critically examines how gender is represented and problematized in Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016) using Carol Bacchi's What's the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) approach, and the theoretical framework of Feminist Political Ecology and Intersectionality. Given the increasing recognition of gender as a crucial dimension in climate governance, the research seeks to uncover the underlying assumptions embedded in the Act's framing of gender and assess its implications for gender-responsive climate action in Kenya.

The study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How is gender represented and problematized in Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016)?
    - What underlying assumptions about gender are embedded in the Act?
    - To what extent does the Climate Change Act (2016) of Kenya incorporate a gender-responsive approach, and what are its implications for achieving climate resilience?

By addressing these questions, the research aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how policy problematizations influence climate governance. The study does not only explore the explicit provisions of the Act but also interrogates the implicit problem representations that shape the role of gender in Kenya's climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. The choice of data, analytical approach and methodological reflections will be discussed and elaborated upon below

2. Methodology

In this chapter I will present this research's epistemological position and methodological reflections which helped form the foundation of my research. These reflections have been the starting point of the research and contributed to creating the research questions. Additionally, I will elaborate and discuss the research methods utilized, data collection and introduction of data, and lastly, introduce the analytical tools utilized.

2.1. Philosophy of Science

In order to clarify the type of knowledge the research aims to generate, philosophy of science, also referred to as "theory of science" plays a crucial role (Rasborg 2013, p. 411). It also serves to provide understanding of the differences between the two key disciplines; *epistemology*, which focusses on the study of knowledge and how it is required, and *ontology*, which examines the nature of being and existence in a given context (Rasborg 2013, p. 407). According to Alan Bryman in *Social Research Methods* (2016), epistemology addresses the question of *what* constitutes valid and acceptable knowledge about a given subject (28). This thesis adopts the epistemological stance of emphasizing that our understanding of society is not fixed, but something that evolve with the changes of society. While this could be attributed to gaining new insights as a society, social constructivism argues that such changes are also influenced by historical and societal processes that shape how we discuss and interpret phenomena (Rasborg 2013, p. 403).

The aim of this thesis is to interpret and understand the empirical data while exploring how the concepts of 'gender' in climate change policies is defined and expressed within a Kenyan context. This is achieved by examining existing political documents concerning climate change in Kenya in regard to their gender-responsiveness.

Bryman further defines social ontology as being "concerned with the nature of social entities" (p. 33). In line with this understanding, gender responsiveness is viewed as a constructed phenomenon, shaped through social interaction. The thesis adopts an ontological perspective influenced by constructivism, which believes that social phenomena are continually created through concepts and actions of social actors. Thus, social phenomena are not only created

through social interaction by social actors, but "they are in a constant state of revision" (Bryman 2016, p. 33).

According to Rasborg, social constructivism fundamentally rejects the idea of an objective reality existing independently of individual consciousness (407). Instead, it argues that human understanding is shaped through social interaction (Rasborg 2013, 407). From this perspective, the way individuals perceive and interpret the world is deeply influenced by their environment and the social contexts in which they operate. Language plays a key role in this proves by mediating social interactions and shaping shared understandings. Through the use of denotations (shared and objective meanings) and connotations (individual and subjective associations), humans collectively establish linguistic agreements about the meaning of words and phenomena (Hallahan et al., 2007, p. 15). In this sense, by changing the way we frame a phenomenon it can fundamentally alter how it is understood and perceived (Rasborg, 2013, p. 413**).**

Social constructivism includes different approaches, which can broadly be decided into two different trends. On a general level, these includes the epistemological perspective, which emphasizes that the social context influences how we perceive and understand reality, and the ontological perspective, which asserts that a phenomenon exists only when it is acknowledged (Rasborg 2013, p. 407). Thus, from the ontological perspective, a social phenomenon relies on the existence of a language that identifies and recognizes it. For example, when examining the intersection of gender and climate change, an ontological perspective would suggest that the concept of 'gender' and 'climate change' solely exists because society has acknowledged and created terms for them.

However, this thesis adopts an epistemological approach, as it contends that our knowledge of gender and climate change is fluid and can evolve over time. Thus, this viewpoint aligns with the foundational principle of social constructivism that social phenomena are shaped through historical and social processes (Rasborg, 2013, p. 403). From this standpoint, humans collectively create and agree upon language to describe and interpret social phenomena through social interaction. Consequently, our understanding of gender and climate change, and societal norms is co-constructed with those around us and remains open to negotiation, as these assumptions are shaped by external influences and can change over time. Applying this constructivist lens to my research, I examine how gender-responsiveness in Kenya's climate change policy is framed, defined, and expressed in the Climate Change Act. The thesis explores how key actors within Kenyan policy discourse ascribe meaning to gender in the

context of climate change. By doing so, I aim to understand not only how gender is conceptualized in climate policies but also how societal and political context could influence this conceptualization.

2.2.   Qualitative Research approach

In order to answer the research question and examine the collected data, its crucial to outline and discuss the chosen method. According to Svend Brinkmann & Lene Tanggaard (2020a), while no definitive definition of qualitative methods exists, they stand in contrast to quantitative methods by focusing on how phenomena is articulated, experienced, and developed (p. 15). The main tasks of a qualitative researcher is to describe, interpret, and understand human experiences (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020a, p. 15). This thesis aims to explore gendered dimensions of climate change legislation in Kenya by examining key climate change legislation (chosen documents outlined under 1.3). This is explored in order to uncover underlying reasons for represented problems with the framing of gender. Qualitative methods enable the interpretation and evaluation of data, making it possible to ascribe value and meaning (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020a, p. 15).

Furthermore, qualitative research complements the thesis' social constructivist foundation, which emphasizes the role of discourse in shaping perceptions of gender-related issues in climate change responses. In this context, social interaction reflects how official legislation on climate change in Kenya is articulated and how it frames gender-related issues through the use of discursive power. Policies are not neutral or objective but are socially constructed documents that reflect and reproduce power dynamics. By focusing on how problems are framed within the selected policies, this research seeks to uncover the underlying assumptions about gender and how they are thought into Kenya's climate governance.

This qualitative approach focuses on identifying patterns in Kenya's climate governance rather than producing generalized findings. By conducting textual analysis, it seeks to explore implicit assumptions within policy documents and assess their gender-responsiveness. Additionally, this method recognizes that policymaking is evolving and interactive process and is shaped by both global frameworks and local contexts.

2.3. Data collection and method of analysis: A policy analysis with the WPR approach

2.3.1. Documents as data material

In order to investigate my field of research and answer my research question, I will be examining how gender-responsiveness is included in relevant national legislation concerning climate change in Kenya. Document analysis is the most used method within social science research, when analyzing social phenomena (Lynggaard 2020, p. 185). According to Kenneth Lynggaard, document analysis can broadly be defined as "*a systemic analysis or evaluation of documents*" [translated] (p. 185). Document analysis can be applied to uncover processes that lead to a political agenda, for example through the stability and change in the meaning actors ascribe to social and political phenomena (Lynggaard 2020, p. 185). In this thesis, this is apparent by examining gender-responsiveness in climate change legislation and how the political actors of Kenya ascribe meaning to this phenomena. In general terms, documents can be described as language that is fixed in text and time (Lynggaard 2020, p. 186). However, this is not to be misinterpreted as documents cannot change or develop over time, as this is often the case. This description of documents covers many types of *texts*, making it a complex phenomenon to define (Lynggaard 2020, p. 186). Thus, this thesis analyze Kenya's Climate Change Act to examine how it incorporates gender-responsiveness. Using document analysis, the thesis assess the document to uncover key narratives in regards to gender, and the political meaning assigned to gender-responsive climate governance. This analysis is supported by subsequent political documents on climate change in Kenya. I will elaborate how the knowledge from these documents will support the analysis in Section 2.3.3. Document analysis stands out from other methods, such as interviews or surveys, as the researcher did not participate in the production of the documents being analyzed (Lynggaard 2020, p. 189). These documents are created independently from this research process and their content is therefore not influenced by the researcher. As such, the documents in this thesis were not created with the intent to contribute to academic research. It is important to note that the documents do not provide an absolute reality, as they represent certain perspectives. This notion is particularly relevant to this thesis, as it allows for exploring how gender perspectives in Kenyan climate change legislation is represented.

It can be useful to distinguish between the different types of documents and categories them in *primary*, *secondary* and *tertiary* documents. This division is based on which actors were involved in the production of the documents, when they were produced and in which context they were created (Lynggaard 2020, 187). Primary documents, as defined by Lynggaard, are typically private and involve a small number of participants, making them inaccessible to the public. Therefore, this research will not be utilizing them. In contrast, secondary documents are publicly available and produced in response to a current issue or event. This can refer to legislation, government reports, news articles and more. These documents can provide insights into ongoing societal or political events and developments (Lynggaard 2020, p. 187). Lastly, tertiary documents also refer to publicly available documents but are distinct in that they are produced after the given event has occurred. However, unlike secondary documents, they are not tied to current issues. They can refer to academic books, background articles, memoirs, and other publications that include an analytical processing of the event and/or citation after they occurred (Lynggaard 2020, p. 188). This thesis is interested in looking into relevant international and national legislation, national policies, strategies and plans to study the field of research and investigate how gender-responsiveness is thought into climate change in Kenya. Thus, it is necessary to examine and seek knowledge from secondary and tertiary documents and they will be the foundation of the analysis. The following section will explain how these documents were selected.

2.3.2.   Data collection

This thesis has a point of departure in exploring the empirical data in order to analyze gender-responsiveness in political documents on climate change in Kenya. This means that the research is using an inductive approach, as is starts by seeking patterns in the data, and thereafter finding relevant analytical tools to identify them (Boolsen 2020, p. 310; Bryman 2016, p. 26).

Utilizing an inductive approach, the research begins with qualitative observations of the political documents to identify trends or themes. However, it is important to recognize that conclusions reached from this approach remain open to interpretations and negotiations, as these inductive methods do not seek to produce definitive results. Instead, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of how gender is framed and represented within political documents on climate change in Kenya. While it cannot provide a definitive

conclusion, it gives insight into the broader social phenomenon of gendered dimensions in climate governance.

The method utilized in this thesis for sampling a data set has followed the *snowball method* (*sneboldsmetoden*) (Lynggaard 2020, p. 189). This approach involves tracing cross-references between documents in order to identify relevant material. The starting point for the researcher is to identify a *mother document* and through that follow references to other relevant documents (Lynggaard 2020, p. 190). In this thesis, the Climate Change Act of 2016, as it was the first legally binding climate change legislation in Kenya. By using this document and the references therein to other relevant political climate change documents, a supporting data set was identified to the analysis of the Climate Change Act. However, this method can often generate material of less value to the specific field of research. Therefore, Lynggaard suggests to differentiate between central documents and less essential documents (Lynggaard 2020, p. 191). The following section will clarify how this process was used in practice for this thesis and introduce the identified data.

2.3.3.   Introduction of data

Based on the approaches clarified above, this section will give a short introduction into the data examined in this thesis. This thesis is primarily based on the *mother document* , the Climate Change Act (2016). This document was chosen due to its central role in Kenya's climate change governance framework and relevance to the research question. The Climate Change Act (2016) provides a legal foundation for climate action in Kenya, which most of the subsequent climate change legislation is. While the research question focuses specifically on this document, other Kenyan political climate change documents are also referenced in this thesis. These include; the National Climate Change Response Strategy (2010), the National Climate Change Action Plan (2018–2022), the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (2017–2026), the Climate Risk Management Framework for Kenya, the National Policy on Climate Finance, and the National Adaptation Plan (2015–2030). These documents are considered secondary data and will be utilized sporadically when relevant in order to give additional context or illustrate interplay between policies relevant to the research question. Additionally, they are also used to provide additional insight into the political landscape of climate change in Kenya. These documents will be introduced under '4. climate change legislation', where the interplay and relevance will be further elaborated upon. Tertiary

documents, such as academic articles, reports, news articles and other relevant literature are also utilized in order to explore attitudes and global discussions around gender and climate change. They complement the analysis by offering critical perspectives particularly regarding the gender, power, and climate governance.

