

# Age-Friendly Cities – Do Female Managers Matter?

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## Abstract

We build upon the elements for child and age-friendly cities determined by UNICEF and WHO to design the first national US survey of local government planning and service delivery. Conducted in collaboration with the International City County Management Association (ICMA) in 2013, 1378 local governments provided gender of the city manager. We run structural equation models of managers' gender, motivations, barriers, collaboration and the impacts on planning, zoning and services. We find support for representative bureaucracy theory as communities with female managers have higher motivation and barriers and are more likely to address age-friendly issues in their comprehensive plans and services. Engagement of seniors and families with children leads to more age-friendly planning, zoning and services. Path dependence may explain the absence of a gender difference in level of cross-agency collaboration for all ages, economic development plans or zoning. Structural paradigm shifts are needed to promote change.

Key words: gender, planning, age-friendly communities, representative bureaucracy

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## Takeaways for Practice

While the city management profession remains overwhelmingly male, our study shows the importance of female leadership on city services and planning.

Female-managed cities are more likely to include attention to the needs of children and seniors in their comprehensive and emergency plans and offer a wider array of age-friendly services.

There is no gender difference in cross-agency collaboration, economic development plans and zoning to meet the needs of children and seniors.

Engagement of families with children and seniors is critical to addressing their needs.

# Age-Friendly Cities – Do Female Managers Matter?

## Introduction

Public administration is beginning to give more attention to gender differences, but this has been understudied with respect to female city managers (Hamidullah, Riccucci & Pandey 2015). Women are underrepresented in local government management in the US (Holman 2017) and hold under 17 percent of city/county management positions (ICMA 2019). One area where gender difference might matter is planning for child and age-friendly cities. While US society is aging, cities are only beginning to recognize the challenges this brings for city services, comprehensive planning and the built environment (Wolf and Amirkanyan 2010, Warner and Zhang 2019). The World Health Organization (2007) and UNICEF (2018) have outlined the key domains where cities need to give attention to the needs of older adults and children. The American Planning Association has articulated guidelines for age-friendly cities (APA 2014). These include attention to service delivery, planning, zoning and the built environment, public health and community engagement. In this paper we present results from a national survey of US municipalities to assess if the gender of the city manager matters for age-friendly planning.

We bring together theoretical strands from both public administration and planning to look at differences in planning in cities that are led by female administrators. Public administration has given much attention to representative bureaucracy theory (Kislov & Rosenbloom 1981; Sowa and Selden 2003; Meier 2018; Kennedy, Bishu, & Heckler 2019). This theory has been used to explain differential attention given to various societal needs as masculine domination historically has led to a concern for “efficiency over caring” in city government (Stivers 2000) and concern about differences in public service motivation (DeHart-Davis, Marlowe & Pandey 2006). Similar concerns have been raised with respect to gender bias in the history of planning (Sandercock and Forsyth 1992). With the aging of America, giving attention to the broader care needs of society is gaining legitimacy in both planning and public administration (APA 2014; Wolf and Amirkanyan 2010). In this paper we look at community age-friendly planning, zoning and service delivery to see if gender of city manager matters.

Representative bureaucracy theory recognizes the difference between passive representation (females in leadership) and active representation (actual policy change). The links between the two depend on both organizational and community characteristics and leadership discretion (Wilkins & Williams 2009, Sowa & Selden 2003, Meier 2018). Organizational context helps determine if women’s voices are heard inside the bureaucracy (Turesky and Warner 2020; Siemiatycki, Enright & Valverde 2019). While some research finds gender differences in attitudes and actions (Kennedy, Bishu & Heckler 2019; Holman 2013), these may not receive full expression due to organizational constraints and bias in the workplace. Organizational psychology has pointed to the importance of role congruity and expectations on why women and their concerns may remain unheard in bureaucratic settings (Correll & Ridgeway 2006; Bosak, Sczesny & Eagly 2012). There are also real gendered power differences at the organizational level, especially between economic development and infrastructure as compared to social services, and these get reflected in choice of policy tools and levels of cross-agency collaboration (Stoney, Mitchell and Warner 2006; Siemiatycki, Enright & Valverde 2019; Johnson and Crum-Cano 2011). Recognizing the intersectionality of addressing gender

concerns (Bearfield, 2009; Breslin, Pandey, and Riccucci, 2016) requires a collaborative cross-agency approach in service delivery (Choi and Warner 2015).

Building from representative bureaucracy theory we hypothesize that H1: female managers will be more common in communities with representative governing boards. We distinguish passive from active bureaucracy and hypothesize that H2: cities with female managers will report more motivations and more barriers to planning for all ages. We also hypothesize that H3: female managed cities will have higher rates of cross-agency collaboration to address the needs of children and seniors.

