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A feminist approach to climate change governance: Everyday and intimate politics

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Abstract:

Neoliberal climate governance, which focuses on shifting responsibility for mitigating climate change onto individuals through their consumption of techno-scientific solutions, ignores and obscures the experience of differently situated subjects. This paper examines the consequences of both framing climate change as a problem of science, and inducing individual behavior changes as a key point of climate policy. We build on environmental governance literature and emerging feminist theorizing about climate change to understand how differently situated bodies become positioned as sites of capital accumulation in climate governance. We use the feminist lens of the ‘everyday’ (Smith 1987), which directs attention to embodiment, difference and inequality. These insights provide points of leverage for feminist scholars of climate science and policy to use to resist and contest the production of neoliberal climate subjects. We argue that a focus on the ‘everyday’ reveals the mundane decision-making in climate governance that affect individuals in varying, embodied ways, and which allows for climate governance to proceed as an ongoing process of capitalist accumulation.

I. Introduction

Climate governance has proliferated in a variety of sectors, spheres, and spaces in recent decades. Political engagements with climate change now include international negotiations, carbon markets, direct action, traditional environmentalism, green consumerism, and urban policy initiatives. Much of mainstream social science and political analysis examines these governance arrangements in terms of policy design and effectiveness (e.g. Gainza-Carmenates et al. 2010; Kuik et al. 2008). This approach often fails to question how climate change is viewed through the lens of technocratic and scientific expertise, and the ways climate governance often fetishizes market-oriented behavioral change as the solution (Macgregor 2014, Swyngendouw 2010). Dominant framings of climate policy are predicated upon decontextualized subjects living in an idealized world where resources and power are evenly distributed. In other words, climate governance is disconnected from many of the ways in which it is experienced, enacted and contested.

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This paper examines the consequences of both framing climate change as a problem of science, and inducing individual behavior changes as a key point of climate policy. Given the masculinist logics embedded in both the framing of climate science and the policies that are developed in response, feminist epistemology is particularly well suited for such an inquiry (Buck et al. 2014). Feminist epistemology began as an exploration of how the social relations of gender, and other axes of difference, influence the production and reproduction of knowledge (Alcoff & Potter 1992). Feminist geographers have since applied various feminist epistemological frameworks to explore the spatial and scalar implications of knowledge production, legitimacy, and representation beyond gender. This includes an emphasis on the ‘everyday’ (Smith 1987) which calls attention to differently situated bodies, embodied experience and the ways that global processes and the intimacy of embodied social relations constitute one another (e.g. Derickson 2009; Kobayashi & Peake 1994; Pratt & Rosner 2012). We suggest, that turning the feminist lens of the ‘everyday’ towards the subjects of climate governance reveals the troubling contradictions and contraindications inherent in the contemporary framing of climate change problems and policy interventions.

We argue for the use of a feminist epistemological critique of climate governance from the perspective of several theoretical positions. First, feminist theory critiques universalizing and totalizing narratives that erase important aspects of social and spatial difference, which is useful to bring to bear on the totalizing nature of much climate change discourse. The neoliberal logics of climate governance, particularly when based solely in technical and scientific ways of knowing, downplay experiential and non-scientific forms of knowledge. Feminist scholars demonstrate the importance of a pluralistic politics of knowledge for effective climate governance. Secondly, more needs to be understood about the everyday and more mundane decisions, encounters, and activities that actually make up climate governance. A feminist epistemology provides a more nuanced accounting of how the practices of power actually work, while also calling attention to a more diverse, heterogeneous, and intimate landscape of climate governance than may be evident from large public displays at international climate meetings. While feminist critiques of technocratic knowledge in climate science and policy are emergent (Israel & Sachs 2013; Jasanoff 2010; Slocum 2004), feminist engagements with policy that individualizes and marketizes actions and inactions have yet to be fully developed (MacGregor 2014). We further this nascent critique by integrating feminist scholarship on climate change with the environmental governance literature to understand how differently situated bodies become positioned as sites of capital accumulation in climate governance.

