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**Appraisal of the MA Thesis *Feminist Approaches to Global Environmental Change* by
Davina E. Vačkárová**

In this thesis, Davina Vačkárová examines how feminist theorists have rethought key concepts informing global environmental change policies and how existing international environmental policies address gender inequality and marginalised communities in transformative intersectional and systemic perspectives. The thesis presents an extensive mapping of the field of environmental change policies and frames. A literature review traverses impressive terrain, providing insight into key fields informing the scholarship on global environmental change ranging from feminist epistemologies, technoscience studies and political ecology to recent posthumanist approaches such as queer ecologies and Anthropocene feminisms. It also provides a short genealogy over the past 30 years of different approaches to gender analysis in environmental policies with a particular focus on intersectional and gender transformative approaches. Discursive frame analysis, an integrated systemic evaluation focusing on gender equality, environment and marginalised voices ('ISE4GEM') and the 'gender integration continuum' are proposed as methodological approaches that together constitute a 'critical policy frame analysis' (32).

The analysis proceeds in two steps. The first is organised around five environmental change concepts or 'mega-frames' (35) that the author identifies based on her expertise as an environmental scientist working in the field of global environmental change. While two concepts were introduced in the literature review and introduction (Anthropocene and planetary boundaries) others had not previously introduced and derive from economics (degrowth) and environmental science (ecosystems services, planetary and social boundaries). Here it would have been helpful for the reader to exemplify at the beginning of each frame discussion how the concept broadly (or in the case of degrowth marginally) has been taken up in environmental policy debates to better sketch a dominant reading of what these frames *do* in policy debates (not how they are generally defined) before introducing feminist critique and alternative conceptions. This analysis mobilises an impressive amount of secondary literature so that it is not always evident where the author's own analytic voice comes in. A short summary of key feminist and gender concerns *across* the five mega-frames would have been helpful to orient the subsequent analysis as to how gender and intersectional concerns are taken up or ignored in existing environmental policies, the second step of the analysis.



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This part of the analysis is organised around environmental policies in four policy areas (sustainable development, climate change, disaster risk reduction, biodiversity), mobilising the ISE4GEM and the 'gender integration continuum' as seemingly new analytical starting points with few explicit references to the literature review and feminist frame analysis. Four sections detail the genealogy and changes of major environmental policies and consider specific target actions. For all policies the analysis finds evidence of the absence of a gender focus, restrictive binary gender approaches as well as some indication of transformative gender actions. We learn that disaster risk reduction is a policy field where diverse LGBTQ+ communities have been taken into account, and biodiversity policies increasingly demand the inclusion of the knowledges and leadership of indigenous communities, whereas climate change policies are mired in conventional gender binaries (or ignore gender). While no doubt attesting to the scope and complexity of these policy areas, the amount of descriptive policy detail and references to secondary literature make it hard to discern where actionable transformative possibilities can be located and appreciate the author's analytical voice.

The thesis is excellent in the fourth chapter Discussion where we encounter the author's interdisciplinary expertise in action. This part critically unfolds how even gender transformative approaches often remain within gender binaries; details the discrimination and risks facing LGBTQ+ scientists and policy makers; and constructively identifies tensions but also possibilities for connection and synergy between key environmental policy frames such as socio-ecological system and Human appropriation of net primary production (HANPP) and feminist counter-frames of natureculture and Planthropocene. It is this part that in an extended version I would recommend for publication with some references to the Czech case.

For the defence, I would like to ask the Davina to address the following questions for clarification:

First, what are overlapping concerns and insights emerging from the feminist critique of the existing policy meta-frames?

Second, based on the policy analysis, what does the author consider the most transformative policy actions to tackle gender inequality and marginalisation in environmental policies?

And third, what is meant with the reference to 'porous boundaries' between human bodies, sexuality, environment and animals attributed to queer and trans ecologies?

I recommend the thesis for defence, and while the final grade will depend on the defence, I recommend the grade very good (2)

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