Achieving Humanist Cities: Learning From Urban Feminism and Feminist Planning

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Abstract: As planners and urbanists continue to debate urban reforms needed to achieve humanist ideals – including just forms of sustainability – several different schools of thought are vying for influence, including cultural urbanism (celebrating the everyday, temporal, occasional, and timeless), pluralist urbanism (aiming for a co-produced city that is more democratic, participatory, and open-ended), and inclusive urbanism (focusing on the right to the city and its accommodations for all populations). Here, we examine feminist urbanism – the specific challenge of gender-equal spaces, particularly public spaces – as a model framework that suggests how the other schools of thought can be combined and translated into practical action. We focus on the nature and importance of public space and the role of gender inclusiveness in assuring public spaces that are more broadly open, participatory, pluralist, and supportive of temporal and everyday activities. We thus find that the emerging concept of feminist urbanism reveals essential issues for a wider humanist urbanism – in particular, who the city is meant to serve and whether the public realm is equitably 'public' to all its users. We note major remaining questions and research lacuna to be investigated, and we conclude with several policy and design recommendations.

Keywords: Cultural Urbanism, Pluralist Urbanism, Inclusive Urbanism, Feminist Urbanism, Public Space, Feminist Planning, Democracy, Gendered Spaces, Humanist Cities.

INTRODUCTION

The sociologist Richard Sennett has described an essential tension between a city's "hardware" (physical spaces and technological systems) and its "software" (its cultural patterns), with "culture informing and transforming the hardware of a city while technological change and infrastructure redirect the city culture" (Sennett, 2013). This tension plays out in the city's public realm, its arena of citizen participation. However, who is the city meant to serve, and is the public realm equitably 'public' to all its users? This question is at the core for those challenging gender-based exclusion and discrimination as part of a project to secure a "feminist urbanism." It is also instructive for other groups seeking a broader vision of "humanist cities" that promote social justice for all populations.

Public spaces have always been arenas of conflict and potential struggle over claims for control and access, historically dominated by majority populations and denied to minority and marginalized groups. Nevertheless, public spaces potentially offer many of the most positive aspects of urban living – access to resources, egalitarian participation in cultural and political life, and shared development of the common welfare. However, private interests are increasingly intruding into constructions of 'public space,' leading to growing inequalities and exclusions and an overall erosion of the commons. David Harvey (2008) warns of an increasing threat of the homogenization of public space in cities and its effects on who can access public space and for what usage.

BACKGROUND: MULTIPLE URBANISMS

Several schools of thought have emerged in recent years to address the challenge of a more humane and egalitarian urbanism, including cultural urbanism, pluralist urbanism, and inclusive urbanism. Each has a nuanced emphasis on different aspects of the urban commons and its challenges, and each brings essential insights to the broader challenge of working towards humanist cities. Feminist urbanism addresses the interrelation between material and imagined space and the experiences of bodies marked by gender. We offer a reflection of the contributions of feminist urbanism to understanding and working for the urban commons.

The basic premise of feminism is that inequality between the sexes exists. The eradication of this inequality poses challenges to urban environments and cities' spatial definitions and characteristics. Gender is part of the geography of everyday life; gender is intertwined with what people do, how they relate to one another, the spaces they use, and the places and landscapes they make (McDowell and Sharp, 1999). The city's spaces are essential for "equal" cities, where its users share, co-create, and achieve greater good for all.

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Reaching the ideal of humanist and livable cities for all requires engaging with cultural, pluralist, and inclusive urbanism (Diagram **1**). All three schools of thought can be learned from feminist urbanism, which 1. demonstrates how gender hierarchies affect our experience of the city and the use of its spaces; 2. Strives to work from these inequalities to conceive and apply urban design methods best suited for creating more humane and inclusive public places. This synthesis is also essential to a more "glocalized" urbanism that successfully manages the interrelation between globalization, modernization, and local needs, identities and characteristics, respecting and building on individual cities' unique cultures and histories.

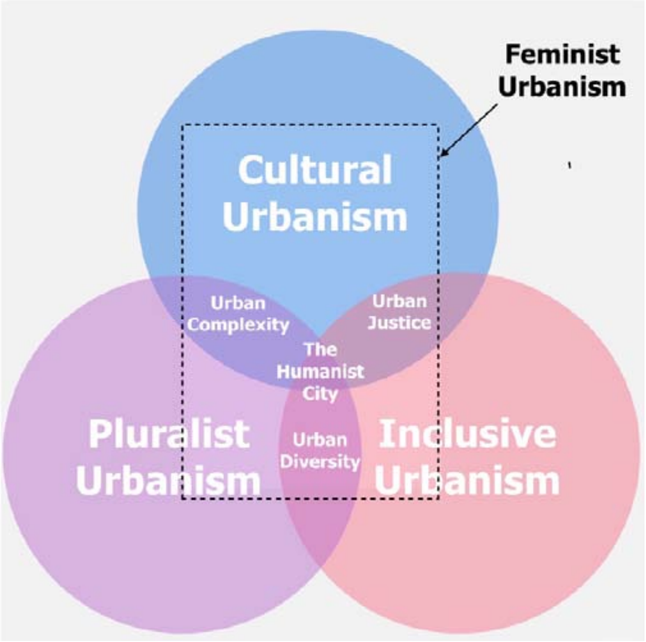

Diagram 1: Achieving humanist cities through a synthesis of urbanisms (Original idea by Tigran Haas, Ryan Locke, and Michael Mehaffy, 2022, Reworked by Michael Mehaffy and Tigran Haas, 2023).

