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Mainstreaming gender in the city

Women and gender became prominent issues in city planning and architecture in the 1970s, propelled by activists and scholars whose ideas seeped in to practice, even as they were fuelled by practice in the feminist movements of the era. Prior to this, initial forays were made by pioneers in the US, including Catherine Bauer Wurster (Bauer, 1934; Wurster, 1963), Jane Addams (Knight, 2005) and Jaqueline Tyrwhitt (Shoshkes, 2013). In Europe, collaborative efforts uniting female patrons, architects, social reformers and designers contributed to the building of a great number of women's spaces in Berlin from the German unification in 1871 to the end of World War I (WWI) (Stratigakos, 2008). These collaborations included housing, restaurants, schools and exhibition halls. Women have long played important roles in urban development as patrons and social reformers (Durning and Wrigley, 2000).

However, conventional histories of planning and architecture do not always acknowledge these roles or, more importantly, their impact on the built environment. A case in point is the key role played by Henrietta Barnett in the building of Hampstead Garden Suburb (Hall, 1988). While the roles of Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin in the development and design of this important example of twentieth century urbanism are taught in planning courses around the world, the role played by Barnett in securing the actual development and buying the land goes mostly unnoticed. Yet, without it, Hampstead as a model garden suburb would not have been built. Conventional histories have also typically missed the pioneering housing complexes designed for professional women who did not have time to devote to overseeing that domestic chores were properly carried out by service personnel.

Women were also active in the aforementioned earlier times in countries not well represented in mainstream planning literature, such as Spain. There, the accomplishments of women such as Concepción Arenal, founder of Spanish feminism, who founded a company devoted to building cheap homes for workers, reformed the prison system and was the first woman to attend university in 1841 (Martínez et al., 2000), often go unnoticed. Of course, there are many other less-well known women pioneers, in Spain and in many other countries, who need to be rediscovered using local and national historical research and archives and embraced as key players in the field of planning and its history. This would serve to give a fairer and more balanced

representation of the roles women played – both individually, as professionals, patrons or social reformers, and through collective action, in shaping urban environments – and how they addressed gender, or ‘women’s issues’ as they would have been called at the time, during the nineteenth and early- to mid-twentieth centuries.

These activist–professionals primarily practiced, and some came to the academy on the strength of their accomplishments. Since the beginning of the 1970s, a more academic outlook prevailed in the US, with the work of pioneering academics such as Dolores Hayden, Susana Torre, Karen Franck, Mary McLeod, Joan Ockman, Daphne Spain, Diana Agrest, Sandra Rosenbloom and many others. Although significant research had also been produced in Europe since the 1980s, by Clara Greed, Marion Roberts, Chris Booth, Jos Boys, Dory Reeves, Teresa Boccia, Sasa Lada, Liisa Horelli, Inés Sánchez de Madariaga and others, the European approach was more practically oriented overall. Matrix, the Women Design Service in the UK (Matrix, 1984; Berglund and Wallace, 2013), or the Eurofem network in Scandinavia (Horelli et al., 2000) are good examples of this, as well as specific initiatives developed by public administration in many countries, such as in Oslo (Ministry of Environment, 1993), and by professional associations, such as the British Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) (Reeves, 1989). In Latin America, women architects and planners have approached the field from a mostly activist position, even if sometimes grounded in the academy. A case in point is the *Mujer y Habitat de América Latina* network.¹

The development of these experiences was supported by insights resulting from those early gendered approaches to the city and its living practices, tracing the differences in experiencing urban space by the two genders. Moreover, the gender-sensitive approach to cities and their planning and design was abetted by a European-wide legal framework developed since 1998, when the Treaty of Amsterdam included a requirement for gender mainstreaming all spheres of public policy (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2003; Council of Europe, 1998). Today, although the practical experience of gender planning is uneven across Europe – fragile in many cases and generally far from real institutionalisation – it is true that specific experiences are widespread, and gender is finally becoming embedded in the city building agenda (Sánchez de Madariaga and Roberts, 2013).

The current context is quite different from the one in which earlier pioneering work on women and gender in cities, planning and architecture took place. While the situation of women has greatly improved in terms of access to employment, full integration and equal recognition is still far into the future. It is worth mentioning that an increasing number of female students in the built environment professions translates very unevenly into their actual participation in the workforce and in decision-making in those professions, which in most countries has remained heavily male dominated (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2010; De Graft-Johnson, 2005). At the same time, care of the home and of dependents continues to be basically women’s work, as the statistics

1 See <http://www.redmujer.org.ar/> (accessed 21 June 2016).

produced by Eurostat demonstrate.² Thus, built environments need to better respond to gender-specific needs arising from new societal challenges, which imply profound social and economic changes. Such changes include evolving and less predictable life cycles for both men and women, a reduction in birth rates, the diversification of household structures, including the increase of single-person and female-headed households with children, the ageing of the population with mostly female higher quintiles, a mostly female population of caregivers, whether at home or in public or private services, and the increasing racial and ethnic diversification of societies.

