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### To Be a Feminist: Illuminating the Nature of Feminism in the Tourism Academy

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## **To Be a Feminist: Illuminating the Nature of Feminism in the Tourism Academy**

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Feminism is a popular, but also highly contested and polemic term (Calas & Smircich, 2006). It takes multiple shapes as an ideology, a social movement, a political programme, a philosophical tradition and a personal identity, among others. “Feminist” is an adjective that can be added to almost anything: research, education, politics, theater, literature...; and to all scholarly or disciplinary identities, for example feminist sociologists, economists, psychologists, etc. This complexity is reflected in the large variety of ways a scholar can adopt and express (or reject) his/her feminist identity. The personal declaration “I am a feminist” and the social judgement made about others (“she/he is a feminist”) hide many different meanings and implications depending on the personal understanding of this term and the social context and circumstances. These consequences matter for the ways in which we envision and understand a feminist agenda for academia. What do we mean by being a feminist academic? And what does feminism mean for the Tourism Academy of the 21st century?

This article aims at illuminating and making sense of these two complex and polemic questions. It does so by firstly providing a critical analysis of the ways the terms “feminism” and “feminist” have been portrayed by academic literature in different historical periods and secondly, using this theoretical landscape to analyze four empirical data sets: a series of public email discussions regarding gender equality that took place on the listserv Tourism Research Information Network in the years 2014 and 2015; the posts and comments shared in the online community Women Academics in Tourism in the year 2015; a series of interviews with tourism academics from diverse nationalities and professional seniority (spring 2016); and my own personal narrative based on memory work. This analysis will provide the background to advance some ideas about the consequences that our understanding of feminism and being a feminist has for the tourism academy of today and of tomorrow.

### **References**

- Calas, M., & Smircich, L. (2006). From the 'Woman's Point of View' Ten Years Later: Towards a Feminist Organization Studies. In S. Clegg, C. Hardy, T. Lawrence, & W. Nord (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of organization studies* (2nd ed., pp. 284–347). London: Sage Publications.