

## **Confronting the Climate Crisis: Feminist Pathways to Just and Sustainable Futures**

**March 24, 2020**

Campus Center, 3rd Floor, Room 3550C  
University of Massachusetts Boston

This symposium aims to call attention not only to the climate crisis, but also to what is at stake in the kinds of responses to it that are proposed. Many of the proposed “fixes” are rooted in the same political economic paradigms and worldviews that created the current climate and ecological crises in the first place; they often not only pose great environmental risks themselves, but also threaten to gravely deepen existing gender, racial and global inequalities. However, there are also encouraging signs that many activists and researchers are approaching climate breakdown with a global justice perspective. Our goal is to highlight, among them, the critically important work being done by feminist political economists and feminist political ecologists who outline the sorts of radical solutions that the crisis demands, proposing fundamental shifts in the dominant global economic model.

### **Agenda**

9:30 – 9:35

#### **Welcome**

*Carol Cohn*, Director, Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights

9:35 – 11:15

#### **Feminist Approaches to the Climate Crisis**

##### **Women, E-waste and Technological Solutions to Climate Change**

*Lucy McAllister*, Visiting Assistant Professor, Lewis Institute Fellow, Babson College

The informal disposal of electronic waste unfairly and disproportionately burdens women in less developed countries by affecting their mortality/morbidity, fertility, and the development of their children. As technological solutions to climate change increasingly enter the waste stream, there is a need for greater inclusion and recognition of women waste workers and other disenfranchised groups in forging future climate agreements.

##### **More than (Wo)men: Why Intersectionality is Critical for Effective and Just Adaptation**

*Edward Carr*, Director and Professor of the International Development, Community, and Environment Department, Clark University

Most “gender-sensitive” approaches to adaptation project design and implementation rest on binary constructions of gender and identity that can obscure the needs of the most vulnerable, marginalized, and challenged in a given population. Adopting and implementing intersectional approaches to identity is a critical means of identifying and addressing these needs, and thus moving toward just and effective adaptation policy and projects.

##### **Diversifying Power: Why We Need Antiracist, Feminist Leadership on Climate and Energy**

*Jennie Stephens*, Director, School of Public Policy & Urban Affairs; Dean’s Professor of Sustainability Science & Policy; Director for Strategic Research Collaborations, Global Resilience Institute, Northeastern University

Effective responses to the climate crisis will not be found in legacy power structures dominated by technocratic, white, male perspectives that have proven to be ineffective and inadequate. Instead, we need inclusive, collaborative leaders committed to resisting those power structures and investing in social and cultural innovations that simultaneously strengthen climate resilience, reduce growing inequities, and promote social justice.

### **Petro-Bromance: Masculinities Driving the Climate Crisis**

*Joni Seager*, Professor of Global Studies, Bentley University

At just the moment that economic and environmental logics are shifting away from fossil fuels, there is a political mobilization of an increasingly stubborn and irrational attachment to them. How is this political support synergistically tied to conservative, often explicitly misogynist, definitions of manliness? And how does this “petro-bromance” further drive the policy and cultural phenomenon of climate denial?

11:20 – 12:20 **Lunch Break**

12:30 – 2:30 **Feminist Perspectives on Mainstream "Solutions"**

### **Climate Non-Negotiables: Not “Something that Markets Can Handle”**

*Anita Nayar*, Director, Regions Refocus

The main policy responses to the global environmental crises have been to turn to market and technological “fixes”, such as carbon trading, agrofuels, nanotechnology, geoengineering and synthetic biology. However, these technologies are no “fix” for today’s multiple social, economic, ecological and political crises; the resulting technocratic-industrial complex is part of the problem, not a pathway to a better future.

### **Rebooting the Scarcity Score: Population, Conflict and Climate Change**

*Betsy Hartmann*, Professor Emerita of Development Studies, Hampshire College

Today old narratives of population pressures causing poverty, migration, environmental degradation and war are being re-cloaked in the green language of climate change. This development diverts attention from the role of powerful fossil fuel interests, contributes to the resurgence of population control, and threatens to further militarize climate policy. How can we mount an effective challenge and advance progressive feminist alternatives?