‘Intersectionality’ – a new concept referring to the ways in which discrimination affects groups and individuals in whom more than one potential trait of discrimination coalesce, whether because of gender, race, ethnicity, age, socio-economic status and so on, and are for this reason in positions of increased vulnerability, is an increasingly important focus of attention for both research and policy.

While economic growth in the developing world is substantially improving the quality of life of many, increasing economic disparities within countries and the reduction of safety nets in Europe and elsewhere during the aftermath of the crisis provide for unstable contexts for many in the developed world. Greece is a case in point, but significant sections of the population in southern European, as well as northern European, countries live in situations of greater precariousness than was the norm in the last half of the twentieth century, as the ‘jobs for life’ status typical of the Fordist period have all but disappeared and the safety nets provided by welfare state provisions have been trimmed across the continent. Women and children in Europe are over-represented among those deemed as living in precarious conditions.

Factoring in gender-specific concerns allows planners and designers to provide and enable a physical environment where daily life is better supported than it is today. Additionally, as new urban issues arise in relation to environmental challenges, technological developments, globalisation and the aspiration of reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals by improving the quality of life of people around the globe, research and action is needed to address these issues, while at the same time properly integrating gender considerations.

We expect that the key contribution of this issue will be to assert that it is time, once again, to bring women and gender to the forefront of the research agenda in planning. It is an important moment from the point of view of urban policy, with major ongoing international developments: the new European Urban Agenda; the international Agendas of Habitat III; the Sustainable Development Goals; and the Paris COP Agreement on Climate Change. Within this context, as existing European and national legislation on gender mainstreaming in city building is further implemented,

2 The Harmonized European Time Use Statistics – HETUS – offers opportunities to calculate user-defined, comparable statistical tables on the organisation and activities of everyday life in fifteen European countries. Available from: <https://www.h5.scb.se/tus/tus/> (accessed 21 June 2016).

we need to inform these developments with gender-aware theoretical and conceptual frameworks and with the necessary empirical data fitted to present, and especially future, contexts. This potentially positions planners as leaders in setting the urban research, policy and design agendas. This special issue addresses a number of relevant topics for this advancement of gender into contemporary planning agendas.

The papers in this issue cover key topics that are central to gendered approaches to planning, authored by European and North American scholars, the focus of which turns to a number of cases beyond these geographical areas and thus to includes discussion of other parts of the world.

The persistent disparities that women face in cities and rural areas are pertinent to planners and policy makers. In the parts of the world that international organisations refer to as ‘emerging economies’ or ‘the developing world’, wealth and other disparities are more pronounced. In the developing world, women still face massive inequality as regards material needs and suffer explicit legal discrimination in terms of gender equality – for instance, in access to property and inheritance rights (Giovarelli and Wamalwa, 2011). In countries where water, energy or sanitation is not widely accessible, women spend endless hours fetching water and biomass, because they are forced to cook without a steady source of energy and to wash by hand. Lack of access to water, sanitation and toilets in homes and schools is a major cause of girls not achieving the same levels of education, resulting in reduced employment opportunities for adult women and increased risk of sexual violence towards them.

Clara Greed looks at global sanitation issues, with particular reference to the needs of girls and women in respect of toilet provision, in her paper, *Taking Women's Bodily Functions into Account in Urban Planning Policy: Public Toilets and Menstruation*. Over two billion people lack adequate toilet provision, and women are particularly badly affected. Fifty per cent of school girls in Africa leave school when menstruation starts, because of the lack of school toilets, thus undermining education and development goals. Greed's paper also addresses the public toilet situation in the West, with particular reference to inadequate provision in the United Kingdom. Historically, women have been given fewer facilities than men, but arguably their need is greater. A lack of toilet facilities has implications for health and well-being by restricting the mobility of the elderly, those with disabilities and children, thus undermining, as a result, sustainability, transportation, inclusive urban design and regeneration policies. Ways of integrating toilet provision into city-wide strategic planning policy and local urban design are discussed in this paper as crucial elements to creating sustainable, efficient, accessible and equitable cities.