2.3.4. Ensuring quality

The following section will address the quality considerations in qualitative research and thereafter reflect on how this thesis applies these criteria.

While quantitative research usually focuses on reliability - ensuring consistent, repeatable results - and validity, there is an ongoing debate about whether these criteria are directly transferable to qualitative research (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020b, p. 658; Riis 2012, p. 352). Svend Brinkmann & Lene Tanggard (2020b) argue that such criteria do not account for the unique characteristics of qualitative research (p. 658). Instead, qualitative research should be assessed using criteria that align more with the specific goals and methodologies (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020b, p. 658). In this context, Tove Thagaard advocates for focusing on transparency instead of reliability and recognizability instead of generalizability (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020b, p. 658).

Transparency, in this sense, involves clearly outlining the steps and decisions taken during the research process to allow readers to follow the steps reasoning behind the findings. In this thesis, transparency has been prioritized through detailed descriptions in the methodology section, where the assumptions and methods underpinning the study are presented. This allows the reader to critically evaluate the interpretations and conclusions drawn from the data (Brinkmann & Tanggaard 2020b, p. 660; Riis 2012, p. 353).

Qualitative studies are often criticized for their subjectivity, as they are shaped by the researcher's perspective and the theoretical framework (Bryman 2016, 398), whereas others view subjectivity in qualitative research as not only unavoidable but positive (Riis 2012, p. 354). Brinkmann & Tanggaard note that researchers are never entirely neutral (p. 659). As a result, it is important to approach the field of research from a nuanced perspective to capture the complexities (Riis 2012, p. 354). In this thesis, this concern is addressed by including a broad set of data on climate change in Kenya to reference to and back up analytical findings. By using cross-references and tertiary documents to back up claims and interpretation, it gives a more thorough and nuanced perspective of the field of research.

Aligned with a social constructivist perspective, this thesis acknowledges that reality and knowledge is socially constructed. While this means that findings cannot claim absolute objectivity, it does not diminish the validity. Instead, it stresses the importance of context in creating the understanding of it (Riis 2012, p. 354). Thus, this thesis does not seek to find a definitive truth about gender dimensions in climate change legislation in Kenya, but rather explore patterns and assumptions within the selected data.

Lastly, the reserarcher's position is acknowledges as an inevitable influence the analysis. Individual political and theoretical stances shape how the material is interpreted, which emphasizes the importance of exploring the findings within their broader context.

2.3.5.   What's the Problem Represented to Be?

The 'What's the Problem Represented to Be?" (WPR) approach, developed by Carol Bacchi, is a critical analytical framework designed to examine public policies by focusing on how "problems" are represented within them. Bacchi challenges the conventional understanding of policymaking, which typically views governments as reacting to pre-existing, identifiable issues external to the policy process (Bacchi 2009, p. 1). Instead, she argues that governments actively participate in the construction of policy problems. While this is not necessarily an intentional misrepresentation, it is a consequence of processes involved in defining and addressing societal issues (Bacchi, 2009, p. 1).

The WPR approach differs from traditional top-down methods of policy making and analysis by questioning how 'problems' are framed. It recognizes that the way a solution is presented reveals underlying assumptions about how the issue itself is perceived. Consequently, these policies consist of implicit representation of what is considered the 'problem' (Bacchi 2012). Analyzing these representations provides insight into the thought processes behind the policies and exposes the power dynamics that influence how issues are constructed. Central to the WPR approach is the idea that problem representations are not objective truths but are socially constructed by policymakers (Bacchi 2009, p. 1). This aligns with a social constructivist perspective, which views the framing of 'problems' as shaped by cultural, historical, and social contexts (Rasborg 2013, p. 403). As such, policies do not merely

address problems: they also shape public understanding of those problems by framing them in specific ways. This process simplifies complex issues, and thereby highlights certain aspects while neglecting others. To uncover these nuances, Bacchi's approach emphasizes the need to examine how 'problems' are constructed rather than accepting them at face value (Bacchi 2009, p. 1). Bacchi provides six questions as a tool for deconstructing problem representations in policies. These questions aim to explore the assumptions, implications, and omissions in policy problematizations (Bacchi 2009, p. 2). This approach is especially usefu for examining how policies shape understandings of inequality and power dynamics. For instance, in the context of this thesis, it can be used to understand how gender issues are framed within climate policies, highlighting whether such policies adopt an intersectional perspective.

The WPR approach also emphasizes that problematizations are the foundation of policy-making. As Bacchi notes, how a 'problem' is perceived directly influences what actions are proposed to address it (Bacchi 2009. p. 1). Policymakers' framing of an issue, therefore, carries weight in shaping societal understanding through their response to that issue. The approach advocates for examining the representations within problematizations, rather than the problems themselves, as this reveals the way of thinking in governance practices. By investigating these representations, the WPR approach exposes what is included in the policy narrative and, importantly, what is excluded. Thus, the WPR approach aims to analyze problematizations within policies by exploring their assumptions and effects. Its purpose is not to uncover the "truth" or intentions of policymakers but to make visible the ways in which issues are framed and the implications of those framings. By critically engaging with these problem representations, the approach offers a powerful tool for understanding how policies construct and address social issues. To do so, it offers the following six questions that are signed to be open, which will be used in order to analyze the gender responsiveness in climate change policies in Kenya:

1. What's the 'problem' represented to be in a specific policy?
This question identifies both explicit and implicit representations of the "problem" within the policy, revealing the dominant narratives that influence the proposed solutions (Bacchi, 2009, p. 3).

2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?

Here, it is crucial analyzing the discourses, assumptions, and ideas that is behind the representation, without focusing on policymakers' biases, to reveal the conceptual logic shaping the policy (Bacchi, 2009, p. 5–6).

3. How has this representation of the 'problem' come about?
This question traces the historical, social, and political conditions that have shaped the development of the "problem," examining the context that enabled it to come about (Bacchi, 2009, p. 10).

4. What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the 'problem' be thought about differently?
Here, we can critically consider omissions, assumptions, and alternative perspectives that might challenge the dominant framing of the issue (Bacchi 2009, p. 12-13).

5. What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?
This examines the consequences of the policy, including how the framing of the issue impacts discourse, stigmatizes individuals, or affects lives (Bacchi, 2009, p. 15 - 16).

6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been (or could it be) questioned, disrupted and replaced?
This final question challenges the acceptance of dominant problem representations, drawing on earlier insights to suggest alternative framings (Bacchi, 2009, p. 19).

2.3.6.   Policy Analysis

Policy analysis functions as a tool for critically examining governmental decisions and strategies aimed at addressing societal issues. Supplementing the WPR approach, it involves analysing policy documents, identifying their objectives, underlying assumptions, and the implications for those affected by them. Policies are created to respond to perceived problems in society, and they define these problems in particular ways (Lasswell, 1971).

They are more than just technical solutions; they also serve as spaces where meaning and power are negotiated (Fischer, 2003). They represent a negotiated response to social problems and reflects the interests of those involved in their creation, and, thereby, can either reproduce or challenge existing inequalities (Bacchi, 2012). Policy documents, therefore, are not simply objective but are constructs that reflect specific worldviews and ideologies. As such, studying them through policy analysis involves examining the various ways in which issues are constructed, whose interests are prioritized, and what the policy framework excludes or overlooks (Meyers, 2004). The WPR approach, as utilized in this thesis, provides a lens for policy analysis by focusing on the framing of problems within policy documents. It encourages an exploration of not just what is being done, but why certain issues are considered problems in the first place and how they are represented (Bacchi, 2009). This critical approach acknowledges that policies often serve as instruments for shaping public perception and discourse, and through this lens, policy analysis becomes a tool for revealing the power relations in the construction of social issues (Gusfield, 1981). This focus on the representation of problems allows for a more nuanced understanding of policy, as it illuminates the hidden ideologies and assumptions that shape decision-making processes.

Thus, policy analysis within the WPR approach allows for a critical investigation of how particular issues, such as gender and climate change, are framed in governmental discourse. It provides a way to examine not only the content of policies but also the logic behind their creation and the possible consequences of their problematization. By engaging with these dimensions, policy analysis becomes a useful tool for uncovering the social, political, and ideological processes that shape public policy. In the context of this thesis, policy analysis will be used to examine how gender is framed within climate change policies in Kenya. By analyzing the representation of gender within these policies, we will be able to uncover the assumptions, values, and power dynamics that influence the state's approach to gender in climate change, providing insight into how such policies may either support or hinder gender equality in regards to climate challenges. Through this analytical process, the thesis aims to contribute to the broader understanding of how policy representations may affect the effectiveness of policy interventions in addressing complex social issues like gender and climate change.

2.4. Limitations of study

A key limitation of this study is its primary focus on the Climate Change Act of Kenya (2016), without giving an in-depth analysis of subsequent climate-related documents such as national action plans, sector-specific strategies, or regulations. While the Act is the first legally binding framework on climate change in Kenya, it may not fully reflect the gender representations in the country's broader or newer climate governance. Subsequent policies, although likely influenced by the Act, may adopt different priorities or a more comprehensive approach to gender. The Climate Change Act establishes the foundational framework for gender in climate governance by setting the tone for how gender is addressed in subsequent documents. While future policies may offer a more robust gender-responsive approach, the Act's provisions are crucial because they guide the direction of Kenya's gender repsonse in climate governance. Understanding how the Act requires gender to be incorporated is important, as it shapes the basis upon which future policies are developed.

Therefore, while the Act provides important insights into the initial gender framework within climate governance, it is only one part of the larger policy landscape. This study does not address how subsequent documents may evolve or challenge its gender approach, but it highlights the importance of examining the Act as the foundation for Kenya's climate governance framework.

3. Theoretical Framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework utilized in this thesis for analyzing how gender-related issues are represented in climate change policies. It integrated three analytical perspectives: feminist political ecology, intersectionality, and gender mainstreaming. These frameworks focus on how power, social structures, and institutional practices interact with environmental governance, with a focus on gender equity.

3.1. Political Ecology: an overview

Political ecology emerged as a critical interdisciplinary framework in order to understand the complex interactions between ecological systems and socio-political structures, emphasizing the role of power, inequality, and economic structures in ecological outcomes. Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) describe political ecology as addressing the *"constantly shifting dialectic between society and land-based resources, and also within classes and groups within society itself"* (p. 17).

This framework focuses on the interactions between political and environmental systems, focussing on the role of power, inequality, and economic structures that shape the ecological outcomes. According to Robbins (2012), political ecology critically analyzes the socio-political processes that lay behind environmental issues (Robbins, 2012). These processes are often seen as attached to economics, historical-, and social power dynamics, as they seek to analyse how environmental issues both reflect and reinforce societal inequalities (Robbins 2012, p. 6). Political ecology combines insights from geography, anthropology, and political economy, which emphasizes how environmental changes are inseparable from global capitalism, colonialism, and social struggles (Robbins, 2012; Biersack & Greenberg, 2006). Political ecology can be used as a framework for analyzing the socio-political dimensions of environmental governance, as it views environmental changes through the stuctures of power. This makes it a valuable lens to examine gender dimensions within climate change politics.

