

Genderfication



The Gendered City

2025

Concept & reflections by

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GENDERFICATION

What ?

A way to describe the transformation of cities through a gendered lens, paralleling but distinct from the concept of gentrification.

Infrastructure: Evaluating whether mobility systems (public transport, cycling routes, pedestrian networks) address women's safety, caregiving roles, and mobility patterns, which often differ from men's due to multitasking journeys (e.g., work, childcare, groceries).

Jobs and Location: Examining spatial mismatches in employment opportunities, where women and marginalized genders may face barriers accessing workplaces located in male-dominated or poorly connected areas. Genderfication asks how job locations and economic development strategies can become more inclusive.

Amenities and Services: Highlighting how the distribution of public toilets, childcare facilities, health centers, and safe leisure spaces are often uneven, reflecting a bias toward male-centered uses of space. A gendered perspective reclaims these amenities as essential urban infrastructure rather than "secondary" services.

Public Space and Belonging: Addressing who feels welcome in parks, plazas, and streets. Genderfication identifies patterns of exclusion (e.g., harassment, lack of lighting, surveillance) and reframes design strategies to promote inclusivity and visibility.

Genderfication offers a framework for rethinking urban transformation not just as economic or spatial restructuring, but as a process of redistributing safety, accessibility, visibility, and opportunity across genders.



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How is it different from Gentrification?

While gentrification typically refers to the socio-economic restructuring of neighborhoods, often resulting in displacement, rising rents, and exclusion

genderfication focuses on the symbolic, material, and structural reshaping of urban space in relation to gendered power dynamics.

More on the What?

Genderfication refers to the socio-spatial process through which urban environments, infrastructures, and policies are reshaped and interpreted through a gendered lens, integrating the lived experiences of women and marginalized genders into planning, governance, and design.

Spatial Dimension

Genderfication highlights that urban space is not neutral: it is produced and reproduced through gendered practices, such as mobility patterns, caregiving responsibilities, and exposure to safety risks.

It seeks to re-code the urban fabric – from housing and mobility networks to public space design – in ways that reflect the needs and perspectives of underrepresented groups.



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Epistemological Dimension

Challenges the dominance of quantitative, “objective” datasets in urban planning by integrating qualitative, narrative, and experiential knowledge.

Establishes feminist methodologies as valid epistemic contributions to spatial science, positioning emotional geographies and embodied experiences as core datasets.

Socio-Political Dimension

Genderfication operates as both a redistributive and recognition-based process:

Redistributive → ensuring resources, infrastructure, and urban benefits are equitably shared.

Recognition-based → making visible the contributions and needs of marginalized genders in shaping cities.

Directly linked to feminist political theory and gender mainstreaming in policy, but pushes beyond tokenism by insisting on systemic transformation.

Cultural Dimension

Reclaims symbolic and cultural visibility in cities (e.g., monuments, street names, archives of women architects, recognition of care labor in the built environment).

Promotes intergenerational knowledge transfer and feminist cultural memory.

Critical Lens on Genderfication

Positive Genderfication: Efforts to embed feminist and inclusive design principles in cities, such as feminist safety audits, participatory mapping, and care-centered infrastructure.

Critical Genderfication: A way to call out superficial or commodified uses of gender narratives in urban planning (e.g., branding a city as “inclusive” without systemic changes, or using “diversity” rhetoric to attract investors while vulnerable groups remain excluded).

Genderfication in Urban Design

The concept of genderfication adds nuance to debates on spatial justice by reframing how gender is both inscribed in and reshaped through the city.

- Expose the implicit masculinist biases of urban form and governance.
- Interrogate the politics of “inclusion” in contemporary urban development.
- Propose feminist methodologies (participatory mapping, narrative geographies, lived-experience data) as tools for more equitable urban transformation.



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Positives of Genderfication

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Recognition of Lived Experience

Genderfication brings marginalized experiences (e.g., women's mobility patterns, LGBTQ+ safety concerns, care-related needs) into the core of planning. It legitimizes subjective data like emotions, perceptions, and narratives, alongside traditional quantitative datasets.

Inclusive Urban Design

Can lead to safer, more accessible, and equitable public spaces – better lighting, inclusive playgrounds, safer transport, and more visible infrastructure for care (toilets, benches, childcare).

Expands urban design beyond “neutral” (but male-biased) standards.

Cultural Visibility & Representation

Genderfication reclaims symbolic space: street names, monuments, and archives that highlight women's and gender-diverse contributions to the city.

Encourages intergenerational continuity, where feminist spatial practices are carried forward.

Policy Innovation

Stimulates municipal and institutional innovation (e.g., gender audits, feminist budgeting, intersectional planning).

Opens pathways for data-driven advocacy that integrates feminist human geography with urban governance.

Social Cohesion & Justice

By valuing care work and community networks, genderfication strengthens social bonds.

Promotes cities that prioritize well-being and equality over profit-driven development.





Negatives / Critical Risks of Genderfication



Pink-Washing & Symbolism without Substance

Cities may adopt “feminist branding” (e.g., painting benches pink, hosting women’s events) without addressing structural inequalities.

Risk of depoliticizing feminist struggles by turning them into marketing strategies.

Commodification of Feminist Narratives

Developers or institutions may use “inclusive design” labels as selling points to attract investors or tourists, while ignoring the deeper needs of marginalized communities.

Gender becomes a marketed identity, not a structural force in planning.

Partial Inclusion

Genderfication may prioritize women’s experiences but risk excluding other marginalized groups (e.g., migrants, disabled communities, low-income households).

Without intersectionality, it can replicate exclusion under a feminist guise.

Fragmentation of Urban Policy

If gentrification initiatives remain project-based (e.g., one neighborhood pilot), they risk being tokenistic rather than systemic.

Without integration into formal policy structures, efforts remain isolated.

At its best → Genderfication disrupts patriarchal urban systems, bringing care, equity, and justice to the forefront of planning and governance.

At its worst → It risks being diluted into symbolic, commodified, or exclusionary practices that do not challenge structural inequities.