Karen Horwood, Aude Bicquelet Lock, Sue Manns, Charlotte Morphet and Natalya Palit

The substantive and descriptive representation of women in planning: analysis from practice and academia

Abstract

Planning makes decisions about the built environment that impact on people's lived experiences and as such should include the voices of all those in society. Building on discussions that have been taking place in both practice and academia, this article focuses on the inclusion of women in planning. We draw on four research projects to explore the extent to which women are included within the planning profession, and their needs are met though the planning system, utilising the Substantive Representation of Women conceptual framework as a way of exploring this. The article identifies issues with both the descriptive and substantive representation of women in planning. We conclude with the identification of further research needed.

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As the immediate past president of the RTPI highlighted in her inaugural speech (Manns, 2020), planning is for and about people, the spaces and places that they use. The legacy of decisions that planners take will last for many generations and impact upon many lives. Planners, whether considering policy development or determining applications are required to balance a wide range of factors, however, at present those tasked with decision making are not as representative of society as they might be. For different voices to be heard, they must not only be welcomed into the room but once there they must be invited to play a full part. The planner of the future should not fit a single description, rather they will be part of a team which reflects the diversity of the society that they serve, where differing views are heard and valued.

It is in this context that this article brings together the research of academics and practitioners focusing on the contemporary position of women and planning. The article results from the Women and Planning conference held at the Leeds Planning School within Leeds Beckett University (UK) in May 2019. The conference aims were to develop a conversation between academics and practitioners, and those in-between, and (re)build a network of those interested in women and planning in the UK. Papers were delivered across a range of areas with both a historical and a

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contemporary focus. Conversation arose in response to several individual papers focusing on the contemporary situation and it is on this that this article builds.

This article examines women and planning both in terms of their descriptive representation as women planners and their substantive representation with the inclusion of women's needs within planning activity. The problem of underrepresentation of women in built environment and equivalent professions is well known, with attempts to create a more diverse profession having limited impact, particularly at higher levels. In addition, despite calls to shift towards a more gender-aware planning practice, questions can be raised as to the extent to which this has been reflected in contemporary practice.

The article draws on the findings of several research projects undertaken between 2018 and 2019 examining both the role of women planners and the impact of a gendered lens on planning policy-making. Through these case studies it is argued that women are underrepresented at higher levels in planning practice, with examples highlighting the barriers to their progression. Alongside this analysis of planning policy highlights a lack of direct engagement with women's needs. Findings from these pieces of research are brought together to present a snapshot of the descriptive and substantive representation of women in planning. The article argues that more work is needed to ensure adequate representation of women as planners and inclusion of their needs in planning policy.

Descriptive and substantive representation

This article is located within broader discussions of representation taking place within political studies. Representation can take different forms, conceptualized in Pitkin's (1967) key work as 'standing for' or 'acting for'. The former, 'standing for' or descriptive representation, focuses on women as actors within decision-making, for example as parliamentary representatives. The latter, 'acting for' or substantive representation, instead engages with the extent to which women's needs are addressed. However, these forms of representation are interlinked on the basis that more women in decision-making roles will lead to greater understanding and prioritisation of women's needs. This leads to the application of critical mass theory, whereby once a tipping point in descriptive representation is reached, substantive representation will follow.

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However, this simple relationship between descriptive and substantive representation has been critiqued with assertations that the relationship is more complex (Celis and Childs, 2008; Celis et al, 2008; Allen and Childs, 2019). Given the diversity in women's backgrounds and experiences, the ability for women to fully represent other women is questioned. In addition, women in decision-making positions have competing priorities which may impact upon their response to women's needs. In response, the role of the critical actor, who focuses on women's needs regardless of their own sex come into focus.

This leads to a shift away from simply examining the numbers of women in decision-making roles and instead towards actions and outcomes. Celis and Childs (2008) maintain that whilst numbers are important for justice and fairness, there is also a need for analysis to engage more with positional power. Celis et al (2008) highlight the need to look to other critical actors and sites of representation advocating a Substantive Representation of Women (SRW) conceptual framework. Through this lens actions purporting to promote the needs and rights of women can be examined through four questions: Firstly, who are the critical actors; secondly where is the activity happening; thirdly, why is it being attempted; and finally, how is it being expressed. Through this framework the full extent of activities to ensure women's needs and rights are being addressed can be better captured.