II. The Neoliberal Nature of Climate Governance

It has been a decade since McCarthy and Prudham (2004) argued that neoliberalism should be understood as a coherent, yet polyvalent, set of “ideologies, discourses, and material practices...[that is] a distinctly environmental project” (2004:276). Bound up in forms of deregulation, reregulation, and commodification that have facilitated a massive expansion in privatized and marketized social relations, nature is now prominently understood as central to the neoliberal project (Castree 2008). The infusion of neoliberal logics into climate change governance has also received significant attention during the past several years. In their examination of carbon control as a key feature of eco-state restructuring under neoliberalism,

While et al. (2010: 82) write that “governance responsibilities are passed to markets and non-state actors (McCarthy & Prudham 2004)...with an overriding emphasis on efficiency, cost-effectiveness and transference at the expense of ecological integrity (Bailey 2007: 416).” (This intensely market-oriented logic of neoliberalism, aimed at achieving emissions reductions in the most economically efficient (i.e. inexpensive) means possible, has resulted in the creation of several new market-based instruments of climate policy (Boyd et al. 2011; Lansing 2011; Robertson 2011).

It becomes apparent from this analysis that ‘business-as-usual’ approaches to climate governance include an emphasis on technocratic ways of knowing climate change and the prevalence of individual action and behavioral change as a viable and primary solution to the problem (Lahsen 2005; Rice 2014). With respect to the first, technocratic regimes of climate governance emphasize expert (i.e. scientific and technical) understandings of climate change, with a focus on instruments/methods of analysis capable of measuring and modeling the climate change problem in its generalizable forms and processes. Hulme (2008: 6) argues that “Climate is defined in purely physical terms, constructed from meteorological observations, predicted inside the software of Earth system science models...wholly disembodied from its multiple and contradictory cultural meanings.” Similarly, in their examination of the European Union emissions trading scheme, Bailey et al. (2011: 700) state that “[Market-based forms of carbon governance] display many features of a technocratic project: they focus on efficacy and efficiency but have little to say on issues of social justice.” Erik Swyngedouw (2010) has argued that the technocratic underpinning of neoliberal climate policy is characteristic of a wider “post-political” condition where, “scientific expertise [is] the foundation and guarantee for properly constituted politics/policies” (2010: 217).

In addition to focusing on scientific ways of knowing climate change, neoliberal approaches to climate governance encourage individual action and behavioral change. The idea that individual choices—such as purchasing a hybrid vehicle, or washing your clothes in cold water, or drinking from a reusable water bottle—can solve the problem of climate change has become a familiar and believable notion for many. Elizabeth Shove (2010) has identified this as the ‘ABC’ approach to climate governance—attitude, behavior, and choice. Shove is quite critical of this approach, writing that “The popularity of the ABC framework [in mainstream climate governance] is an indication of the extent to which responsibility for responding to climate change is thought to lie with individuals whose behavioral choices will make the difference...[Yet], it obscures the extent to which governments sustain unsustainable economic institutions and ways of life” (2010: 1274). Rice (2014), through her examination of urban climate programs, has argued that this is an essential feature of neoliberal climate governance, where personal choices and behavioral change become the centerpiece of many climate policy initiatives, seriously limiting the degree to which larger, more structural changes to the carbon intensive economy can be realized.

This discussion of neoliberal climate governance is meant to highlight particular aspects of its logic with which we (and feminist scholars more broadly) are concerned. The neoliberal discourse of climate governance is global in its understanding of the problem, while advocating individual and market-based responses as solutions, leaving untouched and unexamined uneven capitalist social relations. This approach is defined by a narrow understanding of what the

problem of climate change is (i.e., a global physical phenomena understood best through science) and its possible solutions (i.e., market based and individual actions fully compatible with capitalism). Our concern in this endeavor is not only to reveal the material manifestations of climate governance, but also to identify how it produces particular kinds of subjects and subjectivities. The ways of being and knowing that are produced through contemporary climate governance, in our view, constitute a form of inaction, which enables climate policy favoring capitalist free-market economies. This, in turn, enables the state to avoid governing its resources and its economy in a way that halts or slows climate change.

III. Climate science and technocratic knowledge (re)production

Feminist scholarship increasingly challenges the disembodied and masculinist science behind climate change discourse and policy-making at broad scales, and illuminates the implications of climate change in local places. Much of the critiques of climate policy incorporate case studies from various communities and regions regarding gendered vulnerabilities, exposures to risk, and coping/adaptive capacities (e.g. Bee 2014; 2013; Buechler 2009; Nelson & Stathers 2009; Onta & Resurreccion 2011; Wangui 2014). Feminist analyses of climate change politics, on the other hand, challenge the discursive framing of climate change policy and science, which masks how power is reproduced through such discursive political and economic tropes (Arora-Jonsson 2011; Bee et al. 2013; Israel & Sachs 2013; MacGregor 2010; Manzo 2010; Nelson 2008; Sultana 2013).