### **Weathering Development on an Empty Stomach: Women Farmers, Climate Precarity, and the Fate of the "Green Revolution" in Mozambique**

*Heidi Gengenbach*, Associate Professor of History, University of Massachusetts Boston

In southern Mozambique, an area defined by increasingly unpredictable and extreme weather events, female farmers are five years into a Western donor-funded scheme to reduce chronic malnutrition by "modernizing" smallholder agriculture. However, the scheme’s failure to involve rural women in project design--and deafness to their agroecologically expert critique of the project once underway--threaten to worsen hunger vulnerability in the very communities the scheme purports to help.

### **Confronting the Climate Crisis: A View From Feminist Economics**

*Julie Nelson*, Professor Emerita of Economics, University of Massachusetts Boston

Mainstream economics promotes a narrow mindset when it comes to climate, yet many who criticize the mainstream have narrow views as well. What might be possible if we think past the binary of "hard" versus "soft" solutions?

2:30 – 3:00 **Coffee and Networking Break**

3:00 – 4:00 **Documentary Screening: *Hands On: Women, Climate, Change***

4:00 – 6:00

## **Feminist Pathways to Just and Sustainable Futures**

### **Care Not Growth: Rethinking Sustainability**

*Giovanna Di Chiro*, Professor of Environmental Studies, Swarthmore College

Many feminist critics argue that the corporate-led, privatized, and individualistic “Green Economy” basically serves to sustain global capitalism’s pro-growth agenda while it reproduces and leaves intact deep-rooted colonialist relationships. In the face of the growing crises of poverty, dispossession, and climate disruption, can feminist and anti/de-colonial approaches lead to a more “just transition,” imagining and practicing more just and care-based forms of “sustainability”?

### **Revolutionary Power: An Activist's Love Letter to Heal the Planet and Transform Our Energy System**

*Shalanda Baker*, Professor of Law, Public Policy and Urban Affairs, Northeastern University

Stemming from her work in Mexico, Hawaii and Puerto Rico, Baker will discuss energy policy through the lens of a queer woman of color, arguing that the climate crisis gives us an unprecedented opportunity to reshape the energy system with justice (and love) at the center.

### **Towards a Feminist Green New Deal**

*Bridget Burns*, Director, Women’s Environment and Development Organization

Some say we are living in the decade of the Green New Deal, with unprecedented political and popular momentum for sweeping, ambitious climate justice policies. But what does this look like from a feminist and global justice perspective & how can we build power to influence change?

### **Fertilizing Engagement: Building Trans-Community Collaborations Inspiring and Moving Us toward Climate Justice**

*.O*, Climate and Social Justice Activist in Philadelphia

.O will share her experience as an activist and community organizer in Philadelphia working in collaboration with faculty, students, and community residents to support and sustain the transformation that is needed at this time in his/herstory for global healing. She will focus on two climate justice organizations, Serenity Soular and Philly Thrive.

### **Transnational Feminist Analysis: Spotighting Pitfalls and Pathways on the Road to a Just, Sustainable Future**

*Yifat Susskind*, Executive Director, MADRE

We need more than new policy prescriptions to chart pathways to sustainable futures: we need entirely new paradigms to shape and evaluate policy. A transnational feminist analysis lights the way to making those vital shifts, revealing for instance that any effective Green New Deal must prioritize global justice, center a gender analysis, and be driven by grassroots leadership from the frontlines of climate breakdown. This talk will share principles and learnings from the Feminist Green New Deal campaign and explore the need for a specifically transnational and global approach to feminist analyses.

*Cosponsored by UMass Boston CLA Dean's Office; Africana Studies Dept; Anthropology Dept; Economics Dept; History Dept; Political Science Dept; Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies Dept; Human Rights Minor; the Center for Women in Politics and Public Policy; the Honors College; the School for Global Inclusion and Social Development; the School for the Environment; the Sustainable Solutions Lab; and the John W. McCormack Graduate School of Policy and Global Studies.*

*This symposium is part of the Consortium on Gender, Security and Human Rights' Feminist Roadmap for Sustainable Peace project. Support for the project comes from the Compton Foundation, the Rockefeller Brothers Fund and the Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs.*