THREE URBANISMS, THREE LENSES ON THE CITY

Cultural urbanism promotes and celebrates the everyday, temporal, occasional, and timeless city, rarely guiding conventional approaches to master-planned urbanism. Cultural urbanism explores the City's spatial and social fabric and the kineticism of relationships on the ground that defines the use and management of the built environment. It opens the differences and builds environments that foster community interaction. It enables us to deepen our understanding of what makes our cities unique and exciting while addressing the foundation for creating authentic places. Rather than working from a homogenous ideal, cultural urbanism allows the city's dwellers and users to be active makers of urban space. It is conducive to incorporating a variety of oral histories, narratives, and experiences. Doreen Massey (1994) again brings the key issues: those of space, where space must be conceptualized integrally with time, where a new way of thinking of space, not as some absolute independent dimension, but as constructed out of social relations must be brought in: that what is at issue is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations 'stretched out.' The fact is that social relations are never still, never implacable; they are inherently dynamic and kinetic. Thus, to understand space as simultaneity is, in these terms, not to evacuate it of all inherent dynamism. This is most evident in public places. If Massey looked at these issues through the lens of space, William Whyte did that through the lens of places, but in both cases, it was a fine-grained observation of people, cities, places, and spaces in between. 'Who makes our cities, and what part do everyday users have in the design of cities' is one of the crucial questions one has to ask, and that city-making is a social process and not just a hardware-built environment issue points to the 'close relationship and necessary link between the social and physical shaping of urban environments' (Tonkiss, 2014).

Pluralist urbanism embraces the diversity of activities and processes within the city and its public spaces. Brent Ryan describes three signal considerations for pluralist urbanism for city planners and urban designers: *eternal change, inevitable incompletion, and flexible fidelity*. Cities are ceaselessly active and perpetually changing. It is the urban designer's task to create urban forms with aesthetic qualities that can survive perpetual change (Ryan, 2017). The critical issue is that the public realm needs to remain an open and democratic public good even as it transforms since it cannot remain generic and stable.

Inclusive urbanism draws on years of study of how the city's spaces are used (or not) by certain populations who feel excluded for one reason or another. Whyte (1980), in the vein of 'observational urbanism,' studied a series of urban spaces in New York City and commented on why some were successful while others were not. According to Whyte, The social life in public spaces contributes fundamentally to the quality of life of individuals and society; designers have a moral responsibility to create physical places that facilitate civic engagement and community interaction; public spaces should be designed from the bottom up; design should start with a thorough understanding of the way people use and would like to use spaces. These lessons are crucial for inclusive urbanism if the purpose is to study the differences between how different populations experience spaces as places and to show how these differences help to create more egalitarian spaces within the public realms of our cities.

Inclusive, cultural, and pluralist urbanism are three distinct but interconnected lenses through which urban spaces can be analyzed and appreciated. As Qian *et al*. (2018) discussed, inclusive urbanism emphasizes accessibility and equity, ensuring urban amenities are universally accessible and transcending socio-economic, ability, or background barriers. Cultural urbanism, highlighted by Bianchini and Ghilardi (2007), underscores the importance of nurturing diverse cultural expressions within urban populations, integrating the rich tapestry of cultural heritage into the urban fabric. Pluralist urbanism, on the other hand, advocates for a broad representation of viewpoints and lifestyles within urban planning and policy, promoting a multifaceted approach to urban living.

Feminist urbanism intersects with these lenses by adding a crucial focus on gender equity and challenging traditional patriarchal urban structures. It dovetails with inclusive urbanism by calling for equitable spaces for all genders, emphasizing safety, accessibility, and fair resource distribution (Beebeejaun, 2017). In cultural urbanism, feminist urbanism contributes to the narrative by highlighting women's contributions to urban culture and history (Bianchini and Ghilardi, 2007). Concerning pluralist urbanism, feminist urbanism ensures that women's voices and perspectives are integral in urban discourse and decision-making, thus enhancing the pluralist approach (Kern, 2020). Feminist urbanism, therefore, not only supplements but also deepens the principles of inclusive, cultural, and pluralist urbanism, leading to a more comprehensive and gender-sensitive urban development approach.

FEMINIST URBANISM IN PLACE AND PUBLIC SPACE

From its early manifestations, a defining feature of feminist geography was its intellectual and multidisciplinary approach (Nelson and Seager, 2005), exploring the gender spectrum in a philosophically rigorous way and envisioning a future for feminists that is coalitional. In that identity, fluidity is accepted and utilized as the ultimate backbone of representation (Butler, 2006). As anthropologist Shirley Ardener (1993) argues, no distinction should be made between the terms "space" and "place" when it comes to human use and experience. However, in various disciplines, from urban planning, social geography, sociology, urban design, environmental psychology, anthropology, and urban geography, the terms have been (re) conceptualized frequently and often in somewhat contradictory ways. Prevalent among urban geographers is the view that "place" is a geographically and historically specific instance of the social use of space, notably including public space. On the other hand, Michel de Certeau (2011) states that space is a practiced place in a constellation that is the opposite of the usual definition in geography. Doreen Massey (1994) explains that space and place, and our sense of them (and such related things as our degree of mobility), are gendered through and through and that this gendering of space both reflects and has effects back on how gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live, and in our public spaces.