Much of the feminist analyses of the production, legitimacy, and location of climate change science and policy is influenced by feminist philosophies of science (e.g. Alaimo & Heckman 2008; Barad 2007; Code 2006; Grosz 2008; Haraway 1988; Harding 1986; Keller 1982; Longino 1993; Wilson 2002). This body of literature challenges the masculinist underpinnings of positivist epistemologies that frame scientific knowledge as valid only if it is produced through objective and value-free research. The results of positivist science are often positioned as a totalizing and universal vision of ‘truth’ in research.

For example, in her analysis of the 2 degree Celsius warming target established by the G8 in 2009, Joni Seager (2009), argues that a 2-degree benchmark, or any benchmark for that matter, as an acceptable level of harm, refracts “through a prism of privilege, power, and geography” (2009:14). In particular, she suggests that the notion that climate change the warming of the globe can be stopped at a certain point is based in masculinist notions of controlling or dominating the environment (Keller 1982; Merchant 1980; Plumwood 1993). Building upon Seager’s critique, Israel and Sachs (2013) explore the techno-scientific framing of climate change and the resulting emphasis on managing the climate through environmental and social engineering. They call for feminist research and political projects that value the materiality and partiality of climate science, but also oppose and intervene in the production of logics of domination and control so commonplace in climate change discourse and policy (Israel & Sachs 2013). ~~The logics of control have recently manifested in attempts to engineer the climate, also referred to as geoengineering, which according to Buck et al. (2014), is NOT an irredeemably masculinist project.~~

Several scholars also draw on feminist philosophies of science to explore the implications of decoupling situated experience from the “impersonal, apolitical, and universal imaginary of climate change, projected and endorsed by science” (Jasanoff 2010: 235). Rachel Slocum, for example, suggests that the framing of climate change as a global problem in Western scientific terms has simultaneously served to portray the issue as both spatially and temporally distant while reproducing a false dichotomy between nature/culture. (Slocum 2004). The false nature/culture binary have a variety of implications for climate change science and governance. The first is that it facilitates a notion of control of nature by humans that is bolstered by masculinist narratives of control and dominance. Second, the notion of separate spheres in nature and society perpetuate a problem that has its roots in this false dichotomy, and it draws our attention to the ways in which climate change, and its governance is a thoroughly embodied experience.

Other feminist scholarship has turned its attention towards reconceiving the nature-culture binary by locating global climate change on the body and the space of the intimate. Looking at the corporeal and embodied implications of climate change, Neimanis and Loewen Walker (2014) suggest that a trans-corporality of climate change--or the contact space between human bodies and their environment--ruptures the myth that human bodies are discreet in time, space, and nature. Climate change thus becomes an embodied ‘social-nature’ (Haraway 1991, 1992; Trauger 2004). Such a discursive disruption illustrates how climate change becomes palpable in the ‘everyday’ (Smith, 1987). Furthermore, the notion of trans-corporeality in the context of climate change highlights how climate and bodies are mutually produced and co-constituted, which resists the masculinist discursive abstraction of climate change as a spatially and temporally disembodied scientific project to be mastered. Instead, trans-corporeal climate change places the problem, and thereby its solutions, within and on our bodies; it recognizes its existence as an extension of our bodies, and reimagines climate change as something visceral, material, embodied and part of the everyday (Neimanis & Walker 2014).

Through a critique of the universal, masculinist ways in which knowledge production is typically understood and valued, we can see that climate change is only partially knowable, and our understanding of climate change is constructed through various subjectivities known to different subjects (Rose 1993). At the same time, pluralistic forms of knowledge, including experiential and non-scientific ways of knowing climate change, are not incorporated into epistemologies of climate change. As Sandra Harding (1997) writes, focusing on the “kinds of daily life activities socially assigned to different genders or classes or races within local systems can provide illuminating possibilities for observing and explaining systemic relations between “what one does” and “what one can know” (1997: 384). In other words, paying attention to everyday, routine, and often mundane activities provide different opportunities for ‘seeing’ how social relations are shaped by power, and how responsibility and action are placed on differently and unequally situated bodies..