3.1.1. Historical and Structural Roots of Political Ecology

The historical development of political ecology shows a focus on challenging dominant narratives about environmental degradation and emphasizes the socio-political systems that shape ecological crises. Early contributions, such as Watts (1983) and Blaikie and Brookfield (1987), demonstrated that environmental crises are often not from local mismanagement but from global economic pressures and historical injustices. For instance, Watts's (1983) study of famine in Northern Nigeria showed how colonial agricultural policies disrupted traditional systems of land use by prioritizing cash crop production for export, which ended up leaving local communities vulnerable to ecological and social crises. Blaikie and Brookfield (1987) expanded on this critique, arguing that land degradation must be understood within the broader context of global power dynamics and historical exploitation. Building on these insights, Swyngedouw (2004) shows how resource management practices are integrated into socio-political struggles. He argues that governance systems, such as water resource management, often reflect unequal power dynamics that favor certain groups while marginalizing others, and in turn, perpetuate inequalities across scales. These perspectives show that ecological changes are not only shaped by natural processes but also by history and capitalism, which still influence whose interests are prioritized in environmental governance. This brings up themes of knowledge, power, and marginalization, which are central to political ecology. By examining how environmental knowledge is produced and shared, political ecology shows how dominant governance systems often overlook or suppress local and traditional perspectives (Escobar, 2006; Robbins, 2012). The connection between power and knowledge plays a key role in shaping whose voices are heard in environmental decision-making - and whose are left out. These dynamics of exclusion and marginalization emphazise how environmental governance can become a battleground for competing interests by connecting larger systems to the local experiences of ecological change (Swyngedouw, 2004 ; Blaikie & Brookfield, 1987).

3.1.2. Power, Knowledge, and Marginalization in Political Ecology

Power, knowledge, and marginalization shape how different actors interact with the environment and influence their access to and control over resources, making them central

themes in political ecology. These themes extend to the ideas, discourses, and the production of knowledge, all of which have important implications for environmental governance and social equity.

3.1.2.1.   **Power and Resource Control**

Power determines how actors - such as states, businesses, local communities, or indigenous groups - access and control environmental resources. This control often reflects broader socio-political inequalities. Bryant and Bailey (1997) describe power as the ability to shape interactions with the environment and to influence or limit the environmental practices of others. For example, states often use their authority to declare certain areas as protected or industrial zones, in order to be able to determine who can access and benefit from these resources (Bryant & Bailey, 1997, p. 45). This ability to control resources allows powerful actors to impact environmental outcomes, whether through conservation or industrial exploitation (Paulson et al., 2005, p. 23). Historical processes have had an important role in creating these unequal power dynamics. Colonial administrations often prioritized the interests of imperial powers, and deprive local communities of their land and resources (Bryant, 1998, p. 85). This history continues in the Global South, where state policies often marginalize indigenous and rural populations in favor of large-scale agricultural or industrial projects (Peet et al., 2011, p. 30). Access to resources is further shaped by intersecting factors, such as class, ethnicity, and gender. Escobar (2006) critiques how power imbalances in environmental governance marginalize traditional knowledge, limiting the ability of indigenous groups to contest resource exploitation (p. 30).

3.1.2.2.   **The Politics of Knowledge Production**

Knowledge about the environment is not neutral or universal. Instead, it is shaped by economic and political powers that influence whose knowledge is considered legitimate or valuable. Power operates through the production of knowledge, and thereby creates environmental narratives in ways that often serve the interests of dominant groups (Paulson et al. 2005, p. 29). This dynamic is evident in how environmental problems are framed and

prioritized, with certain issues receiving attention while others are ignored or dismissed. Latour (2004) questions the idea that science is entirely neutral and free from political influence, and points out that the contexts of those creating scientific knowledge play a significant role in shaping it (p. 26). Furthermore, local ecological knowledge is often marginalized in favor of technocratic and Western approaches, which are often aligned with the interests of powerful actors, such as multinational corporations and state governments (Robbins, 2012). This is further evident in how conservation policies, that are driven by larger global institutions, exclude indigenous perspectives and practices. This reinforce power imbalances and often limit the effectiveness of these initiatives (Escobar 2006, p. 62).

3.1.2.3.   Marginalization and Inequality

Marginalization is a recurring theme in political ecology, as power imbalances often exclude certain groups from participating in environmental governance. This particularly affect those defined by gender, class, race, or ethnicity. Environmental change often benefits powerful actors while disproportionately burdening marginalized groups, and thereby, exacerbating existing inequalities (Bryant and Bailey 1997, p. 28). For example, women in rural areas often have the responsibility of managing household resources, yet they are systematically excluded from formal decision-making processes about resource use and conservation (Rocheleau et al., 1996, p. 3). This exclusion is particularly evident in gendered contexts, where women's roles and knowledge are frequently overlooked in environmental policies and practices. Indigenous and rural communities often face marginalization that is connected to the influence of global economic powers. As global markets expand, local communities are frequently removed of their land and lose access to resources, which are instead used for industrial purposes (UNDP 2020). This dynamic is evident in many resource-dependent economies, where industries focused on extraction prioritize short-term profits over the long-term well-being of local communities.

3.1.2.4.   Linking Power, Knowledge, and Environmental Governance

The interplay between power, knowledge, and marginalization reveals that environmental governance is political, which is shaped by unequal relations between different actors. Environmental problems and solutions are socially constructed, with discourses often reflecting the interests of powerful actors while excluding alternative perspectives (Peet et al. 2011, p. 29). It is evident that political ecology emphasizes the need to tackle inequalities by critically looking at both the practical actions that impact the environment and the ideas and knowledge systems that shape those actions. Bryant & Bailey (1997) argue for a more inclusive approach to environmental governance, bringing in a variety of perspectives and challenges dominant power structures (p. 37). By recognizing the links between power, knowledge, and marginalization, researchers and policymakers can work towards solutions that are not only fairer but more sustainable when addressing environmental challenges.

3.2.   Feminist Political Ecology

Feminist Political Ecology is a branch of political ecology that centers gender as a critical lens for understanding the complex relationships between society and the environment. It highlights that environmental issues are deeply tied to social, cultural, and economic systems, challenging the notion that ecological governance and resource management are neutral or universally experienced (Elmhirst, 2011). By drawing on insights from feminist theories, development studies, and ecological research, feminist political ecology addresses gaps in traditional political ecology that have historically overlooked the importance of gender in shaping environmental outcomes (Jarosz, 2001). Feminist Political Ecology builds on the foundational principles of political ecology by analyzing how ecological change is experienced differently by various groups, particularly through the lens of gender. While political ecology examines the intersections of social, political, and economic systems with environmental governance, feminist prolitical ecology takes this further by specifically exploring how these systems shape gendered experiences of environmental challenges and opportunities (Leach 2007). It highlights that the ways men and women engage with and

respond to ecological change are influenced by their socially constructed roles, responsibilities, and access to resources, rather than merely biological differences (Leach, 2007; Rocheleau et al., 1996, p. 3). These socially constructed roles often dictate the ways individuals and communities interact with their environments. For example, in many rural settings, women are traditionally responsible for managing household resources like water, firewood, and food. This gives them unique and practical knowledge about their local ecosystems but also makes them more vulnerable to environmental changes, such as water scarcity or land degradation (Rocheleau et al., 1996). On the other hand, men may be more involved in activities like large-scale farming, herding, or decision-making in governance structures, which makes them have different priorities, perspectives, and levels of influence over environmental management compared to women, whose roles are often more localized and focused on household or community-based resource use (Rocheleau et al., 1996).

Importantly, feminist political ecology emphasizes that these gendered differences are not static or universal. They are shaped by cultural, historical, and geographical contexts that vary across societies and evolve over time. For instance, colonial histories often reinforced patriarchal systems that limited women's rights to land ownership or participation in governance, which leaves lasting impacts that continue to shape resource access and decision-making today (Rocheleau et al., 1996). This localized, context-specific understanding of gendered interactions with the environment shows the flexibility and relevance of feminist political ecology in analyzing ecological change and environmental governance. It emphazises how societal structures and historical systems shape the relationships between people and their environments (Leach, 2007). By doing so, feminist political ecology offers a nuanced framework for understanding how social inequalities - shaped by gender, class, ethnicity, and other factors - intersect with ecological challenges and influence how resources and risks are shared within communities. Feminist Political Ecology not only highlights the gendered experiences of ecological change but also calls for a closer look at how these experiences are influenced by broader dynamics of power, knowledge, and marginalization

3.2.1. Power, knowledge and marginalization in Feminist Political Ecology

In Feminist Political Ecology, power, knowledge, and marginalization are central themes for understanding how environmental governance and resource management reflect and reinforce existing inequalities. Feminist Political Ecology examines the ways that gendered power dynamics, knowledge, and systemic exclusions intersect to shape access to resources, decision-making processes, and ecological outcomes. These dynamics are embedded in social structures and practices, which influence who benefits from environmental governance and who is disproportionately impacted by environmental change (Rocheleau et al., 1996; Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014).

3.2.1.1. Power and Gendered Resource Governance

Power in Feminist Political Ecology is understood as the capacity to shape resource access - often in ways that favor dominant groups while excluding others. According to Rocheleau et al. (1996) "*gender is a critical variable in shaping resource access and control, interacting with class, caste, race, culture, and ethnicity to shape processes of ecological change and the struggle of men and women to sustain ecologically viable livelihoods*" (p. 4). Thus, gender plays a key role in determining who controls and benefits from natural resources, with men often occupying positions of power while women's contributions remain undervalued or invisible (Bryant, 1998; Rocheleau et al., 1996). This is in how land ownership and control are highly gendered, with men more likely to hold legal rights to land, while women often rely on informal or unofficial access. This disparity leaves women more vulnerable to resource loss during environmental crises or policy changes (Rocheleau et al., 1996).

In many parts of the Global South, patriarchal systems - both indigenous and colonial - have historically restricted women's access to land, credit, technology, and education, further reinforcing their marginalization in environmental governance (Jarosz, 2001). These power imbalances are often worsened by the increasing pressures of globalization, which often prioritize market-driven environmental policies that exclude women's voices and fail to recognize their roles in local resource management (Hovorka, 2006).

3.2.1.2.   Knowledge Production and the Politics of Science

Feminist political ecology critizese the ways knowledge is produced, validated, and used in environmental governance, emphazising how dominant narratives often exclude women's and Indigenous ecological knowledge. Feminist critics reveal that environmental research has historically been shaped by male-dominated perspectives, favoring technocratic and Western approaches (Rocheleau et al., 1996). As Rocheleau et al. (1996) argue, scientific and managerial traditions often ignore or undervalue the knowledge and skills of rural people, especially women, which further marginalizes non-dominant knowledge systems and limits the inclusivity of environmental governance. This exclusion undermines the potential for sustainable solutions that draw on more diverse experiences and expertise (Leach, 2007). Local and traditional ecological knowledge, often held by women, is particularly vulnerable to this exclusion. Women's understanding of water management, and food systems is shaped by their daily interactions with natural resources, yet it is often overlooked in policy discussions that prioritize professional scientific knowledge (Jarosz, 2001; Kerr, 2014). For example, according to Rachel Kerr's study on agrobiodiversity and Indigenous knowledge, in rural Malawi, gender inequalities and political pressures have contributed to a loss of agrobiodiversity, as women's agricultural practices and knowledge are ignored in favor of commercial farming (Kerr, 2014). By questioning 'what counts as knowledge and who produces it', feminist political ecology exposes the power dynamics inherent in scientific and environmental policymaking. This perspective challenges the supposed objectivity of science, showing how it often serves the interests of dominant groups, such as multinational corporations or governments, while marginalizing the voices of those most affected by the ecological changes.

3.3.   Intersectionality

Building on the principles of Feminist Political Ecology, intersectionality provides a deeper analytical lens to examine how overlapping identities - such as gender, race, class, and ethnicity - interact to create layered experiences of power, privilege, and marginalization in environmental contexts. Intersectionality is a way of understanding how different systems of

privilege and oppression overlap to shape people's experiences of inequality. Coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), the term initially described the unique forms of discrimination faced by Black women, who were marginalized both by gender and race, in ways that could not be understood by looking at just one factor alone. Crenshaw argued that traditional frameworks for understanding discrimination often ignored how different aspects of identity interact to create complex forms of disadvantage (Crenshaw, 1989).