Outside the bureaucracy, both planning and public administration theory have given attention to the role of participation and the need to focus on community voices and needs. The communicative turn in planning focuses on the power of discourse (Innes and Boor 2004) and the New Public Service in public administration focuses on the importance of citizen participation (Denhardt & Denhardt 2000; Riccucci, Gregg, Van Ryzin & Li 2016). Are women more likely to encourage community participation and collaboration to address social problems, or will they be more constrained in raising gender issues due to gendered norms about contestation, as well as community constraints? Scholars have found evidence in both directions. Women leaders in economic development have shown more attention to social equity issues (Hammer & Pivo 2017), but women leaders are often less likely to be heard in policy discussions, especially those around physical infrastructure (Siemiatycki, Enright & Valverde 2019). Engagement can facilitate active representation and is recognized as a core pillar in the age-friendly recommendations of WHO (2007), UNICEF (2018) and the APA (2014). We hypothesize that H4: communities with more engagement of seniors and families with children will be more likely to address age-friendly issues in their community plans and services.

Planning brings an additional dimension to the discussion in that it is focused on the nature of the built environment, not just bureaucratic management or service delivery. Jane Jacobs (1961) was a pioneer in focusing on the relationship between the built environment and social wellbeing in American cities. Suburban development characterizes most US cities and several female planning scholars have pointed to the gender bias in suburban design (Markusen 1980, Ritzdorf 1994, Hayden 2002). Single family homes, segregated land use and separation of public and private spheres have increased the spatial and time burden women face as they negotiate work and family demands (Ritzdorf 1994). Suburbs were seen as an escape from the city (Hanlon 2010), but it is in suburbs where the segregation of land uses is most extreme – and most negative for women, especially as suburbs age and become more diverse (Micklow and Warner 2014). This path dependence in zoning, and its reification in the built form of a community, makes it more difficult to change, especially in communities that are not growing.

Recent developments in planning, such as New Urbanism, challenge the notion of segregated land use and instead promote mixed use, walkability and denser living patterns (Nelson 2009). These are viewed as being more healthy, environmentally sustainable and better able to meet the needs of an aging society (APA 2014, Harrell, Lynott and Guzman 2014, Warner and Zhang 2019). While gender is not an explicit concern in these new forms of planning, it is implicit in the increased attention to the needs of older adults, the majority of whom are female.

An aging society draws attention to the need for a paradigm shift away from planning for the androgynous worker and towards recognition of a diverse population and the broader range of needs of children, older adult and women. For example, economic development planning has been focused on industrial recruitment and has given less attention to local services and social infrastructure – issues critical for gender and age-friendly planning (Reese 2012; Pratt Kay and Warner 2007, Warner 2006). Housing and land use also have been slow to change, in part because land use regulations are written into law and persist over time (Hirt 2013). While efforts have been made to promote mixed use, such as allowing child care in residential zones, and promoting multiple housing types, such as accessory dwelling units, studies find more action in transportation than in land use and housing (Micklow, Kancilia and Warner 2015). Transportation planning has witnessed a paradigm shift from planning for commuting only, to recognition of the broader mobility needs of all residents – for shopping, schooling, recreation, child care and work (Levine, Grengs, & Merlin 2019). Women’s travel patterns are different – with more trip chaining to multiple destinations and greater time and distance constraints due to the need to negotiate work and family demands (Crane 2007, Kwan 1999). Therefore, we hypothesize H5: there will be more responsiveness to gender in comprehensive plans and services than in zoning and economic development.

The intersectionality of gender with race, class and the built environment creates a special challenge for scholarship on equity in governance (Wilkins and Williams 2009; Bearfield 2009; Breslin, Pandey, and Riccucci 2017). In this paper we bring together measures of governance, public participation, planning, and the built environment, to ask the question, does gender of the city administrator matter in promoting age friendly communities? We test hypotheses regarding representative bureaucracy, role congruity, participation and path dependence. Based on the literature, we explore the following hypotheses.

H1: Female managers will be more common in communities with representative governing boards.

H2: Communities with female managers will report more motivations and more barriers to planning for all ages.

H3: Female managed communities will have higher rates of cross-agency collaboration.

H4: Communities with more engagement of seniors and families with children will be more likely to address age-friendly issues in their community plans and services.

H5: Communities with female management will be more likely to address age-friendly concerns in their plans and services and less likely in their zoning codes and economic development.

