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Policy-as- Discourse Approach to Gender Equality Policies of the European Union in External Affairs

Gender Action Plan III

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Abstract

This thesis examines gender equality policies of the European Union in external affairs. The aim is to discover how the meaning and "problem" of gender (in)equality is constructed, represented, and problematized in the gender policies for external action. The study also ascertains what logics underpin the problem representations, whose voices are silenced, and what subject positions are created. Employing the "what is the "problem" represented to be" (WPR) method of Bacchi, primary Gender Action Plan III documents are analyzed. For the critical discursive analysis of the thesis, broad conceptual and theoretical approaches are applied: social construction theory and poststructuralism; governmentality and neoliberal rationalities; feminist body theory. The paper discovers that neoliberal rationalities underlie the overarching problem representations, postcolonial feminism is silenced and the subject positions label women as "other" and "subordinate". The study concludes that the EU approach to gender equality and mainstreaming in external affairs is instrumentalist and integrationist. There is much to be done for reaching transformative gender mainstreaming.

Key words: European Union, Gender (in)equality, Gender Mainstreaming, the WPR method, Discourse Analysis
Words: 17766

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The List of Abbreviations

CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CEFM	Child, Early and Force Marriage
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DA	Discourse Analysis
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
EU	European Union
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GAD	Gender and Development
GAP	Gender Action Plan
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ILO	International Labor Organization
NPA	Normative Power Approach
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
SDG(s)	Sustainable Development Goals
TFEU	Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union
WID	Women in Development
WPR	What is the Problem Represented to be?

1 Introduction

1.1 The European Union as a Global Gender Actor

> *Europe has been promoting gender equality since 1957 – it is part of the European Union's 'DNA'. For us Europeans gender equality is not an option, it is not a luxury, it is an imperative. We can be proud of what Europe has achieved in recent years. Gender equality is not a distant dream but increasingly a European reality. (*Viviane Reding 2014).

The quote reflects how the idea of "gender equality" is central to the internal and external identity of the European Union (EU). The European Commission (EC) stipulates the EU as "a global leader in gender equality" (EC 2020a: 1). The Union gets its power from its identity and foundational norms (Guerrina & A.M. Wright 2016: 294). Those foundational values that the EU premises on are "human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, respect for human rights" (Council of the EU 2012: 21). In terms of equality of gender, the European Union is "bound to strive for equality between women and men in all its activities" (EC 2010: 3). Since the Union regards equality as its foundational norm and assumes that "values provide the Union with a purpose and a mission", it is obliged to act as a normative power and leader in pursuit of gender equality in transnational settings (Leino & Petrov 2009: 655, cited in David & Guerrina 2013: 56; Guerrina & A.M. Wright 2016: 293). According to Manners, "the EU can be *conceptualized* as a changer of norms in the international system" and "the EU *should* act to extend its norms into the international system" (2002: 252. Italics in original).

The incorporation of the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) into the Maastricht Treaty and the establishment of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) had a complementary role in the EU key foreign policy actorness; they provided the EU with a tool to promote its norms and interests to external affairs (Chappel & Guerrina 2020: 261). The external actorness in the EU sense means the export of the fundamental values enshrined in the Treaties (Chappell & Guerrina 2020: 261). "A highly institutionalized form of internal norm diffusion" in gender equality is expected to happen through gender mainstreaming (Chappel & Guerrina 2020: 265), which was incorporated into the Treaty of Amsterdam (1997). The mainstreaming created an obligation for the EU and its Member States (Guerrina & A.M. Wright 2016, p. 293), who are "at the forefront of the protection, fulfilment and the enjoyment of human rights by women and girls and strongly promote them in all external relations" (Council of the EU 2015: 2), to emerge as a global gender actor (Chappel & Guerrina 2020: 265).

With the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, promoting gender equality in the EU and beyond constitutes more importance and significance on the EU political agenda than it has ever been because the pandemic worsens the existing gender inequality and negates the positive impact of the EU activities and efforts in all life spheres around the globe (EC 2021). Therefore, the EU leadership becomes even more necessary in addressing "structural inequalities" and formulating "more inclusive and gender-equal societies" across the world in the post-COVID-19 recovery (Council of the EU 2020: 4).

1.2 Research Puzzle

The institutional norms and practices of the EU already reveal that the EU considers itself as a legitimate model in gender governance, which needs to be diffused through the norms to the other regions' political and economic structures (Debusscher & Hulse 2014: 560). The EU as a gender actor or a policy entrepreneur and the gender impact of its policies constitute one of the hot controversies in academia (David & Guerrina 2013: 53). A deeper understanding of gender equality involves the challenge of existing gender power mechanisms,

gender practices and structural power struggles (Lombardo & Meier 2008: 106). Therefore, the right question that needs to be asked is: does the EU aim to transform existing unequal gender relations in other parts of the world? (Debusscher & Hulse, 2014: 560). It can be construed as what meaning those gender equality policies encompass in a deeper understanding? Scholars studying the quality and meaning of the EU's external gender equality policies across various sectors have reached an outcome that gender equality policies are not treated as an aim on their own right, but thought to be used as an instrument to achieve other ends (Debusscher & Hulse 2014; Lombardo & Meier 2008; True 2009; Elomäki 2015; Debusscher 2016; Calvo 2013). Based on this background, this paper aims at studying the meaning and construction of gender (in)equality policies in Gender Action Plan III.

1.3 Research Question, Focus, and Scope of the Study

This thesis aims at studying gender equality and women's empowerment policies of the European Union in external relations. The research question that the thesis aims at responding to is:

What is the "problem" of gender (in)equality in the European Union's external action represented to be and what presuppositions, silences and subject positions that problem representation(s) constitute(s)?

The research question is built on the "What is the "Problem" Represented to be" (WPR) method introduced by Carol Bacchi. The Foucault-influenced WPR method to policy analysis is suggested as an analytical strategy "to facilitate post-structural analysis [sic!]", and for "making politics visible" (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016: 13).

As policy documents, the thesis will analyze the documents of the European Union's Gender Action Plan (GAP) III – "putting women and girls' rights at the heart of global recovery for a gender-equal world". The EU published the GAP III in November 2020 as a further milestone to its goal of accomplishing "Gender

Equality and Women's Empowerment in External Action" in a holistic manner (EC 2020b).

In the research question, "problem" refers to a change suggested by a policy proposal (Bacchi 2009: XI), and "problem representation refers a "'problem' implied in any policy or rule" (Bacchi 2009: XII). In the WPR context, a particular "problem" exists because it is represented in a policy proposal (Bacchi 1999: 1).

This paper attempts to reveal problem representations or problematizations – how something is offered as a problem (Bacchi 2009: 277) – in the GAP III. Since the purpose of the WPR method is to find meaning construction of "truth" or representation of "truth", not the "truth" itself (Goodwin 2011: 170-172), the author is interested in ascertaining representation and meaning construction of gender (in)equality in GAP III. Defining gender equality or examining the effectiveness of gender equality policies provided in GAP III is not for this thesis to study.

The thesis has been motivated by the doctoral dissertations of Helle Poulsen (2006) and Dolores Calvo (2013). They have applied the WPR method to gender equality policies of the International Labor Organization (ILO) and the European Union, accordingly. Both of them have used the results of their policy analysis to see how much the discourse challenges existing gender power structures. In this paper, there is a sub-section interpreting the results of the analysis in the context of gender mainstreaming; however, this is not the main aim of the thesis.

In terms of the contribution of this study to the literature, since the GAP III was recently published, it is yet to be analyzed by academics and scholars, meaning that there are not so many papers that account for the policy document's analysis, and there is none with the application of the WPR method. Therefore, this thesis is supposedly the first-time application of the WPR to the GAP III. With that, the thesis will contribute to the policy-as-discourse literature. There is a gap in the application of poststructuralism and its premises into policy research and analysis (Bacchi &Goodwin 2016: 4). The intention is to fill that particular gap in the literature as well.

1.4 De-limitations

In the thesis, only data used are governmental policies of the European Union, meaning that the thesis is only able to illustrate how problem representations are constructed by the discourse of government. However, in order to bring deep, comprehensive, and rich insight to the thesis, the initial plan was to conduct interviews targeting other stakeholders in society and politics and to analyze the interview data by applying the interview-version WPR method. Due to time constraints and COVID-19 restrictions, the interview part of the plan was not materialized.

1.5 Chapter Outline

Chapter 2 systematically provides the historical progress of gender equality policies in internal and external affairs of the European Union. There is a specific focus on the EU's external gender equality policies in the development sector. The goals that the EU wants to achieve with GAP III are presented in this part as well. Finally, there is a short provision of literature of the studies conducted on external gender equality policies of the EU.

Chapter 3 presents six sets of conceptual approaches used in this thesis: social construction theory and poststructuralism; governmentality and neoliberal rationalities; feminist theory; policy as discourse; problematizations; the WPR approach.

Chapter 4 informs about the type of the study and the research method used. The WPR approach is broadly explained.

Chapter 5 presents the problem representations found in the GAP III policies, presuppositions, silences, subject positions, and reflection on findings.

Chapter 6 summarizes the whole thesis and presents a recommendation for further research.

2 Review of Research Context

2.1 Introduction: Three Phases of Gender Equality in the European Union

The development process of making gender equality policies in the European Union can be divided into three complementary and evolutionary phases: equal treatment (1957-1980), positive action (1981-1990), and mainstreaming (1991-present) (Calvo 2013: 28-31). The main idea behind the concept of "equal treatment" in the EU context is: "equal access", "equal opportunities" (Rees 1998: 21-24), or "equality between sexes" in employment (Pető & Manners 2006: 98). The concept of positive action supports the accomplishment of "equal outcome" rather than "equal access" (Calvo 2013: 25). Finally, gender mainstreaming aims at challenging the "male-streamism of organizations" at the structural level (Rees 1998: 29). In the rest of this section, the role of the EU in the historical progress of gender equality policies has been described in accordance with those phases, blending in with scholarly understanding and debate of those approaches.

2.1.1 Equal Treatment (1957-1980)

The roots of gender equality policies date back to the 1870s with the international demand for equal pay by Marie Goegg, who is a Swiss feminist. In 1919, the principle of "equal remuneration for men and women workers for work of equal value" was approved by International Labour Organization under the title of Convention Number 100 (ILO-100) and brought into enforcement in 1952 (Vleuten 2007/2016: 35). ILO-100 was in compliance with the equality principle endorsed by the French Revolution, and therefore it was immediately ratified by

France in 1953 (Vleuten 2007/2016: 36). During the intergovernmental negotiations of the Treaty of Rome, considering lower wages for women as an issue of "distortion", France proposed the ratification of the ILO-100 along with the other relevant conventions as a condition to approve the Treaty of Rome (Vleuten 2007/2016: 41). Thereby, as a single article on social policy, Article 119 (current Article 141 European Community) stipulating that each Member State shall "ensure that the principle of equal pay for male and female workers for equal work or work of equal value is applied" was inserted into the Treaty of Rome (Vleuten 2007/2016: 33). Achieving institutionalization with the political endorsement of the second wave of women's movement, the principle of "equal pay for equal work regardless of sex" became a point of departure for policy spillovers (Pető & Manners 2006: 98). Instability at the national and international level in the 1970s led to the weakening of the European Economic Community (EEC). In order to prevent a further weakening of the EEC, the Member States committed to develop such a supranational social policy, which the population of the Community would receive well. As a result, the EEC approved three directives concerning the position of women between 1975 and 1978 in the area of equal rights: "equal pay for work of equal value"; "equal treatment in terms of employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions"; "equal treatment in social security matters" (Vleuten 2007/2016: 85-104; Rees 1998: 38). Equal treatment directives issued in the late 1980s and early 1990s encompassed occupational security systems and the self-employed, i.e. their target is to address some different characteristics between women and men with the accommodation of equal treatment (Rees 1998: 38).

