

Embedding decolonial and feminist approaches in Dutch spatial planning education

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Project description

Recently, one could witness a (re)new(ed) interest in deploying decolonial and feminist perspectives in human geography education in the Netherlands (e.g., van Meeteren, 2023; Zill et al., 2024). Such efforts have been motivated by the aims to tackle the “colonial, racist, and sexist legacies in [the] discipline’ (Kinkaid, 2023, p. 2, in Zill et al., 2024), and to make the future generation of practitioners and researchers committed to creating spaces of socio-spatial justice and inclusivity. Dutch planning education is equally committed to fostering inclusive and equitable planning practices. However, the engagement with racial justice and gender equality in planning curricula appears not to be an explicit concern (see e.g., Willems et al., 2025). A similar gap between promoting social justice as a core value of planning and the actual training of future planners as culturally competent professionals has also been identified in the US (Jackson et al., 2018) and the UK (Zewolde et al., 2020). However, in these contexts there is an explicit, even if marginal, recognition in planning education that planning is a key field where racialized (Knapp, 2022) and gendered socio-spatial exclusion is being reproduced (Beebejaun, 2017), and there have been efforts to devise and implement planning curricula and pedagogies that engage with these aspects of exclusion (Beebejaun and Ortiz, 2023).

This project has four aims. First, to examine whether decolonial and feminist perspectives and pedagogies are indeed missing in Spatial Planning undergraduate and graduate programmes at Dutch universities today. Second, to explore to what extent teaching staff is concerned with integrating these and if they do, which opportunities or obstacles they experience. Third, to review the relevant international scholarly literature and synthesize insights regarding the application of decolonial and feminist perspectives in planning education. Fourth, to compile a set of resources including academic texts, popularizing articles, films, other creative products and case study examples that planning educators and students can use to engage with racialized and gendered socio-spatial exclusion in the Dutch planning context.

As a Bright Minds assistant, your role will pertain to 1) collecting current Spatial Planning course syllabi of Dutch universities offering Spatial Planning undergraduate and graduate programmes and carrying out a content analysis; 2) conducting and transcribing interviews with teaching staff; 3) doing a literature review; 4) drawing up a compilation of teaching resources; 5) optional: participating in the writing of academic and/or popularizing articles.

Job requirements

- Dutch proficiency;
- Critical mindset (previous experience with decolonial and/or feminist perspectives is a plus), interest in spatial planning (a disciplinary background in spatial planning is NOT required);
- Excellent writing skills;
- Experience with content analysis and/or interviewing is a plus but not a necessity.