

HOMESCAPES make the world we live in:

Gender, water, and the urban home

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Project description

Feminist scholars have documented how, withstanding the ‘fleshy, messy, and indeterminate stuff of everyday life’ (Katz, 2001, p. 711), the home is a key site in the daily lives of women and the reproduction of gendered identities and inequalities (Brickell, 2020; Chapman, 2004). They have emphasized the commonly unrecognized work of women in the home and how this work is central for ‘social reproduction’ and the functioning of unequal development (Federici, 2012; Katz, 2001). Focusing on the domestic scale, a site through which ‘people create senses of belonging, safety, and comfort’ (Dowling & Power, 2013, p. 290), these studies conceptualized the unwaged ‘care work’ or ‘affective labor,’ of cooking, cleaning, laundering, child-rearing, and caring for the elderly and the ill, and analyzed its contribution to the relations of production under capitalism (Agarwal, 1997; Mitchell et al., 2004).

From an feminist urban studies perspective, Peake (2016, p. 221) has highlighted how women and the home scale tend to ‘fall away from sight in the urban, through experiences like exhaustion, while also ‘being the objects of the epistemic violence of their dismissal from the realm of theory’. Likewise, Brickell has called for a ‘critical geography of the home’ that brings out inequalities, such as domestic violence, into the public realm (Brickell, 2012). Feminist scholarship has also explored how, in the global south, domestic water labor (selling, buying, fetching, and/or harvesting rain), translates into physical hardships or ‘embodied experiences’ which re-enforce gendered power relations (O'Reilly, 2016; Truelove, 2011). Central to this work are notions of emotional and affective water labor (Sultana, 2011).

This Bright Minds project will conduct a gender analysis to identify the role of water in shaping social life and power relations in the urban south, with a particular focus on San Andrés (Colombia) and Maputo (Mozambique). If you are interested in this topic, please participate. Within the project, you have some possibilities in deciding on which city is most interesting and relevant for you. In this project, you are invited to: a) support us in screening literature on gender relations, conducting a case-specific literature review (including policy documents, and other secondary sources), b) support us in conducting interviews with scholars, activists, and government workers to investigate intersectional power relations on the local and national contexts.

Job requirements

This project requires a Bright Minds student who is interested **on urban studies, feminist scholarship, and political ecology, and qualitative methods**. The student should be motivated to learn, have interest in the global south, a passionate attitude, and be capable of working independently and incorporate feedback. Importantly, the student must have Spanish OR Portuguese language skills. The

Bright Minds project will contribute to a broader research team which will study similar issues and will therefore have the opportunity to interact with other researchers during the project.

References

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