However, in the 1980s, it became more than obvious that the provision of equal treatment – equal opportunities and individual liberal rights – does not guarantee "real equality" (Pető & Manners 2006: 99) because systems and structures founding on unequal power relations inevitably influence to organizations trying to implement "equal treatment" to men and women. The reason behind the ineffectiveness of equal treatment is that it aims at providing equal access and opportunities to women in public life, meaning that unequal distribution of domestic labor in private life and other unequal power relations rooted in class, race, and cultural differences are not addressed (Rees 1998: 21). Since with equal access and opportunities, the European law has been short of

dealing with structural causes of inequality, but rather has moderated its symptoms and led to inevitable reproduction of inequalities and unequal outcomes in the wider context (Calvo 2013: 28-29), the EU institutions committed to protecting rights of women as a group by demanding positive action with the collaboration of non-governmental organization (NGO) activists and social movements (Pető & Manners 2006: 99).

2.1.2 Positive Action and Positive Discrimination (1981-1990)

At the EU level, the most notable positive action measures are the "1984 Recommendation on the Promotion of Positive Action for Women"; the "First Community Action Programme on the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women and Men (1982-1985)", and the "Second Medium Term Community Action Programme (1986-1990)" (Rees 1998: 40-45).

Recognizing that unequal starting positions of people belonging to different groups lead to a difference in the outcome, positive action aims at creating circumstances and conditions that would lead to equal outcomes (Rees 1998: 25). Grounding on the idea of "women as equal", with the conduct of special programs, positive action attempts to determine and eliminate handicaps to women's equality, and suggest equal entry mechanisms for women to equalize the starting positions. At the extreme level, to enhance the participation of the under-represented groups, positive action may offer affirmative actions and quotas, meaning that it also plays the role of positive discrimination (Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2000: 433). Unlike equal treatment, positive action recognizes dominance and oppression of certain groups within the hierarchy; however, like equal treatment, positive action "seeks to adapt women to a particular model of masculinity dominant in management hierarchies". That is, both approaches are out of capacity to challenge structural power relations creating hierarchies and oppression (Rees 1998: 25). In other words, positive action recognizes categories of women and men as "different" in the biological sense, but fails to deal with those "differences", and therefore subjects women to the position of the "disadvantaged" (Daly 2005: 437-438) because differences are interpreted as the deficiency of women. (Calvo 2013: 29). Since by "perfecting or skewing the rules

of the contest", i.e. redressing imbalances and inequalities in opportunities, the procedural model of positive action is out of potential to challenge and change cultures, systems, and structures, the structural model of gender mainstreaming comes into play (Rees 1998: 28).

2.1.3 Gender Mainstreaming (1991-present)

Unlike equal treatment and positive action, which aim at transforming women to fit into a society ruled by male institutions and cultures, mainstreaming policies target the transformation of institutions grounding on male hierarchy, premising on the politics of difference (Rees 1998: 29). Additionally, compared with those two, here gender is not treated as a specialist field of policy, but incorporated into all areas of policies (Daly 2005: 435).

In the scholarly debate, gender mainstreaming is often understood in two modes: transformative and integrationist approaches. Integrationist approach addresses "gender mainstreaming as a way of more effectively achieving existing policy goals" (Beveridge & Nott 2002: 300, cited in the Debusscher & Hulse 2014: 561). The solution for gender issues and problems is expected to be found within the existing paradigms. In other words, in the vein of the integrationist approach, gender does not have the same meaning as it has in the feminist and gender theory; categories of women and men stay undifferentiated, and women become the main target of the policies (Allwood 2013: 43). Here gender mainstreaming is construed as "a box-ticking exercise"; that is, this version presents plenty of tools, procedures, and instructions for the implementation, where policy workers measure their success by ticking every exercise done without referring to the content of their policies and challenging power relations (Allwood 2013: 43). Rooting in the feminist theories of gender (ibid: 43), the transformative approach claims that norms and institutions implicitly support masculinity and represent male values and interests, and therefore requires the reformulation and the transformation of the institutions (Mazey 2000: 334-335). Thus, it treats gender equality as a goal in itself rather than remedial action for other goals (Allwood 2013: 43).

Concerning the historical development of gender mainstreaming in the EU, for the first time, the concept implicitly entered to the agenda of the EU through the "Third Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities (1991-1995)" (Calvo 2013: 32; Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2000: 435). The justification for the program was: "Equal opportunities policy must not be treated as a separate policy but as an integral part of other policies, underpinning their effectiveness" (CEC 199 la:86, cited in Rees 1998: 46).

In 1995, the European Union played an outstanding role in the Beijing conference in terms of changing the discourse from "Women in Development" (WID) to "Gender and Development" (GAD), meaning that instead of treating gender equality as a women's issue and trying to provide women's visibility in male-dominated social and economic structures, the principles enshrined in the Beijing Declaration affirmed "to address the root causes of gender inequality", which "both women and men have to be equally involved in setting goals"(EC 2001: 7). In other words, the EU succeeded to alter the discourse from mainstreaming as an integrationist approach involving the WID paradigm to mainstreaming as a transformative approach with the GAD paradigm (Poulsen 2006: 18).

In the same year with Beijing Conference, the Commission proposed the adoption of the "Fourth Action Programme (1996-2000) on Equal Opportunities for Women and Men" by the Council, which regarded mainstreaming as an essential element (Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2000: 436). The incorporation of a gender perspective across all sectors and policies was initially materialized by a Communication of Commission, which is also known as the policy "Incorporating Equal Opportunities for Women and Men into All Community Policies and Activities" (Commission of European Community 1996: 2). Gender mainstreaming was regarded as the official policy approach of the EU with the Amsterdam Treaty (1997). Its legal basis is endorsed with article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) (European Parliament 2019: 2), which stipulates that "the Union shall aim to eliminate inequalities, and to promote equality, between men and women" in all its activities (Council of the EU 2012: 69). According to Commission, the concept of gender mainstreaming involves:

> *[n]ot restricting efforts to promote equality to the implementation of specific measures to help women, but mobilising all general policies and measures specifically for the purpose of achieving equality* (Commission of the European Community 1998: 6. Emphasis in original).

The European Parliament (EP) emphasizes that:

> [G]*ender mainstreaming is not just about women, but about ensuring that women's as well as men's experiences and concerns are built in to the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policy, legislation and spending programmes, and that both individual rights and structural inequalities are addressed. It also entails looking at institutions and how they work, including gender representation within policy areas and decision-making structures* (EP 2019).

With the introduction of gender mainstreaming in the Treaty of Amsterdam, the purpose of the EU was to incorporate a gender dimension into internal and external policy areas and changing approach and understanding of policy actors on gender norms and structures (Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2000; Hoskyns 1996; Mazey 2000; David & Guerrina 2013: 54). Gender mainstreaming turns out to be both a revolutionary concept because of its promise to integrate gender into all policies of the EU, and a super demanding concept because it requires the participation of all central actors, such as Commission Directorates-General, sectoral Councils of Ministers, government officials of Member States in the policy process (Hafner-Burton & Pollack 2000: 434).

At the later stage of mainstreaming, the "Fifth Community Action Programme on Equal Opportunities (2001-2006)" was adopted to promote and assist gender equality-related policies within the Community framework strategy 2001-2005 (EUR-lex 2000). Building on the framework strategy 2001-2005, a new gender equality strategy, which is "Roadmap for Equality between Women and Men", was communicated by the Commission for 2006-2010. The strategy had six pillars to achieve: providing gender equality in terms of economic independence;

ensuring that there is a reconciliation between private and professional life; having people equally represented in the decision-making; eliminating gender-based violence; getting rid of gender stereotypes; promoting gender equality in external relations (EUR-lex 2006). Grounding on the previous Roadmap, "strategy for equality between women and men 2010-2015" was adopted by the Commission in 2010. Excluding the last pillar concerning the elimination of gender stereotypes within the Roadmap, the strategy aimed at achieving the first five pillars by following the dual approach in gender mainstreaming. The dual approach involves the incorporation of a gender perspective in all policy areas and specific measures (EC 2010: 8-9). In 2020, the Commission adopted "gender equality strategy 2020-2025" titled "Towards a Gender-Equal Europe". With the dual-approach implementation, the strategy has a goal of increasing mainstreaming of gender by integrating gender to each stage in the design of gender policy in all external and internal policy areas of the European Union. The strategy is based on intersectionality as well. Intersectionality is defined as "the combination of gender with other personal characteristics or identities, and how these intersections contribute to unique experiences of discrimination" (EC 2020a: 2).

2.2 Gender Mainstreaming in Relation to Development Sector

Scholars have considered development policies to be an amenable place to integrate gender equality policies (Debusscher 2014: 18). The first explicit commitment to gender equality in external affairs through the means of development policies is Cotonou Agreement (2000/483/EC) governing relations between the European Union and the seventy-nine African, Caribbean, and Pacific (ACP) countries (Allwood, 2020: 333). Article 1, 20, 31 of the agreement endorse "the equal participation of men and women in all spheres of political, economic and social life", women's access to resources, and the incorporation of "specific positive measures in favour of women", accordingly (ACP-EC 2000: 18 -50).

In 2001, the "Programme of Action for the Mainstreaming of Gender Equality in Community Development Co-operation" (2001-2006) was issued by the Commission of the European Communities (EC). This Programme for Action stressed "the relevance of gender mainstreaming in development co-operation" by referring to women as "the world's poor", who are devoid of "access to economic and social resources" so that improving women's condition and their livelihoods would mean a higher level of productivity and less poverty in developing countries (EUR-lex 2001). In 2007, Commission issued another document titled "Gender Equality and Women Empowerment in Development Cooperation", stipulating that Commission and the EU Member States are "key players in the effort to close the gender gap in the developing world" (EC 2007: 2). Signaling "the importance of Gender Equality in all future EU development cooperation efforts", the program suggested two objectives: firstly, increasing "the efficiency of gender mainstreaming" in political action, development cooperation, and institutional capacity building; secondly, refocusing "specific actions to empower women" in governance, employment and economic activities, education, health and gender-based violence (EC 2007: 2-6). Those two objectives constitute a twin-track strategy (Debusscher, 2014: 3). In 2010, with "EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development" – Gender Action Plan (GAP) –, the EU transformed its strategy into a "three-pronged approach" by including "political dialogue with partner countries" into the twin-track strategy (Debusscher, 2014: 3). The aim of GAP I was to ensure the promotion of gender equality and women's empowerment in development, coupled with adequate provision of human and financial resources (EC 2015: 1-3). In 2015, grounding on the lessons and accomplishments of GAP 2010-2015, the European Commission commenced the second action plan titled "Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women through EU External Relations 2016-2020" (GAP II). The GAP II pursues achieving gender equality and the empowerment of girls and women in "developing, enlargement and neighborhood countries, including fragile, conflict and emergency situations" with the services of the Commission and the European External Action Service (EEAS) activities (EC 2015: 2-4). According to Allwood, with its powerful statement, GAP II is of potential to increase the profile of gender mainstreaming on the EU development policies, which would lead to a meaningful

implementation (2020: 342). In 2020, the European Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy introduced EU gender action plan III – an ambitious agenda for gender equality and women's empowerment in EU external action. Thus, by setting gender equality as "a key political objective of its external action and common and foreign and security policy", the EU aims at reaching the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) constituting the core of the 2030 Agenda (EC 2020b: 2).