For the many millions in the next income bracket tier – those who have access to electricity and energy for cooking, but not to washing machines – washing by hand is a major obstacle to freeing up time for education and gainful employment. In Europe, the widespread access to washing machines since the middle of the twentieth century

has been a major factor in allowing women the time to educate themselves and to enter the labour force in big numbers. One of the authors of this paper, has argued elsewhere, in an op-ed written for UN-Habitat, that access to washing machines could be a good indicator to measure progress concerning three concurrent agendas – i.e. the New Urban Agenda of Habitat III, the Sustainable Development Goals and the Climate Change Agreements – that would simultaneously take into consideration their gender equality implications (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2015). According to Rosling,³ only two billion people today have access to washing machines, while washing linen and clothing for the remaining five billion people in the world is done by women, who spend many hours every day undertaking the heavy burden and time-consuming task of looking for water, heating it and washing by hand. Following Rosling's estimations, given the two billion people today living under the poverty line, along with the additional two billion impoverished persons expected to gain access to electricity in the coming years, it is imperative that we look at the gender dimensions of how this happens. Ensuring access to washing for these wide sections of the population in the so-called developing world will have very significant implications in terms of urban infrastructure and planning, use of energy and emissions to the atmosphere. A significant increase in the number of women who have access to *both* electricity *and* washing machines will prove a key leap forward for gender equality in the world. But this cannot happen in an environmentally sustainable way without a significant change in energy production and consumption patterns by people in the upper income bracket. Again, according to Rosling, at current trends, this group will consume more than half of the world's energy, which itself will almost double. This unsustainable pattern needs to be cut by half or more, through more efficient use of energy and increased use of green energy.

The transportation sector, which has significant gender implications, as shown in this special issue by Loukaitou-Sideris and Blumenberg, is one sector in which important changes need to occur in order to reduce environmental impacts and energy consumption. The potentially negative implications for gender equality of urban policies that prioritise environmental objectives are illustrated within a first world context by Evelyn Blumenberg in her paper, *Why Low Income Women Need Cars in the US*. Drawing on a diverse body of literature and data, she shows why low-income women need automobiles. Their demand for cars emerges from the shifting geographic locations of employment and homes, the characteristics of women's work and the labour market, and women's household responsibilities. A growing body of scholarship on the role of automobiles in shaping outcomes for low-income women shows how those who are able to access automobiles experience a host of benefits, including better employment opportunities, access to healthier food and greater health care

3 See <http://www.gapminder.org/> (accessed 21 June 2016).

use. In spite of this evidence, there are relatively few efforts to increase automobile use among low-income households in the US, likely due to the costs and negative environmental externalities associated with driving. Programmes and policies that have proven to be effective are discussed. Blumenberg argues that if automobiles are essential to women's livelihoods, policies ought to balance the need for automobiles with efforts to reduce their negative environmental impact.

While basic material needs are mostly covered in many of the OECD countries today, women still tend to face greater constraints than men in their daily lives. These constraints relate to: (i) unequal access to employment, including the gender pay gap and greater part-time employment for women; (ii) greater home and caring responsibilities; and (iii) scarce free time for leisure and self-care. Urban structures and transportation systems put constraints on the movements of persons who have to juggle care responsibilities and paid employment, including the lack of sufficient and adequately located and accessible support services for caring for the young and old, as is explained below. Factors contributing to this state of affairs include gender stereotypes, gender bias, which can sometimes be unconscious, and discrimination, both direct and indirect, even in Europe, despite its 'illegal' status (Sánchez de Madariaga, 2012).

Contemporary labour markets across the world show both vertical and horizontal gender segregation, both of which contribute to women's greater economic fragility. Horizontal segregation occurs when women are concentrated in jobs traditionally considered feminine jobs: mostly in health, education and service sectors. These are often less well-paid compared with jobs in male-dominated professions, such as engineering. Vertical segregation happens when women concentrate on the lower rungs of any profession, which happens independently of the degree of feminisation of professional fields and is sometimes explained in terms of the 'glass ceiling'. Contrary to what some might expect, horizontal segregation is greater in the Scandinavian countries, which also have the greatest participation of women in the workforce.⁴ This is explained by how Scandinavian countries have transferred care activities into paid employment, mainly in the form of public services. Yet for the most part, women undertake the same caring functions as before.

As a result of gender roles and sexual divisions of labour, women face what has been called a 'double work load': in paid employment and in the home. The Harmonized European Time Use Statistics (HETUS) – the European survey on the use of time – and the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics both still show significant gender differences in the time allocated to work, household tasks and leisure. Within Europe, there remain great variations between countries, but these are slowly converging over time. While women have joined the labour force in great numbers, the mirroring movement of men engaging in household chores is advancing at a much slower pace. Women take responsibility for the greater share of care work in

4 See http://www.gender.no/Facts_figures/1322 (accessed 21 June 2016).

the home, both of personal and household chores. With the ageing of the current population, the care of elderly persons will require even greater demands of time for caregivers than the childcare requirement of previous generations. Because women live longer, the majority of the elderly population are women, and most of the people who care for them are also women.⁵ The issue of care and its urban implications are crucial for women.