The concept has been applied to address systemic inequalities in various contexts, including law, public health, and environmental justice (Collins & Bilge, 2016). It emphasizes that identities are not fixed but are shaped by historical, cultural, and political contexts, as well as power dynamics (Yuval-Davis, 2006). By focusing on how identities and systems of oppression interact, intersectionality goes beyond oversimplified views of inequality. It provides a more nuanced way to analyze and address social injustices, recognizing that solutions need to account for these overlapping and interconnected factors. In the environmental field, intersectionality sheds light on how experiences of ecological change and governance are shaped not just by gender but by other dimensions of identity as well. While feminist political ecology has long focused on how socially constructed gender roles shape resource use and access, intersectionality extends this analysis by exploring how these roles interact with colonial histories, socioeconomic inequalities, and systemic racism, which create additional layers of power and privilege (Mollett & Faria, 2013). For example, the way resources are distributed or governed often reflects historical and structural inequalities that marginalize certain groups while benefiting others (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). Intersectionality also emphasizes the role of social power in defining whose knowledge and experiences are included or excluded in environmental governance. Feminist political ecology critiques the exclusion of women's and Indigenous knowledge in favor of technocratic and Western scientific approaches (Nightingale, 2011), but intersectionality adds that these exclusions are rarely uniform (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). For example, women from wealthier or majority ethnic groups may have greater access to decision-making platforms than women from poorer or minority groups. This demonstrates how class and race intersect with gender to create differentiated outcomes (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). This perspective aligns with social constructivist theories, which argue that identities like gender, race, and class are not fixed or natural but are shaped by historical and social contexts (Rasborg, 2013). Intersectionality examines how these identities are created and maintained through power dynamics, revealing how systemic inequalities are embedded in

environmental systems and normalized in governance practices. A good example is how women are often stereotyped as being naturally tied to domestic or caregiving roles, which can obscure the diverse ways they contribute to environmental management (Leach, 2007). These stereotypes often reinforce barriers that exclude women from formal decision-making processes. By incorporating intersectionality, feminist political ecology gains a deeper understanding of how gender operates within broader systems of oppression and privilege. This approach highlights the need for more inclusive and context-specific environmental policies that address the intersecting vulnerabilities of marginalized groups (Rocheleau et al., 1996; Mollett & Faria, 2013). Doing so would allow policymakers to better represent and respond to the diverse needs of those most affected by environmental changes, leading to more equitable and sustainable solutions (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014).

3.4.   Utilizing the theories

This thesis integrates Political Ecology, Feminist Political Ecology, Intersectionality, and the What's the Problem Represented to Be? (WPR) approach to critically analyze how gender is framed in Kenya's climate change policies. These perspectives complement each other by providing a multi-dimensional understanding of power, knowledge, and marginalization in environmental governance. Political Ecology situates climate governance within broader economic and political structures, while Feminist Political Ecology supplements this by highlighting how gendered power relations shape resource access and decision-making. Feminist political ecology intersects with Intersectionality, which reveals how gender, class, ethnicity, and other identities intersect, and thereby expose gaps in policy that overlook the specific vulnerabilities of marginalized groups. The WPR approach ties these frameworks together by critically examining how policies define and frame gender issues in the Climate Change Act and whether it acknowledges structural inequalities or reinforce dominant power dynamics. By applying these perspectives together, the analysis will uncover both explicit and implicit assumptions within climate policies, exposing how they shape, include, or exclude gendered concerns. This integrated approach ensures a nuanced and intersectional analysis of Kenya's Climate Change Act, moving beyond surface-level policy analysis in order to reveal deeper socio-political structures.

4. Climate change legislation

Kenya's legislation, policies and plans on climate change reflects the country's commitment to addressing climate vulnerabilities while striving to align with global obligations ratified, such as the Paris Agreement. This section gives an overview of Kenya's legislative and policy landscape on climate change by introducing its international commitments and national legislation, policies, strategies, and plans. Legislation provides the legal framework and enforceable mandates, policies set the overarching principles and goals, agreements outline international commitments, while strategies and plans detail the specific actions and pathways to implement these objectives. The interplay between these different types of documents will be presented in this section. As outlined in the methodology section (1.3.2), the documents discussed here were selected using the snowball sampling method.

4.1. International Legislation

Kenya has shown dedication in demonstrating its commitments to global climate governance through multilpe international climate change treaties. This includes the 1997 Kyoto Protocol and its parent framework, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), which form the foundation of international climate cooperation. In 2016, Kenya signed the Paris Afreement, which came into effect in January 2017. The Paris Agreement builds on the principles of the UNFCCC and aims to enhance global efforts to mitigate climate change and strengthen countries' adaptive capacities (UNFCCC 2016, Art. 2), and make nations address climate threats through actions and long-term strategies (UNFCCC 2016). A defining feature of the Paris Agreement is its participatory and gender responsive approach to adaptation, emphasizing the importance of inclusion of vulnerable groups in climate strategies (UNFCCC 2016). The Agreement requires parties to submit and update their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which outline national goals for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate impacts. Unlike the Kyoto Protocol's top-down approach, the Paris agreement uses a bottom-up approach, allowing countries to set

their own commitments while ensuring transparency and accountability through the UN monitoring framework that they signed onto (UNFCCC 2016, Art 4).

Kenya submitted its first NDC in 2015 and updated it in 2020, committing to a 32% reducting in greenhouse has emissions by 2030 (Republic of Kenya 2020). This updated NDC prioritizes adaptation actions, and recognizes the disproportionate impact of climate change on Kenya due to its socio-economic vulnerabilities and its reliance on climate-sensitive sectors such as agriculture.

In addition to these commitments, Kenya has engaged in other international initiatives. In September 2023, during the Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, Kenya joined other African nations in signing the Kampala Ministerial Declaration on Migration, Environment, and Climate Change (KDMECC-AFRICA) (*IOM* 2023). This declaration addresses the interconnected challenges of migration, environmental degradation, and climate change, and encourages regional collaboration to tackle climate-induced displacement, which is a growing concern for many African countries (*IOM*, 2023). Furthermore, in October 2023, Kenya signed onto Italy's Mattei Plan, a strategic framework designed to strengthen Italy's engagement with African nations. The agreement allocates funding to support climate and environmental objectives, with Kenya set to benefit significantly in improving its climate resilience initiatives and sustainable development efforts (*Kenyans* 2023).

While Kenya has demonstrated its commitment to international frameworks, challenges remain in ensuring the effectiveness of them. Kenya relies heavy on external funding for implementing its NDC, which is estimated to cost $62 billion by 2030. Historically, the delivery of climate finance from developed nations has not reached promised targets, which creates uncertainties for countries like Kenya that depend on such support to meet their ambitious goals (*UNFCCC* 2020).

4.2.   National Legistation

To address the challenges faced by climate change, Kenya has established and ratified a robust framework of policies and strategies. This section introduces Kenya's key national

climate change legislations and strategies, structured into four categories for clarity and coherence. Firstly, *foundational policies*, such as the National Climate Change Response Strategy (2010) and the Climate Change Act (2016), are presented to provide the historical and legal basis for Kenya's climate governance. Second, *action-oriented and sectoral plans*, including the National Climate Change Action Plan (2018–2022), the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (2017–2026), and the Climate Risk Management Framework for Kenya, are discussed to illustrate how Kenya has operationalized its commitments. Third, *climate finance and international commitments* are examined, focusing on policies like the National Policy on Climate Finance and Kenya's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, which align national priorities with global frameworks. Finally, the *long-term adaptation framework*, represented by the National Adaptation Plan (2015–2030), is introduced to highlight Kenya's forward-looking strategies for building resilience to future climate risks.

4.2.1.   Foundational policies

Kenya's National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS), published in 2010, was the country's first dedicated policy document to address climate change. It aimed to mainstream climate adaptation and mitigation into national development plans, and focused on the need for coordinated action across sectors (Government of Kenya 2010, p. 10). This strategy also recognized Kenya's vulnerability to climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods and laid the groundwork for subsequent policies and legislation (Government of Kenya 2010, p. 46).

The NCCRS includes clear objectives focused on enhancing national responses to climate change. One of its key goals is to strengthen Kenya's ability to engage in international climate negotiations by providing guidance on how Kenya can position itself better to benefit from international climate frameworks (Government of Kenya 2010, p. 73). Furthermore, a large focus of the NCCRS is the connection between climate change and food security. It identifies how climate change threatens the four pillars of food security: availability, accessibility, utilization, and stability. It offers initiatives aiming to protect Kenya's

agricultural sector and strengthening rural livelihoods against climate-related disasters (Government of Kenya 2010, p. 35).

The strategy has a strong emphazis on public awareness and participation, and recognizes the importance of involving parliamentarians, government officials, civil society organizations, and the private sector in the development of climate change initiatives (Government of Kenya 2010, p. 119).

As Kenya's first comprehensive climate policy, the NCCRS has been instrumental in shaping the country's approach to climate governance. It laid the foundation for subsequent legislation, including the Climate Change Act (2016), and continues to influence national and local strategies such as the National Climate Change Action Plans.

The Climate Change Act (2016) is the first legal framework in the country to institutinalize these efforts by creating a legal framework for climate governance. Unlike policies and strategies, the Act provides legally binding provisions and mandates, and creates accountability measures in order to enforce climate action across sector (Government of Kenya 2016a). It also established the National Climate Change Council (NCCC), which is chaired by the President, to coordinate and oversee climate actions at national and county levels, monitor implementation and advise the government on policy alignment across sectors (Government of Kenya 2016a, Sec. 5). The act requires public and private entities to consider climate change in their operations, and, thereby, include climate considerations into nationals development planning (Government of Kenya 2016a, Sec. 15). It subsequently requires the entities to report annually to the NCCC. An important provision is how it allows citizens to institute legal proceedings against entities that fail to meet their climate change obligations (Government of Kenya 2016a, Sec. 23). This allows communities to demand action and accountability.

4.2.2. Action-oriented and sectoral plans

Kenya has operatioalized its climate commitments through different action-oriented and sectoral plans that are not only complementary but also designed to build on and strengthen each other. Together, these documents form a framework that integrates climate adaptation

and mitigation across sectors in order to ensure that national goals align with global climate commitments.

The National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) 2018 - 2022 was developed as the implementation framework for Kenya's Climate Change Act, and is acting as a roadmap for achieving low-carbon and climate-resilient development (Government of Kenya 2018, p. xvi). It has priorities such as renewable energy, climate-resilient agriculture, water management and disaster risk reduction (Government of Kenya 2018, p. 15-16). Thus, it has an emphasis on coordinating sectoral strategies and aligning with Kenya's broader climate objectives. For instance, the NCCAP has a focus on capacity building at both national and county levels, which is important for implementing more sector specific strategies such as the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy and the Climate Risk Management Framework (Government of Kenya 2018, p. 39-42). The NCCAP therefore ensures that sectoral plans and strategies are integrated by providing a high-level framework. The Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy (2017-2026) directly supports the NCCAP's focus on food security and agricultural resilience. As agriculture is one of the sectors that is the most vulnerable to climate change, this strategy provides more detailed interventions that contribute to the NCCAPs goals of reducing emissions and increasing resilience (Government of Kenya 2017, p. 22–23). The Climate Risk Management Framework for Kenya further reinforces these efforts by addressing the immediate and long-term risks by climate-related disasters, such as droughts and floods, that disproportionately impact agriculture and water resources (Government of Kenya 2016b, p. vii). The framework's emphasis on disaster risk reduction (DRR) directly supports the goals of both the NCCAP and the Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy by enhancing the resilience of vulnerable communities and infrastructure. For example, its focus on indigenous knowledge in early warning systems aligns with the Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy's advocacy for community-driven approaches to risk management (Government of Kenya, 2016b, p. 10–12). Additionally, the framework is aligning with global frameworks like the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, which strengthens Kenya's ability to manage climate risks in a way that integrates with national policies (Government of Kenya 2016b, p. 14).

