

## **SCHOLARSHIP REPORT**

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Host university and department: **University of Life Sciences Vienna,**

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Thanks to the scholarship from AKTION Cz-At and in cooperation with the Institute of Social Ecology at the University of Life Sciences Vienna, I was able to conduct a research for my MA thesis called Intersectional Analysis of the Climate Justice Movement. The goal of my stay was to conduct in-depth interviews with members of the climate justice movement as well as participant observation during climate strikes. The combination of these two research strategies was chosen in order to deepen my analysis and mediate a dialogue between the proclaimed strategies of the activists and their lived experience. The ultimate objective was to understand how the conceptions of climate justice are produced and reproduced as well as represented in the movement by applying intersectional perspective while drawing on feminist research.

As the beginning of my stay roughly coincided with the beginning of COVID-19 outbreak, many of the original plans had to be adjusted. Luckily, I was very active in the first 2 weeks of my stay and was therefore able to network with climate justice activists as well as to attend various events organised by people who are active in the Viennese environmental circles. Thanks to the contacts I had from before the quarantine, it was possible to carry out part of my research online (even though the scope had to change). Based on the recommendation of my supervisor, Dr. Barbara Smetschka, I attended a welcome workshop of the organisation System change not climate change (SC) and decided to work with SC activists instead of Fridays for Future as originally planned. As there were no climate justice protests happening during my entire stay, it turned out to be a very good decision because SC organise themselves in a very transparent way and thanks to my involvement, I gained access to many

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activists which would be otherwise impossible to reach during the quarantine. Unfortunately, I had to give up on my plan of conducting participant observation due to the situation as there were no protests happening and no physical meetings and plenums for most of my stay. However, I kept detailed fieldnotes throughout the whole research period and therefore I was able to collect additional data on top of the interviews, even though on much smaller scale. I have also decided to analyse the content of SC website (and especially the strategic documents such as position papers) in order to gain wider perspective.

Upon recommendation of my supervisor, I have also decided to join a seminar at the Institute of Social Ecology called Environmental and Climate Justice, which directly corresponded to my research topic and was of great help in terms of deepening the interdisciplinary aspect of my research. Due to the large overlap with the topic of my thesis which I have chosen also as a topic of my final paper, the lecturers Willi Haas and Melanie Pichler provided me with insights from the social ecology perspective which I am extremely grateful for. I presented some of my findings during the seminar and received valuable feedback from the students and lecturers alike, which was of great help. It was also a very good way of gaining overview of environmental and climate justice from the social ecology perspective and gaining access to some of key environmental and climate justice texts. Being in such close contact with the Institute was really fruitful and I'm extremely grateful to Barbara, Willi and Melanie for all their valuable feedback and insights.

In the beginning of my stay, I started networking with the activists as well as focused on writing the methodology chapter. I was able to read up a lot of literature as well as to explore alternative approaches in line with feminist ethics and methodology that give the research participants more power in the writing process as well as flatten the hierarchy as such. Then, I started conducting the interviews online and was also getting in touch with some activists whom I haven't met personally. However, most of the interviews took place in person towards the end of my stay as many of the activists were either very busy during the lockdown, decided to volunteer in another field (and some of them left SC entirely), or weren't in Vienna and often decided to go offline. When the social distancing rules have loosened up, I was able to get back into the field and started conducting my first face-to face interviews as well as attended SC events and meet-ups which were always great places to get in touch with activists.

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Simultaneously, I started transcribing and analysing the interviews and worked on the theory chapter of my thesis. The main focus was on the reviewing of environmental and climate justice literature as well as key ecofeminist texts and also ascertaining how (if at all) is the concept of intersectionality being used within them.

I am truly grateful to AKTION, OeAD and DZS for giving me the amazing opportunity of spending 4 months in Vienna which, besides working on my research, allowed me to rapidly improve my academic skills and will be a great asset for my future studies and carrier.