2.2.1 GAP III

There are five pillars that GAP III plans to achieve by 2025 to contribute to "the humanitarian-development-peace triple nexus" (EC 2020b: 6). Firstly, it provides such a policy framework that would make the reach of gender equality a cross-cutting priority in EU external action, meaning that by furthering gender mainstreaming in external affairs, the union wants to integrate gender equality and women's empowerment into 85% of all its new external actions in external relations (EC 2020b: 3). The GAP III aims at achieving progress in six areas: eliminating gender-based violence; ensuring the provision of reproductive and sexual health and rights; providing access to economic and social rights; ensuring that women and men equally participate in decision-making and leadership; integrating "Women Peace Security" framework into new policy areas; empowering women and girls through digitalization and ensuring their participation in the digital transformation (EC 2020b: 3-20). What differentiates GAP III from previous development projects is that there is an explicit reference that this plan is gender-transformative; that is, "it aims to shift gender-power relations" (EC 2020b: 3). The plan is also characterized by its intersectional approach. Therefore, the overall goal of the plan is to tackle structural causes of gender inequality and gender-based stereotypes and norms, considering all intersecting characteristics (EC 2020b).

2.3 Existing Analyses of the European Union's Gender Equality Promotion Efforts on External Relations

Scholars studying gender equality in the EU have already reached a consensus that scholarly literature focusing on the EU's gender mainstreaming efforts in external relations is less developed and immature compared to feminist scholarship on internal policies (Kantola 2010; Kunz & Maisenbacher 2017; Debusscher & Manners 2020; Muehlenhoff et al. 2020). Gender equality policies of the European Union on external relations have been studied in a variety of contexts across several sectors, predominantly enlargement, climate change and development (Muehlenhoff et al. 2020).

In their article, Debusscher and Manners reveal three problems in the study of the EU's external gender equality policies. They suggest the EU's global actorness's being studied as a sub-field of foreign policy analysis as the first problem. As a solution, they think, normative power approach (NPA) needs to be integrated into the studies because NPA is of capacity to ask normative questions concerning how gender equality policy for external relations should be set (2020: 546). The second problem is that gender is studied in the context of colonial relations, in which Europe may be perceived as the one exploiting the world, considering the colonial past (Debusscher & Manners 2020: 546-547). The third problem is about "who speaks for women?". They conclude that it is for feminist research rather than "privileged European scholars" to hear voices of women living outside of the EU borders (Debusscher & Manners 2020: 547).

Manners and Debusscher introduce a sophisticated theoretical and methodological approach to the study of gender equality in external relations. First, they present a dialogue-based approach and suggest the use of non-European sources, which would help to comprehend the "Other" as a part of the "Self" (Debusscher & Manners 2020: 552). Second, they suggest moving from gender to *gender + approach*, which covers intersectionality and creates a space to understand the effects of gender equality policies on the people of the target (Debusscher & Manners 2020: 553). Finally, they endorse a *broad and*

longitudinal approach, which explicitly recognizes present and past power structures, including the colonial legacy of Europe (ibid: 553).

Allwood argues that development policymakers are the predominant supporters and promoters of gender equality (2020: 329); however, commitments to gender equality in the development policy agenda are insufficient because the discourse and narrative of crises, which are characterized by threat and uncertainty, push the issue of gender inequality off, and prioritize the issues of climate change, migration and security on the development agenda. Pointing out the budget proposal of the Commission for 2021-2027, she stresses that development policies serve to reach the objectives set for migration, security, and climate change while the opposite scenario is supposed to be occurring. (Allwood 2020: 341-342). Another study of gender equality in development policies finds that there is an inadequate implementation of gender mainstreaming resulting in unintended consequences. Allwood suggests that the better and adequate implementation will not secure gender equality, but rather the incorporation of feminist understanding of gender and gender equality into the mainstreaming will do. It is because at the structural level, policymaking processes are still gendered, which leads to the reproduction of gender inequalities (2013: 50).

Debusscher and Hulse have studied gender mainstreaming efforts of the EU in the development policies set for southern Africa, employing critical frame analysis. The results of their discourse analysis illustrate that embracing the integrationist approach, the EU uses gender mainstreaming as an instrument to achieve existing goals of other policies rather than a transformative change of power relations (2014). In another study, Debusscher examines the quality of gender equality policies of the EU with South Africa. The study discovers that Eurocentric ideas dominate the gender policies, and suggests the systematic and meaningful inclusion of the national gender advocates' voices if the aim is to be a global gender actor (2020: 144). Debusscher also studied EU gender efforts and activities in Rwanda and found out that gender mainstreaming produced ineffective results. She relates it to the institutional weakness – "informal norms, practices and logics" in the external action of the EU (2014: 18).

Kunz and Maisenbacher studied the gender equality promotion of the EU in the context of the European Neighborhood Policy. According to their findings, in the EU discourse, the EU neighborhood is considered to be a "backward other" in

terms of gender equality; therefore, the EU's involvement is set to be a necessity. They highlight that the discourse of neighborhood policies silences women in the southern and eastern neighborhoods and considers them as an instrument for development and international security (2017: 137).

In terms of gender in climate change, Alston finds that feminism is subject to erosion in the gender mainstreaming of climate change (Alston 2014). Allwood's analysis of the EU climate change policies shows that the way that the EU responds to climate change is gender-blind, and any intersection of climate change with gender equality in development policies results in gender's being sidelined (2014: 17).

Overall, according to Rees's analysis of EU's gender mainstreaming in 1998, the mainstreaming policies are just about incorporating the equality objectives into all policies rather than changing mainstream in order to accommodate diversity (1998: 50).

3 Conceptual Framework

3.1 Introduction

As stated in chapter 1, this thesis employs the WPR method. The method premises on four theoretical approaches: social construction theory, poststructuralism, feminist body theory, and governmentality studies (Goodwin 2011: 171; Bacchi 2009: 264). Thus, the conceptual framework of this thesis is inevitably built on those theoretical approaches that inform the WPR. Firstly, perspectives of social construction and poststructuralism are provided. Secondly, governmentality theory and neoliberal rationalities are described, which are useful in the identification of the presuppositions and governmental logics underpinning the problem representations. Thirdly, feminist theory and approaches are presented. The provision of feminist perspectives is of high significance because it contributes to comprehending the lived effects of subject positions on people (Bacchi 2009: 43; 93; 265). In this thesis, feminist body theory is also used to discover discourse silences because the study topic is gender and gender (in)equality, which is central to feminist analysis (Enloe 2007: 99). Omitting the feminist approach in the studies of gender makes inadequate results (Enloe 2007: 101). Later, since this thesis treats policy as discourse, it is important to explain what the *policy-as-discourse* concept implies. Acknowledging that the objective of the WPR is to study problematizations through problem representations rather than "problems", the paper provides a conceptual understanding of problematization (Bacchi 2009: 47). Finally, the WPR as a concept is explained.

3.2 Social Construction Theory and Poststructuralism

Supporting the paradigm that "the person constructs reality", the social construction theory was originally developed to challenge realist presuppositions to social reality (Bacchi 1999: 53-54). Despite a variety of constructionist or constructivist approaches, the common assumption acknowledged by all is that knowledge is created or constructed by humans and social forces (Bacchi 2009: 32-33). They, all, endorse the idea that the world is created through attaching meaning and labels to the phenomena (Bacchi 1999: 52).

In the study of public policy, the social construction theory is useful in terms of offering new ways of thinking about the origins of concepts and categories (Bacchi 2009: 264), which leads to ascertaining the logic and assumptions underpinning a policy (Bacchi 2009: 252).

As regards poststructuralism, there is no one fixed way of defining it; it has an application to a variety of theoretical positions (Weedon 1987: 21). To Edkins, the best description of poststructuralism is a "worldview" (2007: 88). Employing François Châtele's definition of Marxism, Dillet argues that "poststructuralism is 'neither a worldview, nor ontology, nor a speculative philosophy, but another way to conceive the order of thought, founded on a new evaluation of the relations between theory and practice"' (1977: 18, cited in Dillet 2017: 518).

Poststructuralism argues that there is no single theory and observation in both natural and social science that is detached from the world. Regarding politics, there is no political neutrality; every opinion has a social and political impact attached to it (Edkins 2007: 88). Poststructuralism invites people to think in novel and counterintuitive ways about the world (Edkins 2007: 89). Thus, it focuses on "the textually-unstable and always contestable nature of social reality" (Bacchi 2009: 34). In this way of thinking, poststructuralists challenge the epistemology of positivists and claim that knowing reality requires participation in reality rather than "objectifying 'bits' of reality" (Dillet 2017: 518).

The main focus of analysis for all forms of poststructuralism is language. (Weedon 1987:22). Derrida says that nothing exists outside of text (Edkins 2007: 90). According to Bacchi, how meaning is shaped is the main focus of study in poststructuralism (2009: 267). In the same vein, to Weedon, "meaning is constituted within the language and is not guaranteed by the subject which speaks it", i.e. the construction of one's subjectivity or sense of self occurs within the language (1987: 21-22). Thus, subject and subjectivity, in a poststructural sense,

emerge during the struggle of economic, social, and political discursive practices' struggle over power (Weedon 1987: 21), i.e. the "self" of a person is mostly produced through socialization rather than inheritance. In brief, subject and world produce each other (Edkins 2007: 90).

In the context of this thesis, the poststructuralist tradition, especially poststructuralist psychology, helps in the identification of subject positions (Bacchi 2009: 15; 41; 236). Furthermore, considering the determination of presuppositions and assumptions underpinning the Western norms and the Western idea of the "self" as its main project (Bacchi 2009: 277), poststructuralism studies how the meaning of concepts and categories is assigned by political debate and how those meanings function in politics (Bacchi 2009: 265) by assuming that there is no value-free and uncontested concept or category (Bacchi 2009: 32). Concepts and categories are necessary elements of finding presuppositions behind policies (Bacchi 1999; 2009).

3.3 Governmentality and Neoliberal Rationalities

The WPR understands that the role of governments is considerably high in the construction of "problems" because any approach of a government to a "problem" is influenced by governmental texts employed for governance (Bacchi 2009: 33). Therefore, governmentality studies render relevance in this paper.

The term "governmentality" was introduced by Michel Foucault in the 1970s (Bachhi 2009: 26). The focus of governmentality studies is on investigating "the art of governing […] best possible way of governing" or "government's consciousness of itself" (Foucault 2001: 232, cited in Lemke 2013: 42). Foucault has employed different and inconsistent definitions of "government" and "governmentality" in his works overtime (Lemke 2013: 38). In a broad sense, he defines government as "conduct of conduct" (Foucault 2000: 341, cited in Lemke 2013: 38), which "designates rationalities and technologies that seek to guide human beings" (Lemke 2013: 38) rather than a singular entity composed of parliament and bureaucracy (Patridge 2014: 40).

For governmentality, Foucault offers two definitions at two levels: generic and substantive/specific. Generic usage of the terms refers to rationalities, mentalities of rule (govern-*mentalities),* governing approaches, or working processes in neoliberal, social and authoritarian regimes (Bacchi 2009: 276). In a specific sense, it is acknowledged as a form of governmentality acting on "population" (Bacchi 2009: 276; Lemke 2013: 38).

According to O'Molley and Marianna Valverde, governmentality has a "capacity to render neoliberalism visible" (Lemke 2013: 51). Oksala asserts that the application of the concepts of power, knowledge, and subjectivity, which are study objects of governmentality, may explain the political ontology of neoliberalism effectively (Oksala 2013: 52). Foucault describes the functioning of neoliberalism as "an apparatus of knowledge and power" and suggests comprehending the world through "social and political reality" constructed by neoliberalism because neoliberalism "delimits our political rationality as well as our implicit self-understanding" (Oksala 2013: 54). According to Foucault-influenced perspectives, setting a boundary between politics and economy, the neoliberal form of governmentality makes political power be guided and conditioned by "objective, universal, and politically neutral" economic knowledge (Oksala 2013: 59-60). Interpreting Foucault's works on sexuality and biopolitics, Oksala asserts that neoliberal governmentality is a "mutation of biopolitical governmentality". In other words, through economic growth and high productivity, neoliberalism attempts to accomplish "the biopolitical end of maximal life", i.e. the maximal material wellbeing of the population (Oksala 2013: 61).

