

A Review of Studies on Female Public Space

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Abstract: With the emergence of the problem of spatial alienation of modern people caused by industrialization and urbanization after World War II, people began to re-examine the spatial problem. The discussion of space has gradually become the mainstream consciousness in western countries. People's way of thinking has changed from timeliness to spatiality. Under this background, the concept of “public space (domain)” has gradually entered the public field of vision. Public space (domain) is not only a “container” carrying people's daily life with the physical characteristics of material space, but also, to some extent, a manifestation platform of social significance with complex political, economic and cultural backgrounds. As there are many problems in public space (domain), such as gender blind spots, equal and open access, fairness and justice, feminists have made critical reflections on it. This paper attempts to construct the theoretical framework of female public space (domain) and open up a path for the research of spatial justice theory, thus realizing the possibility of improving the unjust structure of public space (domain).

1. Introduction

Time and space are two important dimensions for human beings to grasp the world. They have always been the focus of philosophy. From the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century, timeliness has always been the dominant mode of thinking. In the 20th century, with the rapid development of economy and technology after the Second World War, the suburbanization of the urban middle class made a large number of urban population move out of the city, and the urban central area gradually declined. At the same time, the spatial isolation of different classes became increasingly serious, and the urban space appeared unprecedented expansion and differentiation, leading to the reconstruction of the urban space. As industrialization and urbanization have caused the alienation of modern people's spatiality, spatiality has been paid more and more attention, and the overall thinking has shown a “spatial turn” trend from the temporal-historical dimension to the spatial-field dimension.

After the 1970s and 1980s, Michel Foucault and Henri Lefebvre, as thought leaders of the space turn, criticized urbanization, the concentrated expression of capitalist contradictions, reconsidered the social theory of space and constructed the basic space form of daily life. Foucault thinks that the 20th century is the era of space. He thinks that space is the foundation of public life, the foundation of power operation, and has power characteristics. Authorities achieve the purpose of discipline and discipline through spatial organization and planning. Lefebvre thinks that space is playing an increasingly important role in modern society. Based on Marx's theory of production practice, he initiated the politics of space. He believed that space is not only social but also political. In his book “Space Production” published in 1974, he pointed out that the essence of capitalism lies in the production of space. Specific social production methods produce specific types of space. He regards space as the conceptual core of the critical theory of daily life and criticizes the expansion of capitalist space. As for the study of space, it is not just a “container”, but a product under a specific social, political, economic and cultural background. However, public space (domain) is the explicit expression of space problems, humanities and social values. Therefore, the research on public space

(domain) has caused more discussion.

2. Research on Public Space (Domain)

2.1 Concept Source and Development

“Public” and “public domain” first appeared in German in the 18th century. The noun “Öffentlichkeit” evolved from the earlier adjective “Öffentlich”, equivalent to “publicity” in French and “publicity” in English, domestic scholars often translate public space or public domain.

Scholar L.Nadai believes that in the 50 years of the 20th century, there has been a discussion on public space (domain) in the fields of sociology and political philosophy. The earliest definition and proposal of the concept of “public space (domain)” came from the works of Charles Madge, a British sociologist, “Private and Public Space” and Hannah Arendt, a political philosopher. Subsequently, the German philosopher Jürgen Habermas elaborated this concept in his “Structural Transformation of Public Sphere”, which attracted widespread attention and recognition of the public and subsequently had a certain social impact. In the 1960s, attention to public space (domain) extended to the fields of urban planning and design. Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford pay attention to social problems reflected in public spaces (domain) from different perspectives and criticize them in their academic works. By the 1970s, due to academic attention to public space (domain), extensive interdisciplinary discussions and explorations had taken place, and the research on public space (domain) entered the public field of vision.