In the next section, we elaborate on the key points of Smith’s (1987) insights on the ‘everyday’ to illustrate how a feminist epistemological lens can be used to inform a research agenda attentive to locating the subjects of climate governance, re-locating the implications of climate governance toward the embodied spaces of the everyday, and shifting responsibility for climate governance back to states. We use the notion of the ‘everyday’ to draw attention to issues of

embodiment, difference and inequality in the lived experience of differently located subjects. To locate the social and spatially differentiated subjects of climate governance in everyday sites and spaces, is to reveal the fiction of the individual who bears responsibility for action in the neoliberal logic of climate governance. In so doing, we refocus the gaze away from individual responsibility, and toward the role of capitalism in producing and perpetuating climate change in and through climate governance.

IV. Everyday climate governance: Locating the limits of individual action

Employing a feminist epistemological lens to explore climate governance emphasizes the importance of more closely considering the mundane, everyday spaces and practices of climate governance that produce and regulate subjects and subjectivities, and affect people's daily lives. Feminist sociologist Dorothy Smith (1987) theorized the 'everyday' as a fundamental site of experience, organized and determined by broader relations of power. Smith's articulation pointed scholars away from abstracted processes of social life towards the "problematic of the everyday world" that arises from "our ignorance of how our everyday worlds are shaped and determined by relations and forces external to them" (Smith 1987: 110). The everyday, therefore, is the time-place where knowledge, action, and experience come to matter.

Drawing on Smith's work, feminist geographers explore the mundane, taken-for-granted activity of everyday life in homes, neighborhoods, and communities as a means to explain how global processes and relations of power structure daily life and the social relations of intimacy (Dyck 2005; Wright 2009). Mundane practices and everyday experiences are often overlooked as unspectacular, when, in fact, they are the actual stuff of power and politics. Gillian Rose (1993) writes, "For feminists, the everyday routines traced by women are never unimportant, because the seemingly banal and trivial events of the everyday are bound into the power structures which limit and confine women...The everyday is the arena through which patriarchy is (re)created—and contested" (1993: 17). For example, Beth Bee (2014; 2013) illustrates the importance of examining women's everyday spaces and experiences as a means of understanding how gendered relations of power shape women's capacity to adapt to climate change. Cracking open the neoliberal logic of climate change, therefore requires careful consideration of how power works through everyday spaces and practices—in homes where individuals negotiate living practices, in markets where people make routine decisions, or in city council chambers where the daily rhythms of urban life are often spatially structured. Furthermore, it requires a more careful consideration of the fiction of the individual who willing and able to make choices that will solve the global climate problem.

Bringing the feminist lens of the everyday to bear on climate governance, allows us to identify three points of leverage for feminist scholars of climate science and policy to use to resist and contest the production of neoliberal climate subjects. First, by locating power in the everyday decision-making of the state-capital nexus, we demonstrate how climate policy is not a grand, global narrative, but rather a series of small-scale decisions made at varying scales that affect individuals in disparate ways. Following from this we assert that a focus on the everyday reveals a wide field of uneven power relations that differently positions individual's vis-à-vis climate policy and the mandates to consume or modify consumption practices. Lastly we suggest that solutions to climate change that over-determine behavior change allow climate governance to

proceed as business as usual, and ultimately make climate governance “safe for capitalism” (Guthman, 1998:150). In what follows, we elaborate on these three key points of intervention.

1. Everyday states

A feminist epistemology of climate governance emphasizes the ways that political power is exercised not only through international summits and negotiations that receive widespread attention, but also in the everyday decisions made by elected officials, state workers, and community members. In this vein, scholars have called for increasing engagement with “how the techniques, discourses, and everyday practices of environmental governance actually operate” (McCarthy 2007: 188). Mitchell (2002) argues that the state is actually an ‘effect’ of everyday practices of planning, information exchange and expertise. This ‘prosaic’ understanding of politics requires a close examination of the “mundane, but frequently hidden, everyday world of state officials, bureaucratic procedures, meetings, committees, report writing, decision making, procrastination, and filing” (Painter 2006: 770). City managers, for example, choose between various alternative transportation projects based on available funding and constituent demands, and university officials determine whether they will reduce their greenhouse gas emissions using carbon offsets or energy efficiency upgrades based on the recommendations of faculty and students.

