

| Project properties | |
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| Title | Biographies of contested wilderness: a comparative long-term history of human bog use in the Low Countries |
| Group | Cultural Geography Group |
| Project type | thesis |
| Credits | 12(BSc)/36(MSc) |
| Supervisor(s) | Maurice Paulissen (GEO) and Roy van Beek (GEO/SGL) |
| Examiner(s) | Dr Roy van Beek (GEO/SGL) |
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| Begin date | 2017/10/01 |
| End date | 2022/03/15 |
| Description | <p>Large parts of the Low Countries were once covered by raised bogs (hoogvenen). Many bogs have disappeared since the Middle Ages due to reclamation and peat exploitation. What remains is natural and cultural heritage under pressure. The history of large-scale peat exploitation and reclamation in the Low Countries has been studied in several regional cases, but other aspects of man's relations with bog landscapes and its dynamics over the long term have hardly been studied yet.</p> <p>In this project, you will collect evidence on the long-term history of human use of one (BSc) or more (MSc) bog areas as examples of contested wilderness. The main focus is on the last millennium in the Low Countries. You will develop a database in which the consecutive phases in human bog use, the social powerscapes of the actors involved (e.g. insiders such as peasants, local elite, and outsiders such as peat exploitation entrepreneurs), and the phases or events of change marking their transitions are recorded. The database allows to reconstruct 'bog use trajectories' and compare (MSc) these diachronic patterns between different (probably 4-6) bogs across the study area. Next, you will analyse to what degree clustered patterns of similar bog use trajectories can be found across the research area as a whole, and how these may be explained from different perspectives (e.g. commons theory, 'powerscapes', and regional socio-economic dynamics). The research may also include an assessment of which – if any – statistical methods are available to quantify the significance of differences found between study cases. Your sources are mainly historical published accounts, old maps, and where needed archival sources (searchable via https://www.archieven.nl/). You will be part of the Home Turf project team (http://www.boglandscapes.eu/), and your project results will likely be used by ongoing and future studies on past and present human use and perceptions of bog landscapes.</p> |
| Used skills | |
| Requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Basic knowledge on landscape history and/or historical geography of the Netherlands. • At least basic GIS skills. • Enthusiasm for the subject. <p>Also possible as minor Master thesis.</p> |