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Feminist Planning and Urbanism

Understanding the past for an inclusive future

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Definitions

Feminist Planning

The process driving the equitable involvement of all persons in the planning profession, that was originally initiated with consideration for women and later expanded to include all persons regardless of age, gender, place of origin, and sexual identity.

Feminist Urbanism

Various facets of contemporary urban design and planning practices that developed as a reaction to traditional planning processes that were shaped by patriarchal values, with an intention to facilitate equitable access to the benefits and opportunities that can be offered in multi-level agendas.

Synonyms

Gender equality, feminism, intersectional feminism, equity, gender mainstreaming, planning, urbanism.

Cross-references

- Gender inequalities in cities: Inclusive cities
- Education for inclusive and transformative urban development: Putting the future into perspective
- Corporate social responsibility: The roles of organisations in reducing inner-city inequalities

Introduction

Women have always held pivotal roles in society however the vast majority of history has shed light on the contributions of a select few and has tended to focus disproportionately on the achievements of privileged men, particularly those of white cis males (Hendler & Markovich, 2017, p.25; Allick, 2020). These patriarchal norms and the structures that they have enabled have encompassed all facets and all corners of the world and the ensuing top-down exclusionary processes have in many ways impacted how cities have been planned, designed and developed for centuries (Eichler, 1995; Kern, 2020a). This inequity has thereby impacted women's daily experiences, comfort and sense of place regardless of the geographical context.

A woman's experience in the urban environment is entirely distinct from a man's; from perceptions of fear and safety in public spaces, to the unique biometrics of a woman's stride when carrying a package or pushing a stroller (Perez, 2019; Kern, 2020a). Women are more likely to experience fear and intimidation in the built environment, are more likely to be limited in terms of access to and movement through urban spaces, are more often observed by others, and are more likely to be accompanied by children, seniors, or other people in their care. Despite these tangible impacts, these considerations have and continue to be

absent from the majority of local, national and global priorities and policy making at the detriment to half of the world's population.

As part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted at the United Nations in 2016, Goal 5 strives to achieve Gender Equality and Empower all Women and Girls. This widespread inequality has been further exposed during the 2020 global pandemic as lockdowns have increased domestic violence towards women and girls, highlighted that 70% of health and social workers are women, and shown that women take on the majority of unpaid domestic work (UN, 2020). To improve these trends during and after the global economic recovery with community and city building practices, there is a call for an increase in the presence and consideration of women in politics and leadership positions (Didi, 2020), in foreign policy (Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, 2020), an improvement in women's active participation outside government (McFarlane, 1995), a reduced or eliminated gender pay gap (Auspurg et al., 2017; Rubery et al., 2005) and a reduction of the gender data gap to include sex disaggregated data (Klein & D'Ignazio, 2020). It is clear that inequity is rampant in all segments of society and thereby intersects to structure traditional urbanist practices.

Though previous chapters have explored many facets of urbanism, feminist urbanism involves different considerations that include the systematic impacts of development. Though there are some general definitions of feminist urbanism, it has been generally described to explore how the built environment excludes the consideration of gender. Though urban planning and urban design have intended to reflect the human experience, both practices have been conducted by and for a specific segment of society, at the detriment of everyone else (Kern, 2020b; Perez, 2019; Moghadam & Rafieian, 2019). Feminist Urbanism acknowledges that cities and city building practices have been created and evolved through predominantly patriarchal structures that have re-enforced sexism in both public and private contexts.

Choosing to focus on urbanism for this chapter is not at the exclusion of planning, rather the acknowledgement that the profession of planning and its conventional history has been limited to a few male planning visionaries (Hendler & Markovich, 2017 p.24). Women's efforts were not recognized as "legitimate" planning and due to the "narrative of professionalization" many scholars have acknowledged that community building movements outside of token city building have played an equally important role (2017, p.25). As will become further apparent in the following sections, evidenced by the diversity and breadth of examples from across the world, the definition of feminist urbanism is always evolving. Nevertheless, to apply a true feminist lens to urbanism is to acknowledge that equity is equally as essential in informal settlements in India, major cities in north America, small rural towns in Europe, favelas in Brazil, islands in the Caribbean and for all groups of people in those contexts.

The chapter is divided in the following sections. Firstly, it traces the development of feminist urbanism by exploring the links between various theoretical traditions such as feminism, intersectional feminism and feminist geography, and their influence on the planning field. It then discusses the advances made in global and national policy making in countries around the world in efforts to mainstream gender in planning cities. The next section highlights examples of women-led planning networks and organizations on a global, national, city and local level. This is followed by a section on best practices on physical and spatial interventions in places around the world and the barriers to achieve them. Finally, the chapter concludes with reflections on the contextual limitations of gender-based interventions and the implications of mainstreaming feminist urbanism.

Theoretical foundations

The theoretical foundation of this chapter is based on various strands of feminist theories and traces the arc of feminist urbanism by drawing links between the following theoretical traditions, namely feminism, intersectional feminism, feminist geography and ecofeminism. Given the extensive and complex history and multiple streams of feminism and its corresponding waves we have notably not included an entirely fulsome summary. The selected focus intends to connect most directly with the current policy and practices that are described in the following sections.

The presence of women in the built environment has long been used as an indicator of the safety, prosperity, and values of a community (Day, 1999; Hayden, 1985; Kern, 2020a). Still today, women – or, more specifically, white, heteronormative women – are often used as markers for the gentrification and revitalization of urban neighbourhoods (Kern, 2020a). However, women are not a homogenous population, therefore, it is critical to consider intersecting identities in urban responses, including racial and ethnic diversity, sexuality, age, ability, income, and life stage (Brown-Saracino, 2015; Crenshaw, 1989; De Madariaga & Neuman, 2016; Irazábal & Huerta, 2016; Kern, 2020a). Without due consideration of how these identities overlap and impact socio-spatial experiences, then the needs of women and other marginalized populations can be understood only to the extent that they intersect with the dominant population.