Michel de Certeau delves into how individuals interact with and navigate through urban spaces, establishing a critical distinction between 'strategies' - the tools of those in power to structure society - and 'tactics' - the subtle and often ingenious ways individuals circumvent these structures. This distinction is particularly resonant in feminist urbanism, which critically examines how different genders experience and negotiate urban spaces, often dominated by patriarchal strategies. The subversive nature of 'tactics' as described by de Certeau mirrors the efforts within feminist urbanism to resist and reimagine male-dominated urban structures, suggesting methods through which marginalized groups, including women, might assert their presence and agency in the city. Moreover, de Certeau's emphasis on the value of everyday practices aligns seamlessly with the feminist urbanist emphasis on including diverse, lived experiences in urban planning and design, highlighting the significance of these daily interactions in shaping and understanding urban spaces. His concept of 'spatial stories' further enriches this discourse, illustrating how the narratives created through individuals' movements and interactions with urban environments contribute to the overall narrative of the city, a narrative that feminist urbanism seeks to diversify and reframe to be more inclusive. Thus, his theoretical framework provides a profound understanding of how urban spaces are experienced and navigated differently across gender lines and offers a lens to envision how these spaces can be transformed into more equitable environments through everyday practices.

Numerous spatial and social qualities contribute to an engendered public space that is inclusive, pluralist, and culturally rich. Issues of size, scale, degree of physical enclosure, amenities, aesthetics, and other variables matter; public spaces at different times and contexts might change their role to accommodate various and heterogeneous groups of people in the City (Carmona *et al*., 2010). These changing roles also mean changing conditions for various social and economic groups, those inhabiting the adjacent urban realms, and those visiting or passing by (Amin, 2008; Gehl, 2010). This urban complexity problematizes the notion of public space and redefines the grammar and system of public spaces, where no universal vocabulary emerges (Haas and Olsson, 2014). In feminist geographies, a study of geographies of fear has mainly focused on examining the relationship between women's fear and their perceptions and uses of public space. It has been contended that fear is entirely marked by gender and determines one's experience of the City and freedom of movement (Valentine, 1989; Ruddick, 1996; Koskela and Pain, 2000; Pain, 2001). Feminist geographers maintain that public space, particularly that of 'urban space,' is gendered and 'sexed' as predominantly masculine and heterosexual space (Duncan, 1996; Binnie, 1997; Fenster, 2007; Crinnion, 2013).

A city's kinetic and static elements come together when it is understood as a spatial product and as the outcome of social processes (Lefebvre, 1991). In that case, the rising paradigm of cultural urbanism becomes even more pivotal in the City's struggle for just and all-inclusive gendered spaces. Meyer (2014) looks at cultural urbanism as an approach that has seven major elements: paying attention to the context and history of the place as well as narratives, understanding the local preferences of all inhabitants, which allows for a diversity of users and uses, providing a variety of products, taking a chance to be different in space and place, establishing high-quality open space and public realms, and creating higher economic value because of all the above (Figure **1**).

At first glance, such elements appear to support an ideal of what feminist urban researchers Dolores Hayden (1981) and Clara Greed (1994) both refer to as the "non-sexist city" of localized facilities, shops, amenities, and a mix of uses. Building upon this theory,

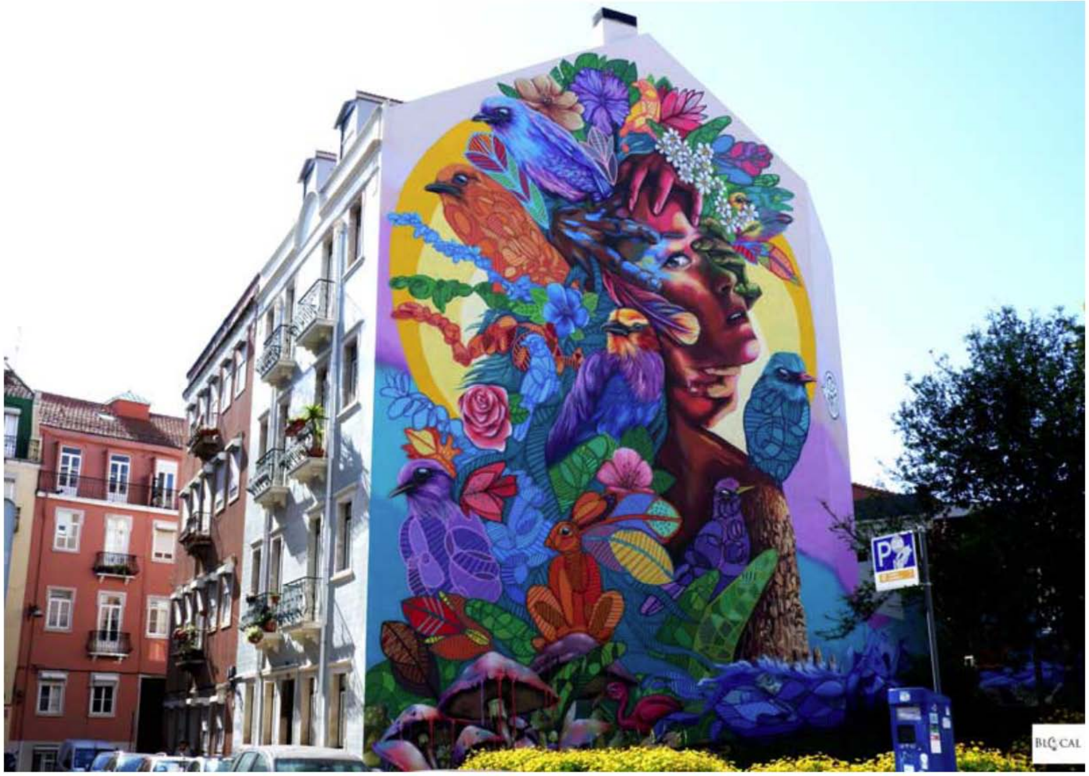

Figure 1: Lisbon street art and Everyday Urbanism: Graça neighborhood, Rua Josefa de Obidos Square, “Tropical Fado in RGB Tones,” an explosion of bright colors painted in 2021 by Lisbon-based muralist OzeArv, who specializes in nature and portraits. Lisbon. Courtesy of: BLocal blog: Travel + Street Art.