Feminist scholar Aihwa Ong (2006) suggests that governments selectively use “overlapping or variegated sovereignties” (2006: 19) in which sovereign state power is used to produce value for capital. In other words, the state’s presumed role as a regulator of modes and means of the economy often overlaps with, or obscures the way in which regulation is often used to facilitate capital accumulation (Trauger 2014). Similarly, environmental governance scholarship illustrate how the meaning of neoliberalism emerges through its facilitation of the development of markets, often through appropriating commonly held resources for private gain, rather than as a mode of governance that favors an absence of regulation (McCarthy & Prudham 2004). Neoliberalism, according to Ong, then allows for the creation of “sites of transformation where market-driven calculations are being introduced in the management of populations” for capital (Ong 2006:4).

With respect to climate governance, many urban climate programs emphasize changing individual behaviors by promoting, for example, riding a bike to work, changing out incandescent light bulbs to compact florescent light bulbs, insulating single family homes, or setting thermostats at particular levels (Rice 2014). Such policies emphasize the individual, market-based choices that are endemic to neoliberal governance, which do little more than facilitate the flow of capital. Thus, the construction of a rational, ‘green’ individual, facilitates the growth of capital accumulation, in the buying of hybrids, solar panels and LED light bulbs. Through this process, well-meaning individuals who believe they are acting in the interest of combating climate change end up reproducing the market-based logic that produced it in the first place.

2. Respons-able bodies

When viewed through the feminist lens of the everyday, neoliberal climate policies have substantially uneven effects on different people. Over the past decade, local city governments, primarily in the global north, have begun to design and implement their own climate change policies, engaging new spaces of climate governance that are closely linked to people's everyday lives (While & Whitehead 2013). The primary mechanisms of action utilized by local city and regional governments are typically land use and transportation planning, energy efficiency and green building ordinances or codes, and educational outreach campaigns to promote low carbon lifestyles (Bassett & Shandas 2010; Bulkeley & Betsill 2003). These programs and policies lie in close proximity to people's everyday lives, as they affect seek to influence and regulate mobility, the way people live in their homes. As such, offsetting carbon emissions become the responsibility of individuals, thereby relocating responsibility from the state to the body.

A feminist analysis of these processes draw attention to the implications of such processes for power relations, differently situated social positions, and the everyday. The emphasis on individual choice regarding energy efficiency, for example, is predicated upon the assumption of socio-economic privilege that ignores the already low-carbon livelihoods of numerous individuals, and households, not by choice, but by necessity. Questions of urban mobility, furthermore, fail to acknowledge the role of social identities such as gender, race and class in accessing available and preferable transportation options. Thinking through the 'everyday' in this way suggests that urban interventions in climate change, aimed at these types of behavioral changes, are already enmeshed in a matrix of difference and power relations, in much the same way as other forms of production of capital in the world system.

Perhaps the most problematic contradiction of neoliberal climate governance is that the focus on individual action in neoliberal climate governance deemphasizes the wider political economic context under which climate change is produced. An extensive body of feminist scholarship has focused on the identities and mythologies that are produced by and for the interests of global capital (Bee 2011; Brickell 2012; Kelly 1999; Ong 2010; Wright 2006;). Yet as Mountz and Hyndman (2006) illustrate, such intimacy in the interest of global capital is not only encapsulated by thinking about how the body, as part of the economic milieu, becomes a material part of the political economy of capital flow, and in the case of climate governance, part of the climate apparatus. —[Ontological argument here about socio-nature?????](#)

3. *Accumulation as usual*

Feminist theorizing calls attention to the way the body is enrolled as an instrument of climate governance, and it also directs our attention to the way bodies become enrolled in circuits of capital. Locating the subjects and sites of climate governance (whether it is being produced, enacted, negotiated, contested, or rejected) requires seeing these processes as part of the global flow of capital, which then become implemented and take form in locally specific places and on bodies (global-intimate). Cindy Katz (2001) asserts that situated practices and processes of global capital flows cross geographies through what she calls 'contour lines', enabling the formation of new political imaginaries or 'counter-topographies', which transcend place, scale and space. Situating these processes allows us to trace the contour lines and counter-topographies of climate change, which move across places, scales and space. This is part of the feminist project of situating the global within the intimate space of the body and the everyday,

which shifts the universal, depoliticized discourse to one of the particular and the political-economic.