This article draws on the SRW framework, through exploring case studies that engage differently with descriptive and substantive representation. Through better understanding the experiences of women planners, and the roles they are employed in, we can better understand the descriptive representation of women in planning. Alongside this, the exploration of the impacts (or not) of feminist critique and understandings on planning activity expands our understanding of the substantive representation of women in planning.

Issue and approaches – a methodological framework

This article results from the Women and Planning conference held at Leeds Beckett University, UK in May 2019, and its methods are shaped by the conference ethos and its feminist foundations. At the outset, the conference organiser clearly stated the aim to: "…develop a conversation between academics and practitioners, and those in-between, and (re)build a network of those interested in women and planning in the UK." (Horwood, 2019). Drawing on feminist principles of inclusion and diversity significant time was taken by the organiser to attempt to bring in women with a relevant

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interest in planning research across sectors, levels of experience, backgrounds and demographics. This was successful to varying degrees but was clearly evident in the balance between academics and practitioners with speakers fairly evenly split between the two categories or located in the space in-between.

The issue of division between planning academics and practitioners is well documented. A desire from academics and practitioners to work together is seen, with practitioners valuing the role of research in informing their work, and academics informing their teaching with practice (Goodman et al, 2017). However, despite this there is evidence that the gap between academics and practitioners is increasing. Kunzmann and Koll-Schretzenmayr's (2015) research into planning across Europe identified that practitioners are less involved in teaching and experience barriers in accessing academic research. Goodman et al's (2017) examination of the situation in Australia and New Zealand mirrors this, identifying the 'publish or perish' culture pervading universities resulting in a barrier to the accessibility of research outputs to practitioners. Hurley et al (2016) articulate a series of challenges to closer ties between academia and practice, focusing on access to research, its use within a politically driven planning system and the lack of forums to bring together academics and practitioners. Goodman et al (2017) point to the need for networks and opportunities for collaboration to bridge the divide.

However, examples that counter to this narrative of division are also presented. Durning (2004) suggests that whilst the academic is moving further away from practice, driven by the focus on academic publishing, the practitioner is instead moving closer to the academic, with practice-based research an increasing feature. Examples of this are perhaps illustrated in Tasan-Kok et al's (2016) work to give voice to practitioners who push the boundaries in their work resulting in a form of practice-based research.

Hurley at al (2016) call for this distinction not to be exaggerated or oversimplified. They highlight that practitioners and academics are not distinct and homogenous groups, but rather there are many relationships between both roles suggesting a spectrum of research engagement. Indeed Porter (2015) calls to a more critical engagement with how we define practice and research, highlighting the contested nature of what does and does not count as research. The act of suggesting such division between academic and practice-based research, and the hierarchy this

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implies, is problematic in terms of deciding who does and doesn't get to speak, and whose voices are and aren't heard, an issue also pertinent to the feminist ethos of the conference.

As a conference engaged with the intersection between planning and women, the organisation was also informed by feminist principles, which emphasise inclusion and collaboration. Feminist research seeks to include a diversity of voices and extends the boundary of what is seen to be knowledge (Snyder, 1995). Perspectives are multiple and informed by an individual's position in the world (McDowell, 1997). Set alongside Porter's (2015) questioning of the distinction between theory and practice in planning, and the hierarchy that this cultivates, feminist theory can start to answer some of the challenges and issues raised earlier in this section.

As a result of feminism's emphasis of multiple and diverse voices the value in working collectively can be seen (McDowell, 1997; Evans and Maddrell, 2019). Indeed, this approach can be seen in the history of women and planning during the 1980s through the RTPI's working group on women and women's committees in the GLC. The act of collaborating can work to challenge hierarchical relationships, often between the researcher and the researched, but also between different types of researchers and as such collaborative writing can itself be conceptualised as a feminist act (Monk et al, 2003). It is within this context that this collaborative article sits.

Alongside bringing together planning academics and practitioners, and those in between, the conference sought to develop a conversation through which collaborative knowledge building can occur. It is a collective activity focused on mutual understanding in contrast to argument or rhetoric which can seek to dominate (Feldman, 1999). Conversation enables the bringing together of different perspectives and expertise to develop new insights (Feldman, 1999). It is through conversation this that collaboration and understanding across boundaries such as that between planning practice and academia can occur.