## **Data and method**

We conducted a national survey with the International City County Management Association (ICMA) in 2013 of the actions, attitudes, motivators and constraints on planning for all generations. Focus groups were held at local government conferences across the nation in 2011 and 2012 to develop survey questions. The surveys were mailed to the chief administrative officers in cities and counties across the United States in 2013. The sample frame included all counties and all municipalities over 25,000 population and a one in three sample of

municipalities under 25,000, and a one-in-2.5 sample of towns and townships over 2,500 in population for a total of 7948 local governments. 1474 places responded for a response rate of 19%. The survey also asked the chief administrators' gender and 1378 municipalities provided this information. This is the sample we use in this analysis. The population distribution of the sample is similar to the population distribution of the universe sample, according to a two-sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov test.

We link our survey data with socio-economic data from the American Community Survey (2009-2013, 2005-2009) to explore the relation between managers' gender, community composition and local government actions on building age-friendly communities. We are interested in what differentiates communities with female managers and if such female leadership differentiates local governments' motivations, barriers, and collaboration in building age-friendly communities. We also measure the impacts of female management on planning, zoning codes, and services (figure 1). This allows us to distinguish passive measures of representative bureaucracy from active measures of policy and services.

Figure 1 about here

The survey asked chief administrative officers to report their level of professional interest in multigenerational planning and their motivations to plan for all ages, the barriers their communities face to joint programming for different ages, and the extent to which their government engages in cross-agency partnerships to serve children and seniors. We also measure the composition of the community board/council and the level of engagement of families with children, youth and older adults. Policy outcomes include attention to multigenerational planning in the comprehensive plan, economic development plan, and emergency plan, the extent of the community covered by age-friendly zoning codes, and the number of age-friendly services available in the community.

We model gender of chief administrative officer as well as process variables such as motivations, barriers and collaboration, and outcome variables such as comprehensive plans, zoning codes and service availability in a single structural system using structural equation modeling. We also include variables for public engagement, governing board characteristics, managers' professional interest, community demographics and metro status. Descriptive statistics are shown in table 1.

Table 1 about here

**Female Administrator.** Sixty-six percent of our responding communities have female administrators (908) and 33% are male (470). Communities with female administrators tend to be larger and have more representative governing boards (shown in the structure of governing board and socio-economic characteristics below). This conforms with the expectations of representative bureaucracy theory and provides some support for H1.

**Manager's Professional Interest.** Our survey asked managers about their professional interest in multigenerational planning. Five motivations were measured. The majority of managers reported that they are motivated by "community needs," especially female managers (female manager: 76%, male manager: 70%). "Fiscal efficiency" also motivates 39% of female managers to engage in multigenerational planning, compared to 31% of male managers. However, fewer female managers indicated that they are motivated by "examples from neighboring

communities” (29% female vs. 35% male). Two motivations could not be differentiated by the gender of managers: “experience in my own family” (41%), and “literature on best practices or emerging trends” (27%). We expect female managers will have more professional interest (H2), and those managers with more professional interest will be more motivated and encounter more barriers (H2) and engage in more cross-agency collaborations (H3).

**Motivation.** Our survey asked managers about their community’s motivations to engage in multigenerational planning. Six motivations are measured, and each motivation is measured for addressing the “needs of seniors” (yes/no) and for the “needs of families with children” (yes/no). We added up the six elements across both seniors and families with children to form the motivation indicator (maximum score 12). The most common motivations, for both female managers male managers, are the “availability of government funding for services or programs” (55%), and the “desire to attract or retain seniors (children) in the community” (43%). Three motivations are higher in communities with a female manager than communities with a male manager: “interest of staff or prioritization by staff” (female manager: 42%, male manager: 35%), “political engagement of seniors/ families with children” (female manager: 41%, male manager: 30%) and “pressure from local elected leaders” (female manager: 31%, male manager: 23%). This suggests support for representative bureaucracy theory (H2), as female managers report more staff interest, more political engagement and more pressure from local leaders. The least common motivation, “pressure from business/non-profit leaders” (19%), cannot be differentiated by managers’ gender. We expect higher motivations will lead to more cross agency collaboration and more age friendly planning.

**Barriers.** Our survey measures fourteen barriers to joint programming for different ages. Local governments with a female manager were more likely to report “lack of funding” (female manager: 79%, male manager: 68%), “turf issues” (female manager: 27%, male manager: 19%), “customer preference for age-segregated services” (female manager: 23%, male manager: 15%), and “opposition to joint programming from seniors toward children” (female manager: 12%, male manager: 8%). Other barriers cannot be significantly differentiated by the managers’ gender, including “segregated funding streams” (43%), “liability” (35%), “lack of information” (33%), “lack of common data systems” (29%), “concerns about safety” (17%), “regulations to protect children” (14%), “regulations to protect frail elders” (8%), “elected official opposition” (7%), “department head or staff opposition” (5%), and the “opposition to joint programming from families with children toward seniors” (3%). Communities with female managers face more barriers and this conforms with H2 and prior theory in both planning and public administration. We expect communities with more barriers will engaged in less age-friendly planning.