Feminism and intersectional feminism

Feminism has a myriad of definitions attributed to its evolving waves in history. Although traditionally defined as “the belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim” (Oxford University Press, 2020). The feminist activist Bell Hooks stated that “feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression” (Hooks, 1984). The feminist movement has been widely criticized for its predominance of white, privileged feminists (Biana, 2020) and thereby exclusion of other groups. Additionally, it has been acknowledged that feminist discourses must evolve and be informed by diverse identities and sexualities of queer-identified people in urban planning, geography and public safety (Angeles & Roberton, 2020). As Leslie Kern notes in *Feminist City*, “feminism must be intersectional if it seeks to address the challenges of the present moment” (2020a). Intersectionality looks beyond a single-axis framework to acknowledge that intersectional experience is more than the sum of racism and sexism (Crenshaw, 1989). Therefore, our definition of feminist urbanism intends to involve intersectional feminism to accurately reflect the zeitgeist.

As coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, intersectionality is a “method and a disposition, a heuristic and analytic tool” introduced to address the marginalization of Black women in antidiscrimination law, feminist and antiracist theory and politics (Carbado et al., 2013, p.303). In 1991, Crenshaw further elaborated the framework “to highlight the ways in which social movement and organization and advocacy around violence against women elided the vulnerabilities of women of color, particularly those from immigrant and socially disadvantaged communities (2013, p.304).

This was however not the first intervention of its kind as there were previous attempts by Marxist-feminist theorists, interventions from lesbian feminism perspectives, and connections made between gender and disability (Supik et al., 2012). The concept has since been critiqued for only reflecting the intersectional experience of black american women and not women of colour in Europe (Kerner, 2017, p.848). Nonetheless, this does not negate the global interdisciplinary engagement that the intellectual history of intersectionality has created (Carbado et al., p.303). Kerner (2017) posits that feminist theory could benefit from both intersectional feminism and post-colonial feminism. Acknowledging that both inequality amongst subgroups of women, power relations among women and interactions among feminists could assist with framing the understanding and discourse (2017, p.847).

Feminist Geography

The discipline of feminist geography is a subset of human geography that deals more explicitly with the aspects the female experience as it relates to space. This can be public or private space, as is the case of the seminal text by Dolores Hayden “What Would a Non-Sexist City Be Like? Speculations on Housing, Urban Design, and Human Work” (Hayden, 1980). In this article Hayden deconstructs the notion of “home” and a woman’s place within it by suggesting alternative models for cohabitation in order to break down gender norms of work (and by extension, society) through reverting isolation and confinement of women to a section of the standard dwelling unit. This is considered one of the earliest references to overtly calling the city “sexist” and was a part of the launching point of feminist geographical discussion beginning in the 1970s.

Ecofeminism

Through its joint name, ecofeminism recognizes that the domination of women and nature cannot be understood without recognizing the conceptual ties between the two (Mallory, 2018). Ecofeminism began in the 1970’s as a political movement by Francis D’Eaubonne who argued that “the destruction of the planet is due to the profit motive inherent in male power” (Nhanenge, 2011, p.11). There are many perspectives on ecofeminism, however it does generally note that women’s position in society is due to prevailing social and economic structures that expose them to particular environmental incivilities (Buckingham, 2004, p.147). Further, that as women share from being disadvantaged by environmental degradation, they are therefore in the best position to argue on nature’s behalf (2004, p.147). Importantly, ecofeminists caution the value in pursuing unlimited economic growth at the expense of the environment (2004, p.149). This has recently been echoed by Jacinda Arden in New Zealand’s national budget by focusing on well-being rather than traditional economic growth (Peat, 2019).

These considerations are inherently tied to climate change, especially with disaster management in informal settlements. A glaring example of this was demonstrated in Gujarat, a state in Western India in post-disaster management after an earthquake. As the majority of housing had been destroyed new homes were needed but as women were not included or consulted in the process, homes were built entirely without kitchens, thereby impacting essential daily tasks (Perez, 2018, p.575). Fundamentally, the climate crisis is a feminist issue as it disproportionately impacts women and amplifies existing gender inequalities across the world (Baker, 2019).

Influence of feminist theoretical foundations on Planning Theory

Planning theory has been isolated from the field in which it operates (Fainstein, 2005, p.127) and speaks to what planners do with “little reference either to the socio-spatial constraints under which they do it or the object they seek to affect” (2005, p.121). Planning theorists delved into an abstract process that was isolated from social conditions, planning practice and the physical city (Buregard in Fainstein, 2005, p.211). This detachment between theory and practice resulted in a disconnect between the real need for community planning; people in a community wishing to improve their environment (Hodge & Gordon, 2010, p.3). Historically plans have not reflected the “public good” (2010, p.6) despite the intent to be in the public interest, because it is not “monolithic and neutral” (2010, p.7) and has resulted in inequity in community planning. ‘Progressive’ ideas of acknowledging equity in planning are difficult to implement given long established policies that concentrate low-income and minority households and exclude them from other neighbourhoods through zoning and building codes (Carman & Fainstein, 2013, p.126). Despite the “trickle-down” policy in cities that has produced “few benefits for increasingly destitute residents” (2013, p.124) planners have a substantial amount of power and ability to see comprehensively

that could be leveraged in the future. However, the lack of gender diversity in planning affects not only the way we design and plan, but also who we design and plan for (RTPI, 2020).

Policymaking

Although there have been attempts at integrating feminist concepts in urbanist practices over the past 20 years, a full integration into policy has been lacking. While some contexts in the global north have achieved more success in this regard, it is especially glaring in many developmental contexts in the broadly defined 'global south' where initiatives often remain on paper with many barriers for implementation.