It is in this context that this article has developed. The article combines four pieces of research undertaken independently that engage with the contemporary descriptive and substantive representation of women in planning. The pieces of research come from different positions reflecting the personal and professional perspectives of the researchers, alongside the differing foci of the projects themselves. Through bringing these together we are able to bring a diversity of voice from the practice and academic spectrum. The following section focuses on these pieces of research.

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Within each we will first outline the position of the researcher(s) and the methods used, before exploring the research findings. The positionality of the researcher is fore fronted to recognise the significance of the academic/practitioner collaboration.

We start with a focus solidly on descriptive representation with the work of Charlotte Morphet to examine the extent to which women are represented in leadership positions. This is developed through the work of Aude Bicquelet-Lock and Sue Manns to better understand the experiences of women working in planning and the gendered-barriers to their advancement, thus asking questions about the opportunities for the descriptive representation highlighted by Morphet. Natalya Palit's discussion of the success of gender mainstreaming in Vienna gives a real life example of the interplay between the descriptive and substantive, through exploring the ways in which critical actors were able to affect change. Finally, we end with a focus on substantive representation, with Karen Horwood's examination of the extent to which women's needs are addressed through the local plans in England.

Women working in planning in the UK

Charlotte Morphet straddles practice and academia. She is a chartered planner with over 10 years' experience across the public, private and third sectors. Charlotte is a doctoral researcher at The Leeds Planning School. She is a co-founder of Women in Planning and a strong advocate for inclusive and equitable places, cities and place making. Her research examines the descriptive representation of women in planning through quantitative analysis of the number of women in leadership positions. Through the Women in Planning network, Morphet undertook an analysis of 379 planning consultancy websites using the RTPI Directory of Planning Consultants and cross referencing this with Planning's Consultancy Survey 2018. The RTPI Directory of Planning Consultants provides coverage across the UK split by the four nations (England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales) and in England divides these into regions. The size of consultancies ranged from single consultant to large real estate and engineering firms. Planners were counted who were working at senior levels, identified as chief executives, managing directors, senior directors and directors, and categorised by gender.

There was much research in the 1980s-1990s on women working in Local Government and their experience, particularly in leadership roles. Greed's (1994) research on female planners sits within this and, 20 years on, is still the main text which sets out the experience of women working in public

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sector planning, including analysis the level occupied by women in the management and leadership structure. Greed (1994) described an old boys club with few women working in senior roles but many women working lower down the ranks. At that time, a lack of senior women seems to have been apparent within other parts of Local Government with only four women working as Chief Executives across the UK in 1990 (Morphet, 1990). In this period, planners mainly worked in the public sector, but there was the start of a shift towards the private sector (Morphet, 1983). Since then, there has been a lack of research into women working in the profession and therefore a lack of understanding. There is also limited research into leadership within the planning profession.

Research into the make-up of planners in terms of sex, alongside other protected characteristics identified in the Equalities Act 2010, class or social status is limited. The RTPI recognises this, stating "Despite its importance to society, there has been relatively little evidence published on the size and structure of the planning profession in the UK" (Kenny, 2019). In the UK 50.6% of the population are female (ONS, 2019), raising the question of the extent to which this majority is represented in the UK planning profession. As of January 2020, the RTPI had 25,067 members of which 39% were women and 61% were men (figures based on RTPI membership data in January 2020). This can be compared with data from the 1990s with Greed's (1994) research finding that in December 1993 of the 17,435 members of the RTPI, 22.5% were women and 77.5% were men.

This data only provides gender split on the RTPI members. However, planning membership to the RTPI is not mandatory to practice planning. The Annual Population Survey (APSs) undertaken by ONS does record data on individuals working in the UK who describe Town Planning Officer as their main occupation (Kenny, 2019). APAs data on the planning profession has estimated that 40% of planners are women, with 60% being men in the UK, numbers close to the RTPI figure. These figures are not broken down into different levels of responsibility or seniority in the profession. There is a lack of understanding the ways in which the gender balance permeates through the profession or is concentrated in certain levels. This raises the question of whether there are points where there is a larger gap between the number of men and women, for example at the more senior levels.

Women in Planning, a UK wide organisation and network, focused on equality, diversity and inclusion in the planning profession and practice, has focused its research into providing more data on this (Morphet et al, 2019). This focus on leadership is informed by research undertaken by

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management consultancy McKenney and Company (Hunt et al, 2015) which shows that having more women at leadership level can lead to greater diversity throughout organisations.