**Collaboration.** Collaboration is a key approach to building age-friendly communities (Choi and Warner 2014). Our survey asks managers to report which agencies are engaged in “cross-agency partnerships to serve children or seniors.” Among the fourteen local government agencies measured, libraries, parks and recreation schools and police top the list. The rates of these top four cross-agency partnerships are higher in communities with female managers: “library” (female manager: 69%, male manager: 63%), “parks and recreation department” (female manager: 63%, male manager: 49%), “school district” (female manager: 59%, male manager: 51%), and “police department” (female manager: 54%, male manager: 48%). Cross agency collaboration cannot be distinguished by the gender of managers, in “Area Agency on Aging (49%), “public health department” (49%), “hospital or health care providers” (46%), “fire department” (45%), “housing agency” (34%), “economic development agency/chamber of

commerce” (28%), and “transportation or highway department” (21%). The lowest rates of collaboration are in planning departments, community colleges and child care resource and referral, but even here, communities with female managers show higher rates of collaboration: “planning department” (female manager: 31%, male manager: 23%), “community college” (female manager: 30%, male manager: 21%), and “childcare resource and referral agency” (female manager: 23%, male manager: 17%). The results suggest women managers may encourage more cross-agency collaboration (partial support for H3). We added up number of agencies engaged in cross-agency partnerships to form a collaboration index (max score 14). We expect communities with more collaboration will engage in more age-friendly planning.

**Planning.** The survey measured if a community has a comprehensive plan, an economic development plan and an emergency plan, and if those plans specifically address the needs of children and older adults. Each plan is measured on a level of 0-3. If a community did not have a plan, it is coded as 0. If the community had a plan, but it did not address the needs of children or seniors, it is coded as 1. If the community plan only addressed the needs of children or only addressed the needs of seniors, it is coded as 2. If the community plan addresses the needs of both seniors and children, it is coded as 3.

Among the three plans measured, most communities have an emergency plan (92%), and 53% of emergency plans address the needs of both children and elders. Comprehensive plans are also commonly adopted by communities (80%), and 39% of respondents indicated that their comprehensive plan addresses the needs of both seniors and families with children. However, only 62% communities had an economic development plan, and only 16% of the respondents reported that their economic plan addresses the needs of both children and seniors.

Communities with a female manager are more likely to plan. Regarding the comprehensive plan, 83% of female managed communities have a comprehensive plan, compared to 73% in male managed communities. In communities with female managers, 42% reported the plan addresses the needs of both seniors and children, compared to 32% of communities with male managers. Communities with female managers reported a higher percent of emergency plans (female manager: 94%, male manager: 90%), and a higher percent of emergency plans addressing the needs of both children and seniors (female manager: 55%, male manager: 47%).

Interestingly, for communities with an economic development plan, communities with female managers are more likely to have an economic development plan that does *not* address the needs of either children or seniors (42% female manager, compared to 38% if male manager). This could reflect a bias against addressing gender issues, such as child care, in economic development (Folbre 2006; Warner 2006). In accordance with H5, we expect communities with female managers will be more likely to address multigenerational concerns in their comprehensive plan and emergency plan, but not in their economic development plan.

**Zoning codes.** Our survey measured the percent of the community covered by fourteen zoning codes on a scale of 1 to 5 (0%=1, 0-25%=2, 25-50%=3, 50-75%=4, ≥75%=5). The zoning code index includes codes related to neighborhood, street and housing characteristics. We expect communities with female managers will have more of the community covered by more age-friendly zoning codes. Communities with female managers have a higher percent of their community covered, between 50% and 75% (median level 4), to “promote parks or recreation

facilities in all neighborhoods” and to “mandate sidewalk system” (Female manager median =4, male manager median=3)”, “require street connections between adjacent developments” (Female manager median =4, male manager median=3), “contain pedestrian-friendly design guidelines (Female manager median =3, male manager median=2)”, and “allow mixed-use (e.g., retail and services in residential areas)” (Female manager median =3, male manager median=2). Although more than half of communities reported that requiring “complete streets” covers less than 25% of their community, more communities with a female manager (Female manager=24%, male manager=18%) report more than 75% of their community is covered .

Other zoning codes cannot be differentiated by managers’ gender. More than 50% of respondents reported that between 50% and 75% (median score 4) of their community is covered with zoning codes that “allow family-sized housing (with 2 or more bedrooms),” and that 25%-50% of the community is covered by zoning codes that “allow multi-family housing”, “allow child care centers”, “allow child care business in residential units by right”, and “promote affordable housing”. These are important measures of mixed use.