Organizations in many countries in the global south are often not explicitly focused on women-centric planning issues but have in recent decades, mandated various policies ranging from women's rights and empowerment, safety issues in public spaces and bottom up, community-oriented planning. Urban planning in the broadest sense in these contexts is often top-down and bureaucratic, functioning through a combination of zonal and master plans and tends to leave out nuances in spatial interventions like walkable street profiles and vital public spaces that can enable safer cities. It thus contributes to fragmented and therefore unsafe cities reinforced by huge gaps in income and livelihoods, and unequal access to safe public transport in different urban areas. Together with weak governance systems, these planning models tend to perpetuate inequality in public spaces and affect the safety of women.

In these contexts 'unequal gender relations' (Falú, 2017) also mean that leadership positions in the planning sector are increasingly occupied by male professionals. These factors collectively contribute to a lack of focus towards addressing the dearth of women planning professionals in public and private domains and negates the possible spheres of influence for gender mainstreaming in city planning; leaving women planners out of key decision-making processes. Recent changes strive to be more strategic and inclusive through communicative and participative forms of planning with a mandated gender focus. However, these are not explicitly often women led and tend to get lesser priority due to a bureaucratic way of functioning and local political dynamics. We discuss these through concrete examples in the next section. In including these examples from across the globe the intent is not to provide copy-paste approaches to feminist urbanism practices. Rather, the intention is to acknowledge that cities evolve at different rates and through entirely different contexts, and these examples can be referenced to assist in progression. Despite the examples that are typically associated with feminist urbanism, it does not solely concern women's safety, rather it entails an equal opportunity to interact, move around and enjoy the vitality offered by the urban environment regardless of the season or time of day.

The following section looks at examples of feminist policy and gender inclusion. Despite its inclusion and mandate by some governments it is important to note that "women are underrepresented as social actors in policy making" (Mósesdóttir & Erlingsdóttir, 2005) and this results in difficulties actioning and implementing these policies.

Global policymaking

The structural connections between gender equality and sustainable urban development are already well acknowledged at the global level in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Indeed, SDG 11 explicitly commits to gender equality by making cities and urban settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable, and providing universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible green public spaces. Following this path, the New Urban Agenda, adopted in 2016 at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development, advocates for gender-inclusive and gender responsive cities. UN Women, in partnership with other UN agencies and partners, participates in the implementation of integrated and

evidence-based approach in cities through the *Safe Cities and Safe Public Spaces* Global Flagship Programme (UN Women, 2017) and the *Safe Cities Free of Violence against Women and Girls* Global Programme (Bhatla et al., 2013).

UN Women advocates for ensuring women's voices and needs count, achieving equal participation in decision-making and including gender perspective in policies (UN Women, 2020). In Albania for example, UN Women worked with the southern cities of Fier, Berat and Përmet on gender-responsive budgeting through open discussion and identification of community needs (UN Women Albania, n.d.). The Agency also works on gender mainstreaming in institutional development, such as the initiative in Tbilisi, Georgia, to conduct a participatory gender audit with the objective of serving as an entry point for mainstreaming gender into urban development and planning (Government of Georgia, 2017).

Organizations such as the Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy have acknowledged the restrictive and exclusionary lens of policy at a global scale. Looking beyond the existing foreign policy discourse towards “a multidimensional policy framework that aims to elevate women's and marginalised groups' experiences and agency to scrutinise the destructive forces of patriarchy, colonisation, heteronormativity, capitalism, racism, imperialism, and militarism” (Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy, 2020).

- Canada

In Canada, the federal government initially committed to using Gender Based Analysis plus (GBA+) in 1995 as an analytical process to assess how diverse groups of women, men and non-binary people may experience policies, programs and initiatives (Government of Canada, 2018). The commitment was renewed in 2015 to support the full implementation across federal departments and mandated the Minister of Status of Women to ensure that any government policy and legislation is sensitive to the impacts on diverse groups of people (2018). The Fall 2015 Report of the Auditor General of Canada entitled “Implementing Gender-based Analysis”, provided a 2016-2020 Action Plan to address full implementation of GBA+ across government by identifying and addressing barriers and reporting on progress (Government of Canada, 2015).

- Vienna, Austria

The municipality of Vienna, in Austria, is known to be a pioneer in enforcing gender mainstreaming into urban planning by introducing different user profiles, with the objective of improving and ensuring “fair shares in the city” for all. The city took a stand to assume a change in its planning culture through the adoption of gender-sensitive planning in 1991, putting respect for the everyday life of women and men of all ages and at different life phases at the very centre of the urban planning process (Foran, 2013). By referring to different user profiles, the municipality all refers to further variables of discrimination such as age, socio-cultural background, religion, or physical or psychological abilities. To support the daily life of these different users, Vienna came up with strategic visioning to guide cross-sector actions. The models go from polycentric urban-structure to improve urban infrastructure and services accessibility, to the idea of supporting a “city of short distance” allowing combination of paid work, family chores and services users, but also focusing on developing adequate public spaces (Bauer, 2009). After two decades of pilot projects and processes, gender mainstreaming is at the center of Vienna's structuring urban documents (Strategy Plan for Vienna, Urban Plan and sectoral programs, master plans and urban design concepts etc.).

- Iceland

Iceland has been the world's leader in gender equality since 2009 (WEF, 2020, p.9). Issues of gender equality are not addressed by a national employment policy, rather dealt with in special equality action programmes (Mósesdóttir & Erlingsdóttir, 2005). These programs are connected to the Iceland Gender

Equality Fund and Gender Equality Implementation Fund and tied to the 2008 Gender Equality Act (Centre for Gender Equality Iceland, 2012). The Gender Equality Act aims to “establish and maintain equal status and equal opportunities for women and men and promote gender equality in all spheres of the society” (European Parliament, 2010).