In response Charlotte undertook a survey of the websites of 379 planning consultancies websites across the UK identifying a combined total of 1,016 chief executives, managing directors, senior directors, senior partners, partners and directors working in planning roles. Categorisation by gender revealed that just 17% were women. Analysing this further, at the highest level of chief executives, managing directors, senior directors and senior partners, women made up 13%. At the lower level of director and partner, 19% were women. These results show that there is currently not gender balance at the leadership level in private sector planning consultancy resulting in a low level of descriptive representation of women at the higher levels of private planning practice.

Women Planners – An Analysis of gender-related barriers to professional advancement.

Prof. Aude Bicquelet-Lock and Sue Manns are also part of both academia and practice. Aude is the Deputy Head of Policy and Research at the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) and also Visiting Professor at the WHO Collaborating Centre for Healthy Urban Environments at the University of the West of England. Meanwhile Sue was president of the RTPI in 2020 and is the RTPI's Board Champion for Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. She has almost 40 years' experience in town and country planning across the public, private and voluntary sectors, at national, regional and local levels and also in academia as a senior lecturer in planning law and practice. Sue has a keen interest in inclusivity and diversity in planning. Aude undertook research through the RTPI that examines the descriptive representation of women as planners, examining the experiences of female planners to better understand the barriers and obstacles directly or indirectly related to gender as experienced by women working in the planning profession.

In 2017 the RTPI's conducted a Member Survey, the results of which were published late that year. The survey was filled out by more than 4,000 of the RTPI's 25,000 members, with 37% of the respondents women and 62% men corresponding fairly closely to the current membership of the RTPI as a whole.

Overall, the results showed that women were somewhat less likely to report satisfaction and somewhat more likely to report dissatisfaction with pay, workload, training, career progression and

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opportunities. The gaps here were not necessarily large, but they were persistent. The results also revealed that women were more likely to have experienced barriers to professional advancement when compared to men, including lack of career mentors and lack of family-friendly employer policies. The survey found that a gender was seen as a direct barrier by 24% of female respondents compared to just 2% of male respondents, and the lack of family-friendly employer policies mentioned by 14% of female respondents compared to 2% of their male counterparts.

The findings of this survey led directly to the RTPI appointing a Board Champion for Diversity, Equality and Inclusivity and to further work to explore the extent of the issue. In early 2019 Aude undertook a series of 52 qualitative interviews documenting the experiences of different women in the workplace. The primary aim of this study was to better understand the professional journey of female planners – in particular, the barriers and obstacles directly or indirectly related to gender as experienced by women working in the planning profession.

Semi-structured qualitative interviews conducted face-to-face or by phone were carried out, supplemented where interviewing was not possible by a questionnaire based on the interview the topic guide which was sent to, filled in and returned by participants. Overall, the study gathered 52 participants across six countries (England, Scotland, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the US). Participants took part in the research on a voluntary basis. The study was advertised on the RTPI website and promoted via professional networks.

The survey (Bicquelet-Lock et. Al, 2020) revealed a range of issues for women planners in the workplace. Women taking part in the study said they felt at a disadvantage in workplaces that overwhelmingly reflected 'masculine' cultures and norms of behaviour, and that this was having a concrete effect on their careers. More than half said they felt their opportunities for promotion were limited because of their gender and close to half said they had experienced sexist or inappropriate comments at work. The study suggests that women are particularly felt at risk of discrimination when returning from maternity leave and when opportunities for promotion arise in their workplace

Whist some respondents felt that their gender had not been a barrier, they did recount that on occasion experienced sexist comments or behaviour on the part of their male counterparts, for example being called 'darling' during meetings or being asked whether they are the tea girl. The

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interviews suggested that such behaviour was as likely to come from the younger generation of male planners as from the older generation, and it was also not a characteristic of one sector in particular. Some women mentioned that they had moved across sectors and they said it very much depends on the culture of the particular workplace.

Whilst interviewees did report some engagement with the benefits of a diverse workforce from their employer, it was reported that some workplaces merely paid lip service to equality in the workplace, perhaps as a way of making themselves look like a modern, progressive employer. The interviews found that some women felt that advancement might require adopting 'male' behaviour traits and that other women in more senior positions were their greatest barrier. In some cases, women mentioned that sexism is at times accompanied by ageism, racism and discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation.