2.2 Theoretical Analysis of Public Space

(1) The study of public space (domain) from the perspective of political philosophy

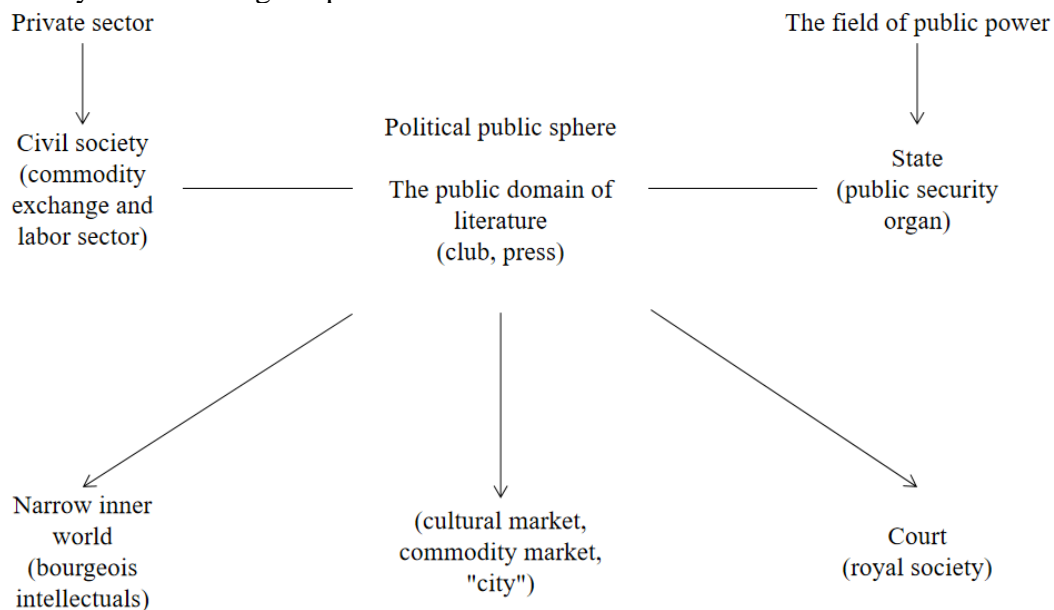
Arendt and Habermas discuss public space (domain) from the perspective of political philosophy. Arendt was the first to put forward the term “public space (domain)”, she traced the formation of “public space (domain)” back to the open democratic political debates in ancient Greek city-states. With the rise of society, the originally political private sphere and the private space with private family and housework activities are gradually introduced into the discussion of public space (domain). Society has constructed the most distinctive sign of the organization of the life process itself. People are involved in activities related to pure life in the social life mode. They depend on each other. The whole life activities gradually show an open trend. In this process, they feel the importance of public space (domain).

Arendt believes that public space (domain) is open, communicative, participatory and realistic, which requires that public space (domain) should be transparent, open and fair and open to all. She said in “Human Conditions”: “Public”, which means that anything that appears in public can be seen and heard by all, in the greatest degree of openness “. The publicity of public space (domain) is reflected in the place where all citizens are provided with equal speech and action. “The word” public “means the world itself, which is common to all of us.” The public space (domain) as a common world gathers people into a community of things that are connected with each other, strengthens communication methods, and embodies its communicative nature. In Arendt's view, the public's participation in the public space (domain) is reflected in the fact that all people have equal opportunities to truly express their love for the political system and their opinions on public affairs. In the process of expression, they retain their own personality and at the same time reflect their true self. At the same time, the public also undertook certain tasks of trial, defense and handling public affairs. Thus, the public's sense of participation and importance in public space (domain) has been enhanced. The reality of public space (domain) is embodied in the fact that it can truly show the reality of things in the public world. In the public space (domain), the public world provides a common meeting place for all people. Each participant and the speaker have different positions and positions, and the angle of view and direction they represent also have their own characteristics. Everyone observes things, listens and expresses things from different perspectives. Things cannot be designed in advance with any common yardstick or scale. Only when different people see the identity of things through different perspectives can the reality of the world be truly displayed. This is the meaning of public

life.

Habermas' public space (domain) developed from the classical representative public field to the literary public field and then to the bourgeois public field. The origin of public space (domain) came from the ancient Greek city-states. Since the Renaissance, the public domain and so-called classical everything have had real normative power, and still do. In the representative public sphere of the court that emerged under the early European feudal system, public activities were limited to aristocrats and there were many restrictions. Therefore, the representative public sphere began to die out gradually and was replaced by the literary public sphere, but it maintained a certain connection with the representative public sphere of the royal family. Therefore, the bourgeois public sphere was born.