it appears that a feminist city would be, in turn, one of a proliferation of options, and especially the flexibility of space, in contrast with the otherwise rigidity of patriarchal "places." In recent years, more women have been elected to positions of city mayors and other leadership roles and have unsurprisingly been the drivers of this movement. Specifically, the addition of The Right to the City to The New Urban Agenda was spearheaded by Ada Colau, the first female mayor of Barcelona, and Anne Hidalgo, the mayor of Paris (Guardian Cities, 2016). In "La Ciudad Mentirosa," Manuel Delgado offers a critical analysis of the governance under Colau, highlighting a significant gap between the rhetoric of feminist politics and its actual implementation in practice. Delgado argues that despite the progressive discourse surrounding urban initiatives in Barcelona, the city has increasingly become exclusive, diverging from the inclusive principles often espoused in feminist theory. This critique sheds light on the complexities and challenges in translating feminist political ideals into tangible urban policies and practices, suggesting a disconnect between theoretical commitments and on-the-ground realities. This examination underscores the importance of aligning political discourse with actionable strategies in urban governance to truly reflect the core values of feminist thought (Delgado, M, 2017). *La Ciudad Mentirosa*). Colau's incentive toward the feminization of politics is predicated on the understanding and acknowledgment that our cities have hitherto been primarily patriarchal and that this is a fundamental flaw in the future success of our cities and, ultimately, a distance between feminist politics and feminist praxis:

> *"We still live in sexist and patriarchal cities – patriarchy goes hand in hand with the neoliberal City; they are two sides of the same coin. However, right now, we have an opportunity for those individuals who have traditionally been let down as "second-class citizens" to become the main characters."*
>
> - Ada Colau

It has been a strong argument in research and literature, as well as in practice, that women's needs and lived experiences have been neglected for more than five decades in urbanism studies, urban design, and planning (Day 2011). Therefore, exploring the intricate relationships between the built environment and women in public spaces has become a significant line of investigation in research since the 1990s. This addresses the gap between designing safe and just urban public spaces and planning a more equitable city for women (Churchman and Altman 1994; Franck and Paxson 1989; Kallus 2003; McDowell 1983). Some studies have addressed and focused on the formation of gender identities in place and the experiences of women in public spaces (Day 1999, 2000; Massey, 1994).

Feminist urbanism significantly influences academic scholarship and urban practice by challenging and reshaping traditional urban planning and design frameworks. This field emphasizes inclusivity and equity in urban spaces, particularly for women. Central to feminist urbanism is the critique of traditional, patriarchal urban planning. Pioneers like Jane Darke (1994), Gillian Rose (1993), and Leslie Kern (2020) have highlighted how urban spaces often mirror patriarchal structures, sidelining women's experiences and roles in urban environments. In her influential work, Kern emphasizes an urban design that addresses women's needs and experiences. This critique encompasses various urban planning aspects, including transportation, public space design, and the division between public and private spheres (Kern, 2019).

In urban transportation and mobility, feminist urbanism reveals biases favoring male mobility patterns, often neglecting women's complex trip-chaining patterns due to domestic and care responsibilities. The "urinary leash" concept illustrates the gendered nature of urban design, where the absence of public toilets limits women's access to public spaces, reflecting broader societal inequities. Feminist urbanism also prioritizes safety in urban spaces, acknowledging women's unique challenges and fears regarding city safety. This approach advocates for urban designs and policies promoting women's autonomy, freedom, and independence rather than paternalistic or protectionist measures.

Real-world examples of feminist urbanism include initiatives like Col.lectiu Punt 6 in Barcelona, which emphasizes women's direct participation in urban planning processes (Esacalante and Valdivia, 2015). Similarly, 'pink transportation' policies in Delhi, India, offering free public bus transport for women and girls, demonstrate a commitment to feminist and sustainable urban mobility. Feminist urbanism's contributions to scholarship and urban practice are significant, providing a critical perspective for more inclusive, equitable, and just urban spaces. This approach benefits women and supports broader sustainable urban development and social justice goals (FES Asia, 2024).

WHY (FEMINIST) PUBLIC SPACE MATTERS

Setha Low (2022) describes the importance of public spaces across a wide spectrum of human benefit and public good, focusing on spatial justice. According to Harvey (1973), spatial justice refers to the fair distribution of resources and opportunities in physical space. The related concept of social justice focuses on the equitable treatment of all individuals within a society, addressing issues of fairness and equality (Rawls, 1971). Environmental justice emphasizes the fair distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, particularly for marginalized communities (Bullard, 1990). Territorial justice involves fairness in allocating resources and opportunities across different territorial units (Soja, 2010).

In contemporary discussions on spatial justice, scholars continue to explore the evolving dynamics of urban spaces and their impact on social equity. Recent research by Fainstein (2019) emphasizes the need for a nuanced understanding of spatial justice, recognizing that it extends beyond the physical distribution of resources to encompass issues of cultural recognition and procedural fairness. The concept underscores the importance of addressing the power imbalances inherent in urban development processes, ensuring that planning decisions prioritize the needs and voices of marginalized communities (Fainstein, 2019). Furthermore, Laura Pulido (2017) emphasizes the intersectionality of spatial justice by examining how race, class, and gender intersect to produce unique spatial inequalities.