The RTPI Corporate Strategy 2020 – 2030 contains, as one of its four pillars, the promotion of equality, diversity and inclusivity. In 2019 the RTPI commissioned specialist diversity and inclusion consultancy Brook Graham to look at how the planning profession currently performs and to identify a series of bespoke actions that could be taken forward to achieve a better balance. They found that whilst the planning profession performs relatively better than a number of other built environment professions in terms of equality, diversity and inclusivity, there remains much to be done.

The first stage of the Action Plan 'CHANGE' (RTPI, 2020) was completed in February 2020. Work is now underway to take forward the high-level actions identified in stage one and combine these with a set of detailed supporting actions.

The experiences of gender mainstreaming in Vienna

Natalya is practice based, but with an interest in research. Natalya is a chartered town planner with experience of working across the fields of architecture, planning and community engagement, in both the public and private sector. She is currently Area Plans Manager at Enfield Council having previously worked as a planning consultant at HTA Design- a multidisciplinary practice specialising in social housing and estate regeneration projects. She is also a part-time visiting lecturer at the University of Westminster (School of Architecture and Cities.) She was also previously a Chapter Leader for the London Chapter of Urbanistas, a network inspiring leadership in women and empowering collaboration on projects/ideas that make everyday life in cities better for

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everyone.   Natalya's research was awarded the RTPI's 2018/19 biannual George Pepler Travel Bursary to fund travel to Vienna to research gender mainstreaming. This piece of research moves us from descriptive representation to explore how this can lead to substantive representation.

Natalya visited Vienna in Autumn 2019 to undertake fieldwork and interview some of the key women who had led the gender mainstreaming work in Vienna. The research investigates how gender mainstreaming gained momentum in urban planning in Vienna and what the tangible impacts were on built outcomes and planning practice. Accounts were gathered both from planners and politicians to gain an understanding of the context that enabled gender mainstreaming to gain traction in Vienna and how this informed planning practice. This was complemented by on-site observations of selected gender sensitive pilot projects and policy analysis of the city's Gender Mainstreaming Manual (Damyanovic et al, 2013).

A series of unique circumstances in Vienna enabled gender mainstreaming in urban planning to gain prominence in the early 90s. At the time gender sensitive planning was emerging in Vienna, feminism and gender equality was very much a key political issue. This undoubtedly helped the importance of gender mainstreaming in urban planning to be recognised- so the prioritisation of the issue was very much in the spirit of the times.

An exhibition entitled ''Who does public space belong to? Women's everyday life in the city" was held by the city's planners, which gained significant media attention. It led to the establishment of a "Women's Office" in the City of Vienna and subsequently the creation of the "Coordination Office for Planning and Construction Geared to the Requirements of Daily Life and the Specific Needs of Women" (Coordination Office). They had responsibility for assessing gender related quality in planning on an ongoing basis at the highest level of the City Administration.

Female officers were actively promoted to key decision-making roles in built environment posts, which gave them the power to progress an agenda of gender mainstreaming. Eva Kail, the head of the Coordination Office, had previously been the head of the Women's Department. This meant she had a good rapport with key politicians and a good standing within the Municipality more broadly, which was pivotal to the team's effectiveness.

Implementation of gender sensitive planning started from individual pilot projects to demonstrate the benefits on the ground. These were located around the city and ranged from improving

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streetscapes and public parks to housing projects that were designed by women for women. Beginning with physical projects was an effective strategy that contributed to the focus on gender being sustained and built upon. Firstly, it enabled planners to pick the least complex projects first, to illustrate the value of gender mainstreaming and to get buy in from politicians to continue the work. Secondly, it also allowed politicians to tangibly demonstrate positive improvements to their electorate.

After the initial pilot projects were implemented, the planners formulated more general guidance, drawing on lessons they had learnt from practice. This sequence of implementing pilot projects first, was essential to Vienna's success - it not only enabled actions to be realised quickly, but also emboldened politicians to support gender sensitive planning at a more strategic level. The guidance was also complemented by awareness raising training and campaigns across the municipality's related departments. The intention was to embed a gender sensitive approach to planning across the wider institution to reduce the reliance on the Coordination Office as the only ones able to ensure whether developments were considering the specific needs of women.