Neoliberal government technologies create subjects for the government ends by inciting the idea of an "actively responsible agent" (Bexell 2012: 391). "Political subject is understood as an atomic individual whose natural self-interest and tendency to compete must be fostered and enhanced" (Oksala 2013: 66). Self-surveillance and self-regulation become a necessity in the understanding of people as political subjects (Bacchi 2009: 29), i.e. individuals become solely responsible for "problems" that were regarded as social and political issues (Oksala 2013: 67). Since the capacities and skills of individual subjects are resources that need to be developed and utilized (Bexell 2012: 390-391), behavioral choices of "schooling, training, medical care, vitamin consumption, acquiring information about the

economic system, and migration" become an investment of individuals for themselves (Oksala 2013: 68). Therefore, "economic interpretation of all human behavior" becomes the best way to understand social reality (Oksala 2013: 69).

With the employment of the governmentality approach, this paper tries to interrogate how women are governed and what kind of subjects of women have been created through governmental rationalities in the discourse of GAP III documents.

3.4 Feminist Body Theory and Gender

Cynthia Enloe describes feminism as a "multidimensional yet coherent worldview" studying the way that power operates and perpetuates (Enloe 2007: 99). The point of departure for feminist critiques is the "patriarchal structure of society" that premises on the social meanings of biological sex difference and contributes to the subordination of the category of women to the men in the institutional and social practices (Weedon 1987: 2-3). Feminism studies how power structures/relations produce the category of women (Butler 1984) and problematizes the marginalization of women in international relations and power, and claims that the actions and thoughts of women are manipulated and shaped by the system of patriarchy (Enloe 2007: 100).

"We are inheritors of a world literally divided into institutionalized conceptions and practices of "masculine" and "feminine"". (Brown 1988: 4, cited in Agius & Nicholas 2018: 12). Feminism brings visibility to the "men-as-men" approach and problematizes masculinity (Enloe 2007: 99). Simone de Beauvoir argues that "where he is the absolute, she is the other"; that is, male-dominated masculine structures result in women's being immanent "other" from subjectivity (1997: 26, cited in ibid: 12). Masculinism is a taken-for-granted patriarchal ideology that advocates the naturalization and justification of men's domination (Agius & Nicholas 2018: 5), whereas it sidelines, materially excludes, and marginalizes feminism and anything that are feminine (Agius & Nicholas 2018: 8-12). Brittan identifies four central presuppositions of masculinism: the taken-for-granted assumption that men and women are different; the normalization of

heterosexuality; the taken-for-granted acceptance of "sexual division of labor"; the endorsement of men dominance on public/private spheres (Agius & Nicholas 2018: 5). Distinguishing between masculinity and masculinism, Brittan asserts that "[m]asculinity […] is always local and subject to change"; however, the existing reproduction and justification of taken-for-granted power of men in the public and private spheres imply that it is masculinism that does not change and is "never under real attack (Brittan 1989:6, cited ibid: 5).

Gender is a central integral part of feminist studies (Enloe 2007: 101). Gender analyses study masculinities and femininities and their relationship with each other and how femininities and masculinities shape and define the nexus between women and men (Enloe 2007: 100).

There are different understandings of gender and gender identities. Butler claims that gender should not be understood as a cultural reflection of sex (Butler 1990: 7). Referring to Simone de Beauvoir's statement that "one is not born a woman, but rather, becomes one" (1973: 301, cited in Butler 1990: 8), Butler claims that gender or one's being a woman is formulated by culture, but sex does not have any role in that because culture may make a male body a "woman" as much as it does a female body (Butler 1990: 8). Butler describes gender identities as the effects of regulations devised for disciplining sexuality, fantasy and desire, meaning that no "gender" exists before regulations, there are only subjects that regulative power shapes and reproduces human identities that are gender-specific.

In the same vein, according to Griffin, gender identities are products of practices in heteronormative systems (Griffin 2009: 36). Berlant and Warner define heteronormativity as "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent […] but also privileged" (1998: 548). Thus, existing gender or human identities are produced in line with standards of reproductive heterosexuality (ibid: 36).

Feminist theory necessitates developing an adequate language representing women to promote their visibility in politics, acknowledging that women's lives are "misrepresented or not represented at all" by prevalent culture (Butler, 1990:1). In this vein, the WPR approach helps to find that language.

3.5 Discursive Approach: "Policy as Discourse"

Foucault defines discourse as "practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak: they do not identify objects, they constitute them and in the practice of doing so conceal their invention" (Foucault 1977, cited in Bacchi 1999: 40). Another way of putting this, being larger than language and words, discourses are frames setting limits on how an issue can be perceived and talked about (ibid: 40). Stuart Hall calls discourse a "system of representation" and "[…] [sic!] a way of representing - a particular type of knowledge about a topic". Therefore, the combination of several statements about a topic creates a particular discourse that leads to the construction of the topic in a certain way and excludes the possibility of thinking differently (1992: 291, cited in Agius & Nicholas 2018: 17-18).

Discourse is a social construct. Those controlling power and the means of communication create and persevere or change the discourse (Pitsoe & Letseka 2013: 24). Drawing attention to "the power to make discourse", Ball contends that meanings are not products of language, but products of "institutional practices", "power relations" and "social position" (Bacchi 2009: 41). In other words, if actions, objects, and practices represent a meaning, they have been produced through the social and political practices and struggles throughout history (Goodwin 2011: 170). This implies that words and concepts generate different meanings and different real social effects in different discourses (Bacchi 2009:41).

Regarding the policy-as-discourse concept, the primary interest of theorists employing policy as discourse is to determine why it is difficult to achieve "progress change", which makes them explore "the constraints imposed by discourses" by constructing meaning (Bacchi 2009: 47). That is, adopting dual-Foucauldian problematic: "what the subject is able to say", and "what the subject is permitted to say" (Bacchi, 1999: 41), those theorists attempt to see how language and discourse frame "what can be said" (Bacchi 2009: 48).

The fundamental premise underpinning a policy-as-discourse approach is that "every policy proposal contains within it and explicit or implicit diagnosis of the 'problem'" (Bacchi 1999: 1). Therefore, one needs to seek a problem within the policy proposal because it is the discourse of a policy that constructs both "problem" and "solution" to that particular problem (Calvo 2013: 18). The

implication is that the governments are active creators of policy "problems" (Bacchi 2009: 1).

3.6 Problematizations rather than "Problems"

There are two central analytical developments on problematizations. The first one is interpretivism, which highlights the role of people and regards policy workers or social scientists/ social actors as "problematizing agents" that "stand outside and shape 'reality'" or offer "competing understanding or interpretations of a problem". In the second development, analytical focus is Foucault-influenced poststructuralism that thinks of political subjects as creations of discourses, and considers problematizations "as the products of governmental practices" that "shape who we are and how we live" (Bacchi 2015: 3-5). Therefore, the main distinction between these two analytical foci is that interpretivists study "how people make meaning together" or "how they give shaping a "problem", whereas Foucault-influenced poststructuralism studies "scrutinize and question meanings that are in place" and the ways that ""subjects", "objects" and "problems" are constituted within them" (Bacchi 2015: 5-6).

The WPR approach employs Foucault-influenced perspective of "problematization" analysis, which can be thought in two modes: the first meaning is about "thinking problematically" (Foucault, 1977:185-186, cited in Bacchi 2012: 1); that is, problematization "consists in seeing what type of assumptions, of familiar notions, of established, unexamined ways of thinking the accepted practices are based" (Foucault 1984:456, cited in Bacchi 2015: 3). The second type of Foucault-based problematization is about interrogating the manner and reason that certain behavior, processes, and phenomena "become a problem" (Bacchi 2012: 1). In brief, how certain things are "shaped as particular objects for thought" becomes the focus of studies (Bacchi 2012: 1).

Foucault also introduces problematization as a way to understand government rationalities (Bacchi 2009: 30). He regards "practical texts" or "prescriptive texts" or any text suggesting guidance on how to behave, which is devised for reading, learning, and establishing "framework of everyday conduct" as the "object of a

'practice'". Therefore, to study how governing takes place, those practical texts need to be problematized (Foucault 1986:12-13, cited in Bacchi 2012: 3).

3.7 The WPR Method as an Approach

According to Deleuze, the WPR approach provides "participation in and management of the problems" (1994:158, cited in Bacchi 2009: XVII). Unlike other forms of analysis, the WPR approach acknowledges that governing does not only take place in the state but beyond it; therefore, it expands its scope of study beyond the state (Bacchi 2009: 26). The focus of the WPR approach is on the "knowledges" impacting the rules that govern individuals, and on experts and professionals who have an impact on the production of these "knowledges", but not the direct participants in political processes (Bacchi 2009: 26).

In traditional views, the general understanding of the term "policy" refers to a program or a course of action that needs to be undertaken for fixing assumed "problems", i.e. a solution to "problems". Therefore, "policy-makers" are the ones that fix "problems" (Bacchi 2009: IX). Bacchi argues that what differentiates the WPR approach from traditional approaches to the study of policies is its focus upon "problem representation" rather than "problem definition" and "problem identification" (1999: 21). She adds that the WPR approach addresses the "construction of *policy* problems", but not "the construction of *social* problems (Bacchi 1999: 50. Italics in original), i.e. the WPR's concentration is on "deconstructing the social problem constructions on offer", not "the processes or rhetoric of social problem construction" (Bacchi 1999: 51). According to Goodwin, the WPR approach "frames policy not as a response to existing conditions and problems, but more as a discourse in which both problems and solutions are created" (1996: 67, cited in Bacchi 1999: 2).

4 Methodology

4.1 Introduction

This part of the thesis embarks on presenting information about the type of the study. Since the WPR method has a discursive approach to policy analysis, and some questions of the WPR renders the application of the critical discourse analysis (CDA), as a research method, this thesis automatically employs DA and CDA. In this part, there is a section providing what those methods imply and what they are for. There are six questions that the WPR method uses for operationalization. Their detailed explanation is also presented. In the paragraph called “Data Gathering”, what documents have been used for analysis, and their justification is described. Finally, in order to illustrate how the WPR is relevant, and how it has been applied to gender equality and mainstreaming policies, the studies of Calvo and Poulsen are presented in this part as well.

4.2 Qualitative Research

This thesis is a qualitative study. The justification for choosing qualitative research methods is that qualitative studies enable the researchers to focus on meanings created by social experiences and try to have a “value-laden nature of inquiry” (Denzin & Lincoln 2005: 4-10). Since how the meaning of gender (in)equality is constructed is what this paper aims at studying, the qualitative methods are deemed to be plausible.

4.3 Discourse and Critical Discourse Analysis

This study is discursive. In the identification of governmental rationalities and presuppositions, silences, and subject positions, critical discourse analysis has heavily been applied.

Considered to be more than a method (Hardy, Nelson & Harley 2004: 20), discourse analysis is an interpretative, qualitative, and constructionist form of analysis or methodology employed to understand social phenomena (Halperin & Heath 2012: 310; Hardy et al. 2004:19). The objective of the interpretive form of DA is to uncover the meanings that social reality has for agents and actors who are participants of it (Halperin & Heath 2012: 310-311). Compared to the interpretative approach, DA as a constructivist approach suggests the more profound interrogation by trying to reveal how meanings are constructed by discursive practices (Halperin & Heath 2012: 311). Thus, in the exploration of how social reality is created, the DA relies on both a set of techniques for qualitatively investigating texts and a set of assumptions for understanding "the constructive effects of language" (Hardy et al. 2004: 19).