Women led planning networks and organizations

This section aims to highlight women led planning networks and organisations from different parts of the world and functioning at a global, national, city and local scale. Many of these organizations were borne out of a need to bring women planning professionals together for various initiatives, to create a sense of solidarity and belonging and to address together the urgent need for a feminist lens on urban planning.

Global

- Commonwealth Women in Planning Network

The Commonwealth Women in Planning Network is a subgroup of the Commonwealth Association of Planners (CAP), which represents over 40,000 professional planners from across 28 Commonwealth countries. Formed in 2018, the Commonwealth Women in Planning Network recognizes the potential of intersectional, gender-inclusive planning, policy, and design to positively contribute to global economic, social, cultural, and environmental objectives. The Network released the unprecedented *Women in Planning Manifesto* (Commonwealth Women in Planning Network, 2018), an international call to action for advancing the role of women in the planning profession and highlighting the impact of planning and design on women’s safety, prosperity, and empowerment. The Manifesto has since been adopted by CAP and a number of global planning organizations, supporting the Network’s objective of fostering inclusiveness and equality, as advocated for by the 2030 Agenda, the New Urban Agenda, and the Paris Agreement.

- Slum Dwellers International

It is also important to highlight the role played by women in initiating transformative initiatives in informal settlements. The network Slum/Shack Dwellers International (SDI) formed by the urban poor across 15 countries of the Global South originally initiated by Federations founded by women of savings groups in local communities (Patel & Mitlin, 2007). The roles of these federations have grown from managing savings and credits to taking actions aiming at improving access to basic infrastructure and services in local neighbourhoods, securing land, upgrading homes and more generally improving the quality of life in informal settlements. The SDI approach means to and foster participation to address women’s needs and create and protect local space where women can engage. SDI also adopted a methodology based on a “culture to aspire” to empower women and support them to operate in a dominant culture to bring change.

- Urbanistas Global

Urbanistas is a global network founded in 2012 in the UK. There are chapters across the UK, Rotterdam and in New York and Sydney (Urbanistas: 2020). The collaborative women-led network aims to amplify women’s voice and ideas to improve cities (Urbanistas: 2020). The aim of the network is to support women to start and deliver their own projects by crowd sourcing support from women within the network. Projects have included the Office of Displaced Designers (ODD). ODD is a project based in Greece which seeks to provide refugees with professional development opportunities in architecture and design (Urbanistas: 2020).

- Urbanists Rotterdam, Netherlands

Urbanistas Rotterdam, based in the city of Rotterdam, is a community of women urbanists working in and around the Randstad region in The Netherlands (comprising the urban agglomeration between Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht). While The Netherlands is considered a progressive country in many aspects, there persists a glass ceiling wherein the ratio of women occupying leadership positions is skewed (ref xx). This is also reflected in the urban planning and design sector. Urbanistas Rotterdam strives to overcome this gap through bottom-up and community oriented initiatives where young women urbanists can showcase their work and ideas to each other and gain peer support.

National

- Women in Urbanism Aotearoa, New Zealand

Women in Urbanism Aotearoa is a society located in New Zealand. Aotearoa is the Maori name for New Zealand, and the organization has a mission to “transform our towns and cities into more beautiful, inspiring and inclusive places for everyone” (Women in Urbanism Aotearoa, 2020a). They are membership based for those who have an interest in cities, sustainability, climate change and good design outcomes for women and live in, or have a strong connection to New Zealand (Women in Urbanism Aotearoa Incorporated, 2020). The organization advocates for efforts such as Equitable Light Rail for Auckland (Women in Urbanism Aotearoa, 2020b) and a Street Harassment Campaign (Women in Urbanism Aotearoa, 2020c).

- Women in Planning UK

Women in Planning UK is an independent network for women working in planning and related disciplines. It was started in 2012 and is separate from the Royal Town Planning Institute. It has 14 branches across the UK including outposts in the devolved nations. Women in Planning aims to promote equality, inclusion and diversity within the planning profession; with a focus on gender. The network hosts events, publishes blogs such as the ‘Day in the Life of’ series, and in 2020 has set up a new initiative called Thought Exchange. Thought Exchange aims to provide a platform for women in the profession to share ideas through short videos, hosted on YouTube channels, and social media posts. In addition, the network has published research on gender equality within the UK planning profession (Women in Planning: 2019). The research focused on how many women held the position of director and above at private planning consultancies in the UK. The research found that women held 17% of these positions with men filling 83% (Women in Planning, 2019).

- The Association of Women in Property, UK

Women in Property is a UK wide network founded in the 1980s (FIND REF). The network is focused on gender equality in the property and construction industry. It runs programmes including the Mid Career Taskforce, mentoring program and annual National Student Awards. The awards have been running for 14 years with over 124 students nominated by their lecturers across 60 different universities (Women in Property: 2020).

- Safetipin, India

Safetipin, based in Delhi and founded in 2013 is a social developmental organization that aims to tackle safety for women in public spaces through crowdsourced data on mobility patterns via three apps, My

safetipin, Safetipin Nite and Safetipin Site and safety audits. Through the apps, the users can express their observation on issues such as lack of street lighting, broken footpaths, open electrical wiring etc which enables the apps to plan safer routes for women to walk to their destinations. They also work closely with public service providers by acting as a mediator through the crowdsourced information, with NGOs, and companies that strive to provide safe access to their women employees.

- Tanzania Women Architects for Humanity, Tanzania

Tanzania Women Architects for Humanity (TAWAH) is a multi-disciplinary consortium of women architects, engineers, scientists and quantity surveyors who undertake collective initiatives through participatory methods by mobilizing women from low-income groups to build adequate housing for marginalized communities. This includes those living in poverty, indigeneous communities, minorities and refugees who are traditionally excluded from an equitable access to basic services and appropriate living conditions. By imparting practical building skills and know-how for women from low-income groups, this NGO strives for social justice by enabling the women to generate income and economic opportunities for themselves.