These plans also share a focus on capacity building, public participation, and resource mobilization, which ensures that they are implemented in a coordinated manner. For instance, the NCCAP gives a structure for monitoring and evaluating progress across all sectorts, which then enables feedback that can inform the Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy and the

Climate Risk Management Framework. Thus, this interplay ensures that lessons learned from one sector can be adapted to others. By building on each other's strengths, these action-oriented and sectoral plans create a unified framework for addressing climate change in Kenya. The NCCAP provides the overall guidance, while the Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy and the Climate Risk Management Framework offer sector-specific solutions.

4.2.3.   Climate Finance and International commitments

Climate finance is central to Kenya's climate governance and provides resources to implement its strategies. The National Policy on Climate Finance consists of mechanisms in order to mobilize and manage financial resources (Government of Kenya 2016c, p. vi). This policy allows Kenya to access global mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) and Adaptation Fund, and thereby allowing them to ensure financial support for mitigation and adaptation efforts (Government of Kenya 2016c, p. 31). Kenya's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), updated in 2020, commit the country to a 32% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 (Government of Kenya 2020, p. 1). According to the NDC, there is a need for $62 billion in financing, with $41 billion allocated to adaptation (Government of Kenya 2020, p. 1). The NDC also integrates gender-responsive measures, recognizing the disproportionate impacts of climate change on women and vulnerable groups (Government of Kenya 2020, p. 16). The Climate Risk Management Framework complements these efforts by linking climate finance to disaster risk reduction and adaptation, as it promotes participatory financial planning (Government of Kenya 2016b, p. vii). This makes sure that resources reach vulnerable communities and include local knowledge, including from women (Government of Kenya 2016b, p. 26). This approach supports gender-responsive measures as outlined in the NDC and reinforces the interplay of Kenya's financial strategies and the country's broader adaptation goals (Government of Kenya 2016b, p. 12–14).

4.2.4. Long-term Adaptation Framework: The National Adaptation Plan 2015 - 2030

Kenya's long-term climate planning is built on the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2015 - 2030. It was approved in November 2015 and offers a framework for integrating climate adaptation into both national and country-level development plans (Government of Kenya 2015, p. v). The NAP identifies different priority actions, such as strengthening institutional capacity, promoting public awareness, and advancing community-driven adaptation solutions, that are all designed to address the impacts of climate change (Government of Kenya, 2015). The NAP was developed with support from international development agencies, the Government, the civil society and the private sector (Government of Kenya 2015, p. III). It is created as part of the commitments to the UNFCCC under the Paris Agreement together with the NDC. The aim of the NAP is "*to consolidate the country's vision on adaptation supported by macro-level adaptation actions that relate with the economic sectors and county level vulnerabilities to enhance long term resilience and adaptivity capacity.*" (Government of Kenya 2015, p. 1). The NAP is in alignment with Kenya's Vision 2030 which ensures that climate adaptation is integrated into the broader socio-economic planning (Government of Kenya 2015, p. 2). Vision 2030 emphasizes the importance of sustainable development and the NAP supports this by addressing the long-term impacts of climate change on key sectors such as health, infrastructure, and tourism (Government of Kenya 2015). Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) are also central to the NAP's implementation with the purpose of ensuring that adaptation actions are effective (Government of Kenya 2015, p. 45). The plan includes a detailed M&E framework to track progress, identify challenges, and adapt strategies as needed (Government of Kenya 2015, p. 45). The NAP complements other national climate policies such as the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) and the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy. While the NCCAP provides overall guidance for mitigation and adaptation, and the Climate Smart Agriculture Strategy focuses on sector-specific vulnerabilities, the NAP focuses on adaptation across all levels of governance. Together, these policies create a comprehensive framework for addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

4.3. Climate governance framework

Kenya's climate governance integrates international commitments, national legislation, sectoral strategies, and financial mechanisms, ensuring a structured yet adaptive response to climate change. Global agreements like the Paris Agreement shape national priorities, reflected in Kenya's Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) and funding strategies.

At the national level, policies such as the National Climate Change Response Strategy (NCCRS, 2010) and the National Adaptation Plan (NAP, 2015–2030) provide overarching frameworks, while action plans like the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP, 2018–2022) and sector-specific policies ensure targeted implementation. These policies reinforce one another through coordinated sectoral efforts and alignment with Vision 2030.

At the core of this framework is the Climate Change Act (2016), Kenya's first legally binding climate law, which establishes the foundation for climate governance. Subsequent policies and strategies, such as the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) and sectoral adaptation frameworks, have been developed in alignment with the Act, reflecting its legal mandates. As a result, the Act sets the tone for how gender responsiveness is integrated into climate governance, influencing how policies address gender dynamics in climate adaptation and mitigation. This sets the stage for the following analysis, which examines how the Act shapes gender inclusion in Kenya's climate action framework.

5. Analysis

By asking the question, "What's the problem represented to be?" (WPR), Bacchi's (2009) framework provides a method to examine how policies construct specific issues as problems. This section analyzes the Climate Change Act (2016) of Kenya, following the steps outlined under Bacchi's questions and utilizing the theoretical framework of feminist political ecology and intersectionality.

As elaborated upon earlier, the Climate Change Act (2016) serves as Kenya's foundational legislative framework for addressing climate change. Its primary objective is to provide an overall structure for coordinating climate action implementation and gender equity into national climate governance (Government of Kenya, 2016). However, the Climate Change Act is not an isolated policy; its implementation and effectiveness rely on its interplay with other key climate governance documents. Policies such as the National Adaptation Plan (NAP) 2015–2030, the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) under the Paris Agreement, and the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) are crucial in operationalizing the principles outlined in the Climate Change Act. Together, these documents form a comprehensive framework where the Climate Change Act functions as the legal backbone and establish the principles and structures which other policies are build upon. This analysis will therefore examine how gender-related issues within the Climate Change Act is represented through Bacchi's Whats the Problem Represented to be? approach, using Feminist Political Ecology and Intersectionality as the theoretical framework, and discussed using the knowledge on the interplat of the different political documents on climate change in Kenya.

5.1. What is the 'Problem' Represented to be?

As elaborated upon earlier under the methodology section, Bacchi's first question examines how a 'problem' is represented. This section actively analyzes the Climate Change Act to uncover both explicit and implicit representations of gender. The analysis focuses on

language, framing, and the proposed solutions, using them as key indicators of how the Act defines and constructs the problem.

The Climate Change Act (2016) explicitly represents gender equity as a central issue in Kenya's climate governance framework. Under Section 3(2)(e), the Act emphasizes the need to "mainstream intergenerational and gender equity in all aspects of climate change responses" (Government of Kenya, 2016). This provision positions gender equity as a guiding principle for climate governance, and acknowledges the disproportionate impacts of climate change on marginalized groups, particularly women. By including gender equity in the Act's objectives, the policy explicitly frames existing governance systems (from before 2016) as deficient in addressing the vulnerabilities and needs of women in regards to climate change. Similarly, Section 25(2)(a) reinforces the importance of equity by requiring that adaptation programs must address the needs of marginalized groups, including women, to ensure inclusive development (Government of Kenya, 2016). This explicit framing of gender equity indicates a recognition of gender as a structural issue that requires intervention.

5.1.1.   Gender in Governance and Decision-making

The Climate Change Act (2016) highlights the inclusion of women in governance structures, particularly through its provisions establishing the National Climate Change Council. Under Section 7(6), the Act mandates adherence to the two-thirds gender rule in the composition of the Council, ensuring that no more than two-thirds of its members are of the same gender (Government of Kenya, 2016). This requirement implicitly addresses the exclusion of women from decision-making processes and shows an understanding of gender imbalance as a systemic issue in climate governance. By mandating gender representation in the Council, it can be argued that the Act recognizes that diverse decision-making bodies are better equipped to respond to the needs of all societal groups. Governance structures that exclude women may reinforce inequities in resource allocation, decision-making, and policy implementation by maintaining male-dominated control over environmental management (Rocheleau et al., 1996). Thus, it can be argued that the Climate Change Act problematizes the lack of gender diversity and representation in decision-making processes as a barrier to equitable and effective climate governance. Furthermore, Section 6(d) mandates the Council to approve a "*national gender and intergenerational responsive public education awareness strategy*"

aimed at enhancing public participation and representation in climate change initiatives (Government of Kenya). This provision explicitly identifies the lack of gender inclusivity in public engagement as a problem and frames education and awareness as tools for addressing it. By emphasizing gender-responsive public education, it can be argued the Act recognizes that meaningful participation requires addressing barriers to knowledge and capacity that disproportionately affect women.

5.1.2. Gender in Climate Finance

The Act's explicit framing of gender equity in regards to finance can be found in the Climate Change Fund, established under Section 25 5(e), as the Act mandates the development of procedures to ensure "gender and intergenerational equity in access to monies from the Fund" (Government of Kenya, 2016). This provision directly ties financial resource allocation to the principle of equity. Through this it can be argued that the act identifies financial exclusion of marginalized groups, including women, as a critical barrier to effective climate action. By requiring gender-responsive mechanisms for disbursing funds, it can be argued that the Act acknowledges that financial systems often follow existing inequalities, leaving women underrepresented in access to resources (Rocheleau et al., 1996). This explicit provision align with the global framework of the Paris Agreement, which emphasizes the role of gender-responsive finance in building equitable climate resilience (UNFCCC, 2015).

5.1.3. Gender Equity in Education, Consultation, and Fiscal Accountability

The Climate Change Act (2016) also frames gender and equity as important in climate governance, particularly through provisions aimed at education, consultation, and the inclusion of marginalized groups in planning processes. Section 9(8)(f) assigns the Directorate the responsibility to "*coordinate implementation of the gender and intergenerational climate change education, consultation, and learning at the national and county government levels*" (Government of Kenya, 2016). By emphasizing the need to institutionalize gender-responsive education and consultation across multiple levels of

government, the Act seeks to localize and institutionalize inclusivity in governance, aligning with global calls for gender-responsive climate action under frameworks such as the Paris Agreement (UNFCCC, 2015). Therefore, it can be argued that the provision problematizes the absence of gender and intergenerational inclusivity in climate education and public consultation as a gap. Similarly, Section 13(5)(d) reinforces the importance of inclusivity in governance by requiring that the formulation of the National Climate Change Action Plan considers "*the likely impact of the action plans, strategies, and policies on the marginalized and disadvantaged communities*" (Government of Kenya, 2016). By mandating the assessment of fiscal circumstances and their impacts on disadvantaged communities, the Act represents the problem as a structural challenge that must be addressed through planning.

This framing aligns with intersectional analyses of vulnerability, which highlight that women and marginalized communities often face compounded disadvantages due to the overlapping impacts of socioeconomic status, geographic location, and systemic discrimination (Crenshaw, 1989). The requirement to evaluate fiscal impacts on these groups reflects an acknowledgment of these intersecting vulnerabilities and the need to center equity in climate planning and resource allocation. Furthermore, this provision recognizes that structural inequities are not incidental but a part of the process of shaping climate governance. Thus, it can be argued that the Act problematizes the lack of targeted fiscal planning for marginalized groups as a critical shortcoming in achieving inclusive climate resilience.