The focus of the critical discourse analysis is on how language, power and ideology are inextricably intertwined with each other. It is tasked with studying the role of discourse "in enacting, reproducing, and resisting social power abuse, dominance and inequality" (Halperin & Heath 2012: 313). How more powerful groups and institutions in the society control the minds and actions of less powerful people by controlling public discourse is the focus of the CDA studies. From this aspect, the application of CDA is relevant in studying if/ how men as powerful groups of society control public discourse and therefore impact women's lives.

Since CDA is "in fact a political theory as much as method of inquiry" (ibid: 313), the author found it appropriate to provide the major theoretical perspectives contributing to the understanding of the CDA in particular and DA in general under subsection 3.5.

4.4 "What is the "Problem" Represented to Be?"

The WPR approach presents six questions for operationalization. This thesis will systematically apply four of those six questions. Since Bacchi confirms the possibility of skipping questions depending on the purpose of a particular study (2009), questions 3 and 6 will not be addressed in this paper because they are out of the scope of this research. Figure 1 provides a short description of the WPR questions.

What's the Problem Represented to be? (WPR) approach to policy analysis

Question 1: What is the problem (e.g., of "gender inequality", "drug use/abuse", "economic development", "global warming", "childhood obesity", "irregular migration", etc.) represented to be in a specific policy or policies?
Questions 2: What deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the "problem" (*problem representation*)?
Question 3: How has this representation of the "problem" come about ?
Question 4: What is left unproblematic in this problem representation? Where are the silences? Can the "problem" be conceptualized differently?
Question 5: What effects (discursive, subjectification, lived) are produced by this representation of the "problem"?
Question 6: How and where has this representation of the "problem" been produced, disseminated and defended? How has it been and / or how can it be disrupted and replaced?
Step 7: Apply this list of questions to your own problem representations.

Figure 1: The WPR method
Source: Bacchi & Goodwin 2016: 20

The following paragraphs present the detailed elaboration of each question stipulated in figure 1.

Question 1: What is the "Problem" Represented to be in a Specific Policy?

The task of the first question is to bring a clarification to the problematizations hidden in specific policies. The best explanation of how to put the first question into practice is reflected in the following quote:

> *If you propose to do 'such and such' in a policy, you must assume that the 'problem' is 'such and such' (e.g. if you introduce*

> *training programs for women, you must assume that women lack training.* (Bacchi 2009: 5)

Thus, the embarking point for the analysis is to identify "implied problem representations" in a particular policy or a proposal for change, which requires one to "work backwards from a proposal" (Bacchi &Goodwin, 2016:20). By delving into the stated "solutions", it is possible to figure out the implicit problematizations (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016: 21).

Question 2: What Presuppositions or Assumptions Underlie This Representation of the "Problem?

The applicability of the second question embarks with the successful completion of the first one; that is, after the identification of implied problem representation(s), the real work of identifying underpinning presupposition(s) start(s) (Bacchi 2009: 5). The notion "presuppositions" refers to taken-for-granted "epistemological and ontological assumptions", knowledge and truth that are implicit in the problem representations. The key is that uncovering policy-makers' presuppositions and biased beliefs is not of interest here, but rather "'conceptual logics' underpinning specific problem representations" (ibid: 5). Those conceptual logics are uncovered through the identification of binaries, key concepts, and categories within a particular policy (Bacchi, 2009:7). Their definition and characteristics are provided in the following paragraphs.

Binaries are dichotomies given in an A/not-A relationship, meaning that the inclusion of one side of dichotomy assumes the exclusion of another side. Since binaries rest on a hierarchical approach, one party of binary is regarded to be superior to another party, or one side is positioned as "other" and lesser. Bacchi emphasizes the importance of binaries for policy analysis because of their capacity to delineate complex relationships in a simple way (Bacchi 2009: 7-8). In this thesis, binaries of public/private, economic/social, male/female, equality/inequality, and somehow responsible/irresponsible are relevant.

Bacchi defines concepts as contested and open-ended labels; that is, the essence of concepts is contingent on how governmental practices and competing political visions give meaning to them (Bacchi 2009: 8).

Categories, which are created through measurement techniques, namely consensus and surveys in governing, are of high significance because they influence the way that individuals think of themselves and others (Bacchi 2009: 9).

Question 3: How has This Representation of the 'Problem' come about?

Taking its basis from Foucault's genealogical theory, this question has two interconnected objectives: firstly, the study of non-discursive practices' influence – specific developments and decisions – on identified problematization; secondly, the recognition that there are competing problem representations over time and across space (Bacchi 2009: 10). Genealogy refers to the track of historical roots from the current time. In the context of the WPR, genealogy studies search the "history" of a current problem representation, and try to understand how existing institutions and practices are the products of "natural evolution". In addition to the study of the history and roots of a particular problem representation, this question scrutinizes the power relations that configure some problem representations successfully and defeat the others (Bacchi 2009: 10-11).

Since it is not for this thesis to present a genealogy of the gender equality policies, this question is excluded from the analysis.

Question 4: What is Left Unproblematic in This Problem Representation? Where are the Silences? Can the 'Problem' be Thought About Differently?

This question seeks the failures, silences, and limits of the underlying problem representations. The task here is to address distortions and misrepresentations emerging out of simplification of complex situations through binaries. The silences/absences in a political discourse constitute a significant part of the analysis because they reveal what is missed and marginalized (Kvist & Peterson 2010: 190).

Question 5: What effects are produced by this representation of the "problem"?

According to Bacchi, the essence of the fifth question rests on its emphasis on identifying the effects of key premises and logics of governmentality found out through the second question on those that are governed (Bacchi, 2009:7). Gunn claims that power needs to be studied "in its effects rather than its sources and at the margins rather than at the centre" (2009: 709, cited in Bacchi 2009: 38). However, the effects that Bacchi focuses on are not like "outcomes" that are explored after impact evaluation and assessment of policies in the conventional sense, but rather are material consequences that the way that a "problem" is articulated in a policy's discourse causes (Bacchi 2009: 43). Thus, the aim of question 5 is to illustrate what implications and effects the problem representations entail and to intervene harmful consequences of those representations for particular groups of people (Bacchi & Goodwin 2016: 23). The WPR categorizes those effects as the following: discursive effects, subjectification effects, and lived effects.

Discursive effects deal with the effects that emerged out of a "problem" representation. The presumption is that the discourses of policies are framed in a certain way. A particular framing of a policy's discourse leads to the consideration of certain issues for social intervention, whereas it limits a topic to be thought differently and closes off different kinds of social analyses. According to Bacchi, since such silences of discourses produce effects that might be devastating for a certain group of people, they need closely to be studied (Bacchi 2019: 16).

How governmental technologies produce "governable political subjects" is the concern of subjectification effects (Bacchi 2009: 12). The idea is that policy discourses participate in the creation of "subjects of a particular kind" through the articulation of social relationships and individuals' positions in a certain manner (Bacchi 2009: 16). "[w]ho we are – how we feel about ourselves and others – is at least an extent an effect of the subject positions made available in public policies" (ibid: 16). As Davies elaborated, the very being of subjects is defined by their political situation that is impacted by discourses (Bacchi 2009: 42). Referring to Foucault's "dividing practices", Bacchi asserts that subjectification effects become relevant when policy discourses aim at encouraging the desired behavior among the majority; they portray certain groups of people in opposition to other groups of people and target the minority as responsible for a "problem". Thus, the

task here is to identify "what effects follow from particular attributions of responsibility" (ibid: 16).

The concern of lived effects is to determine the "material impact of problem representations". In other words, these are effects with real-life consequences, assuming that "there are real bodies and real people living the effects of discursive conventions" (Bacchi 2009: 43-46) and "discursive practice is attached to bodies in space" (Clifford 2001: 56, cited in Bacchi &Goodwin 2016: 38).

Question 6: How/Where is This Representation of the "Problem" Produced, Disseminated, and Defended? How Could It Be Questioned, Disrupted, and Replaced?

With this question, the aim is to identify what kind of means is employed to reach the target audience and accomplish legitimacy. The role of media is necessitated for the dissemination and the support of particular problem representations (Bacchi 2009: 19). However, this thesis is limited to only documents retrieved from the European Union Institutions. Therefore, this question is also opted out of the analysis.

4.5 Data Gathering

Data types for the WPR approach are texts. The word "text" here refers to any written, verbal and non-verbal communication. Thus, any texts that are provided in the form of organizational files, legislation, speeches, research reports, program contracts, statistical data, and the like are of capacity to become data for the WPR policy analysis. (Goodwin 2011: 171).

As stated in the introduction, this thesis analyzes Gender Action Plan III of the European Union. There are six documents related to GAP III. To get an overall idea or come with an outcome for an idea, all of them have been read and analyzed. However, in the analysis, only three of them have been quoted. The primary and main document for the analysis is the "Joint Communication to the European Parliament and the Council (2020)" because consisting of 23 pages, it is

much more explanatory compared to other documents and serves as valuable data for the paper. The other document used is the "Joint Staff Working Document (2020)" consisting of 31 pages of indicators and objectives. The EC suggests accompanying the joint communication for framing the implementation of GAP III. The last one is the "Factsheet (2020)" of GAP III. All of them have been retrieved from the official website of the European Commission.

4.6 Previous Applications of the WPR to Gender Equality Policies

Several authors employed the WPR approach to figure out how the concept of gender (in)equality is problematized or represented to be a problem in the discourse of various organization's policies. As pointed out in subsection 1.3, one of them is Poulsen, who attempted to unveil meaning constructions and conceptualizations of gender equality and gender mainstreaming, and their legitimizations in the International Labor Organization (ILO) context by studying ILO documents covering from 1994 to 2003 (2006: 23-24). In the study, Poulsen revealed that the discourse of the ILO documents provides "the worker" as the main subject category. The women's subject position in the subject category of worker is delineated as: "the victim, the misfit, the poor, the illiterate, and the nurturer (ibid: 129-130). With the application of question 4, she finds that the power relations existing between categories of women and men, the "heterosexual matrix", and the experiences of post-colonial women are left unproblematic (ibid: 154-159). Another dissertation study concerning gender equality and gender mainstreaming of the European Union comes from Calvo. Studying policy texts of the EU from 2005 to 2010, Calvo found out that the "problem" of gender equality in the documents is given as the absence of women in the labor market, political life, and education which hinders the potentiality of their being used as resources in the economy.

Both of them conclude that since the accomplishment of gender equality is considered to be an instrument for economic success, the EU and the ILO have

not been able to pursue the promise of a transformative approach (Calvo 2013: 11).

5 Findings and Analysis

5.1 Introduction

This part of the thesis deals with the analysis. First, the problem representations of the GAP III policies are described. Second, the main rationalities and presuppositions informing the problem representations are provided. The next part presents people whose voices are silenced and disregarded in the discourse. After silences, the description of subject positions and effects of those positions on their lives are described. Finally, the reflection of literature and conceptual framework on the findings is presented.

5.2 What is the Problem Represented to Be in the Policy of Gender (In)equality?

In this part, the first question of the WPR method to the policy texts is applied. The first task of representing a "problem" is more of a descriptive exercise, aiming at clarification (Bacchi 2009: 2; Bacchi 2012: 22). The main assumption of the first task is "what is proposed as a policy intervention will reveal how the issue is being thought about". Since "problems" are implicit in what is proposed for a change in policies (Bacchi 2009: 2-3), the author tries to identify "problem" in the goals and objectives of the governmental texts by "working backwards". This part of the thesis is challenging because although some proposals might be explicit, a range of proposals in a specific policy is usually contradictory to each other (Bacchi 2009: 20) or problem representations are nested in each other (Bacchi, 1999: 5). That particular challenge is experienced in this thesis as well.

