

Nature, care, and (re)productivity: feminist perspectives on sustainability and the bioeconomy

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ABSTRACT ORIGINAL

This special issue addresses the bioeconomy, currently one of the most prominent concepts for transitioning toward sustainable economies. In the face of the rapidly accelerating climate crisis, the notion of the bioeconomy seems to offer an elegant solution for “greening” the economy while simultaneously maintaining economic growth and high productivity. Considering the existing feminist research on society-nature relations and the bioeconomy more specifically, it becomes clear that many bioeconomy policies fail to consider logics of care and lack a consistent focus on social justice and the preservation, promotion, and interaction of human and non-human reproductive capacities. Feminist research also provides a foundation for problematizing narratives of ecological modernization and green productivism. It highlights the need for a critique of sustainability narratives, which tend to gloss over the challenges of the bioeconomy rather than address them. This special issue considers this need, bringing together and into dialogue different feminist approaches and key concepts from feminist political ecology, ecofeminism, and feminist science and technology studies to critically analyze bioeconomy-related transformation processes. It also aligns with critical literature on society-nature relations in challenging the prevailing techno-optimism of bioeconomy policies and projects, which risk not just remaining oblivious to social and economic power asymmetries and (re)productivity but even opposing the latter. Focusing on the core concepts of care and (re)productivity contributes to the analysis of the (re)productive dimension of the bioeconomy as counterpart and in contrast to its inherent green productivism. © 2025 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group.