- TAO Pilipinas, The Philippines

TAO Pilipinas is a women-led NGO in The Philippines that started in 1986 following the end of 20 years of dictatorship through a People Power revolution and subsequent socio-civic student activism bolstered through community participation. Currently the organization assists the urban and rural poor through various capacity building, community and research projects to enable sustainable and inclusive forms of development.

- Women in Real Estate, Kenya

Women in Real Estate (WIRE) functions as a networking organization that strives for capacity building and increasing the presence of women professionals in the increasingly male dominated architecture and building industry in Kenya (Machuhie, 2020). Through various initiatives pertaining to business development, industry research, career outreach, advocacy and mentoring programs, WIRE serves as a platform that enables women to broaden their knowledge, leadership skills, and grow their network and business opportunities.

- Women in Planning South Africa (WiPSA)

Women in Planning South Africa (Appendix A) is a network seeking to promote gender mainstreaming in the town planning and development sector, still predominantly dominated by males. Their activities revolve around space planning, but also economic and social-community development. The association aims at transforming the profession by building a platform to foster support and collaboration among women. Through a set of seminars, workshops, online courses and by developing mentorship programmes, the network also aspires to ensure that young women find guidance and opportunities to enter the job market.

Local

- Women Transforming Cities, Vancouver, Canada

Women Transforming Cities (WTC) was formed in 2009 from the City of Vancouver's first Women's Advisory Committee with the vision to live in cities where all self-identified women and girls, in all their

diversity, have real social, economic and political power (Women Transforming Cities, 2020). Since inception they have led initiatives and challenges to connect to the community including the Women Led Cities Initiative, an initiative to action on systemic barriers on women's participation in local government and the Hot Pink Paper Campaign to incentivize women to vote. Most recently they were a main contributor to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Toward Parity Framework (FCM, 2020).

- Women in Cities International, Montréal, Canada

Women in Cities International (WICI) was founded in 2002 in Montréal, Canada, following nearly a decade of work on women's safety in Canadian cities. WICI champions the participatory potential of women's safety audits, maintaining that women and girls are experts in their own safety. The non-profit organization works alongside local and national governments, urban planners, transit authorities, international organizations, and community groups to build safe, inclusive, and accessible cities. WICI was instrumental in the development of the First International Conference on the Safety of Women in 2002 and continues to generate and exchange knowledge on women's and girls' experiences in urban environments. WICI has maintained a commitment to using participatory approaches to support dialogue and change, while expanding their organizational focus to incorporate conversations around diversity, disability, gender policy, and women's access to water and sanitation.

- The Women Led Cities Initiative, Philadelphia, USA

In 2018 Women Led Cities (WLC) began with a pilot working conference for women in the Greater Philadelphia region working in various urbanism fields. Attention was specifically placed on recruiting women from a wide range of backgrounds and levels of experience, including students, urban planners, artists, policymakers, and grassroots organizers. An intersectional cohort of mostly Women of Color was assembled to join three working conferences over the following year thanks to a grant from the Knight Foundation. Though the project is no longer active following the funding period, it was featured at SXSW, Placemaking Week in Amsterdam, and various other planning conferences where workshops helped shed light on the gender inequity of urban design and leadership.

- Women in Urbanism YYC, Calgary, Canada

Women in Urbanism YYC is based in Calgary, Canada and was founded in March, 2019 as a way to connect women working in urbanism related fields such as planning, architecture, landscape design, community associations, civil society and other realms. Inspired by Women in Planning UK and Women in Urbanism Aotorea and similar efforts, the network aims at promoting equity, diversity and inclusion in urbanism (Women in Urbanism YYC, 2020). Since adoption the network has served as a point of connection and resource sharing for local women, has held numerous discussion and brainstorming sessions and held a popular cross-disciplinary mentorship and networking event and webinar discussion on feminism during COVID-19.

Promising Practices and the barriers to achieve them

This section showcases examples of best practices from different parts of the world. While examples from countries in Europe and North America focus on policy and spatial interventions that were a result of feminist planning practices, those from developmental contexts in Africa, Asia, and South and Central America highlight the ongoing efforts to mainstream gender conscious planning practices as well as the systemic issues that act as barriers to achieving them. While this is not an exhaustive list, it serves as

examples of how different contexts have responded to the need to put gender-based planning on the agenda.

Europe

- *Sweden*

Based on initial efforts from the town of Karlskoga, many towns in Sweden changed their seemingly gender-neutral approach to snow-clearing to shift the prioritization from main roads to local streets. This was based on a 2011 gender-equality initiative that resulted from data collection that demonstrated how male and female mobility patterns are quite different (99pi, 2019). When the town councillors changed the snow-clearing order there was no obvious cost associated, however they ended up saving money by reduced hospital admissions from injuries caused from slippery or icy pedestrian conditions (Perez, p.4). Caroline Criado-Perez also looked at data from other Swedish cities showing that “the cost of pedestrian accidents in icy conditions was about twice the cost of winter road maintenance” (p.6).

- *Barcelona, Spain*

Barcelona’s first female mayor Ada Colau Ballano was elected in 2015 under the municipalist political platform Barcelona En Comu. Along with Paris mayor Anne Hidalgo, she was recognized for her advocacy of the Right to the City and its inclusion in the UN’s New Urban Agenda ratified at Habitat III in Quito in 2016 (Johnston-Zimmerman, 2017). As a part of this reform she stated very clearly her personal, feminist, incentive for the ratification which was otherwise opposed:

The way in which this prioritization manifests in the public realm comes in the form of Ada’s radical rethink on streets as public spaces, or Superblocks, as she calls them. The Superblock program (or Superilles) transforms neighborhood streets within the block system of the urban form into car-free or low-car streets in order to prioritize broader arteries for car traffic and provide more public spaces for community use. The program is a part of the Right to the City ethos, as well as the feminist perspective that Ada espouses, in that it prioritizes children, the elderly, and women and girls’ health and wellbeing in the public realm.