5.1.4.   Findings

The Climate Change Act (2016) explicitly and implicitly frames gender equity as a critical issue within Kenya's climate governance framework. Through its provisions on governance, decision-making, climate finance, education, and consultation, the Act problematizes the exclusion of women and marginalized groups as systemic barriers to effective and inclusive climate action. By including gender equity as a guiding principle in governance structures, fiscal planning, and public engagement, the Act represents these exclusions not as incidental omissions but as structural absence that require action.

The Act's emphasis on integrating gender considerations into different aspects of climate governance recognizes the intersectional vulnerabilities faced by women and marginalized groups (Kaijser & Kronsell 2014). However, while the Act provides a strong foundation for addressing gender inequities, it is crucial to further analyse the deeper narratives that shape Kenyas approach to gender in climate governance. As these problematizations are interpreted merely based on the provisions, it is necessary to further analyze the underlying assumptions and logics in order to substantiate the claims with further data. The following section will therefore apply Bacchi's second question to examine the presuppositions and assumptions underlying these problem representations.

5.2. What presuppositions or assumptions underpin this representation of the 'problem'?

This section utilizes Bacchi's second question to expose the assumptions and presuppositions within the Climate Change Act's (2016) representation of gender equity. Drawing on insights from feminist political ecology, policies are understood not as neutral instruments but as products of socio-political and historical contexts that reflect dominant norms and power structures (Rocheleau et al., 1996, p. 15). These norms shape institutional practices and influence what becomes accepted as natural or inevitable in governance systems (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). Intersectionality further illustrates how experiences of gender inequity are shaped by the interplay of multiple factors such as socioeconomic status, ethnicity, and geographical location, emphasizing that gendered vulnerabilities and contributions cannot be generalized (Crenshaw, 1989).

Within Bacchi's framework, the construction of problem representations depends on implicit conceptual logics, assumptions and norms that allow these representations to appear logical and coherent (Bacchi, 2009). These logics often rely on categories and symbolic meanings, which shape how solutions and through that, problems, are framed. Thus section critically examines the language and assumptions in the Climate Change Act, identifying how these discursive elements construct meaning and reflect norms about gender and equity in climate governance.

5.2.1. Assumptions About Gender, Women and Vulnerability

Through the analysis above, it is evident that the Climate Change Act (2016) emphasizes gender equity as an important component of Kenya's climate governance framework. It is therefore essential to examine its framing of women and vulnerability to uncover underlying assumptions on gender equity. As previously discussed, Section 3(2)(e) explicitly identifies the need to "*mainstream intergenerational and gender equity in all aspects of climate change responses*" (Government of Kenya, 2016). By including gender equity within the Act's objectives, women are positioned as a focal group among marginalized populations requiring targeted support. This framing aligns with global discourses, such as the Paris Agreement, which prioritize women and other vulnerable groups in climate governance(UNFCCC, 2015). However, such representation could imply that women, as a collective, are more vulnerable to climate change than men or other groups, reinforcing the idea that their vulnerability is a result of their identity rather than the systemic barriers. This association of women with vulnerability reflects a broader trend often critiqued by feminist political ecology, where the term "gender" is often operationalized as synonymous with "women."(Arora-Jonsson 2014;Rocheleau et al., 1996) This narrow focus of structural dynamics reduces gender equity to merely addressing women's issues without addressing the broader systems of power and inequality that shape these vulnerabilities (Rocheleau et al., 1996). The Climate Change Act reflects this logic by emphasizing women's inclusion in climate governance without adequately addressing systemic barriers such as discriminatory land tenure laws, limited access to financial credit, and social norms (UNDP 2020). By having this narrow focus on inclusion rather than transformation, the Act risks creating reliance rather than empowering women to act as agents of change in climate resilience. Thus, it creates an assumption that addressing women's vulnerability is primarily a matter of including them in existing structures and processes, rather than transforming those structures to break down the systemic barriers that perpetuate their marginalization.

Another aspect of the equating 'gender' with 'women' is while gender theoretically includes relational dynamics between men and women, it can be argued that the Act's language and focus implicitly center women as the main group being addressed. This is evident in Section 9(8)(f) that requires the Directorate to coordinate gender-responsive education, consultation, and learning at both national and county levels (Government of Kenya, 2016). However, the emphasis on 'gender-responsive' measures in the Act may mostly address women's inclusion

and needs without explicitly considering the roles, privileges, or responsibilities of men. This argument can be traced to global climate policy frameworks, such as the Paris Agreement, which frequently emphasize the vulnerabilities and inclusion of women in climate governance while giving little attention to masculinity or broader gendered power relations (Arora-Jonsson 2014; UNFCCC, 2015). Scholars such as Arora-Jonsson (2014) argue that international climate policies often frame "gender" as synonymous with "women," focusing primarily on their perceived vulnerability and exclusion. This framing, while addressing important inequities, tends to overlook the broader context of how gendered power dynamics shape access to resources, decision-making, and climate impacts. Thus, it can it argued that this framing reflects a presupposition of the broader trend in climate policies, where "gender" is operationalized to focus on women's vulnerabilities and participation, often excluding discussions on masculinity or relational gender dynamics.

5.2.2. Assumptions About Women's Contributions to Climate Action

The problem representations in the Climate Change Act (2016) concerning women's contributions to climate action includes several implicit assumptions and presuppositions that shape how gender equity is framed within the Act. By focusing on quotas to increase the number of women in governance structures, it can be argued that the Act presumes women's presence will ensure their meaningful participation and influence over policy outcomes. However, this view simplifies the relational and structural barriers that often constrain women's agency in governance. As Rocheleau, Thomas-Slayter, and Wangari (1996) argue, systemic inequalities , such as patriarchal norms, limited access to education, and unequal power dynamics, can persist even when women are included in formal decision-making processes (Rocheleau et al. 1996). Without addressing these underlying issues, procedural inclusion may result in symbolic rather than substantive participation, where women's presence does not translate into acutal influence on decisions.

Furthermore, the Act frames the exclusion of women as a problem of underrepresentation, but this approach does not fully account for the socio-economic and cultural norms that limit women's leadership opportunities. Such approaches are widely critiqued for treating gender equity as a technical fix while neglecting the systemic transformations necessary to dismantle these barriers (Leach 2007), as it perpetuates an essentialist view of gender inclusion as a

one-size fits all, which *"may be compelling for certain political moments but they are usually not practical to the real experience of real people they are meant to represent"* (Resurrección 2013, p. 40). Without addressing these deeper inequities, the assumption that quotas alone can resolve exclusion risks reducing gender equity to a matter of numbers rather than substantive change.

5.2.3.   Findings

In conclusion, the Climate Change Act (2016) represents women's exclusion from governance as a significant barrier to effective and inclusive climate action. However, its framing of this issue is shaped by implicit assumptions that procedural inclusion will lead to meaningful participation, without fully addressing the socio-cultural and institutional barriers that constrain women's agency. Furthermore, by valuing women's participation primarily for its functional benefits, the Act risks sidelining the broader principle of justice in governance. For gender equity in governance to be truly transformative, it must go beyond numerical representation and address the deeper power dynamics and systemic inequalities that sustain women's marginalization in decision-making spaces (Rocheleau et al., 1996).

5.3.   How has this Representation of the 'Problem' come about?

Kenya's *Climate Change Act (2016)* marked an important step in formalizing gender equity within climate governance, by integrating requirements for gender representation in decision-making and mainstreaming inclusivity into climate governane. However, based on the analysis above of the assumption about gender equity, it is crucial to explore how the emergence of gender equity as a priority within the Act came about. It is therefore important to explore the relationship between donor's and the Government of Kenya and political and institutional factors in Kenya which could influence how gender was framed in climate policy.

5.3.1.   The Role of Donors in Shaping Gender Equity in Climate Governance

Under President Uhuru Kenyatta's administration (2013–2022), Kenya sought to position itself as a leader in global climate governance by engaging with international financial institutions and donor agencies to increase access to climate finance (Ojanji 2022). However, while this positioning enhanced financial resources, it did not always translate into significant structural gender reforms in climate governance, as much climate finance is directed toward infrastructure projects, sidelining gender considerations (Atlantic 2024). Climate finance was a high priority for Kenya, as limited access to external funding forces many governments to meet donor eligibility criteria (Reuters 2024), which in turn can cause procedural integration of the requirements. This suggests that while Kenya benefited from increased climate finance, gender reforms remained procedural rather than transformative.

Kenya receives substantial climate finance from multilateral and bilateral sources, including the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the Climate Investment Funds (CIF), and bilateral donors such as the Danish International Development Agency (DANIDA) (Amuhaya & Degterev, 2019, p. 6). Kenya's reliance on foreign aid for climate finance meant that international donors are able to exert substantial influence over national policy priorities, including gender integration (Reuters 2024). Multilateral organizations such as the Green Climate Fund (GCF), the World Bank, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) increasingly required recipient countries to demonstrate gender-sensitive approaches in their climate finance proposals as a condition for funding (UNDP, n.d., p. 13). These global financing mechanisms sought to ensure that climate interventions did not reinforce existing gender disparities and that both men and women could access resources equitably. This prompted recipient governments like Kenya to develop climate policies that aligned with these expectations, meaning that Kenya's national coordination mechanisms may reflect broader donor expectations instead of internally driven policy reforms (Amuhaya & Degterev, 2019, p. 2).

Unequal power dynamics between donors and recipient governments represent a significant political challenge in donor-government coordination. As Robb (2004) notes, "*Aid, by its very definition, is a manifestation of inequality*" (in McCormick & Schmitz, 2009, p. 8). Donors hold the power to impose conditions on the grants and loans they provide, such as requiring recipient governments to integrate gender equity or gender mainstreaming mechanisms. While recipient governments may successfully resist or adjust some conditions, the final decision-making power lies with the donor. In this context, what are often described as "aid

partnerships" are, in fact, unequal relationships, where the donor has more power than the recipient (McCormick & Schmitz, 2009, p. 8). This power imbalance can have negative effects on the effectiveness of donor-government coordination, hindering successful cooperation and alignment. This externally driven focus on specific aspects or mechanisms, such as gender equity, while securing access to climate finance, may result in a narrow conceptualization of gender equity, where emphasizing women's vulnerability rather than broader structural inequalities in governance, resource access, and decision-making power becomes a priority (McCormick & Schmitz, 2009, p. 8; Resurrección 2013).

5.3.2.   Political and Institutional Factors Shaping Gender Policy Implementation

Beyond financial dependency, political leadership and bureaucratic structures also played a significant role in shaping how gender was integrated into the Climate Change Act.

While Kenya's increased access to climate finance offered opportunities for gender equity, the broader political landscape continued to constrain the full integration of women into decision-making processes. Following the constitutional reforms of 2010, which introduced the two-thirds gender rule, Kenya saw a gradual increase in women's political participation. Women held 23% of elected positions by the 2013 elections and made up 34% of the seats in county assemblies (Sidha et al., 2023). However, women's leadership was often limited by institutional barriers that resulted in them having less influential positions. Even though more women were present in political roles, they were often assigned to less prestigious positions, such as chairs of committees related to gender, youth, and children's affairs, rather than those that influenced broader legislative agendas (Sidha et al, 2023). This suggests that the increase in women's representation was more procedural in nature, with quotas serving to meet constitutional requirements but not necessarily leading to substantive changes in power dynamics. This lack of meaningful representation in critical decision-making bodies aligns with the broader barriers women face in governance (Puzyreva et al. 2018). Puzyreva, Roy, and Murphy (2018) argue that gender inequality in climate adaptation is worsened by existing institutional and societal inequalities, and further claims that empowering women in governance structures should be central to climate change policies. This correlates with the

formal inclusion of gender equity in Kenya's Climate Change Act. It may not be sufficient enough to create transformative change unless women are empowered to influence decisions in the most critical roles, especially in male-dominated areas, which the Climate Change Act does not address.