Bourgeois public space (domain) exists in cities and is a public space (domain) for citizens. Habermas believes that the basic outline of bourgeois public space (domain) in the 18th century can be expressed by the following simplified social structure:



In the public space (domain) of the bourgeoisie, the intellectuals in the bourgeoisie are a middle class between the aristocratic society and the citizen class. They have mastered the negotiation skills through social communication with the nobles and nobles. The upper world is also trying to get rid of the court, and their power is weakening, thus forming a kind of power balanced with the upper society in the city. With the emergence of a series of organizations such as cafes and salons in the city, the gradually formed middle class of the bourgeoisie carries out literary criticism and political criticism in the organizations. Public spaces (domain) have strong social functions and strengthen the core position of the city. Subsequently, the citizens broke through the shackles of the social hierarchy and gathered together with the aristocracy to jointly oppose despotism in the political field, oppose the public spaces (domain) controlled by the upper strata, and criticize the power institutions through media and other means. As Habermas wrote in his book *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*: “As society emerges as the antithesis of the state, on the one hand, it clearly defines a private sphere that is not subject to public power, on the other hand, in the process of life, it transcends the limitations of individual families and pays attention to public affairs. Therefore, the sphere that is always governed by contracts will become a” critical “field, that is, it requires the public to make reasonable criticism on it. As long as the functions of such a tool as news media are changed, the public will fully accept this challenge. With the help of the news media, the government has turned society into a strictly public affair. “Different social individuals, through their public participation and communication in the social space of the public space (domain), launch rational and critical democratic public debates and free discussions on public affairs and political affairs, so as to reach a consensus, form a discourse mechanism and have a benign check and balance effect on power.

Henri Lefebvre, a French Marxist philosopher, put forward the theory of space production-the

space of time and space representation and reappearance, showing that public space (domain) is an imaginary space and a representation of space in real space and public space (domain) in life. Lefebvre believes that the city should be an open public space, and the city residents should have the right to produce, manage and use the city, and discuss fair and just city rights from the production of space.

Edward W. Soje, an American postmodern geographer, put forward a brand-new concept of “the third space” on the basis of Lefebvre's ternary dialectics of spatiality, historicity and sociality and Foucault's theory, and emphasized the development of the thinking method of the third space. The “third space” encourages people to think about space in different ways, questioning the traditional concept of space and the way of thinking it contains in contemporary thoughts, presenting and strengthening the structure of spatial differences, and providing theoretical support for feminism's subversion of the patriarchal center tradition. Feminists actively explore the “third space” and use time to penetrate into the space domain of race, class and gender, deepening the exploration of space openness, difference and other issues. This is also the core issue of the publicity and accessibility of public space.

(2) The study of public space (domain) from the perspective of sociology and urban planning

Nadai believed that “public space (domain)” was introduced into the built environment by city scholars from the social and political category. In urban planning and social studies, public space (domain) is regarded as a platform for the occurrence and coexistence of different social lives. The concept of “public space (domain)” is different from “open space, open space, citizen space, citizen space” which only has material space characteristics and emphasizes functional space types. Instead, it changes from the concept of functional supremacy formed by modernism to the discussion of the complex political, economic and cultural background behind the space and its humanistic and social values. Only by combining the physical space environment with the real social significance behind the space entity can we have a relatively comprehensive understanding of space.

Jacobs Jane's “Death and Life of Big American Cities” first introduced the term “public space (domain)” into the field of urban research. Jacobs will focus on a series of serious urban problems in the process of urban planning and reconstruction due to the concepts of functional supremacy and consumerism advocated by modernism, such as the destruction of the original texture of the traditional city, the decline of the center after the rapid expansion of the city, the deterioration of the living environment in the suburbs, the neglect of public spaces (domain), the vague spatial characteristics, the rise in crime rate, etc. At this time, the importance of public space (domain) as a place for city public social communication becomes more and more obvious. Therefore, the urban spatial form method advocated by Jacobs is a mixed function, heterogeneous and certain density of urban public space that can maintain the relationship between individuals and social groups.

Western social scholars and urban design scholars pay attention to urban public space (domain) with the nature of life and social interaction from different perspectives. The significance of public is to form an important link to maintain social relations at different levels, to provide a platform for differentiated social individuals to understand, communicate and integrate with each other, and to form a rich and diversified urban life.

3. Critical Reflection on Female Public Space (Domain)

In the above-mentioned research on public space (domain), we found that as an important part of social life, it should have the characteristics of publicity, openness, equality and difference, should be open to all, and can freely, fairly and openly generate dialogue and express oneself on this platform. However, in the public space (domain) in the real society, there are many phenomena of spatial injustice. Feminists are influenced by postmodern thoughts and have made critical reflections on it from the perspective of women.