Public space and the public realm are the civic commons where all these forms of urban justice ultimately manifest. With all its elements, cultural urbanism finds itself on the workable ground in the public realm as the fundamental and pivotal element of community support and building up, which is crucial for sustaining places and spaces. It is through the formation of 'community' that public spaces are most noted for (re)establishing social capital in cities. Traditionally, the primary function of the community (or *gemeinschaft*) was to serve as a link between the people and society, creating an arena of common interest; that way, citizens could relate to their societies in both a geographic and non-geographic sense (Tönnies, 1988; Hoggett, 1997). This becomes a central concept of public space at every level of interaction and experience among people. At the backbone of 'community-building' is the notion of 'the third space' (Oldenburg, 1991). This consists of the social surroundings separate from the 'first' and 'second places' – those of 'home' and 'work.' Such places are necessary for allowing diversity to flourish and for people to learn to live with and negotiate with each other. People generate a sense of pride, social cohesion, and civic identity in these communal spaces. Oldenburg (1991) makes the case that third places are integral for establishing civil society, direct democracy, engagement, and the feeling of attachment and sense of place. Such spaces serve as arenas for equity, diversity, and justice. It is also in these places where marginalized groups can exercise their rights, voice their opinions, and stand up against injustice in a democratic forum, even if that means, in some instances, a temporary or permanent loss of order, control, and comfort. This is why it is crucial to dwell deeper into spatializing the inter-related concepts of justice, democracy, equity, citizenship, society, community, neighborhood, LGBTQ+ struggles, and so on, to explore, in a combined Soja-Fainstein-Harvey manner, how the spatial perspective might open entirely new and fresh possibilities, novel ways of thinking about these (societally) traditionally essential concepts and ideas.

Public spaces and other adjacent urban places provide numerous benefits to all forms of business, innovation, and entrepreneurship, spanning both formal and informal sectors. Additionally, vibrant streets and inclusive public spaces become places of economic value and benefit, promoting income, investment, wealth creation, and providing employment (Andersson, 2016). Interconnected systems of quality public spaces manifest their economic value by directly attracting marketing and business points in bustling streets, active parks and squares, and other appealing public space forms. These spaces attract and retain people of all kinds. Furthermore, public spaces can be utilized as a novel approach to intensify the city's vitality through urban renewal programs. This can increase property values, which can then be captured in the form of taxes through innovative approaches to municipal finance, such as land value capture. Public spaces must also offer the public utilities made available to urban citizens, including walkable streets and the public transportation systems that use them. The ownership of this geography becomes critical when one considers the current dominance of automobile culture and the ramifications thereof environmentally, psychologically, and physically.

The auto-oriented city is an extension of modern male-dominated urban power systems, established and maintained through top-down engineering professions still heavily dominated by males. The corollary is that a feminist city would be a people-oriented city, a car-independent or even car-free city, and, by extension, a humanist city. Globally, women make up more than 50% of public transportation users but are disproportionately the victims of harassment, discrimination, and assault on these systems, leading to compensation measures like women-only subway cars and taxi services (Peters, 2013). Conversely, the movements toward car-free city centers and protected bikeways have been dominated by female leadership, including such recent changes to Times Square and Broadway and Bryant Park in New York City, the 'superilles' (superblocks) in Barcelona, and the move to make the route adjacent to the river Seine pedestrianized permanently in Paris (Figure **2**).

The literature on feminist urbanism is extensive, providing valuable insights for other schools of thought. In a classic 1980 essay titled “What Would a Non-sexist City Be Like?” The American urbanist Dolores Hayden called for centers that "transcend traditional definitions of home, neighborhood, city, and workplace" (Hayden, 1980). Susanna Rustin points to the fact that "a woman-friendly city or a feminist city would be more porous, the divisions between home and work less rigid (so that domestic work is acknowledged as a productive activity) and careers (of children, disabled relatives and older people) are less excluded from economic life." In any case, such divisions are often artificial, with women in the global south undertaking economic activity that has too often been ignored (Rustin, 2014). Racialized and gendered people have historically not been allowed to be part of the citizenry, nor has race or gender been included or recognized as a characteristic of the ideal citizen (Rose, 1993; Doyle, 1994; Massey, 1994; Marston, 1995; Staeheli, 1996; Wilson, 1998; McDowell, 1999; Domosh and Seager, 2001; Warner, 2002; Butler, 2004; Bailey, 2014). As England and Simon observe, these social markers affect mobility, access to housing and employment, and general feelings of (true) belonging within the City (England and Simon, 2010).

Jane Jacobs’ observations on diversity in our cities, as well as those who plan them, are equally relevant today: "Most city diversity is the creation of incredible numbers of different people and different private organizations, with vastly differing ideas and purposes,