The zoning codes with the least coverage are “allow accessory dwelling units (e.g., “granny flats”)", “mandate universal design for new housing construction (physically accessible to people with limited mobility)”, and “provide density bonuses (e.g., for affordable housing, open space, transit)”. More than half of respondents indicated that those codes cover less than 25% of their community and we find no difference by gender of manager. Zoning codes persist over time and reflect past path dependence, thus we expect communities with female managers will not be differentiated with respect to zoning codes (H5).

**Services.** Services measure the number of available services, facilities and programs in the community meeting the needs of seniors and children. The survey measured 29 services, including nine services for children, eleven services for seniors, and nine services for both seniors and children. More than half of the child-related services were significantly higher in communities with female managers. Those services include: “after-school program” (female manager: 80%, male manager: 69%), and “summer camps” (female manager: 68%, male manager: 55%), “youth center” (female manager: 42%, male manager: 31%), “childcare services” (female manager: 36%, male manager: 29%), and “walk-to-school programs” (female manager: 34%, male manager: 27%). The service of “home visiting for families with children” is more available in communities with male managers (23%) than communities with female managers (18%). Other child-related services cannot be differentiated by managers’ gender, including “publicly supported preschool” (51%), “family literacy/parenting programs” (46%), and “youth employment programs” (33%).

The gender effect is less prominent in the senior-related services. Among the eleven services for seniors, the most common services and the least common services cannot be differentiated by managers’ gender. The most common services include “home-delivered meals or groceries for seniors” (81%), “senior center” (79%), and “home visiting for seniors”(48%). Less common services also showed no difference by gender of manager: “nutrition programs/meals for seniors” (24%) and mobility-related services such as: “volunteer driver program” (19%), “taxi vouchers for seniors” (12%), and “school buses used to transport seniors” (10%). We find significant differences with female managers in “adult day care” (female manager: 47%, male manager: 39%), “home modification services for seniors” (female manager:42%, male manager: 36%), “adult education services” (female manager: 36%, male

manager: 30%), and “large lettering on street/traffic signs” (female manager: 22%, male manager: 16%).

Communities with female managers are more likely to provide services for all ages. These services include “street furniture/places to sit and rest” (female manager: 62%, male manager: 54%), “demand-response transit” (aka “dial-a-ride”) (female manager: 62%, male manager :54%), “community center shared by all ages” (female manager: 50%, male manager: 41%), and “enhanced crosswalks (e.g., extended crossing times, sidewalk bump-outs, highly-visible paint)” (female manager 49%, male manager: 39%). Other all age services are not differentiated by manager’s gender. These services include: “public restrooms in commercial districts and parks” (55%), “inter-generational programs for seniors and youth” (38%), and “recreation programs for all ages” (32%), “public funding for community groups to use vans” (20%) and “health care services for all ages” (11%). We added up the available services to form the service index, and expect communities with female managers will provide more services to meet the needs of seniors and families with children (H5).

**Public Engagement.** The survey asked about the level of engagement of seniors, youth and families with children in planning for their needs. The engagement of each group was measured on a three-point scale (1=not at all engaged, 2=somewhat engaged, and 3=very engaged). More than half of respondents reported that all the groups are at least somewhat engaged in the planning process (median=2). Seniors have the highest level of engagement, followed by families with young children and youth. More communities with female managers report engaging seniors somewhat (female manager: 71%, male manager: 66%). We expect (H4) that communities with more engagement will have higher motivation, more cross-agency partnership and more age-friendly planning.

**Structure of Governing Board.** The survey asked if the community’s governing board/council was representative of elites or representative of the community. If representative democracy were present, we would expect more female managers and more age-friendly planning in communities with representative governing boards (H1). Respondents reported if their community governing board is “representative of elites,” “evenly balanced” or “representative of community.” More than half of communities report their governing board is representative of the community (52%), but those with female managers have a significantly higher percent than communities with male managers (55% vs. 46%).

**Socio-economic conditions.** We control for socio-economic conditions. These variables include socioeconomic factors (per capita income, Gini, poverty rate), and demographics (population, population density, population growth). These variables are drawn from the American Community Survey 2009-2013 and American Community Survey 2005-2009 estimates. We differentiate respondents by metro status using 2010 US Census place definitions and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) 2010 standards (No. 13-01 Bulletin) (US Census Bureau, 2013a, 2013b). Metro core includes metropolitan cities and counties which have a principal city and this serves as our reference category. Suburban places are all other metropolitan places. Rural is nonmetropolitan. Communities with female managers have more population, higher population density, higher population growth and are more likely to be suburbs and less likely to be rural.