According to research conducted one year after pilot activations, it is predicted that the Superblocks, if implemented citywide, could save hundreds of lives each year and cut air pollution by one quarter (Burgen, 2019). Additional positive impacts have come from decreased noise pollution as well as heat island effects, and an increase in walking/cycling and green spaces which boost physical and mental health. Ada has connected car-dominated cities with patriarchal design in part because of these benefits, especially with regards to climate change and a focus on the collective good. “We urgently need a paradigm shift away from the car-centred urban planning model and towards a people-centred approach,” she said in a Guardian article detailing the program’s impact (Colau, 2016).

- *Women Design Service, UK*

WDS was set up in 1983 (Berglund and Wallace: 2013) and ran until February 2012 (WDS: 2020). Set up by a group of women architects, designers and planners who wanted to ensure that cities across the UK took account of women’s needs, it produced research and training for women’s groups (WDS: 2020). WDS focused on all women, including women from ethnic minorities and women with disabilities (WDS: 2020). Themes occurred through WDS, the need for toilets, nappy changing, creches, housing design, parks, pavements, safety and transport; and the WDS undertook research on these themes (WDS: 2020). The research led to a series of publications and guides (WDS: 2020).

When the WDS was established in the 1980s it was an era of radical policy making in London (Berglund and Wallace: 2013). The Greater London Council provided political support for women's issues (Berglund and Wallace: 2013). At this time, there was a London-wide Women and Planning group, which was made up of local authority officers across London (Greed: 1994) and the Women Design Service was the secretary for this group.

In the 1990s and onwards, the political support for women's issues wavered and WDS was operating in a very different context and it became harder to secure funding and support (Berglund and Wallace: 2016). During the UK coalition government and the global recession, the WDS was unable to find funding or resources to continue its work (WDS, 2020).

- The Royal Town Planning Institute's Gender Mainstreaming Toolkit

Gender mainstreaming is the process of embedding the different needs of men and women into decision-making. The EU Amsterdam Treaty of 1997 makes 'the elimination of inequalities and the promotion of equality between women and men' a key consideration for all activities at a local authority level in the UK. Research suggests that the impact of gender mainstreaming on planning practice in the UK was limited in scope (Greed and Reeves, 2005; Greed, 2006)

In this context in 2003 the Royal Town Planning Institute published their Gender Mainstreaming toolkit developed by academics and practitioners (Greed et al, 2003). Aimed at all those engaged in the planning process, the toolkit sought to give practical guidance for those working in planning to incorporate gender issues into their work. The toolkit provides users with a series of questions to consider in order to better understand the impact of planning policy or other activities on gender equality.

- Women and Planning Conference

In 2019 The Leeds Planning School at Leeds Beckett University hosted the Women and Planning Conference. The conference sought to further develop the conversation around the need for diversity in the planning profession. It brought together academics and practitioners (and those in between) to discuss the histories of women and planning, issues facing gender diversity in contemporary planning, and ambitions for the future (Leeds Beckett University, 2020). Following the conference the Women and Planning Research Group was formed to take this research forward.

- Women Friendly Leeds

Women Friendly Cities is a UN Joint Programme which seeks to further equality in the financial, social and political opportunities a city can offer. A Women Friendly City is described as one where women have full access to health, social, employment and urban services, and where decision makers include women's issues and needs in their planning. In 2019 Women's Lives Leeds, a consortium of 11 women's organisations in Leeds commenced their Women Friendly Leeds movement which aims to be the first UK Women Friendly City. Key initiatives to date include listening to women and girls to better understand their needs, and engaging with strategic partners and decision makers. Work is ongoing to seek to ensure women's voices are heard in planning the post-COVID19 city.

North America

- *Canada*
- Vancouver, British Columbia - *A City for All Women*

In 2016, Vancouver City Council passed a motion to undertake the development of a comprehensive, intersectional gender equity strategy. The resulting document, *A City for All Women* (2018), is a 10-year strategy that recognizes Vancouver’s evolving political and social landscape. The Strategy identifies five key priority areas that contribute to women’s equity in the built environment, including intersectionality, safety, childcare, housing, and representation. By providing a number of measurable short and long-term goals for each municipal department, the strategy recognizes the importance of taking a coordinated approach to gender equity. Notably, the City of Vancouver aligned this strategy with a number of cross-departmental policies and initiatives, including Vancouver’s Healthy City Strategy, Childcare Strategy and Housing Strategy, and has committed to ongoing progress measurement and reporting throughout the project lifespan.

- Montréal, Conseil des Montréalaises, Quebec

Created in 2004, the Conseil des Montréalaises (CM) is a women’s advisory panel serving Montréal’s City Council and Executive Committee. The Conseil consists of 15 women, nominated on the recommendation of female elected officials, which acts as a consultative body to City Council and municipal administration matters relating to women’s status, equity, or quality of life in Montréal. CM works alongside stakeholders and women’s community groups to develop relationships with elected officials and municipal employees in order to raise awareness of issues related to the status and equity of women.

- **United States**
- *Feminist Economic Recovery Plan, United States*

While continuing to recover from COVID-19, the state of Hawai’i adopted a Feminist Economic Recovery Plan. The plan was produced by the Hawai’i State Commission on the Status of Women and is designed to incorporate “the unique needs of indigenous and immigrant women, caregivers, elderly women, femme-identifying and non-binary people, incarcerated women, unsheltered women, domestic abuse and sex trafficking survivors, and women with disabilities.” (Nguyen, 2020). The comprehensive document and call to action importantly notes that “this is our moment to build a system that is capable of delivering gender equality” (Hawai’i State Commission on the Status of Women, 2020).