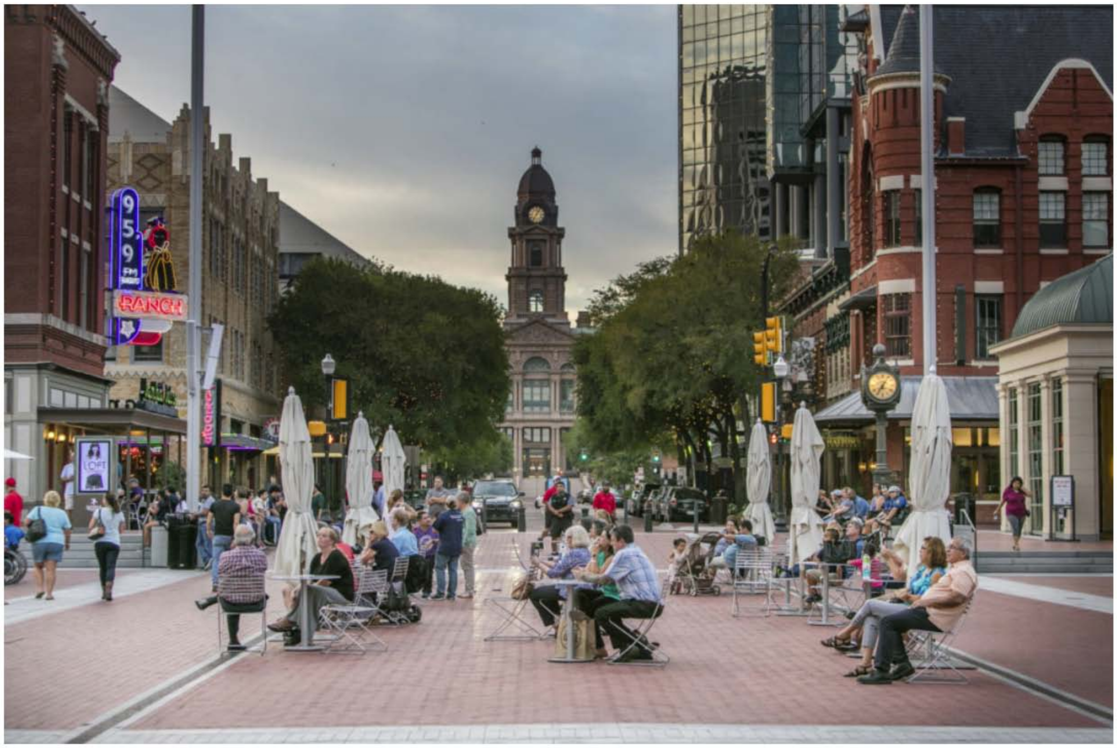

Figure 2: Sundance Square forms the core of a new walkable urban district in Fort Worth, TX, USA. The Sundance Square Plaza has become a significant outdoor gathering space in downtown Fort Worth. The inclusive and spatially integrating plaza brings together people from all over North Texas and the entire country—image Courtesy of PPS, Forth Worth Business Press TX, and Ethan Kent.

planning and contriving outside the formal framework of public action″ (Jacobs, 1961). This a point poignantly made by one of the few well-known female urbanists then or now. Gender ideologies and the practices of women and men are central to how spaces are constructed. These processes and practices are dynamic and fluid; they are constantly re-created and re-formed, even as the spaces they construct are changed and transformed (Staeheli and Martin, 2000). City-making is a social process (Figure **3**), and the intricate and close relationship between urban environments' social and physical shaping is crucial for creating gender identity and inclusive public spaces. In line with that, as Louis Wirth (1938) and Fran Tonkiss (2014) observed, cities are fundamentally social forms, not necessarily built forms. Just as space, the network of processes and relationships that connect places (Massey, 1994) may be coded with a gender identity; it may also be given a (a) sexual identity. In feminist geographies, if public space is viewed as predominantly patriarchal, and heterosexuality is part and parcel of that form of masculinity—heteropatriarchy—then public space is sexed to the advantage of heterosexuals and the disadvantage of alternative sexualities (McDowell and Sharp, 1999 and Nelson and Seager, 2005). To challenge their spatial exclusion from public spaces and resist their spatial containment in private places, many gays and lesbians and the whole LGBT community around the world invert the identities of public spaces at specific times, either squares or streets or parks, expressing thereby their identity and breaking the bonds and vicious circle of embedded masculine unshared spaces; thereby sustaining, challenging and altering gender and sexual identities vis-à-vis spatial geographies – those of spaces and places in the City (Fellmann *et al*., 2013).

SOME CONCLUSIONS FOR URBAN PRAXIS AND POLICY

A humanist city, then, is a city that allows the entire possible participation of all citizens, not only as a form of justice for those who have previously been marginalized but as a public good for the entire city. As Jane Jacobs said, “Cities can provide something for everybody, only because, and only when, everybody creates them.” Feminist urbanism and the feminist city planning that must achieve it provide a road map to achieving the larger goals of a humanist city. As noted by, among others, Leslie Kern (2020 and 2022), "feminist city planning" is a theoretical and practical approach to urban planning and design that prioritizes the needs and experiences of women and other marginalized groups. In feminist city planning, the lived