## Results

We ran a structural equation model (SEM) to examine the research framework (figure 1). We ran SEM in STATA 14.0 without latent factors, and used maximum likelihood methods to estimate the coefficients and address missing values. We model gender of chief administrative officer as well as process variables such as motivations, barriers and collaboration, and outcome variables such as comprehensive plans, zoning codes and service availability. We also include variables for public engagement, governing board characteristics, managers' professional interest, community demographics and metro status. Results are shown in table 2.

Table 2 is about here

Our primary hypotheses regard gender effects. Results show that female managers are more common in communities with representative governing boards and higher density. These results support representative bureaucracy theory and H1, which argues that communities with governing boards more representative of their population will be more likely to have female managers. However, we do not find the governing board is related to age-friendly planning and services, but female managers are. This supports active representational bureaucracy –female leadership is more likely to address the needs of traditionally underrepresented groups like children and seniors in planning and services (supports H5).

Professional interest does not differentiate female managers but does have a positive effect on motivation, barriers, and collaboration. Recall that community need is the most commonly reported professional interest and this motivates managers to engage in multigenerational planning, respond to more barriers, and engage in more cross-agency partnerships to serve children or seniors. These results also support representational bureaucracy theory.

Female managed communities have more motivations to engage in multigenerational planning and face more barriers (supports H2). However, the managers' gender is not related to cross-agency collaboration (does not support H3). Governing boards which are more representative of community, population size, and managers' professional interest are related to more collaboration.

Regarding outcomes, among the three types of plans we measure, communities with female managers are more likely to address the needs of seniors and families with children in their comprehensive plan and emergency plan. However, attention to children and aging issues in economic development plans is not related to the managers' gender. Recall that only 21% of communities have an economic development plan addressing the needs of seniors or children, compared to 52% of communities with a comprehensive plan, and 64% with an emergency plan. The gender effect is significant in comprehensive and emergency plans, which pay more attention to multigenerational needs (supports H5). Female managers also matter for age-friendly services, while the managers' gender is not related to zoning code (supports H5).

Engagement of seniors and families with children has a strong positive effect on all of our outcome measures – plans, zoning and services (support for H4). The effect of engagement is stronger than the gender effect and second only to the effect of cross-agency collaboration.

Motivation, collaboration and engagement play an important role in building age-friendly communities. All of these variables are positively related to age-friendliness of comprehensive

plans, economic development plans, emergency plans, zoning codes and services. Motivation is also positively related to all age-friendly outcomes (planning, zoning codes and services), and our results show that female leadership indirectly enhances those outcomes. Female managers also report more barriers to building age-friendly communities. However, among the age-friendly outcomes, barriers are only negatively related to zoning codes, but female manager is not related to zoning. This suggests that although descriptive statistics show that female managed cities have a higher coverage of some zoning codes, it is not a gender effect. Age-friendly zoning codes are more related to the demographic structure, including more population, higher population density and higher population growth.

Demographic structure matters, as larger communities are more likely to be age-friendly. Age-friendly features also are more common in more dense community settings, as most age-friendly features are easier to achieve in more dense environments. Communities with more population density are more likely to address multigenerational issues in their comprehensive plans and in their zoning codes and services. But density is negatively related to age-friendly economic development plans, as is per capita income. Zoning codes are more age-friendly in communities with more population growth, but services are lower.

We also controlled for metro status. Results show that rural communities lag in motivation, and suburbs lag in both motivation and cross-agency collaboration, but we find no difference in planning, zoning or service outcomes after controlling for all other factors.

## **Discussion**

Does gender matter for age-friendly planning? Yes. Our models show support for both passive and active representational bureaucracy theory, citizen engagement and path dependence. Regarding passive representative bureaucracy theory, we find female managers are more common in communities with representative governing boards (supports H1). Female managers also report higher degree of motivation, and barriers in their communities (supports H2). These are the process features so critical to age-friendly planning. Role congruity theory and expectations states theory lead us to expect more motivation and barriers in female-managed cities. The collaboration results show no gender effect (against H3) – but collaboration is higher in communities with representative governing boards. To get all agencies to work together requires broader representation than just women and the power to encourage agencies to work together in unconventional ways.

With respect to age-friendly outcomes, we find communities with female managers report more attention to age-friendly issues in their comprehensive and emergency plans and in the array of services provided (supports H5). This supports active representative bureaucracy theory. Where gender is not significant is in age-friendly economic development plan and zoning. What might explain this gap? Economic development policy has been biased toward export-based industries and against local services, especially household services like child care (Kay, Pratt and Warner 2007; Warner 2006). Feminist economists have long complained of the gender bias in economic development thinking (Folbre 2006). Recently some scholars find more attention to social equity in economic development among female leaders (Holman 2013). While attention to child care issues in economic development is growing, less than 13 percent of cities reported giving attention to child care in their economic development policy in the latest ICMA survey (Reese and Ye 2015).