In her paper, *A Gendered View of Mobility and Transport*, Loukaitou-Sideris addresses the implications of gender roles and differences in employment and care activities in urban environments through the lens of transportation. She argues that women's mobility in cities is not only challenged by physical, economic, cultural and psychological constraints, but also inadequate transportation policies that often neglect or disregard women's needs. Women have distinct mobility needs and travel patterns, while at the same time important differences exist among women, based on socio-demographic characteristics and geographic contexts. Such differences and nuances are not always understood and much less addressed by policy makers. Historically, women have often faced important mobility hurdles, lessening their accessibility to city resources and opportunities. Feminist scholars agree that how people move (where, how fast and how often) is demonstrably gendered and continues to reproduce gendered power hierarchies. Gender distinctions in travel patterns hold true for both the Global North and the Global South.

It is important to note that we need to look at these categories of 'Global North' or 'Global South', or 'first world' and 'developing world', cautiously.⁶ We use them as useful metaphors, but we must be clear that the boundaries between rich and poor at a global level are not geographically clear any longer; in fact, they are rapidly evolving, with countries under the 'developing' tag becoming increasingly dissimilar. Statistician Hans Rosling has argued that what most people think of as the divisions between the 'developed' and 'developing world' no longer exist, that using the term 'developing world' is intellectually lazy and that we should classify countries more precisely.⁷ Moreover, many wealthy countries have rural areas, towns and urban neighbourhoods that resemble countries with emerging economies. Conversely, many emerging nations have areas that resemble advanced nations.

5 See <http://unstats.un.org/unsd/gender/default.html> (accessed 21 June 2016).

6 The World Bank classifies countries into low, lower-middle, upper-middle and high income groups, each associated with an annually updated threshold level of Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, with the low- and middle-income groups taken together referred to as the 'developing world'. The IMF classifies thirty-seven countries as 'Advanced Economies' and considers all others as 'Emerging Market and Developing Economies'. The UNDP's Human Development Index groups countries into: very high, high, medium and low levels of human development. This index draws on various indicators, including those related to income, education and health. The United Nations has no formal definition of developing countries, but still uses the term 'developing world' for monitoring purposes and classifies as many as 159 countries as such.

7 See <http://live.worldbank.org/hans-rosling-beyond-open-data> (accessed 21 June 2016).

Where do we stand with respect to gender mainstreaming in the planning arena? Two papers address this topic in this special issue and provide forward-looking suggestions. Camilla Perrone, in her paper *Grounds for Future Gendered Urban Agendas*, analyses the international debates on UN-Habitat and EU New Urban Agendas to present suggestions for a twenty-first century gendered urban agenda. While recalling the controversial debate on the implementation of ‘gender mainstreaming strategies’, she reflects on the need to reconceptualise gender as a constitutive versus a nominal essence. She posits a selection of grounds as domains of work and policy transfer, so as to mirror the complexity of gendered practices and create the conditions for their flourishing. The areas suggested as relevant for substantial gender mainstreaming would include (inter) urban connectivity and the question of women’s food-growing and agricultural activities, inspired by an urban life experiment in Mondeggi in Tuscany, Italy.

Dory Reeves, in her paper *Engendering Cities: International Dimensions from Aotearoa, New Zealand*, contributes a New Zealand perspective on gender and planning, based on desk research carried out for the European COST genderSTE network. The research sets out to document and examine those aspects of New Zealand’s relationship with Europe which relate to planning, as well as identify strategies and tactics to help deliver gender equality in the future. How can the NZ—EU Science Agreements linked to Horizon 2020 deliver gender sensitive responses to planning, and what role can a network of policy makers and researchers play and what barriers need to be overcome? The investigation found that New Zealand’s approach to gender has been, and continues to be, gender neutral, because of the subordination of the feminist discourse to the discourse on culture and ethnicity, which is a longstanding discourse of the country. Given this, international networks play an important role in providing mutual support to advocacy groups.