- Stalled, United States

While it has been widely acknowledged that the needs of trans-gender, non-binary and intersex people should be reflected in the built environment and public realm, there is limited urbanist practices reflecting this necessity. An important example of this valuable consideration is the design of public washrooms. In the United States, the debate over sex segregated washrooms has been lengthy and contentious (99pi, 2020). Stalled was formed in 2018 by a cross-disciplinary research team to address an urgent need to create “safe, sustainable and inclusive public restrooms for everyone regardless of age, gender, race, religion and disability” (Stalled, 2020).

Asia

- South Asia

India

In India for example, the sustained co-existence of patriarchal systems in multiple home and work environments, traditionally followed norms in social hierarchies and enduring unequal power relationships between men and women have meant that historically, women have been prohibited from equitable use of public spaces (Phadke and Ranade, 2011). This has roots in tendencies to censor the behaviour of women and protectionism, and in turn, limits the mobility of women and their opportunities.

However, recent feminist developments within the planning field around the world and collective activism of various women's groups within India has meant that a paternalistic way of planning that used to dictate urban design standards has gradually made way for awareness of gender sensitive planning and the need to include this explicitly in planning agendas. For example, as a result of sustained campaigns by women's groups and citizens, the Mumbai development plan 2034 has established an 'Advisory committee on gender', a first in the country to develop infrastructure for working women. The 8-member committee consists of a gender activist, urban planner, architect, academic, communication specialist, lawyer and a representative of the municipal corporation. Some of the suggestions put forth by the committee include care centres, skill centres, working women's hostels, shelters for the homeless and reservation for women vendors (Dhupkar, 2019). While many aspects of the development plan such as reduction of green spaces, lack of heritage preservation and the intensity of allocated Floor Space Index (FSI) has been critiqued (Koppikar, 2015), the inclusion of gender in a development plan is considered a positive step.

Bangladesh

In recent decades, while gender dimensions are increasingly taken into account in governance, economic and developmental issues, as well as in empowering low-income women entrepreneurs in Bangladesh, these have not made notable inroads into the planning field. While there is an increase in women planning professionals in various sectors, their formal and informal collaboration currently exists mainly through efforts on social media platforms, for example, 'Women Architects Engineers Planners Association (WAEPA Bangladesh)'. Buoyed by the growing economy and a rising middle class, Dhaka, the capital city has witnessed in recent decades, a surge in contemporary architecture practices. These however remain overwhelmingly dominated by male professionals. Interventions are restricted to 'individual plot based on stand-alone practices' (Morshed, 2018) while the city faces multiple planning issues typical of other Asian mega cities.

Nepal

In efforts to mainstream gender in the public sphere by increasing equitable access to women, urban poor and marginalised communities, the Ministry of Urban Development (MoUD) in Nepal published Gender Equality and Social Inclusion (GESI) operational guidelines which was adopted by various sectors such as urban development, building construction, housing, water supply and sanitation. However, the GESI has attracted critique because of a lack of genuine participation by women in decision-making processes. To address this gap, UNOPS Nepal Office and Cities Alliance have constituted 'The City for Women Laboratory' to explore potentials for empowerment and inclusion of women in issues pertaining to urban development and governance (Cities Alliance, 2020).

South East Asia

Singapore

Singapore is regarded as one of the safest cities in the world. This is largely due to the presence of the state in the surveillance of the public spaces and the meting of fines and harsh punishments in case the laws and regulations are not adhered to. The founding Prime Minister of Singapore Lee Kuan Yew prioritised safety as one of the bulwarks of modern Singapore where ‘a woman can run at three o’ clock in the morning’ (Tan, 2019; p.1). Perhaps because of this top-down approach to safety, gender mainstreaming is seen in collusion to safe public spaces and does not receive an explicit mention in the urban documents published by the ‘Centre for Livable Cities’ which is jointly established by the Ministry of National Development and the Ministry of the Environment and Water Resources.

Philippines

In the Philippines, major gains have been made in the recent decades regarding women’s participation in development work and governance, and various policies have been initiated to ensure gender equality and to prevent discrimination. The Philippine Commission on Women bears main responsibility for institutionalizing gender mainstreaming in the national development plans and further coordinates, prepares, assesses, and updates the National Plan for Women as well as ensures its implementation. It also monitors the performance of government agencies regarding the implementation of the plan at all levels (Phillipine Commission on Women, 2020).

South & Central America

In countries in South and Central America, gender issues and violence against women are exacerbated because of its coexistence with class differences, race prejudice, political ideologies, climate justice, and income gaps subsequently impacting women’s access to the benefits of urbanization (Hiramatsu, 2018). To counter the absence of women from urban planning policies, several women have emerged as thought leaders, activists and public intellectuals from an individual capacity as well as in collaboration with NGOs, local communities and municipalities to bring the complex nature of these issues to the forefront. For example, The Latin America Women and Habitat Network, and CISCOSA Ciudades Feministas in Argentina strive to develop a feminist way of urban planning (Appendix A).

Brazil

In Brazil, many activists and organizations have held discussions at various levels to shed light on the deeply complex societal fissure and inequalities brought about by gender bias and race, and its subsequent impact on the rights to the city, safety, walkability and lack of viable public transport options, for example ‘Cidadeapé – Associação pela Mobilidade a Pé em São Paulo’, ‘Instituto Pólis’, ‘Mobilize: Mobilidade Urbana Sustentável’ among other organizations that are functioning at the intersection of architecture and urban planning (Appendix A). Leadership positions in most favelas and housing movements are led by women, however since most of these women are poor and less educated, they have very limited or no access to ongoing discussions about gender mainstreaming in the planning field.