Harvey (2003) asserts that accumulation through dispossession is an ongoing process of the expansion of the capitalist global economy; however, feminist scholar, Hartsock (2006) argues that most Marxist accounts of contemporary capitalist accumulation do not account for gender as a central organizing principle in the everyday circulation of capital (See also Whatmore 1991). She argues: “Primitive accumulation is very clearly and perhaps at its very core a gendered set of processes, a moment which cannot be understood without central attention to the differential situations of women and men” (2006: 183). Keating et al. (2010) extend this analysis to look at “contemporary globalization as a moment of capitalist accumulation profoundly marked by gender” (2010:154), which draws our attention to the various ways dispossession works to concentrate capital in the hands of a very few, extracting it from differently and unequally situated individuals. This work by feminist scholars disrupts the notion of a universalized individual who reacts to capital accumulation in undifferentiated ways, as well as provokes a wider insight into how capital accumulation is always experienced in intersectional ways.

While Ong (2006) makes visible the links between transnational capital and state powers of exception, Trauger (2014) extends this analysis by asserting that states and capitalism are mutually reinforcing and co-productive of each other. Capitalism as we know it is only possible through the interventions of the state in the form of subsidies and patents, military interventions and taxes and tariffs, which facilitate the accumulation of capital for a powerful minority (Trauger 2014). Thus, regulatory frameworks that seek to implement individualized behavior changes, particularly those marked by consumption or capital investment should always be viewed as site of capital accumulation. For particular individuals, being enrolled, through climate governance mechanisms, in a circuit of capital in the interest of mitigating climate change, is a form of accumulation by dispossession. The ‘business as usual’ forms of climate governance that do not critique or identify capitalism as a cause of climate change, miss a key point of intervention, as well as a profound source of injustice when responsibility for climate mitigation is assumed by the dispossessed.

In sum, by shifting the focus to forms of power located in everyday and mundane spaces of neighborhoods, homes, and more localized forms of social organization, the often routine and mundane aspects of decision-making around climate change are made visible. This visibility enables us to re-imagine how climate governance is conceived, embodied, enacted, and/or resisted at scales often made insignificant or invisible by neoliberal approaches to climate change. This also shows how climate politics affects our everyday lives and works to demystify power and politics in ways that reveal both the limitations and potentialities of particular approaches to climate governance. Lastly, it exposes how the shifting of responsibility for climate governance from the state onto differently situated bodies through various consumption politics and transportation ‘choices,’ absolves the state of its presumed responsibility for regulating corporations. Climate governance, as ‘business as usual’, facilitates the accumulation of capital and dispossesses those who do not or cannot ‘choose’ to consume or invest capital under the guise of addressing or mitigating climate change.

V. Conclusion

In connecting the ‘everyday’ feminist geographers have pushed critical scholarship to account for scale and scalar politics by deconstructing local/global binaries (Freeman 2001; Gibson-Graham 2002; Katz 2004; Massey 2005; Rose 1997) and connecting scales of the global to those of the intimate (Brickell 2012; Mountz and Hyndman 2006; Oswin & Olund 2010; Pain & Staeheli 2014; Pratt & Rosner 2012; Wright 2009). By pairing the global and intimate, such scholars attempt to rupture the grand narratives of the ‘global’ while avoiding romantic notions of ‘local’, dislocating traditional organizations of space, and reconfiguring conventional ideas of scale (Pratt & Rosner 2012). In this way, feminist epistemologies helps us to conceptualize multiple, partial knowledges and to therefore recognize and support and understand climate action and in-action. Climate change is not a ‘global’ or ‘national’ matter; it represents the “stretching of social, political, and economic relations over space, constructed and negotiated by interlocking scales of bodies, homes, cities, regions, nations and the global” (Dyck 2005: 235).

The detachment of neoliberal climate governance from everyday spaces and subjectivities ignores and obscures the lived experiences, knowledges, access, responsibilities, and roles that make up the actual subjects and subject positions that are gendered, classed, raced, and otherwise differently situated. This detachment simultaneously permits the construction of the ideal neoliberal citizen, the citizen-consumer, whose individual actions in the private spaces of the home and the market become appropriate solutions to climate change (Macgregor 2014). As MacGregor (2014) argues, a consideration of the ways in which the neoliberal enclosure of the public sphere has displaced any engagement with climate change into the private sphere is appropriate for a feminist analysis. Consequently, the apolitical fictitious actor, devoid of actually existing subjectivity, whose actions within the market and the household are assumed to offset carbon emissions, become little more than sites of capital accumulation. We argue that a feminist epistemology is useful for understanding why individual action and behavior change are not sufficient to combat global climate change, and in fact, may actually reinforce the unequal power relations and logics that underlie the problem in the first place.

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