What we have learned; where we need to go

What should feminists and gender-sensitive planners and scholars be thinking about and doing now, so that in the future conditions for women will be better, both in developed and developing countries? We first posit the obvious: that women in the so-called ‘developing’ world need to have basic material needs, equivalent to those in OECD countries, which we take for granted. Yet given this, we hasten to add that the same profligacy and impact on the environment that first world acquisition of material wealth by expropriation of the natural environment and exploitation of the cultural environments at home and elsewhere should not be replicated. Developing countries should adapt existing, and create new, methods and materials that are appropriate to their contexts. This is already occurring in some places. In many of these countries, particularly the poorest in Africa, scarcity is leading to innovation and new models in consumption and production.

Examples of material improvements abound. A signal improvement is something as seemingly innocuous as access to washing machines, which is a key household implement for women's quality of life, requiring previous development of significant urban infrastructure, including electricity, water, sewerage and a sufficient level of household income. While this can make qualitative enhancements in the non-OECD nations, we go further and ask planners and scholars: what are the equivalents of washing machines in OECD countries? What innovations would provide a significant leap forward for women in wealthy nations now and into the future? We argue, for various reasons, that the answer to this question is not necessarily a material thing or an artifact.

First, when considering at a global level the natural environment, gender inequality, other aspects of inequality and urban development agendas *in combination*, it is obvious that in order to provide basic material goods to the growing world population, especially the rapidly increasing urban population, consumption by the upper income brackets need to be significantly curtailed.

We argue that women can play a key role in advancing an agenda for reduced consumption and more efficient use of natural and other resources in the developing world. This is because of women's roles as carers of persons, homes and environments. Gendered divisions of labour have led men into the public domain of the formal economy and political power, often leading to unnecessary accumulation and fierce competition, including violence – among individuals, organisations and countries – as well as exploitation of natural resources. While men have fought for power and resources, women have been, and still are, mostly providers of care. They are the ones who provide the 'soft activities' necessary to protect and sustain life at its most fragile: babies and infants, the elderly, the dying, the infirm and those with physical inability. They continue to do so even after they enter the workforce in increasingly diverse positions.

The necessary and inherent values required to protect, support and care for the lives of those who cannot take care of themselves, so beautifully described by the philosopher and Saint Edith Stein, patron of Europe, in her many essays on women, are the values that could underlie a global shift towards a world less predatory with nature, more voluntarily frugal and more sensitive to the needs of all human beings, irrespective of age, gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability or any other individual or group characteristic that sets persons apart in positions of vulnerability. Taking care of others sometimes implies putting their needs ahead of one's own.

We further argue for a reconsideration of the use value of things, rather than their exchange value, and the huge urban implications of these ideas. One example of this is the emerging sharing economy – something women worldwide pioneered generations ago, without giving it a name, so ingrained it was in the women's way of living. The current resurgence of the sharing economy is a consequence, among other things,

of the current economic crisis and the new expression of sustainability consciousness. In this process, we can learn from the experience of collaborative survival strategies developed by women in the developing world (Moser, 2009).

Another example of a more austere lifestyle that is being developed in the rich parts of the world is a lifestyle more deeply based on caring values, in which responsibility for the well-being of self and others overpowers the pressures of competition for 'having more than the neighbour', whether this 'having more' refers to material things, prestige or power. This is another instance in which traditionally feminine perspectives of caring for others can contribute to shifting priorities, from material wealth to personal growth of all. Here, one cautious note needs to be heralded: on attributing these capacities and values only to women, essentialising caring values as intrinsically women's values would be nothing more than a particular kind of double standard; indeed, it would be one form of gender bias too commonly found, even among researchers. This type of double standard occurs when a human attribute or trait is assigned in a prescriptive way to individuals of one gender, while at the same time the attribute is given ontological status and considered to be more important for those of that particular sex. Arguments of this kind were used to criticise the so-called second wave of feminism, or the feminism of difference, some decades ago. While it is important not to fall into these simplifying interpretations, which only reinforce gender stereotypes, it is also important not to fall into opposite interpretations, which fail to recognise that differences on issues related to the care of others do exist between men and women. Such perspectives – aspiring to demonstrate that women are equally capable in professional fields – often label any argument or evidence that women care more for nature and others than men as essentialising stereotypes.

We posit that these traditionally feminine values developed in the domestic sphere of the home have the potential to transform the public sphere of professional activity and decision-making as they become more widely embraced by all, irrespective of gender.

These factors and facts – the rise of the caring and the sharing economies, the increasing participation of women in the workplace and positions of leadership, as well as the increasing proportion of women as societies age – converge to place a greater emphasis on the role of women and the leadership nature of those roles in directing societies in the future. As these societies become more urban – up to 70 per cent of the global population by the year 2050 – they also point to the need for urban planning to change its foci to adapt to these realities and for gender-aware women and men to lead these changes in the planning professions and their scholarship.

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