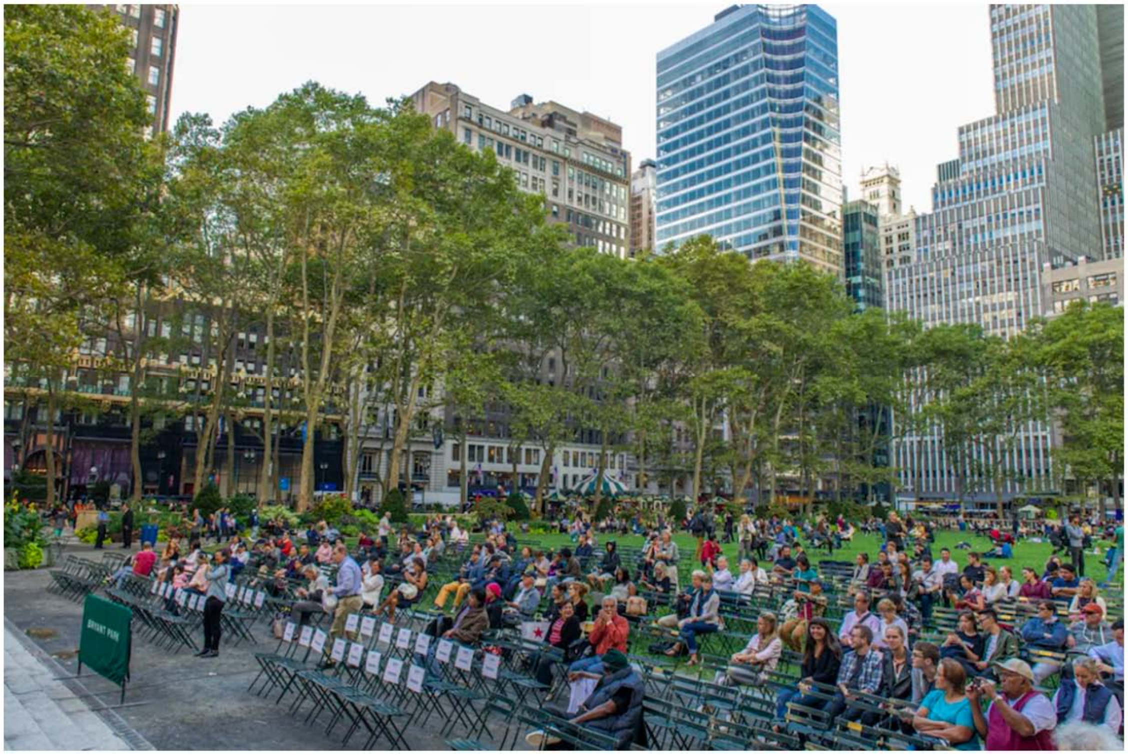

Figure 3: Bryant Park, Manhattan, NY: Iconic Example of placemaking, a city-making exercise as a social process, A park in Midtown Manhattan that has been widely recognized as one of the best public space renewal projects of the last four decades. Image Courtesy of PPS, Ryan Locke and Ethan Kent.

experiences and perspectives of diverse groups of people are central to the planning process, and decision-making is informed by understanding how the built environment affects different communities differently. This approach recognizes the importance of creating cities that are safe, accessible, inclusive, and equitable for all residents, regardless of their gender, race, class, sexuality, or ability.

We conclude with *several key principles of feminist city planning and urban design* that we see as crucial in the context of those mentioned above and a cornerstone for policy-making for just public spaces and plural cultural urbanism of renewal:

1. ***Diversity and Inclusion:*** Recognizing and celebrating the diversity of urban populations in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, ability, and age. It involves creating spaces that are inclusive and accessible for all.
2. ***Safety and Security:*** Creating safe and secure environments, free from violence and harassment, for women, girls, and gender non-conforming individuals. This includes design features that increase visibility and lighting and measures to control access to public spaces.
3. ***Accessibility and Mobility:*** Providing safe and convenient modes of transportation that are accessible to all, including those with disabilities, older adults, and children.
4. ***Economic Empowerment:*** Supporting the economic empowerment of women and marginalized groups through urban planning and design that promotes entrepreneurship, access to markets, and income-generating activities.
5. ***Sustainable Development:*** Implementing sustainable and environmentally friendly urban planning and design practices while considering the specific needs of women and marginalized communities.
6. ***Community Engagement:*** Encourage community participation and engagement in the planning and design to ensure their voices and perspectives are heard and incorporated into decision-making.
7. ***Intersectionality:*** Recognizing that gender inequalities are intertwined with other forms of oppression, such as race, class, and sexuality, and that feminist city planning and urban design must address these intersections.

In turn, achieving these goals will require focused policies for urban planning, development, and maintenance:

1. ***Addressing systemic discrimination*** by identifying and challenging the policies and practices that perpetuate discrimination and inequality, such as housing segregation, unequal access to education and healthcare, and discriminatory policing practices.
2. ***Promoting economic equality*** by creating policies and programs that promote economic growth and development while addressing income inequality and poverty. This could include initiatives like affordable housing, access to job training and education, and living wage policies.
3. ***Ensuring inclusive governance*** by promoting the participation of diverse communities in the political process and decision-making and ensuring that government institutions are responsive and accountable to the needs and concerns of all residents.
4. ***Fostering social cohesion*** by promoting diversity and inclusivity, building social connections and networks, and creating safe and welcoming public spaces accessible to all.
5. ***Addressing environmental injustice*** by addressing the disproportionate impact of environmental hazards and pollution on marginalized communities and promoting sustainable and equitable development practices.

Specific policies and practices may include those that promote affordable housing, public transportation, pedestrian-friendly streets, and accessible public spaces, among others. Specific reforms may include zoning changes to end exclusionary zoning, redlining, and car-dominated planning; policies to protect public spaces from degradation and fortification; practices to proactively involve citizens in co-planning and co-producing their city at all scales; and allocation of appropriate resources to public spaces, and to the adjoining private spaces needed to provide access and participation for all.

Feminist urbanism contributes to urbanism scholarship, urban practice, and urban politics by providing a critical lens through which cities and their policies are viewed and shaped (Haas, 2023). This approach challenges the traditional, often patriarchal, framework of urban planning, emphasizing inclusivity, safety, and women's lived experiences in urban spaces (Kern, 2020) by prioritizing the needs and perspectives of women, feminist urbanism, architecture, and urban design advocate for more equitable, aesthetic, accessible, and responsive urban environments (Brown, 2011). This approach enriches the academic discourse in urban studies. It impacts the practical aspects of urban planning and governance, leading to policies and designs that better cater to a diverse urban population. In urban politics, feminist urbanism fosters greater representation and participation of women in decision-making processes, ensuring that urban policies reflect the needs of all city dwellers (Vishaka, 2023). This integration of feminist principles into urbanism is crucial for creating cities that are not only physically inclusive but also socially and politically equitable