3.1 A Study of Women's Public Space (Domain) from the Perspective of Political Philosophy

(1) Patriarchy and gender determinism affect the structure of public space (domain)

Habermas mentioned in “Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere” that the public sphere itself has patriarchal characteristics, and because of the exclusiveness of the bourgeois public sphere, women and the poor class have always been unable to enter it fairly and equally. In the process of forming political opinions and wishes, they were deprived of equal participation rights. Exclusion of women has a constructive influence on the political public sphere, at the same time, it also affects the spatial structure of public space (domain).

Under the influence of traditional patriarchal social concepts, women are usually regarded as “second sex” and “other” inferior to men. Therefore, in the division of public and private spheres, public space (domain) is a symbol of men, in which men have absolute right to speak and enjoy certain rights, while women's activities are limited to a single family private space. This dichotomy between public and private spheres will greatly restrict women's behavior, but in fact it is a social control over women's identity and enhances women's subordinate status.

Feminists fought for universal citizenship for two centuries. In the 20th century, women finally obtained the rights of equality, participation and entry of citizens, enjoyed certain state policy support and gradually improved their social status. However, under the social division of labor in the industrial revolution and the values dominated by men, the relationship between gender and public space (domain) has been strengthened, and the gender relationship has been reproduced in the development process of urban geography. Therefore, seemingly equal social relations actually produce a confrontation between the equality of male image-building and the real social status that women should have. Discrimination caused by gender differences has not been eliminated in public spaces (domain).

(2) Theoretical construction

Many problems in female public space (domain) have attracted strong attention from feminist scholars. The study of western women's public space (domain) shows different characteristics in different stages of development. The characteristics and contents of the study vary with different theoretical schools: from the 1970s to the early 1980s: Emphasize the power relation in space; 1980s: Emphasized the role relationship of space; 1990s: Emphasis on Spatial Difference. The space feminists take the female perspective as a starting point to discuss how the gender, identity, power, discourse, differences and other issues in space are reflected in the space order, and fight for a more equal and autonomous social space through their own efforts, thus pointing out a new direction for space criticism research.

Nancy Fraser, as the third generation representative of Frankfurt School in Western Marxism and a radical feminist, influenced by post-structuralism and multicultural theory, criticized the problems existing in Habermas' public space (domain), believing that Habermas' public space (domain) theory lacks consideration of gender dimensions. Fraser put forward four hypotheses for Habermas' theory of public space (domain). First, how can the public of different social classes in the public domain enter and participate in the discussion on an equal footing? Second, there may be a crisis of separation from the masses and democracy in a single public sphere. Third, there is a dispute over the division of issues of public interest and private interest discussed in public space (domain); Fourth, whether it is necessary to distinguish between the state and civil society in an effective democratic public sphere.

Fraser gave an answer by constructing the theoretical system of female public space (domain). First, Habermas' equal and open access to public space (domain) is restricted by gender, status, wealth and race. Women of any class or race are excluded from official political participation due to their gender and status. Therefore, Fraser calls for putting aside social inequality in order to obtain a public space (domain) where interlocutors can discuss on an equal footing. Only by eliminating inequality in social mechanisms can real equal participation be brought about. Political democracy requires solid social equality. This does not require everyone to have the same income, but refers to the roughly equal social relationship between the dominant and the dominated. Therefore, she believes that the public space (domain) of the bourgeois concept cannot meet the necessary conditions for equal participation she expected, and one of the tasks of critical theory is to propose feasible methods to solve the pollution of social inequality to the public space (domain). Second, whether in an unequal class society or an equal multicultural society, multiple public spaces (domains)

are superior to a single compound public domain. Fraser no longer pursues grand public space (domain), but prefers a new and inclusive diverse space that can be dismantled and reconstructed arbitrarily. Her public space (domain) is not only a place to form discourse, but also a place to promulgate social identity and form identity. People identify with different and diverse identities and enter their own public spaces (domain). In this way, the identity of women has overcome the so-called “human” universal nature. Fraser's model of female public space (domain) is also based on diversity. Third, she believes that the discussion of private issues is restricted in public spaces (domain). Even if women are allowed to enter the discussion, it is likely that women's speech will be restricted and oppressed as a private matter. Fourth, public spaces (domain) that require a clear distinction between the state and civil society under any concept cannot achieve self-management forms, public internal coordination and political acceptability that guarantee social democracy and equality. Therefore, the public sphere of bourgeois concept is not enough for contemporary critical theories. People need a kind of post-bourgeois public space (domain) so that people no longer only separate the formation of their own opinions from the formulation of authoritative decisions, but play a better role. It will enable people to imagine different mixed forms between the strong public and the weak public.