5.3.3.   Findings

Thus, it can be argued that the representation of gender equity in Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016) was shaped by a combination of external donor-driven conditions and the domestic political environment. While the Act integrates gender equity across various climate policies, its execution remains highly dependent on international funding, further impacted by fragmented government coordination, and limited domestic commitment (Reuters 2024; Amuhaya & Degterev, 2019). The emphasis on donor compliance has made the integration of gender provisions procedural rather than transformative, as the government's focus has often been on aligning with donor priorities, rather than developing a transformative gender agenda (McCormick & Schmitz, 2009). This externally-driven framework limits the potential for substantive change (Puzyreva, Roy, & Murphy, 2018). While gender equity is formally recognized in the Act, the lack of comprehensive political will and institutional change means that the inclusion of gender remains largely procedural. Without breaking down these deeper power structures and acknowledging them in legally binding legislation, the provisions in the Act are unlikely to result in transformative changes in how gender equity is integrated into Kenya's climate governance.

5.4.   What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences?

In this section, we will explore the silences and omissions in Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016) in regards to gender. Building on the previous analysis of how gender is represented in the Act, we will now critically examine where key gender-related issues are overlooked or inadequately addressed. The analysis will focus on three key dimensions: *the intersectionality of gender with other social inequalities*, *the role of men,* and *the gendered impacts of climate change*. This approach will highlight areas where the Act's treatment of gender falls short of

fully addressing gendered vulnerabilities and barriers, and thereby, limiting its potential for transformative change.

5.4.1. The Intersectionality of Gender with other Social Inequalities

The Kenya Climate Change Act (2016) presents a general framework for gender equity in climate governance. However, it contains significant silences regarding the concept of intersectionality, which is a crucial lens for understanding the vulnerabilities women face when gender intersects with other axes of social identity, such as socio-economic status, ethnicity, and geography (Crenshaw 1989).

The Act references "marginalized and disadvantaged communities" in multiple sections, but does not provide a clear definition of which communities are included in this category or how these communities experience intersectional disadvantage (Government of Kenya, 2016; Kaijser & Kronsell 2014). This approach reflects the critique of intersectionality provided by Crenshaw (1989), as focusing on gender in isolation neglects the ways in which race, class, and geography influence experiences of discrimination and vulnerability.

This is further evident in Section 4 of the Act, which refers to the participation of marginalized communities in climate change decision-making, but the document does not specify which marginalized groups are being referred to or the specific barriers these groups face (Government of Kenya, 2016). Women in rural Kenya face challenges due to their gender, socio-economic status, and geographic location (UNDP 2020, p. 3), but the Act does not explicitly address these intersections. Puzyreva, Roy, and Murphy (2018) argue that gender and ethnicity intersect in ways that worsens women's vulnerabilities in climate adaptation, particularly for women from indigenous and rural communities who face multiple forms of exclusion (Puzyreva et al 2018). The Act fails to detail how these intersectional disadvantages limit women's ability to engage in climate governance, which means it overlooks significant aspects of vulnerability.

Moreover, the Act does not address how gender roles, which are shaped by both cultural norms and economic class, can impact women's ability to access resources for climate adaptation (Government of Kenya 2016; Mollett & Faria, 2013). For example, women are

often tasked with collecting water and firewood, which are viewed as "women's jobs" in many communities (UNDP 2020, p. 3). However, the Act does not explore how these gendered responsibilities intersect with economic or geographic aspects, which can further limit women's ability to engage in climate governance (Leach, 2007). Feminist political ecology suggests that gendered knowledge of the environment is often impacted by unequal power relations, but the Act does not examine how gender roles in resource collection can affect women's opportunities for climate adaptation (Government of kenya 2016; Mollett & Faria, 2013). This highlights a gap in the Act's treatment of gender, as it fails to address how power dynamics within the household and the broader community affect women's roles in environmental decision-making.

By not recognizing how gender is connected with other social inequalities, the Kenya Climate Change Act fails to develop policies that address the intersections of gender with socio-economic, geographic, and ethnic factors. Crenshaw (1989) argues that without a intersectional framework, policies and provisions which aim to address gender inequality will remain ineffective as they will overlook the multiple layers of oppression that marginalized women face. In this case, the Kenya Climate Change Act misses the opportunity to create inclusive climate policies that address the complex realities of women's lives, particularly those from marginalized and disadvantaged communities. Therefore, it can be argued that an important silence in the Kenya Climate Change Act (2016) is its failure to address the intersectionality of gender with other forms of social inequalities.

5.4.2.   The Role of Men

The Act advocates for mainstreaming "gender equity" in all aspects of climate change response, including the involvement of marginalized and disadvantaged communities, which implicitly acknowledges diverse groups in society. However, it does not explicitly detail how men can engage in the process of altering power dynamics that contribute to gender inequality. This is evident under Section 3 of the Act under objectives, as it emphasizes the need for gender-responsive measures in climate governance, stating, "*mainstream intergenerational and gender equity in all aspects of climate change responses.*"(Government of Kenya 2016). This highlights the importance of gender in the policy, but does not mention

how men might actively contribute to these efforts or improve the gendered power relations that often hinder women's participation (Government of Kenya, 2016). Similarly, the Act talks about marginalized communities but does not address the need for men's involvement in achieving gender equity in these groups (Government of Kenya, 2016, Sec 7 2(h)). Men are critical to promoting gender equality, particularly in changing traditional gender norms (Sidha et al. 2023). The failure to directly address men's roles in such a transformative process weakens the Act's potential for actual change. Knowledge of the environment and climate change adaptation is embedded in the gendered power relations, which needs to be understood and challenged by both men and women in order to achieve meaningful progress in climate action (Leach 2007).

The Act's focus on gender inclusivity lacks a framework for engaging men in breaking down the barriers that has systemically affected women from participating in decision-making processes. Feminist political ecology emphazises this importance of engaging both men and women in challenging patriarchal norms that prevents equitable climate governance (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). Gendered power relations are often connected to patriarchal societal structures, and without addressing men's role in these structures, it is difficult to achieve transformative gender equity in climate governance. However, Act's approach does not go far enough in considering how men's behaviors, particularly in rural communities, need to change in order to contribute to gender equality.

5.4.3.   The Gendered Impacts of Climate Change

The Kenya Climate Change Act, 2016 outlines several provisions related to gender, however, the analysis of the Act reveals silences and omissions concerning the gendered impacts of climate change.

One significant gap in the Act is its failure to address caregiving responsibilities as a gendered impact of climate change. Women in Kenya, particularly in rural areas, often bear the responsibilities of caregiving, which are exacerbated during climate-induced events such as floods or droughts (UNDP 2020, p. 3). Financing Alliance for Health (n.d.) claims that during climate crises, women's caregiving tasks become a bigger burden, yet the Act does not propose any specific strategies to address this (Financing Alliance for Health, n.d.). The Act

acknowledges that gender is a cross-cutting issue but fails to examine how climate-induced events further increase women's unpaid labor, particularly caregiving. The omission of this issue reflects the Act's procedural approach to gender equity, rather than a transformative one (Government of Kenya, 2016).

Additionally, the Act does not sufficiently address the gendered impacts on agriculture. Women are the primary workers in Kenya's agricultural sector, yet they face significant challenges related to land access, limited resources, and climate-resilient technologies. Furthermore, women's crucial role in food production makes them more vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (UNDP 2020), yet the Act fails to offer specific solutions for these vulnerabilities. The Act's failure to develop mechanisms to support women's empowerment in agriculture further reflects the lack of engagement with the gendered impacts of climate change (Government of Kenya, 2016). Thus, it can be argued that while the Kenya Climate Change Act acknowledges gender equity, it overlooks critical gendered impacts of climate change, particularly in the areas of caregiving and agriculture. These silences reflect a procedural rather than transformative approach to gender equity.

5.4.4. Findings

The Kenya Climate Change Act (2016) acknowledges gender equity but fails to address key gendered issues that could lead to actual transformative change. Building on the previous analysis, while using intersectionality and feminist political ecology, it is evident that a significant omission is the lack of an intersectional approach. This is evident in how it overlooks how gender intersects with socio-economic status, ethnicity, and geography to create complex vulnerabilities, particularly for marginalized women in rural areas. Additionally, while the Act focuses on women's inclusion, it does not engage men in challenging patriarchal norms, missing an opportunity to address the broader social structures that perpetuate gender inequality (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). The Act also fails to address the specific gendered impacts of climate change, particularly in caregiving and agriculture, leaving women's vulnerabilities unaddressed (UNDP, 2020). These silences reveal a procedural approach to gender equity, limiting the Act's potential to create truly inclusive and transformative climate policies.

Thus, gender equity in the Kenya Climate Change Act (2016) not only limits its potential for transformative change but also shapes the way gendered vulnerabilities are addressed within climate governance. Therefore, it is relevant to explore the broader effects produced by this representation of the 'problem'.

5.5.   What effects are produced by this representation of the 'problem'?

This section applies Bacchi's (2009) WPR (What's the Problem Represented to Be?) framework to analyze how the procedural framing of gender equity in the Climate Change Act shapes governance structures, institutional responses, and socio-political dynamics. Using Question 5 of Bacchi's approach, the analysis will explore the effects produced by this representation of gender equity, particularly in reinforcing male-dominated governance structures, institutional tokenism, and financial exclusions.

5.5.1.   Reinforcing male-dominated Climate Governance Structures

The procedural approach to gender equity within the Climate Change Act could risk producing governance structures that reinforce existing masculinized power dynamics in climate policy. By treating gender as a requirement rather than a structural concern, the Act ensures that women's inclusion remains primarily a formality rather than substantive. As a result, climate governance mechanisms risks to continue to be dominated by male-led institutions, technical experts, and state actors who shape decision-making priorities without disrupting entrenched power asymmetries (Resurrección, 2013, p. 35).

This approach to gender equity may result in institutional tokenism, where gender is referenced in policy frameworks but does not translate into actual redistribution of power or resources. Nightingale (2017) highlights that when gender policies are reduced to procedural mandates, they often lead to "*struggles over authority and recognition*," where women are included on the requirement they conform to pre-existing governance norms rather than challenging them (p. 12). Consequently, the procedural approach in the Climate Change Act

could potentially reinforces a hierarchical, male-dominated system, ensuring that women's roles in climate policy will continue to not be included much in decision-making. Furthermore, this proceduralization contributes to the depoliticization of gender in climate governance. As Harris (2015) notes, gender-sensitive policies under neoliberal environmental governance tend to merely focus on efficiency and technical expertise over socio-political transformation, which further reinforce masculinized decision-making frameworks (p. 7). By embedding gender within procedural mechanisms rather than integrating it as a transformative policy, the Act could make sure that there would be a continued exclusion of women and Indigenous communities and from decision-making processes.

Additionally, the Kenyan political landscape exemplifies this entrenchment of male-dominated governance structures. Despite the increased representation of women in national and regional policy forums, they are systematically excluded from leadership roles. According to Sidha, Schivachi, & Mokeira (2023), Women legislators often find themselves in less prestigious and underfunded committees, reinforcing the procedural rather than transformative nature of gender equity in governance (Sidha et al., 2023). Leadership positions such as committee chairpersons and opposition leaders, remain largely occupied by men, preventing women from influencing actual policy changes. The UNDP Gender Analysis Report (2020) highlights that despite women being primary caregivers and key actors in agricultural and water management, their contributions are not recognized in governance structures. Additionally, lack of enforcement in gender-sensitive policies has made it difficult to translate formal gender provisions into tangible shifts in governance (UNDP, 2020). Ultimately, this procedural approach to gender in the Climate Change Act does not challenge existing power structures, which allows them to maintain under the guise of inclusion. Thus, this approach to gender equity could impact climate governance in Kenya to continue to privilege dominant power holders while limiting substantive gender-responsive interventions.

