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"The Making of an Environmental Hero: A History of Ecomodern Masculinity, Fuel Cells and Arnold Schwarzenegger"

Hultman, Martin

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How could Arnold Schwarzenegger be portrayed as an environmental role model, even in countries such as Sweden, a country known around the world for progressive policies in gender equality and the environment? This paper introduces and investigates the notion of 'ecomodern masculinity,' through the assemblage of Schwarzenegger's gender identity, environmental politics, and image in Sweden. While there has been research on gender inequity in relation to environmental and developmental goals, there has been little concern with constructions of how shifting hegemonic masculinity is embedded in environmental policy. As former California governor, actor, and Mr. Universe, Schwarzenegger's connection to the ecomodern politics that he prescribed is researched within a framework combining insights from the fields of gender and environmental studies. Ecomodern environmental politics and Kindergarten Commando masculinity are understood as attempts to incorporate and deflect criticism in order to perpetuate hegemony, to ensure that practices remain in effect, 'business as usual.' By looking at the historical changes in Schwarzenegger's identity intertwined with the rise of ecomodern discourse, this article illustrates those changes and broadens our understanding of global politics in the fields of energy and the environment.

— Adapted from the author's abstract.

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