Vienna's efforts in gender mainstreaming were concentrated in the 90s and early 2000s, with some activity into the 2010s. More recently, a shift of focus politically, and a recent restructure of the administration have reduced the Coordination Office down to just one person, from three people at its maximum. This is reportedly to enable resources to be diverted into other issues, for example climate change. Despite the reduction in activity in this field, there are lessons that can be learned from Vienna's experience and inform practice in the UK. The design measures in themselves are perhaps not directly transferable as they are inextricably linked to the context in which they were created. However, many of the methodologies and approaches could be relevant to help us improve equitable design of places through planning practice in the UK.

Gender Mainstreaming in Vienna signified a more 'user-centred' approach with a focus on the needs of women. Today this could be applied to other underrepresented groups. Vienna's 'social space analysis' methodology could be used to gather and apply local expert knowledge to inform the design of spaces based on a more inclusive perspective. Planners used quantifiable data to build support for change drawing on existing relationships with colleagues to source this. Similarly, the content of evidence bases in the UK could consider the gender implications. In instances where the planners in Vienna were met with resistance, trials were installed to test and demonstrate how

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proposals would work in practice. This was innovative in its time, and a relevant approach today. Lastly increasing the visibility of the issue with dedicated staff and holding design teams accountable to gender sensitive planning review boards focused the attention of all those involved on the issue.

In conclusion, an enabling political context together with a range of tactics and strategies used by the planners in the municipality and those they were working with, ultimately led to Vienna becoming a successful example of gender sensitive approach to planning. The descriptive representation of women within the municipality through the Women's and later the Coordination offices led to the substantive representation of women's needs through the delivery of tangible projects which drew on the gendered lens to develop the urban form.

Searching for women in the local plans in England

Dr Karen Horwood is located within academia as a senior lecturer in planning at the Leeds Planning School. She was the convenor of the Women and Planning 2019 conference and has a research specialism in women and planning. However, she is also an associate member of the RTPI with experience of having worked for Leeds City Council. Her research focuses squarely on the substantive representation of women through an examination of the extent to which the needs of women are included in the local plans of England. Karen undertook a content analysis counting the number of times terms which indicate a connection to women were used. This approach was adopted to give a breadth of analysis of the extent to which the substantive representation of women in planning policy could be seen through the inclusion of their specific needs. Whilst limited in the extent to which the detail of the substantive representation could be explored, the strategy was predicated on the basis that including women's needs would require the use of specific language relating to such. As such the inclusion of such language would be an indication of engagement which could be explored more fully in future research.

Local plans are a key part of the local development framework required for all local planning authorities (LPA) in England and guide the strategic development across the LPA's area. They must meet requirements set out both in statute and the National Planning Policy Framework and are subject to a process of review and examination. The LPA operates within a legislative context that includes equalities. The Amsterdam Treaty 1997 requires that all member states promote equality between men and women (European Union, 1997). Within a national context, the 2010 Equalities

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Act requires the all public authorities to have due regard in three areas, across a number of protected characteristics including sex:

> *"(a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;*
>
> *"(b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;*
>
> *"(c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it." (Equality Act, 2010, s. 149)*

Consequently, the LPAs would need to ensure consideration of equalities during plan preparation.

Local plans were identified in 2018 through a world-wide web search and accessed through the local planning authority's website. As part of the inspection process the Planning Inspectorate keeps records of the status of all LPA's local plans (Planning Inspectorate, 2018), including the date of the current version. The web search was cross -referenced with this data to ensure the most up to date version was found. Some LPAs have produced their plans collaboratively with neighbouring areas resulting in a lower number of plans than the total number of 343 local authorities in England. In a small number of instances local plans could not be found, and as such these were not included in the study. In total, 334 local plans were identified and analysed. A quantitative content analysis was undertaken to count the number of instances of terms connected to women and planning. The terms used were women, female, sex, gender, (in)equality/ies. These terms were used to identify both where the wider equalities context was responded to, along with the extent to which a particular focus on the needs of women was highlighted, with the inclusion of several terms that would be most likely to be used in this way.

This research identified that use of these terms was sparse and unevenly split both in terms of which terms were used, and the extent to which the local plans used the terms at all. Remarkably 11% of documents did not use any of the terms at all. Usage peaked at 1-5 usages with 48% of documents with an additional 22% at a frequency of 7-10. However, this was very unevenly split between terms with between 75%-93% not using the terms women, female, sex or gender at any point. Figure 1 gives this breakdown in more detail.