Mexico

In the city of Monterrey in Mexico, as a reaction against the traditional gender norms in the society, after several years of lobbying by women’s advocates, the city instituted ‘the Gender Equality Program of the Secretariat of Sustainable Development and the State Program for Urban Development 2030’ to enable women to have a greater say in how the cities are planned and designed (García, 2019). Both in 2019 and 2020, Mexico city witnessed marches by women to protest the violence against women, and the rising femicides, numbering upto 10 registered cases a day. This is attributed in a large measure to the unsafe public spaces in Mexican cities (Arellano, 2020).

Africa

East Africa

Several countries in East Africa comprising Burundi, Comoros, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Seychelles, Somalia, Tanzania and Uganda are witnessing a construction boom. However, planning is an emerging field in these contexts, and allied fields such as architecture, real estate, contracting and quantity surveying are considered as male oriented disciplines. In addition, more focus is devoted to addressing urgent developmental issues of poverty, infant mortality, access to basic services, health and education, and this could explain partly why gender issues in the planning sector are afforded lesser priority.

A few notable examples include a woman-led social movement for ethical and sustainable development in Tanzania which pushes for legislative reform in built environment practices (Wood, 2019). In Kenya, there are acknowledgements that women are under-represented in professions which concern the built environment, and this is also reflected in the universities where fewer women enroll for these courses (see Maichuhie, 2020 for statistics).

Reflections

Through collaboration on this chapter we have had the opportunity to explore intersections between feminist planning and urbanism. Looking at a range of networks and organizations across the globe, we have observed that a majority of the initiatives are at a local grassroots scale rather than within professional networks. This suggests that the feminist urbanism discourse is not necessarily accepted and mainstreamed within existing professional structures. Regardless of the scale, the existence of a policy or network does not mean that the corresponding built environment is equitable. This demonstrates the importance of monitoring, implementation, and widespread education to ensure that policies, goals and targets are continuously reflected in city building in the immediate, medium, and long-term.

There is not a singular effective approach to feminist urbanism as it requires engagement, and continuous and intentional conversations with communities and an understanding of the context to properly reflect the intersectionality within the built environment. Given that planning is a relatively new profession in many parts of the world, and the practice of planning continues to involve mostly white cis males, there is a great deal of work that still needs to be done. Female representation at leadership levels typically lessens the higher you move up in hierarchical organizations. This demonstrates an inherent conflict where in leadership decisions and the systems that they reside within continue to be exclusionary. To ensure planning and urbanist practices are equitable there should be a diversity of representation at all levels to reflect the communities that are being planned and designed in collaboration with. Ultimately, what is considered a 'good' city remains entirely subjective. Nonetheless, the built environment and its harbingers should be far more equitable so that everyone has the opportunity to feel safe, welcome, and is able to prosper irrespective of their gender.

Reflexivity Statement

The authors of this chapter come from a diversity of backgrounds and expertise. While we were assisted by a range of colleagues, practitioners and authors from different contexts and included best practices from across the world we were not able to include all female identifying community builders and visionaries. Inherently, our personal and professional experience provides us with a research bias that we acknowledge may have limited our scope and focus. With this acknowledgement we understand that this

online publication can evolve to include additional examples that may contribute towards achieving a more inclusive feminist urbanism in every corner of the world.

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Appendix A

List of Feminist Planning & Urbanism related organizations

Organization	Location	Website
American Planning Association (APA) Women and Planning Division	United States	https://women.planning.org/
Arquitetas em Rede	Brazil	https://www.instagram.com/arquitetasemrede/
BAME in Property	United Kingdom	https://www.bameinproperty.com/
BAME Planners Network	United Kingdom	https://twitter.com/bameplanners
Black Females in Architecture	United Kingdom	https://www.blackfemarc.com/
Cidadeapé – Associação pela Mobilidade a Pé em São Paulo	Sao Paulo, Brazil	https://cidadeape.org/
CISCSA Ciudades Feministas	Argentina	https://www.ciscsa.org.ar/quienes-somos
Commonwealth Women in Planning Network (CWIP)	Global (Commonwealth countries)	https://tinyurl.com/yxh262qj
Instituto Pólis	Brazil	https://polis.org.br/
Mahila Housing SEWA Trust	India	https://www.mahilahousingtrust.org/
Mobilize: Mobilidade Urbana Sustentável	Brazil	https://www.mobilize.org.br/
Network for Feminist Urban Planning	Global (based in Sweden)	https://tryggaesverige.org/tankesmedja/eng-nfu
Safecity	Global (based in India)	https://safecity.in/
Safetipin	India	https://safetipin.com/
Tanzania Women Architects for Humanity (TAWAH)	Tanzania	http://outbox.co.tz/test/tawah/
TAO Pilipinas	The Philippines	https://tao-pilipinas.org/

The Association of Women in Property	United Kingdom	https://www.womeninproperty.org.uk
The Latin America Women and Habitat Network	Latin America	https://www.redmujer.org.ar/the-network
Urbanistas Rotterdam		https://www.urbanistasrdam.nl/
Urbanistas UK	United Kingdom	https://www.urbanistas.org.uk/
WEDO (Women's Environmental and Development Organization)	Global	https://wedo.org/
WIEGO (Women in Informal Employment Globalizing and Organizing)	Global	https://www.wiego.org/
Women in Cities International	Montreal, Canada	https://femmesetvilles.org/
Women in Planning, South Africa (WIPSA)	South Africa	http://wipsa.org.za/
Women in Real Estate (WIRE)	Kenya, Africa	http://www.wire.or.ke/
Women Transforming Cities	Vancouver, Canada	https://www.womentransformingcities.org/
Women in Urbanism Aotearoa	New Zealand	https://www.womeninurban.org.nz/
Women in Urbanism YYC	Calgary, Canada	https://twitter.com/Womeninyyc