Bacchi recommends repetitively applying the first question at each successive level of analysis and acknowledging the "implications of different problem representations" (ibid: 5). To identify the "problem" of gender (in)equality, the author has read the documents multiple times and asked questions that are similar to the first question or its derivatives: What issues are considered to create or increase the "problem" of gender (in)equality? What causes the policies suggest for legitimating the "problems"? What solutions do the policies offer to reach gender equality?

The analysis of the textual documents reveals four overarching problem representations of gender (in)equality and women's empowerment in GAP III, namely:

1. Gender-based violence and a lack of social norms
2. A lack of women's access to resources in the labor market
3. The limited access of women/girls to social protection and public services
4. A Lack of women's and girls' participation and leadership in decision-making at all levels

The close analysis illustrates that what is central to four problem representations is that the existing institutional and legislative framework and structures are not gender-responsive. Therefore, the solution rests on bringing gender dimension into the existing institutions, which comes as an "integrationist approach" to gender mainstreaming.

The following section provides each problem representation of gender (in)equality in detail.

5.2.1 A lack of Social Norms and Gender-Based Violence

The first "problem" for gender (in)equality represented to be is the practice of different forms of violence on women and girls that disproportionately impact their life. Gender-based violence is a "problem" for equality because it poses a "tremendous cost for victims, their families, societies and economics" (EC 2020b: 10). The forms of violence practiced on women and girls are: child, early and forced marriage (CEFM), female genital mutilation (FGM) and gender-biased selection – preference of sons at birth –, domestic violence and conflict-related

sexual violence (EC 2020b: 10; EC 2020c: 9), gender-based violence in public life and psychological violence (EC 2020b: 17; EC 2020c: 8). GAP III relates the roots of the "problem" into "harmful social norms and stereotypes" that are present across cultures and countries (EC 2020b: 10-11; EC 2020c: 8; 11; 12). The "problem" exists because there is a lack of social norms that would regulate the behavior of people. Therefore, to address the "problem" from the very onset – "challenging harmful social norms" –, the GAP III suggests improving laws and policies that would enhance the persecution and criminalization of perpetrators (EC 2020b: 11; EC 2020c: 8-9). Therefore, the absence of profound law enforcement mechanisms that are responsive to gender-based violence implicitly contributes to the occurrence of gender-based violence, and eventually gender inequality.

5.2.2 A lack of Access to Resources in the Labor Market

The second problematization is the existence of a gender gap in labor force participation and income and pay gaps in the labor market, which "put women at a further disadvantage" (EC 2020b: 13). According to texts, the disadvantage of economic dependence on women is maintained or reinforced by discriminative regulations and practices that restrict women's access to economic, financial resources (EC 2020b: 13; EC 2020c) and digital technologies (EC 2020b: 20). This suggests that the lack of non-discriminatory and inclusive regulations that would provide access to resources and rights for women in economy and business is indirectly considered to be a "problem" contributing to the "problem" of gender equality by limiting women's economic empowerment (EC 2020b: 13; EC 2020c: 14).

5.2.3 A Lack of Access to Adequate Social Protection and Public Services

The construction of the third problematization can be generalized as the absence of adequate social protection and public services. In this vein, firstly, the presence of "gender gaps in schooling and learning" (EC 2020b: 14) and absence of

"quality, affordable and inclusive education" and "gender-responsive education systems" and "digital technologies and solutions" are represented to be the "problem" going against accomplishing gender equality (EC 2020b: 15-20; EC 2020c: 13; 16). According to the texts' implication, there are fewer women/girls in education because their access to education is restricted by the issues of early pregnancy, child labor, and various forms of gender-based violence (EC 2020b: 15). Here, there is a nesting of problem representations within each other: the first problem representation, which is the conduct of "gender-based violence", negatively contributes to or becomes a barrier to solve the third "problem", which is a lack of schooling and learning. There is a positive correlation between these two problem representations that make them move in tandem; that is, one's solution leads to progress in other's solution, and in the same direction, one's worsening condition hinders the progress of others.

The solutions that the EU offers imply that another "problem" of gender equality involving the inadequacy of public services is the lack of necessary healthcare services to girls and women. This is represented to be the "problem" of gender equality because inadequate public health systems enhance maternal deaths and unintended pregnancies. Therefore, the absence of resilient and sustainable healthcare services is represented to be the "problem" that needs to be fixed to solve gender (in)equality in terms of health (EC 2020c: 17).

5.2.4 A Lack of Women's Participation and Leadership in Decision-making at all Levels

"Women and girls should participate equally in public and private sphere" (EC 2020b: 16). Thus, the fourth "problem" of gender (in)equality is framed as women and girls do not participate in the public and private sphere as much as men do. The following statement represents in detail how women's participation, representation, and leadership are absent in the power: "Women continue to be under-represented as voters, political leaders and elected officials, as official peace negotiators and mediators" (EC 2020b: 17). The women's participation in power, "peace and security-related contexts" is assumed to be necessary to "create a fertile ground for conflict and gender-based violence" (EC 2020b: 18).

However, the presence of harmful social gender norms, inadequate legislation, and low education prevents their participation (EC 2020b: 19). Thus, it is believed that establishing or improving institutional mechanisms supporting women's representation in power will help to overcome the "problem" of gender (in)equality (EC 2020c: 18-20).

5.3 Assumptions and Rationalities

Applying the second WPR Question – "[W]hat deep-seated presuppositions or assumptions underlie this representation of the 'problem'?" –, this part of the thesis presents the author's critical analysis of the four problem representations identified in the previous section. The second question serves to reveal implicit governmental rationalities and conceptual logics underpinning the problematizations by scrutinizing the binaries and concepts in the texts.

The analysis of the documents reveals that the main presupposition underpinning all four problematizations of gender (in)equality is generic assumptions of a neoliberal form of governmentality, which "seeks to organize all policy areas according to the logic of the markets" (Mikelatou & Arvantis 2018: 500). It becomes noticeable in the form of "responsibilization", "active citizenship" (Patridge 2014: 111-115), and heteronormativity (Griffin 2009). Referencing Gender Action Plan III and related documents, in the rest of the heading, the author will try to demonstrate how neoliberalism and its generic assumptions inform the EU's gender (in)equality strategy for external action.

5.3.1 Binaries: Neoliberal Heteronormativity

Throughout the discourse of GAP III's all documents, there is no explicit definition of "gender" and "gender identity" provided. However, in the footnote of joint communication of the GAP III, the description of gender as "the socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that a given society considers appropriate for women and men" is presented (EC 2020b: 2). In the discourse, the predominant usage of binaries, such as male/female, women/men,

girls/boys, and feminine/masculine in the discourse aligns with the aforementioned understanding of gender by the EU (EC 2020b; EC 2020c; EC 2020d). To explain, according to Butler, a system that is binary in terms of gender implicitly assumes that "gender mirrors sex" or gender is restricted by sex i.e. it is not independent of sex (1990: 6). To Butler's understanding, binary delineation of women and men is "a regulatory operation of power that naturalises [sic!] the hegemonic instance" (2004:43, cited in Griffin 2009: 160). That hegemonic instance is neoliberalism that "retains ideological commitments to rationalism, heteronormativity, and genderless economic structures" (Prügl 2015: 619). Institutions and policies founding their premises on heteronormativity think human body and identity in terms of "the arrangement of sexual organs" (Griffin 2009: 32) and feminine and masculine are given as "the attributes of 'male' and 'female'" (Griffin 2009: 29).

That understanding of gender as the cultural expression of biological sex is noticed in the texts. As an illustration, the discourse refers to pregnancy by employing terms, such as "pregnant women", "pregnant girls" (EC 2020c: 14; 16; EC 2020b: 16). This is a compelling example of how biological female characteristics of being pregnant are automatically attached to the category of girls and women and defines individuals' gender identity. Using those particular terms also excludes pregnant individuals that do not identify themselves as a woman or girl – transmen and non-binary-identified females – by sexing pregnancy. Additionally, by attaching the condition of pregnancy to the only category of women and girls, the texts implicitly assume that caregiving tasks associated with pregnancy are only exclusive to the category of women, endorsing traditional gendered division of labor. If the "power of discourse" is "to produce that which it names" (Butler 1993: 2; 187; 225), then the discourse of GAP III-related documents produces gender identities that are determined by their biological sex.

5.3.2 Generic Neoliberal Economic Assumptions and Market Logics

Texts suggest that economic rationality is the very dominant presumption that informs the problematizations in GAP III; that is, governmental rationality behind

the "problem" of gender (in)quality is not to achieve gender equality in itself, but "to meet the labor market demands" (Debusscher & Hulse 2014: 566). For example, the texts understand women's empowerment as "key to reducing poverty and to achieving inclusive and sustainable growth" by providing estimates that "advancing gender equality could add about EUR 11 to 21 trillion to global GDP by 2025" (EC 2020b: 13). Unpaid care and domestic work are considered to be a "problem" because of their being a barrier to women's labor force participation. For example, "less than 50% of women are in the labor market compared to 76% of men" (EC 2020b: 14). In the same way, the lack of education is presented to be a "problem" because it is a drawback in economic terms: "Every additional year of primary school increases girls' eventual wages by 10-20%" (EC 2020b: 15). Gender-based violence, the lack of access of women and girls to reproductive health and health in general are represented as a "problem" because they reduce the "earning potential" of women (EC 2020b: 15). The low presence of women in governance processes concerning natural resources and eco-system is a "problem" because about half of the labor force in the agriculture sector of developing countries relies on women (EC 2020b: 19). Finally, the limited access of women and girls to digitalization and digital technologies is represented to be a "problem" due to its economic drawback as well. The GAP III highlights that problem by presenting statistical data that the absence of 600 million women online around the world result in the loss of thirteen billion euro in GDP (EC 2020b: 20).

GAP III follows a human rights-based approach in tackling the roots of gender inequality (EC 2020b; EC 2020c). However, the critical discourse analysis suggests that the embodiment of human rights to legitimize gender equality is a means to accomplish economic ends of neoliberalism:

> ***Gender equality*** *is a* ***core value of the EU*** *and a* ***universally recognised human right****, as well as* ***an imperative to well-being, economic growth, prosperity, good governance, peace and security.*** *All people, in all their diversity, should be free to live their chosen life, thrive socially and economically, participate and take a lead as equals.* (EC 2020b: 2. Emphasis in original)

The recognition of gender equality as a human rights-based approach creates a space to ask for the same and equal treatment for all people of diversity. This is the echo of the rule that "those who are 'equal' are held to be the 'same' in some way or "equals" are the 'likes' in 'likes must be treated alike'" (Bacchi 2009: 184). The implication is that both women and men are equal human beings, and therefore they need to be treated alike in some way because donating "the same rights to all empowers our societies. It makes them richer and more secure" (Josep Borrell 2020d). The alike treatment is understood as: all women and men of diverse backgrounds "should have equal opportunities, equal access to employment, decent work, equal pay for equal work to be economically independent" (EC 2020b: 12). Thus, by using the principle of equality and "equal opportunity", neoliberalism embraces "a fundamental human equality and an infinite human variety" (Bacchi 2009: 187) and tries to gain the labor force participation of women, who have been lost from the contribution of the economy due to challenges posed by gender inequality. To conclude, by employing a human rights-based approach and equal treatment, the EU wants to accomplish gender equality, which is a key to economic well-being and growth.