	0	1-5	6-10	11-20	21-30	>30
Women	252 (75%)	82 (25%)	0	0	0	0

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Female	260 (78%)	72 (22%)	2 (0.6%)	0	0	0
Sex	311 (93%)	23 (7%)	0	0	0	0
Gender	266 (80%)	68 (20%)	0	0	0	0
(In)Equality/ies	58 (17%)	167 (50%)	57 (17%)	31 (9%)	15 (4%)	6 (2%)
Any term	37 (11%)	159 (48%)	72 (22%)	41 (12%)	15 (4%)	10 (3%)

Figure 1 The number and percentage of local plans to include identified terms, split by the frequency of their inclusion
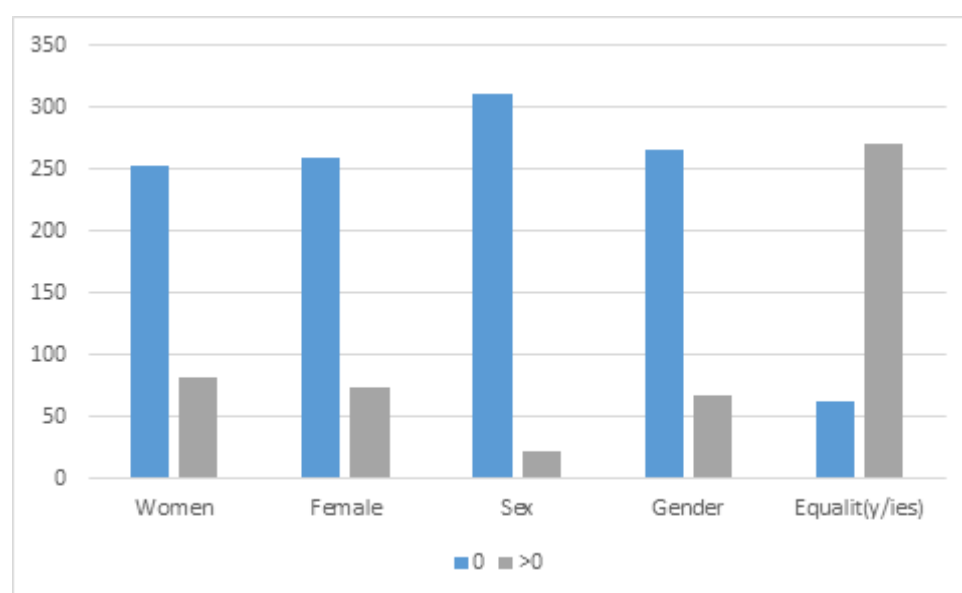

Figure 2 The number of local plans with zero and greater than zero used of the identified terms

For all terms except (in)equalit(y/ies), the majority of local plans didn't include them at all, as illustrated in figure 2.

This highlights a lack of substantive representation of women in planning policy with a lack of overt inclusion of the specific needs of women within the core strategy level of strategic planning in England. Whilst there is some inclusion of the broader equalities agenda, this does not extend to a specific identification of the particular policy elements needed to specifically address women's needs and discrete from a recognition of the need for broader equalities work.

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Discussion - Returning to the SRW framework

Each of these pieces of research speak to issues of substantive and descriptive representation of women within planning, and we will explore this through the Substantive Representation of Women (SRW) framework proposed by Celis et al (2008) as discussed earlier in the article. Celis et al (2008) assert that the key questions in analysing the representation of women are who is acting, where is the action occurring, why is it happening and how is it being expressed. It is to these questions we now return to examine what these pieces of research tell us about the representation of women in planning.

Who is acting?

The question of who is acting to advocate for women as planners and as the recipients of planning is crucial to understand the ways in which substantive representation of women is happening. Celis et al (2008) highlight that alongside representation of women in and of itself, the role of the critical actor is key to substantive representation.

Charlotte's work moves beyond the representation of women in planning more generally consider the extent to which they are in positions of leadership. This shifts the focus from broader representation in the planning sector towards where they are in positions that are likely to have more power. Leadership positions within planning give the individual access to decision making, shaping organisational culture, and determining priorities. It is in these ways that women have a greater access to the activities that enable them to operate as critical actors. As such finding only 17% of women in senior levels within planning practice in the private sector identifies a limitation on their opportunities to act as critical actors.

