

Feminist approaches in human geography and spatial planning curricula in Dutch higher education

Department: Human Geography and Spatial Planning

Research group: Geography & Education, Urban Geography, International Development Studies, Spatial Planning

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Project description

Creating an inclusive teaching and learning environment that recognizes and values students' diversity is a broadly proclaimed aim of Dutch universities. In human geography and spatial planning, inclusivity and diversity have also become key topics of curricula: many courses have become geared towards making students learn about and reflect on what inclusivity and diversity mean in different spatial contexts as well as how places can be made more inclusive. Considering these trends, it would be plausible to expect that feminist approaches, understood both in terms of feminist teaching methods and feminist theoretical perspectives, form an integral part of human geography and spatial planning teaching. Feminist teaching implies namely a commitment to non-hierarchical pedagogies and the empowerment of students, and feminist theoretical perspectives in geography and planning share a concern with the gendered dimensions of places and spaces. At the same time, broader societal trends of post-feminism and related calls for an anti-woke agenda have arguably undermined efforts to incorporate feminist approaches in teaching agendas.

This project aims at systematically examining 1) to what extent and how feminist teaching methods and feminist theoretical perspectives are indeed integrated in Human Geography and Spatial Planning undergraduate and graduate programmes at Dutch universities today and 2) which opportunities or obstacles teaching staff experience in trying to integrate feminist approaches. The outcomes of this project will provide relevant insights on whether and how the growing attention to inclusivity and diversity as principles *and* objects of teaching in human geography and spatial planning are substantiated methodologically and theoretically. Furthermore, by offering a comprehensive national scale overview of the opportunities and challenges of devising feminist teaching agendas, it will create a platform for inter-university exchange and reflection.

As a Bright Minds assistant, your role will pertain to 1) collecting current Human Geography and Spatial Planning course syllabi of Dutch universities offering Human Geography and Spatial Planning undergraduate and graduate programmes; 2) carrying out a content analysis by applying a coding scheme developed with the research team; 3) designing and evaluating a survey, under the supervision of the research team; 4) conducting and transcribing interviews with geography and teaching staff; 5) participating in the writing of academic and/or popularizing articles.

Job requirements

- Dutch proficiency;
- Experience with surveying and content analysis, or a willingness to acquire the skills needed to apply these;
- Affinity with/interest in feminist theories and methods.