5.3.3 Concepts: Social Inclusion and Active citizenship

Since key concepts offer another way of finding the presuppositions of problematizations, this part analyzes the key concepts in the GAP III. Those are "inequality", "equality", "intersectionality", "empowerment", "discrimination", "mobilization", "self-determination", "diversity", "segregation", "civic engagement", "exclusion" (EC 2020b; EC 2020c; EC 2020d). All the specified concepts are more or less linked to the term "social inclusion" that is interchangeably used with the term "social integration" in the documents. There is a tendency to utilize the concept of "social inclusion" as a means to further the scope and impact of the concept of inclusive "active citizenship" in the EU's discourse (Mikelatou & Arvantis 2018: 499). In neoliberalism, "social inclusion" refers to the development of human capital through labor force skills (Mikelatou & Arvantis 2018: 502). In the same way, an individual producing a product that is of an economic value is considered as an "active citizen" with "self-fulfillment"

because of contribution to society (Mikelatou & Arvantis 2018: 501; Newman & Tonkens 2011: 9). This form of neoliberalism premises on "notions of individual freedom, choice, and empowerment" (Prügl 2015: 620), considering individuals to be an entrepreneur developing personal attributes, high qualifications, and skills for adjusting altering social and working conditions in a knowledge-based economy (Mikelatou &Arvantis 2018: 500-501).

The aforementioned neoliberal traits of governmentality resonate in the following instances from the texts. Gap III emphasizes the importance of women's being provided with "sexual and reproductive health and rights" for achieving "self-determination" with the discourse that everyone has "the right to have full control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters affecting their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health" (EC 2020b: 12). To enhance women's and girls' participation and leadership in the economy, social and public life, the documents suggest promoting "affordable and inclusive education at all levels" as well as comprehensive sexuality education, digital literacy in education, digital skills in jobs, and entrepreneurship and increasing "women's capacity as political leaders in governments and parliaments through training", "capacity-building and mentoring on women's leadership" (EC 2020b: 12-21). The aforementioned positive action measures for increasing the education level and self-fulfillment of women are informed by neoliberal logic because in neoliberalism, education is a "sufficient expression of social inclusion" (Mikelatou & Arvantis: 502)

To conclude, holding people responsible "for their own and each other's welfare and community well-being" (Newman and Tonkens 2011: 13-14) and providing the promotion of "the citizens' self-determination" by disciplining their behavioral choices through education, training, and capacity-building, neoliberalist discourse creates active responsible social agents (Eggers et al. 2019: 43-52; Mikelatou &Arvantis 2018). Therefore, neoliberalism manages to establish a strategic project that creates individuals with high-level accountability to "norms of market-embedded gender equality"; that is, biopolitical power resonates in there (Prügl 2014: 619).

5.4 Silences in the Discourse of GAP III

This part of the thesis deals with the fourth question of the WPR approach, which seeks the silences and the issues that are left unproblematic in the problem representations. Therefore, the objective in this part is to see if a "problem" can be thought and stipulated differently. This section claims that the homogenization of women's experiences and the ignorance of the impact of colonialism on them are the issues that are "left unproblematic" and "silenced" in the discourse. Therefore, the part suggests that "problem" could be defined or represented differently if the cultural differences of women were reflected in the women's experiences and non-Western women spoke on their behalf instead of Western feminists.

5.4.1 Silence of Postcolonial Feminist Voices

In the texts, the given goal of the policies is to provide gender mainstreaming in all-new "external" actions. Here the word "external" suggests that the target of the policy is any country that is outside of the EU border. However, the mention of "developing countries" three times (EC 2020b: 16; 19) and explicit geographical references, such as Sub-Saharan Africa, other African countries, Southeast Asian countries, Southern Neighborhood countries (EC 2020b: 7-8), Pacific and Central Asia (EC 2020c: 8) propose that the main focus group of policy is non-Western countries or non-Western developing countries. The other general title that the majority of aforementioned geographical regions usually own is "postcolonial" or third-world countries. Therefore, when questioning "what is left unproblematic" in the discourses of GAP III documents, looking at texts through a postcolonial feminist lens becomes necessary. Postcolonial feminism aims to "disrupt the power to name, represent and theorize by challenging western arrogance and ethnocentrism, and incorporating the voices of marginalized peoples". It questions why western feminism speaks on behalf of women in the other parts of the world (McEwan 2001: 100).

In the texts, there is just one-time usage of terms "race" and "ethnicity" in the context of emphasizing the necessity of focusing on the most disadvantaged women, such as "persons belonging to racial/ethnic/religious minorities" (EC 2020b: 4). In the rest of the discourse, demographical characteristics are only delineated in terms of sex, gender, and age. This shows that in the GAP III,

intersectionality is addressed in terms of sex and age. Women/girls from other parts of the world are considered to be equal despite their cultural backgrounds. This kind of homogenized approach may lead to an assumption that addressing some interests and needs of some women is tantamount to the addressing interests and values of all.

Homogenized treatment has been subject to the critiques of post-colonial feminists in the regard that "class, race, sexual orientation, ability and age differences among women" are disregarded (Bacchi 1999: 69). They argue that feminist writings of the Western humanist discourse "colonize the material and historical heterogeneities of the lives of women in the third world, thereby producing/re-presenting a composite, singular 'Third World Woman'" (Mohanty 1984: 334). Postcolonial feminists think that western feminist discourse perceives women as a coherent group based on "secondary sociological and anthropological universals" – women's role in domestic production and wage labor (Mohanty 1984: 351) –, rather than "biological essentials" (Mohanty 1984: 337). Thus, an "average third world woman" under western eyes is inevitably profiled as religious, family-oriented/traditional, illiterate, domestic, a victim of men's oppression, and somewhat revolutionary with less consciousness of their rights (Mohanty 1984: 352).

According to Mohanty, the homogenization and systematization of various groups of women's experiences in various countries leave all marginal and resistant modes of experiences unaddressed (Mohanty 1984: 352). Hosken argues that one should avoid theorizing male oppression for general society, but rather its theorization should be culture-specific to develop a better comprehension and effective mechanisms to treat it (Mohanty 1984: 339). To Mohanty, there is a need to define and name the discursive power of the West (Mohanty 1984: 335); that is, voices and liberation strategies of feminists and colonized subjects from colonized societies need to be integrated into the feminist practice so that non-Western women do not become "mute, passive (and implicitly grateful) recipients of Western ideas" (Poulsen 2006: 160).

In binary terms, the claims of post-colonial feminism imply that the Western world assumes that the non-Western world does not follow the "norm" that the Western world has reached in gender mainstreaming. Therefore, to cover the difference between these two sides in the context of gender equality and to reach

the goal of gender equality at the global level, the progress of the subordinate or secondary side – the non-Western world – needs to be ensured by gender mainstreaming policies of the "norm" side – EU (Western world). Thus, by diffusing its gender norms to other countries and reflecting them in its external policies' discourses, the EU silences the voices of feminists and subjects of the non-Western world and leaves the issues and problems that they regard significant as unproblematic.

In the next question, the main task is to see how the discourse positions the subjects of women in society. It will be interesting to see how/ if the image of the "average third world woman" described by Mohanty is produced by the discourse of the GAP III documents.

5.5 Subject Positions

The main task in this part is to identify what kind of subject positions and effects the discourse of the texts induces. Question 5 builds on question 4. Bacchi explicitly refers to question 4 to account for effects produced by problematizations (Bacchi& Goodwin 2016: 23; 34 -37). In the previous question, the author reached an implication that the target group of GAP III policies is the women/girls of the non-Western world, which more or less refers to the image of "third world woman". Therefore, the subject positions of women identified in this part may also be construed as subject positions of women/girls living in the non-Western world.

The analysis reveals that there are three predominant subject types that women (non-Western women) are positioned in the discourses: "women as vulnerable victims", "women as illiterate", "women as domestic and informal sector workers". These subject positions are somewhat similar to Mohanty's classification.

In the following paragraphs, women's subject positions and the real-life impact of those positions on them have been described. The last section presents subject positions attached to men for the purpose of comparison

5.5.1 Women as Vulnerable Victims

One of the predominant positions that women are subject to hold in GAP III documents is a "vulnerable, disadvantaged and excluded victim". They are victims in a variety of contexts, such as victims of violence, victims of natural disasters, representatives of the disadvantaged group of people (EC 2020b).

In the main document, women are consistently referenced as a victim of violence. Since there is very little or almost no reference that the category of men is also subject to gender-based violence, the discourse of the texts gives such an impression that gender-based violence is a term that has been initiated only for the violence conducted on the category of women. For instance:

> *35% of women have experienced gender-based violence. In some countries, this rises to 70%* (EC 2020b: 10).

> *246 million children worldwide experience school-related gender-based violence, disadvantaged girls and children being particularly affected* (EC 2020b: 15).

In the texts, there is also such a delineation that someone's being a woman creates a condition for their exposure to violence. For example:

> […] *violence that is directed against women because* ***she is a woman*** *or that affects women disproportionally persist in every country, constituting one of the most widespread and under-reported forms of human rights violations* (EC 2020b: 10, emphasis added).

Such a negative subject positioning of women in the discourse might invoke harmful lived effects for them; that is, they might be regarded as a group of people that do not fit into society, which needs to be "othered" and held subordinate and less universally human compared to men.

The documents address violence against women in politics and the labor market as well:

> *GAP III should support specific actions aiming to prevent violence, abuse and harassment* ***against women and girls with disabilities****, as described by the Istanbul Convention. A growing concern is* ***violence against women and girls in politics****.* (EC 2020b: 24. Emphasis in original).

According to the discourse above, the category of women represents vulnerability and victimization at the workplace because they are **abused and harassed**.

The vulnerable and weak description of women is also salient when the documents refer to the impact of natural disasters and global crises on people:

> *In many places, women's and girls' rights are called into question and often denied. Instability, fragility, conflict, climate change, environmental degradation, migration, forced displacement and lately the COVID-19 pandemic are among the critical factors exacerbating inequalities and threatening hard-won gains* (EC 2020b: 2).

> *Women account for 80% of the people displaced by the impacts of climate change* (EC 2020b: 19).

> *Poor women and children are up to 14 times more likely to be killed than men by climate-fueled disaster, such as hurricane or flood* (EC 2020b: 19).

While natural disasters and global crises target men as much as they do women, GAP III is the shortage of addressing it. According to Allwood, in some cases, gendered responses to natural disasters pressure men to take more risks and lead to higher mortality rates of men (2014: 2). However, suggesting the gendered impact of natural disasters, texts insist on positioning women as helpless, vulnerable and poor victims of environmental changes with no reference to the men's situation. The discursive effect of such description of women does not only

depict them along with children as disadvantaged subjects at the risk of dying, but also implies that women are devoid of skills that are required to avoid natural disasters – perhaps, they do not know how to swim or climb the trees (Allwood 2014: 2). Thus, the documents tend to describe women vulnerable and weak and consider them as a group of people that are not able to demand their rights when it is denied so that they need protection.

Women's systematic description along with other vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of women with special needs increases women's vulnerable victim status further:

> *Focus should also be on the most disadvantaged women, for instance indigenous peoples and persons belonging to racial/ethnic/religious minorities, forcibly displaced, migrant, economically and socially deprived women, those living in rural and coastal areas, as they face multiple discrimination. Specific challenges for girls and of elderly women should be considered. Women with disabilities, also protected by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, are particularly disadvantaged* (EC 2020b: 4).

Here the acknowledged profile of women in "normal" conditions is already vulnerable and victim; however, this vulnerability becomes particularly salient when the situations of the most disadvantaged groups of women, such as displaced, migrant, rural, old, and disabled ones are considered.

5.5.2 Women as Illiterate

> ***2 in 3*** *of the 740 million illiterate adults in the world are women* (EC 2020b: 12. Emphasis in original).

> *Girls receive less distance education […]. Half of all refugee girls in secondary school will not return to school after COVID-19* (EC 2020b: 15).

> *Women are under-represented in ICT careers: men are 4 times more likely to be ICT specialists* (EC 2020b: 21).

> *Each individual has the right to have full control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters affecting their sexuality and sexual and reproductive health, free from discrimination, coercion and violence, to lead healthy lives, and to participate in the economy and in social and political life. Access to quality and affordable comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education, including comprehensive sexuality education, and healthcare services is needed* (EC 2020b: 12).