However, an important insight from the model is that we can neither assume that access to these positions will lead to greater substantive representation of women, as not all women in positions of power will become critical actors who advocate for the needs of women. Nor indeed that critical actors need to be women themselves, rather recognising that both men and women can advocate.

Building on this, Aude's research explores the experiences of women working in planning including the barriers they face within their role, which consequently could limit women's access to critical actor positions. This is highlighted through the identification of barriers to their progression and promotion, hindering their development in the workplace. This provides a qualitative dimension to

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Charlotte's quantitative analysis suggesting reasons for the underrepresentation in leadership positions. The dominance of masculine norms identified can also present a barrier to any critical actors seeking to gain purchase for their advocacy.

Natalya gives us an insight into the conditions under which critical actors do emerge in planning. She describes a situation of political will alongside actors who had the interest, expertise and influence. The application of the SRW model identifies that more research is needed to ascertain the experiences of women in leadership roles within planning to better understand the extent to which they do hold power, what their priorities are, whether they are able to carry out their priorities, and to identify where other critical actors may be found.

Where is it occurring?

Natalya highlights in her study of Vienna that substantive representation of women can occur in formal planning structures, through the establishment of a relevant department with staff and political influence. Pilot projects were then carried out to provide demonstrations of how such action can be implemented.

Karen's research examines formal policy-making and identifies that there is minimal evidence of an explicit engagement with the substantive representation of women within local plans. There is instead greater engagement with broader equalities. This reflects the legislative context within which plan making is operating where the Equalities Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty require local authorities to consider equalities across a range of protected characteristics, encouraging overall compliance rather than a focus on any particular protected characteristic. Further research is needed here, drawing on the insights of intersectionality (Crenshaw, 1989), to better understand how planning can respond to the specific needs across protected characteristics.

Why is it attempted?

Natalya's work highlights that in Vienna the representation of women's needs in planning was attempted in situations where there was political will and there were critical actors in an institutional set up that facilitated their work. Planning practice in the UK operates through institutional and legislative structures so action needs to take place within this. Karen's work highlights that at a strategic policy level action appears to be limited.

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How is it being expressed?

Natalya's research identifies that in Vienna it was expressed through the establishment of a dedicated department, instigating pilot projects that then informed wider practice. In an English context, Karen's research looks instead to policy-making and identifies that it isn't being expressed in the local plans. However, there are limitations to this research, with the possibility that discrete actions are being undertaken even if not explicitly named as such in strategic planning.

Future directions for further research

This article brought together research that has been undertaken to examine the descriptive and substantive representation of women in planning. However, there is much more to be done, and indeed the conference at which these papers came together sought to reinvigorate this research agenda. Findings from the article highlight gaps in our current understanding that could shape future research.

We need to better understand the barriers to explicit engagement with women's needs. Research has been undertaken in the past (Greed, 2005a; 2005b) and there has been discussion of the impact of gender mainstreaming outside of planning (Daly, 2005), but more recent and focused analysis is needed. This article identifies an example of good practice in Vienna, but it must also be recognised that there are more examples emerging, for example in Barcelona, Sweden and globally with the recently released UN's Her Cities programme (UN- Habitat and Global Utmaning, 2021). It is important to draw widely and understand the excellence and pitfalls of such examples.

The research here also suggests institutional and legislative barriers to the descriptive and substantive representation of women. This needs further examination to better understand the situation and identify solutions. Whilst minimal activity can be found at a strategic policy level other scales and areas of planning practice need exploring, for example is it happening in supplementary guidance, panel meetings when decisions are being made, at appeal? What is happening in private practice, are there developers responding to this issue? The critical actor may be found at other points in the planning system, or indeed outside the planning system, for example in 2021 the charity Make Space for Girls (Make Space for Girls, 2021) was established to campaign for consideration of the needs of girls in planning playgrounds and recreational space.

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Finally concerns of representation of marginalised groups is complex – women's needs are not singular, rather there is a diversity in women's interests which can contradict or come into conflict with one another (Celis et al, 2008; Crenshaw, 1989). In addition, as Karen's research highlights planning operates within a broader equalities framework shaped around multiple protected characteristics. Examining the ways in which these intersect is crucial to an understanding of women and planning, and its broader engagement with social justice.

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