The lack of a gender effect on zoning reflects the historical path dependence of zoning. The race and gender bias of zoning has deep roots in US land use policy (Hirt 2013; Ritzdorf 1994). Only recently, with the rise of New Urbanism (Nelson 2009), are we beginning to see a break in the segregated land use policy of the past. Our models show that growing cities are most likely to break from these old modes of planning.

Motivation, collaboration and engagement – the key processes to promote age-friendly planning – have a positive impact on all outcome variables. This confirms prior research and the guidance from WHO (2007), UNICEF (2018) and APA (2014) which emphasizes the role of collaboration and engagement (supports H4). This also supports the increased attention given to engagement and collaboration in public administration (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000) and in planning (Innes and Booher 2004).

## **Conclusion**

Gender is receiving renewed attention in public administration (Hamidullah, Riccucci & Pandey 2015, Kennedy, Bishu, & Heckler, 2019). This article explores whether communities with female managers are more likely to engage in age-friendly planning. Using a national survey from 2013 we find the answer is a partial yes. Communities with female managers are more likely to address the needs of seniors and of families with children in their comprehensive plans, emergency plans and array of services. Communities with female managers also report higher motivation and more barriers.

Where we do not see a gender effect is in cross-agency collaboration, economic development and zoning. What would explain this result? Power, active representation and path dependence provide some clues. Cross-agency collaboration requires the ability to get traditional agencies such as police and fire and highway departments to work with planners and offices for the ageing and child care. This is difficult, though important inroads are being made. Economic development has been focused on business incentives and recruitment and less on the critical social infrastructure needs that women and children face. Zoning is grounded in past laws which can be difficult to change, except in growing communities where new neighborhoods are platted. Path dependence matters. But planning modalities are changing with the needs of an aging society, and with New Urbanism approaches toward mixed use and walkability. These give openings to also address gender issues.

This research has implications for the city management profession. While the city management profession remains overwhelmingly male, our study shows the importance of female leadership on community services and planning. Efforts to enhance career tracks to encourage more women to enter and stay in the field are being pursued by organizations such as ICMA (2019). This may help communities meet the challenges of promoting a more inclusive local government response to an aging society. But moving beyond passive to active representation requires shifting the planning structures of our communities. To do so we must address power differences across agencies and the path dependence of planning and zoning modalities. Paradigm shifts are hard, but point the way toward a more equitable future.

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Table 1 Descriptive statistics, Planning and Gender

Variable	N	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Female manager (yes=1) <sup>1</sup>	1,378	.66	.47	0	1
Professional interest (5 elements) <sup>1</sup>	1,378	2.10	1.32	0	5
Motivation (6 elements for children and 6 for seniors) <sup>1</sup>	1,378	4.46	3.33	0	12
Barriers (14 elements) <sup>1</sup>	1,378	3.26	2.23	0	14
Collaboration (14 agencies) <sup>1</sup>	1,378	5.82	3.76	0	14
Comprehensive plan (level 0-3) <sup>1</sup>	1,342	1.70	1.18	0	3
Economic development plan (level 0-3) <sup>1</sup>	1,335	.99	1.04	0	3
Emergency plan (level 0-3) <sup>1</sup>	1,337	2.09	1.05	0	3
Zoning code (14 elements, level 1-5) <sup>1</sup>	1,025	41.23	11.38	14	70
Service (29 elements) <sup>1</sup>	1,378	11.66	5.60	0	28
Engagement (3 elements, level 1-3) <sup>1</sup>	1,333	5.57	1.32	3	9
Representative of community (yes=1) <sup>1</sup>	1,308	.52	.50	0	1
Per capita income (ln) <sup>2</sup>	1,378	1.16	.33	8.62	11.56
Gini <sup>2</sup>	1,378	.43	.05	.26	.62
Poverty rate (%) <sup>2</sup>	1,378	14.51	8.22	.29	52.04
Population (ln) <sup>2</sup>	1,378	9.86	1.34	6.48	14.51
Population density (ln) <sup>2</sup>	1,378	6.11	2.06	-2.24	1.87
Population growth (%) <sup>2,3</sup>	1,377	17.10	53.00	-43.06	77.76
Metro core <sup>4</sup>	1,378	.15	.36	0	1
Suburb <sup>4</sup>	1,378	.52	.50	0	1
Rural <sup>4</sup>	1,378	.33	.47	0	1

US Municipalities.