A core insight of feminist planning is that urban landscapes, often seen as neutral, subtly perpetuate social inequalities. This perspective reveals how disparities are intricately woven into the neighborhoods, homes, and public spaces that make up our cities. Feminist planning aims to bring these biases to the forefront of urban praxis and practice, advocating for a broader, more inclusive lens to analyze and reconstruct urban environments (Kern, 2019). It addresses the diverse experiences of fear, motherhood, friendship, activism, and solitude in the city, underscoring the need for spaces that cater to a wide range of urban experiences (Kern, 2020). This intersectional approach to urban history and planning posits cities as potential hubs for fostering equitable and inclusive futures. It challenges conventional urban designs and policies, calling for a transformation towards cities that are equitable, sustainable, and responsive to the needs of all, particularly women and marginalized groups. This perspective in urban development encourages a collaborative rethinking of cityscapes to create more inclusive, welcoming, and balanced urban environments (Haas, 2023).

So, humanist cities, rooted in the philosophy of humanism, emphasize urban environments designed to prioritize all inhabitants' well-being, dignity, and potential. These cities focus on people-centered design, cultural richness, environmental sustainability, and economic and social equity (Montgomery, 2013; Fainstein, 2010). This approach dovetails with feminist urban planning, which similarly advocates for inclusive, equitable urban spaces but specifically addresses gender inequalities (Kern, 2019 and 2022). Feminist planning contributes to the humanist city framework by ensuring that urban design and policies are sensitive to all genders' diverse needs and experiences, thereby fostering physically accommodating and socially and culturally nurturing environments for everyone. Integrating feminist perspectives into humanist city planning thus enriches the overall goal of creating truly inclusive cities that reflect the diverse populace they serve.

So, in conclusion, we can say that the relationship between humanist cities and urban feminism is deeply intertwined, as both concepts aim to create urban spaces that are inclusive, equitable, and responsive to the needs of all citizens. Urban feminism, focusing on feminist planning, plays a crucial role in achieving a humanist city. It emphasizes the importance of gender in urban design and planning, ensuring that the needs and experiences of women and other marginalized groups are considered. This approach leads to more accessible, safe, and inclusive urban environments, key characteristics of humanist cities. Feminist planning contributes to the humanist city by advocating for spaces that accommodate diverse lifestyles and needs, such as child-friendly areas, safe public transportation, and inclusive public spaces. By challenging traditional planning paradigms that often overlook the experiences of women and minorities, urban feminism ensures that cities are developed with a comprehensive understanding of the varied needs of their inhabitants. This approach leads to more equitable, accessible, and responsive urban environments, embodying the true spirit of a humanist city where every individual's experience is valued and reflected in the urban fabric.

Urban feminism and feminist planning are pivotal for realizing the vision of a humanist city, which seeks to prioritize the well-being and needs of all its inhabitants. These approaches challenge traditional city planning models that often neglect the experiences and requirements of women and other marginalized groups. By incorporating a gender perspective, urban feminism ensures that cities are designed to be more inclusive, safe, and accessible. This inclusivity extends to creating child-friendly spaces, safe public transportation systems, and public areas that cater to a diverse population. Feminist planning thus becomes a critical tool in shaping urban environments that embody the principles of a humanist city - where equity, diversity, and the acknowledgment of different lived experiences are at the forefront of urban development and design.

The question of whom the city is meant to serve and whether the public realm is equitably 'public' to all its users touches on the core principles of urban planning and social equity. Ideally, cities should serve all inhabitants, providing equitable access to resources, opportunities, and public spaces. However, cities often reflect social inequalities, where access to public amenities and spaces can be unevenly distributed. Factors like socio-economic status, gender, race, and age can influence an individual's experience of the city. Urban planners and policymakers' challenge is creating truly inclusive and equitable cities based on feminist planning principles, ensuring that the public realm is accessible and beneficial to all, regardless of their background. The city has been described as humanity’s greatest invention, and the benefits of this seminal human invention are prodigious. However, a city has the paradoxical ability to both oppress and emancipate. To achieve cities' full potential, we must take the steps necessary to establish an inclusive, pluralist, cultural urbanism: more specifically, urbanism that learns from the still-incomplete struggle for feminist ideals. As we have argued, that struggle is also the urban struggle for the ideals of a humanist city.

SPECIAL NOTE

This paper is part of the larger research project on “Urban Disclosures and Who Owns the City,” a triennial research program, 2016-2019, at the Centre for the Future of Places at KTH, a research program directed by Dr. Tigran Haas and Dr. Michael Mehaffy, which has amongst other things resulted in the publication: Haas, T. (2023) *Women Reclaiming the City - International Research on Urbanism, Architecture, and Planning*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, ISBN: 978-1-5381-6265-1 [This book is the first in which current societal themes revolving around urbanism, architecture, and city planning are put forth solely through female perspectives. It reveals the importance of having female lenses on certain societal debates. Twenty-five leading female urban scholars draw on principles, concepts, and positions that are foundational to other frameworks and fields—specifically, critical studies, indigenous and ethnic studies, postcolonial theory, queer theory, feminist theory, progressive urban theory, social ecology, urban planning and design, architecture, urban economics and urban social geography, landscape urbanism, new urbanism, heritage management and urbanism, political ecology, and cultural studies— to present alternatives to the current classical theories and conceptualizations that have failed to engage a truly intersectional analysis of the dominant city and urban discourses, policies, and practices].

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Received on 31-12-2023 Accepted on 12-01-2024 Published on 08-02-2024

https://doi.org/10.6000/2817-2310.2024.03.04

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