Fraser put forward a trinity justice theory of “redistribution-recognition-representation”, namely, redistribution in the economic field, recognition in the cultural field and representation in the political field, aiming at how women can advocate, safeguard their own rights and interests, criticize reality and reshape their self-identity in the public space (domain).

3.2 On Female Public Space from the Perspective of Sociology and Urban Planning

(1) The core issues in female public space planning

The feminist perspective discusses the problems of female public space (domain) in the field of urban planning, such as female absence in public space (domain) caused by gender loss, insufficient participation in planning of female groups caused by identity, imbalance between female spatial security and multiple rights caused by rights, etc. Therefore, the inclusion of a gender perspective in the planning is conducive to improving women's quality of life, enhancing women's social status, increasing women's spatial participation, solving the fundamental problems of spatial contradictions, achieving a deeper balance in the structure of public space (domain), satisfying women's demands for a safe, fair and diverse space, and promoting justice in public space (domain).

(2) Theoretical construction

Sociologist Jacobs pays attention to the difficult situation of vulnerable groups including women in space, Susan thinks the influence of rights in urban space planning on the structure of women's public space (domain), while Ellis Marion Young puts forward the principles and mechanisms for constructing women's public space (domain). Jacobs mentioned the influence of feminism on urban spatial planning in “Death and Life of Major American Cities”, which is the first time to show a new perspective of feminism in the large-scale social activities of urban planning. She pays attention to the oppression and exclusion of the urban fringe groups (the elderly, children, women, vagrants ...) and discovers the difficult social problems in their environment. Through social scholars from the perspective of women to explore the public space (domain) problems, which caused the reflection of modern urban public space (domain) planning. Susan Saegert believes that traditional ideas have suppressed women's rights in urban planning.

Iris Marion Young believes that public space (domain) has a certain political nature, which provides the most important platform for connecting the relationship between power organs and the public. People can discuss social issues of public concern through public space (domain), which may affect the handling of social issues by power organs and even affect the decision-making direction of national laws and public policies. I.M. Yang put forward the concept of “heterogeneous public”. The so-called “heterogeneous public” actually refers to the public with different social backgrounds, experiences and emotions, who have the right to enter open public spaces (domain) to share and express diverse cultures. The public sphere should be an open, heterogeneous, pluralistic and inclusive rational place for communication. Real public discussions should respect differences, not

exclusion. Therefore, as women are the most vulnerable groups, more respect should be given in public space (domain).

Carolyn Andrew gave specific practical guidance from the perspective of urban spatial planning. Andrew put forward the ideal of a feminist city, which includes: helping to solve violence that threatens the safety of women and children, and eliminating hidden dangers of women's safety in public spaces (domain); Establish a cheap, safe and convenient transportation system; Setting up a friendly environment suitable for women to live in, and appropriately increasing employment opportunities; Establishing diversified social services that meet the needs of women, such as proper childcare services; Taking care of the basic living problems of special groups among women; Developing women's art, etc. She stressed that feminism is not only concerned with the needs of women, but also the needs of vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and the disabled.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, women are in a weak position compared with men. Women are neglected, excluded or even suppressed and restricted in the public domain, which seriously affects the structure of public space (domain). Although women have won some freedom, there are still many problems. It is a very complicated project for us to theorize women's voices, but if we do not do so, “women” will always become an oppressive category. Therefore, it is necessary for us to re-examine the issue of female public space (domain) from a multi-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary perspective. Through the training basis, knowledge system and methodology of various disciplines, feminist criticism and feminist thoughts are included into the construction of public space (domain). The European and American academic sessions have paid great attention to the issue of female public space (domain), but feminists still do not have enough strength to provide a strong theoretical and practical framework for female public space (domain), and further efforts are needed. It is a long way to go to study the possibility of women's public space (domain) according to China's national conditions.

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