Another subject positioning of women is "illiterate" – ignorant, less-skilled, traditional, backward. The discourse of the texts implicitly argues that the reason that women are discriminated against, coerced, and exposed to violence or socially excluded from social, economic, and political life rests on women' s lack of necessary skills and less awareness of their rights, i.e. skills that women possess are not up-to-date and not accordance with the demands and conditions of the current labor market. In order to adjust backward and "traditional" women to the labor market and provide gender equality, they need to be acquainted and trained with digital technologies.

The following pieces that the GAP III suggests as solutions to treat women's illiteracy may be construed as a list of necessary skills that the labor market requires, but women do not have:

> *increasing investment in girls' education to achieve equal access to all forms of education and training, including science, technology, engineering and maths, digital literacy and skills, and technical and vocational education and training*
> (EC 2020b: 15).

> *Promoting digital literacy for girls in education, as well as digital skills for jobs and entrepreneurship while addressing the*

> *gender norms and stereotypes that steer women and girls away from technology* (EC 2020b: 21).

Thus, since women are digitally illiterate and far away from numerical sciences and engineering, they are not able to occupy positions in digitalization and entrepreneurship.

Texts also give such an impression that the absence of women in the leadership of governments or the economy is due to their being less skilled, and therefore they need to be trained. Thus, they offer:

> *enhancing women's capacity as political leaders in governments and parliaments through training* (EC 2020b: 17).

> *supporting women's entrepreneurship and employment in the green, blue and circular economy, including clean cooking and sustainable energy, sustainable fishing activities, [...] based on (i) capacity building for rural women* (EC 2020b: 20).

> *Supporting the provision of public and private services through gender-responsive digital channels, technologies and services (e.g. e-government, digital financial services) that will enhance women and girls' inclusion and participation in the society* (EC 2020b: 21).

Positioning women as illiterate, digitally illiterate, uneducated, and traditional subjects, texts give an impression that they are by themselves responsible for the cause of gender inequality. If society excludes women, the fault is women's because they do not have the necessary education, capacity, and literacy for today's society. They are "deviants" and somehow misfit to society. However, by educating and training women and girls, i.e. increasing opportunities, they can be developed as "normal" individuals fitting into society's needs, and eventually, their inclusion in society can be provided. Such an approach supports the logic underpinning the equal opportunity policy.

5.5.3 Women as Domestic and Informal Sector Workers

> *Women bear 76.2% of total hours of unpaid care and domestic work globally*. (EC 2020b: 13).

The provision of statistical data illustrating the high rate of unpaid care work conducted by a global woman suggests that the discourse tends to link women's identity as a worker to the role of a nurturer and caregiver. There is also an implication that even if women/girls participate in the labor market as paid workers, they are workers of the vulnerable and least protected sectors:

> *The **consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic** are affecting women, as they are disproportionately represented in sectors negatively affected by the crisis, in precarious and informal employment, as well as in the care workforce (in the fields of education, social work and health among other sectors, and domestic workers). In addition they are also carrying the increasing burden of unpaid care work. This underscores the urgent need to adopt non-discriminatory and inclusive social protection schemes, formal employment, to extend labour rights and entitlements to informal and precarious workers and have a particular focus on improving the working conditions and pay of care workers* (EC 2020b: 13, emphasis in original).

> *Gender stereotypes limit girls' aspirations for science and engineering careers and discourage boys from pursuing jobs in the care sector* (EC 2020b:15).

In the texts, the subject of women in the labor market is positioned as "informal worker", "precarious worker", "domestic worker". Women's role as mother and daughter excludes them from well-paid and secure careers, such as science and engineering careers, and subjects them to the care sector, such as education, social work and health sectors. Such a vulnerable position of women as worker result in real effects that negatively impact to their living conditions; since

they work at vulnerable and informal sectors, they become the first people impacted by the harmful consequences of crises, such as Covid-19. As informal employees, they are subject to discrimination, and their conditions are not necessarily taken into serious consideration as those having formal employment, such as men. Thus, as precarious workers, women are devoid of inclusive social protection schemes and entitlement of labor rights.

GAP III pictures women/girls as traditional subjects who experience labor market segregation, i.e. women are not equally paid and not represented in economic decision-making. This is salient in a piece of text that is provided as a solution to women's existing labor market problems. It suggests:

> *Promoting decent work, equal pay and labour rights, and women's transition to the formal economy, among other by reducing labour market segregation, boosting women's leadership and increasing their bargaining power in economic and household decision-making and social dialogue, in sectors with a majority of women workers, including domestic work, as well as in non-traditional sectors* (EC 2020b: 14).

After subject position "domestic worker", perhaps the second prominent worker identity attached to women is a worker in the agricultural sector:

> *On average, women account for 43% of the agricultural labour force in developing countries, but present less than 15 % of all agricultural landholders* (EC 2020b: 19).

Despite women constitute almost half of the labor force's participation in agriculture, a very little percent of them is known as landholders. In binary terms, the implication is that it is mostly men taking the position of "landholder".

To sum up, in terms of the identity of women as a worker, they are positioned to the traditional, informal and domestic sector, and considered to be alien to the public face of economics and powerless actors in decision-making at all levels.

5.5.4 Where are Men/Boys?

In general, men are less visible in the documents. For example, in the joint communication, there are 18 times of usage the word “men” and 10 times of usage the word “boys”, while the word “women” and “girls” have been referenced 133 and 55 times, accordingly (EC 2020b). In the factsheet, men and boys are referenced twice and once, correspondingly, whereas words “women” and “girls” have been employed 11 and 4 times, correspondingly (EC 2020d). In the joint staff working document, there are 78 and 56 times usage of terms “men” and “boys”, and the words “women” and “girls” were used 190 and 103 times, accordingly (EC 2020c). Men are mostly referenced for the purpose of comparison i.e. to make more salient how much women and girls are behind of them; for example, expressions, such as “below that of boys” in terms of education, “less access than boys” in terms of resources, “fewer women than men” in terms of mobile phone coverage, “men are more likely […]” in terms of career of the high status are very predominant (EC 2020b: 15;21;13). As in subsection 5.5.3, there are instances of implicitly positioning men’s subjects to the status of landholders and capital holders. This is equal to say that as a main category of subjects, in the texts, there is a perception of men as the bosses and managers at all levels of society.

5.6 The Reflection of Literature on Findings

In the sub-section 2.2.1, it is stated that with the GAP III, the EU aims to achieve transformative gender mainstreaming. However, in the texts, gender inequality is understood as a women’s problem; that is, there is a huge focus on women’s interests, needs, presence, participation, victimization, protection, absence, and rights through numerical evidence. In a way, gender is understood as women. Men are almost invisible. This shows that the WID paradigm still resonates in the EU discourse rather than the GAP paradigm because the latter requires a substantial effort and participation from men in eliminating power imbalances (Debusscher & Hulse 2014: 561). According to feminists, the focus on women is

ineffective because of its neglect of "underlying societal problems" – "unequal gender relations" (ibid: 561). Lombardo & Kantola argues that bringing visibility to the existing inequality between genders by pointing out who is in the power through numerical evidence runs the risk of not addressing differences in women's experiences and "unequal structures and norms of male domination and female marginalisation [sic!]" (2017: 326). However, the true feminist and transformative perspective ensures that equality policies eliminate the hierarchies between men and women (Muehlenhoff et al. 2020: 325).

Additionally, the findings in sub-section 5.3.2 suggest that the economic difficulty posed by gender inequality is the real problem in the discourse, and the solution lies in bringing women to the labor force through skill development, capacity building, education, learning, reproductive health, and self-determination i.e. positive action measures. According to Prügl, capacity building or skill development is sought to be the main solution to alter existing attitudes rather than changing cultural politics or power relations (2015: 620). Poulsen claims that focus on economic dimensions of gender (in)equality and provision of women with equal resources is not about changing existing gender hierarchies and policies (2006:193).

The findings of how heterosexuality is normalized in the discourse in subsection 5.3.1 and the identification of women's worker identity with domestic work and their description as illiterate and vulnerable in part 5.5 match with Brittan's description of masculinism in part 3.4. Thus, masculinism, which sidelines feminism, prevails the discourse.

The EU's past in colonialism renders the relevance to apply intersectionality when the EU's external affairs are a matter of concern (Muehlenhoff et al. 2020: 326). Addressing intersectionality is an integral part of a comprehensive and transformative approach (Beier & Çaglar 2020: 571). However, as subsection 5.4.1 confirms, the intersectionality is only used in the discourse in terms of sex/age in the GAP III, race/ethnicity/class/ sexual orientation are omitted.

To conclude, the discourse analysis of GAP III illustrates that the integrationist approach of gender mainstreaming prevails the transformative one.

6 Conclusion

This section presents the summary of findings and the linkage of the findings with the study context and the research purpose and question.

This qualitative study employed the Foucault-influenced WPR method to interrogate what kind of problem representations of gender (in)equality prevail the discourse of the GAP III. Applying four out of six questions to the documents, the aim was also to find out conceptual logics behind, silences and subject positions of problem representations.

Overall, this study found four overarching problem representations of gender (in)equality in the GAP III documents. They are: gender-based violence emerging from the lack/absence of guiding social norms; the limited access of women/girls to due resources available in the labor market; the shortage of social protection and public services provoked by inadequate institutional frameworks; the absence of women in power triggered by gendered social norms and legislation.

Regarding presuppositions supporting the problematizations, by using a binary form of thinking, the analysis found out that the discourse grounds on heteronormative neoliberal thinking that appreciates heterosexuality and presents gender as a cultural representation of biological sex. The critical discourse analysis also found out that all problem representations are associated with neoliberal market logic, meaning that the "problems" of gender (in)equality are represented to be a "problem" because they are a barrier to the exploitation of women's capacity for economic ends. In other words, women/ girls render an untrained capacity for economic growth, but this capacity cannot be used because of gender inequality. Therefore, those barriers need to be removed.

The paper found out that the target of GAP III is the non-Western world or third world countries; however, the discourse of texts is quite Western, and there is no consideration of post-colonial feminist views. By assuming that all women are equal, texts create the homogenized experiences of "third world women" and

silences women's cultural differences. The CDA also discovered that in the vein of "third world woman", the discourse positions women to the subject of "vulnerable victims", "illiterate" and "secondary workers", whereas men's subject statuses are positioned to be much more privileged. These findings show how the EU manages to use "dividing practices" to build hierarchy or the role of subordination in the context of women and men, western and non-western world.

The thesis concludes that with the GAP III, the EU aims at bringing the transformative approach to gender mainstreaming; however, the WPR discourse analysis illustrates that in reality, the EU's approach to gender mainstreaming is the integrative one because in the texts, nothing suggests that the EU wants to change power relations between genders. They are mostly about integrating gender into the existing institutional framework and institutional structures. The results of the study are in line with studies of Hello Poulsen and Dolores Calvo, who had found the absence of transformative progress in the respective policies of their respective organizations.

As stated in the introduction, studying the effectiveness of policies or suggesting more effective ones is not in the focus of this thesis; however, since the WPR method helps in developing novel perspectives when one scrutinizes an issue, inevitably valuable insights into the governance are produced with its application (Bacchi 2009: 34). Thus, the author of this thesis believes that the results serve as invaluable data to policy workers or those involved in the policy analysis for the self-scrutiny and reflectivity. In terms of contribution to literature, this thesis should be understood to contribute to gender (in)equality studies, European studies, and discursive policy analysis studies.

Regarding suggestions for further study, in the thesis, there are only documents retrieved from the website of the European Commission for the WPR analysis. As stated above, many scholars have applied the WPR to the policies along with interviews conducted by them to provide a better comprehension. However, due to the lack of time and Covid-19 restrictions, it was not possible in the context of this thesis. Therefore, for future studies, the application of the WPR to the interviews targeting GAP III is encouraged.

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