5.5.2. Effects in Regards to Gender and Climate Finance

The procedural framing of gender equity in the Climate Change Act also produces systematic exclusions in climate finance allocation. By treating gender as a compliance metric rather than an imperative for financial redistribution, the Act ensures that funding mechanisms can

continue to operate through male-dominated financial institutions that often disadvantage women and marginalized communities (UNDP 2020).

An effect of this procedural approach is the continued exclusion of women from climate finance access. Climate funding programs, despite gender mainstreaming commitments, are often affected by bureaucratic systems and financial constraints within governance institutions (Amuhaya & Degterev, 2019), which often results in inadequate funding for gender-responsive adaptation efforts. This is evident in how the Ministry of Agriculture in Kenya has a Gender Unit but lacks a specific budget line to support gender initiatives, while gender mainstreaming efforts in the Ministry of Water are constrained by lack of awareness and financial resources (UNDP, 2020, p. 25). Nightingale (2017) highlights that this procedural integration often leads to the formal recognition of women in climate finance policies, yet it does not translate into meaningful shifts in financial power. Women elected through nomination processes often lack the financial and political capital required to access funding streams dominated by party elites (Sidha et al., 2023). Financial gatekeeping mechanisms ensure that male legislators, who typically have greater economic influence, continue to control resource distribution, leaving female legislators and policymakers with limited financial leverage to advocate for gender-sensitive climate finance policies (Sidha et al. 2023). Furthermore, Kaijser and Kronsell (2014) argue that climate policies often fail to incorporate intersectional perspectives, leading to the reinforcement of systemic inequalities (Kaijser and Kronsell 2014). They highlight that race, class, and gender shape differential vulnerabilities to climate change, yet these dimensions are frequently overlooked in mainstream governance frameworks (Kaijser and Kronsell 2014). This omission perpetuates structures that exclude marginalized groups from financial decision-making and resource allocation. Without mechanisms that address these structural inequalities, procedural gender inclusion in climate finance merely perpetuates and continue existing exclusions under the disguise of neutrality and efficiency (Mollett & Faria, 2013, p. 120). Furthermore, women's limited access to financial resources is a structural barrier. The UNDP Gender Analysis Report (2020) highlights that only around 10% of agricultural credit in Kenya goes to women, and women own just 1.62% of agricultural land (p. 6). Women's limited land ownership excludes them from accessing adaptation funding. This reflects how financial exclusions are structurally embedded, and thereby, prevents women from fully participating in climate resilience efforts.

Ultimately, by making gender equity a prodecural inclusion rather than embedding it within financial redistribution mechanisms, the Climate Change Act ensures that climate finance can continues to reproduce gendered and intersectional inequalities. Climate finance can continues to operate in a way that favors elite economic players instead of supporting real gender-responsive transformation. Without structural shifts in financial governance, like gender-responsive budgeting and direct support for women-led initiatives, climate finance can continue to reinforce existing inequalities instead of fixing them.

5.5.3.   Findings

This analysis shows that the procedural framing of gender equity within the Climate Change Act produces consequences that reinforce existing power structures while limiting opportunities for meaningful transformation. By positioning gender as a procedural requirement rather than a structural necessity, climate governance mechanisms maintain the dominance of male-led institutions, and further ensure that women's participation remains largely symbolic rather than substantive. This representation contributes to an illusion of inclusivity that does not challenge the dynamics that shape climate policy and decision-making processes. Furthermore, this approach perpetuates institutional tokenism, to the effect that gender inclusion is acknowledged in policy frameworks but fails to translate into shifts in authority, leadership, or resource distribution. As a result, women's participation may be conditioned on following existing governance norms rather than transforming those structures to be more equitable. This procedural framing strips gender of its political urgency, reducing it to a bureaucratic checkbox rather than a meaningful structural issue. As a result, the deeper inequalities that exclude women from decision-making and governance remain intact, with little effort to challenge them. Financially, women may continue to face barriers in accessing climate funds due to rigid institutions and economic disparities. With no real commitment to funding gender-sensitive policies, women-led initiatives struggle to gain momentum, reinforcing existing socio-economic inequalities and limiting their role in shaping climate resilience efforts.

5.6. How/where has this representation of the 'problem' been produced, disseminated and defended?

Carol Bacchi's approach to policy analysis emphasizes that policies are not just solutions to pre-existing problems but actively construct the issues they claim to address. Based on the previous analysis, this section will focus specifically on the Kenyan Climate Change Act and its procedural rather than transformative approach to gender inclusion, by applying Bacchis last question on how this representation of gender equity has been produced, disseminated, and defended (Bacchi, 2009). By applying Bacchi's approach, this section aims to question the dominant policy narratives that limit gender inclusion to technical compliance rather than structural transformation (Bacchi, 2012). It critically evaluates how gender equity is reduced to a procedural inclusion rather than being integrated into climate governance as a transformative principle.

5.6.1. Challenging the Procedural Approach to Gender in Climate Governance

The representation of gender equity in climate governance as a procedural issue rather than a transformative one is rooted in global policy frameworks, climate finance structures, and national implementation strategies that prioritize compliance over real systemic change. International institutions such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Gender Action Plan, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and climate finance mechanisms like the Green Climate Fund (GCF) have established gender inclusion as a requirement but have largely failed to ensure that these commitments lead to meaningful power shifts (UNFCCC, 2016; UNDP, 2020). One of the main ways this procedural framing is reinforced is through international climate finance mechanisms. The GCF and World Bank climate programs require gender considerations in funding proposals, yet their implementation has been criticized for prioritizing compliance with gender-sensitive indicators over ensuring that financial resources reach women-led adaptation initiatives (Schalatek 2022, p. 6). This can results in gender inclusion being reduced to a reporting

exercise, where policies mention gender to satisfy donor expectations while continuing to operate within male-dominated governance and financial systems.

This research argues that the Kenyan Climate Change Act reflects this international approach. As proposed earlier, gender is integrated into the Act as global finance institutions reward policies that formally acknowledge gender, but without a mandate for financial redistribution or prioritization of women's leadership, these provisions remain mostly symbolic (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014). The influence of global governance norms on national policy development is highly evident, which places gender within procedural frameworks that fail to disrupt existing power hierarchies. As a result, gender inclusion in governance is presented as a neutral, technical concern rather than a political struggle over resources and decision-making power (UNDP 2020).

This framing of gender inclusion is maintained through bureaucratic justifications and technical decision-making structures. Policymakers often frame gender equity as a matter of capacity-building, monitoring, and evaluation rather than a fundamental restructuring of climate governance (Bryant & Bailey, 1997). The Kenyan government reinforces this by promoting gender-sensitive budgeting, yet there is a lack of adequate gender-specific budgetary allocations at sector levels and in the national and county budgets. While gender-responsive planning and budgeting are acknowledged as crucial, actual implementation remains inconsistent, with limited compliance in practice (UNDP 2020, p. 6). This allows gender considerations to be maintained at a surface level, and thereby, acknowledged in policy but not included in financial allocations and governance structures.

Despite the dominance of procedural gender inclusion, this approach has been widely criticized by scholars and activists. Feminist Political Ecology points out that gender has been mainstreamed into environmental governance in ways that often depoliticize and institutionalize gender into technical tools and procedures, and, thereby, removing its transformative potential (Elmhirst, 2011). Researchers argue that gender-sensitive climate policies must move beyond representation and symbolic commitments to include financial redistribution, community-led governance, and intersectional approaches (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Rocheleau et al., 1996). Climate justice movements have also challenged procedural gender mainstreaming, calling for gender-responsive budgeting, legal reforms to secure land and financial rights for women, and direct funding for women-led adaptation projects (UNDP, 2020).

Policy alternatives exist to replace this procedural framing with a more transformative approach. Including intersectionality in climate governance requires moving beyond broad gender inclusion policies to recognize how gender, race, class, and geography shape climate vulnerability and access to resources (Mollett & Faria, 2013). This includes reducing bureaucratic requirements that favor elite institutions and prioritizing direct funding for community-driven climate adaptation (McCormick & Schmitz, 2009).

These critiques and proposed reforms challenge the effectiveness of the current procedural gender framework and push for policies that shift financial and political power to marginalized communities. The Kenyan Climate Change Act could be revised to include mandatory gender-responsive budgeting, stronger legal protections for women's land rights, and dedicated financial mechanisms for women-led adaptation initiatives. Without these changes, gender inclusion will remain a procedural requirement rather than transformative in climate governance.

5.6.2.   Findings

Thus, this analysis has shown that gender equity in climate governance is framed as a procedural issue rather than a transformative one, and thereby reinforcing bureaucratic norms that prioritize compliance over real transformational change. Using Bacchi's WPR approach, it is clear that this framing is actively constructed and maintained through policy structures that treat gender as an administrative formality. Climate finance mechanisms, despite gender commitments, continue to favor institutions over grassroot women-led initiatives, making real gender-responsive funding difficult to access. However, this procedural framing is not uncontested. Feminist Political Ecology and have continuously challenged this representation by advocating for intersectional and decolonial approaches to gender equity in climate governance. Scholars have emphasized the need for policy reforms that go beyond merely inclusion and compliance-based gender mainstreaming and instead advocate for a larger focus on gender-responsive budgeting, legally binding reforms, and direct financial mechanisms for women-led initiatives and womens meaningful inclusion in decision-making

6. Conclusion

This thesis set out to answer the research question: How is gender represented and problematized in Kenya's Climate Change Act (2016)? Using Carol Bacchi's *What's the Problem Represented to Be?* (WPR) approach alongside Feminist Political Ecology and Intersectionality, this research examined how the Act problematizes gender within climate governance and explored its implications for gender equity. Rather than seeking to a definitive truth, this thesis analyzed the framing of gender in the Climate Change Act through a feminist political ecology and intersectionality lens.

This thesis argues that the Act incorporates gender considerations by including gender equity into climate governance through provisions such as the two-thirds gender rule in decision-making, gender-responsive climate finance, and inclusive climate education and public participation. These commitments suggest a recognition of gender disparities in climate change and an effort to promote inclusivity in Kenya's climate governance framework. However, it contends that the Act's framing of gender remains limited and reinforces traditional power structures. The Act positions women primarily as vulnerable groups needing protection, rather than as key actors in shaping climate solutions. While it acknowledges gender disparities, it does not directly challenge or disrupt deeper structural inequalities, such as in land ownership, economic participation, and access to resources. These are areas that feminist political ecology highlights as central to achieving gender justice in environmental governance (Rocheleau et al., 1996; Jarosz 2001). Rather than empowering women as leaders in climate resilience, the Act risks reinforcing a passive role for women in climate action, focusing on their vulnerabilities rather than their agency.

Additionally, this thesis argues that the Act lacks concrete enforcement mechanisms, raising concerns about its practical impact. While it mandates gender equity in various aspects of climate governance, it does not clearly outline how these commitments will be implemented or monitored. Without well-defined accountability structures and measurable targets, there is a risk that these gender provisions will remain symbolic rather than transformative (Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014; Rocheleau et al., 1996).

Overall, this research suggests that while the Climate Change Act (2016) takes steps toward gender equity, it does not go far enough in transforming the power dynamics that shape climate governance. To bridge the gap between policy and practice, this thesis argues that

Kenya must move beyond gender mainstreaming and adopt a more intersectional and feminist approach. This means ensuring that women and marginalized communities not only participate in climate governance but also influence climate policies at all levels (Elmhirst 2011;Kaijser & Kronsell, 2014;Rocheleau et al., 1996).

By examining how gender is framed in climate policy, this research highlights the power of policy narratives in shaping inclusion, representation, and decision-making. Strengthening gender-responsive climate action requires a shift from viewing women as vulnerable to recognizing them as central players in climate resilience and adaptation (UNDP 2020).

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