Data source: <sup>1</sup>Planning Across Generations Survey 2013. <sup>2</sup>American Community Survey 2009-2013. <sup>3</sup>American Community Survey 2005-2009. <sup>4</sup>US Census 2010

Table 2 SEM model results (standardized coefficients), Planning and Gender

	Female manager <sub>1</sub>	Motivation <sub>1</sub>	Barriers <sub>1</sub>	Collab. <sub>1</sub>	Comp. plan <sub>1</sub>	Economic dev. plan <sub>1</sub>	Emergency plan <sub>1</sub>	Zoning code <sub>1</sub>	Service <sub>1</sub>
Female manager <sub>1</sub>	-	.053*	.091**	.049	.083**	-.026	.090**	.031	.041*
Professional interest <sub>1</sub>	-.011	.378**	.225**	.226**	-	-	-	-	-
Motivation <sub>1</sub>	-	-	-	-	.088**	.122**	.099**	.083**	.109**
Collaboration <sub>1</sub>	-	-	-	-	.140**	.208**	.113**	.150**	.361**
Barriers <sub>1</sub>	-	-	-	-	-.020	-.048	.027	-.081**	.029
Engagement <sub>1</sub>	-	-	-	-	.068*	.132**	.104**	.144**	.141**
Representative of community <sub>1</sub>	.078**	.024	-.066*	.080**	.001	-.048	.021	.051	-.007
Per capita income (ln) <sub>2</sub>	.012	-.046	.004	-.009	.063	-.122*	.047	.061	.005
Gini <sub>2</sub>	-.049	.052	.001	.068	-.021	.024	.043	-.073	.023
Poverty rate <sub>2</sub>	.042	-.043	.105	.011	-.014	-.046	-.027	.063	-.014
Population (ln) <sub>2</sub>	.057	.102**	.158**	.213**	.039	.101**	.074*	.106**	.336**
Population density (ln) <sub>2</sub>	.202**	.038	-.063*	.044	.211**	-.074*	-.057	.348**	.071**
Population growth <sub>2,3</sub>	.046	.012	-.014	.032	.004	.045	.041	.053*	-.071**
Suburban <sub>4</sub>	.058	-.103*	-.045	-.107*	.018	.073	.003	-.063	-.049
Rural <sub>4</sub>	.079	-.093*	-.042	-.084	.007	.080	-.026	-.014	.006
N	1378								
Goodness of fit	.68								

US Municipalities. Data sources: <sub>1</sub>Planning Across Generations Survey 2013. <sub>2</sub>American Community Survey 2009-2013. <sub>3</sub>American Community Survey 2005-2009. <sub>4</sub>US Census 2010

Note: \*\* p<.01, \* p<.05, “-” denotes variables are not estimated in the model.

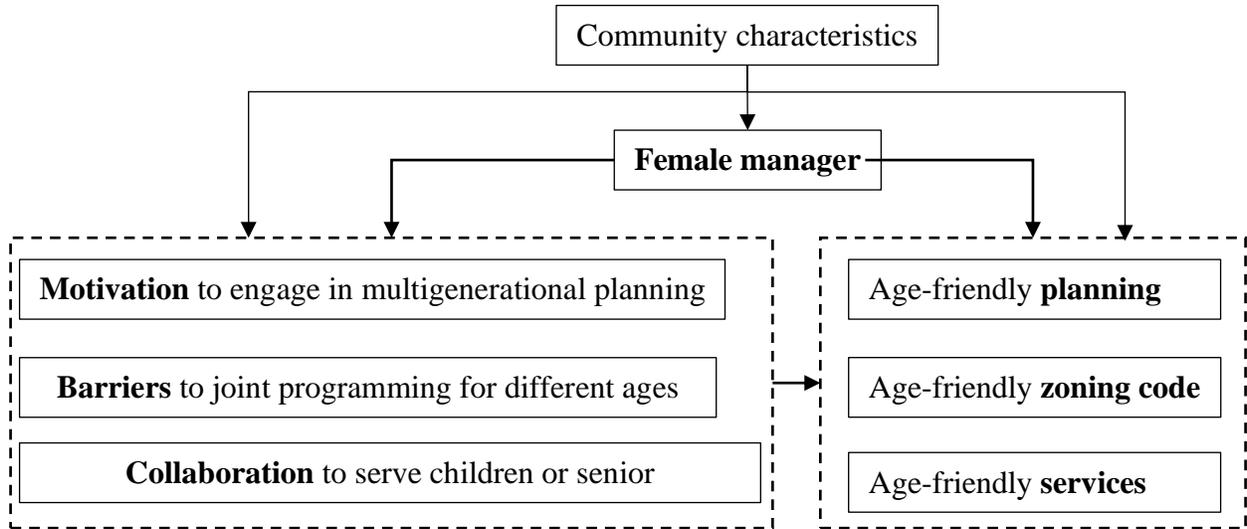


Figure 1 Research framework