

Research on the Experience of Western Urban Public Space Based on Environmental Behavior

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Abstract: Using the research method of environmental behavior, through analyzing the public spatial experience of public space participating in public life in different times in the development process of western cities, this paper discusses the relationship and mutual influence between people and space under different modes of public life behavior.

Public space is the most important component of the contemporary and future cities. It not only gives people full freedom of communication, but also is the best place to recognize and experience the city. The behavior subject of public space is the public. With the research method of environmental behavior, the public life style, behavior mode and spatial experience of the subject are analyzed to realize the humanization of public space, "representing the efforts to endow the material environment with ethical implications."

1. Environmental Behavior and Spatial Experience

1.1 The concept and development of environmental behavior

Environmental behavior, which emerged in the 1960s, is a new discipline to study and discuss the interaction and interaction between the external environment and human behavior. Environmental behavior is an applied discipline developed from environmental psychology, trying to use the basic research methods and principles of psychology to study people's reactions and behaviors in the environment, thus guiding space design and improving people's living environment. Designers generally do not agree with the psychological concepts of mechanical materialism such as "environmental determinism" and "behaviorism". They believe that people and environment interact and adapt to each other.

1.2 Research on spatial experience in environmental behavior

American urban planning theorist Kevin Lynch introduced some research methods of spatial cognition and cognitive map from the image theory of psychology in his book "The Image of City" to explore people's visual cognition and memory process of urban spatial form, which has brought impact to the field of spatial design. Danish architectural theorist Jan Gehl tried to establish an evaluation system of public space quality by observing human behavior in his book *Life Between*

Buildings. With the in-depth discussion of design theory, designers have also participated in the research of spatial experience, gradually shifting the research focus of space design from objects to people.

1.3 Research on Spatial experience in Design Field

Space is the basic form of production and social reproduction. Human beings create space, and space also shapes human behavior patterns and emotional experiences. The experimental construction group "Super studio" of the Italian Florence Institute of Architecture declared that the only building in this world can only be our life. Swiss architect Bernard Tschumi believed that what can define architecture is not form or simple function, but event. Space design disciplines such as architectural design gradually focus on people's life style, behavior and emotional experience in space.

2. The Concept and Development of Public Space

Public space will have different interpretations from the perspectives of political philosophy and material environment: the core of discussion in the political field is the public life style of the public; The focus in the field of spatial design has gradually shifted from spatial form to the behavior of the public. Studying the cross-cutting fields of the two disciplines and taking "public life style-behavior style-spatial form-spatial experience" as a model can provide reference for the development of "people-oriented" urban public space.

2.1 Public space in the political sphere

The public space in the category of political philosophy, that is, the "public sphere", refers to a platform that can gather people from different strata to communicate and generate "public opinion". American political thinker Hannah Arendt was the first to put forward this concept. She thinks that the public sphere is the only place where people can show irreplaceable. The world in which people actively live (*vita activa*) is made up of things created by human activities, but these "things" often restrict their human creators in turn. German social philosopher Jurgen Habermas believed that public space is the intermediate zone between private space and public power and is the space that embodies the spirit of public rationality.

2.2 Public Space in Design

Public Space under the category of material environment is a concept in urban planning, landscape, architecture, interior and other design disciplines. As a space carrier carrying social activities and values, it generally refers to an open space that is not enclosed physically for public use in daily life of citizens. Broadly speaking, the space used for public facilities, such as squares, park greenbelts, shopping centers, cultural and sports venues, transportation hubs and other public spaces, also belongs to the category of public space.

2.3 Intersection between the two fields

The religious and political public spaces such as fanes, temples and municipal squares in ancient Greece, as well as cultural public spaces such as outdoor theatres and stadiums, have continued in Europe to this day. All kinds of folk clubs, salons and cafes belong to the category of public spaces in both political and design fields. The existence of these public spaces is one of the important

material conditions for people to cultivate public awareness in public life.

3. Experience of Public Space in European Cities in Different Periods

The development of cities, especially the formation and renewal of physical spaces such as buildings, blocks and public spaces, is the result of planned and purposeful creative activities by human beings. We can see from the changes of social structure, public life style and public space in western cities that there is a close correlation and mutual influence between people's public life style and public spatial experience.

3.1 Experience of Urban Public Space in Ancient Greece

Arendt believed that the ancient Greek square was the earliest public space and the carrier of public life. Square, parliament hall and theater in ancient Greek city-states are important places for people to participate in political and cultural life, and are the source of Arendt's concept of western "public sphere". The ancient Greek city-states had a high degree of democracy and an active public political life. Adult men of local origin with free citizenship gradually mastered the core political rights through the voting rights of the citizens' assembly, which was the embryonic form of the modern democratic system. Athens citizens pay attention to communication and discussion. The open ancient Greek squares, markets and stadiums are not only places for religious activities, market exchange, information exchange and knowledge dissemination, but also places for citizens to participate in democratic political life such as debates, speeches, national legislation, lawsuits and trials. The ancient Greeks believed that the place was powerful. Market shops, temples and theaters gradually took shape around the square. Low-rise single public buildings and open-air theaters scattered in the center formed a random overall shape of the horizontally open ancient Greek square built on the mountain, attracting citizens to come here to gather and walk, stop and communicate freely in the space.

3.2 Experience of Urban Public Space in Ancient Rome

The Romans never sacrificed the private domain for the public domain. On the contrary, they knew that only in the form of coexistence of the two can the two domains survive. In ancient Rome, squares began to show clear boundaries and form semi-enclosed spaces. Buildings extended to astonishing dimensions and showed a strong sense of order. The surrounding religious and commemorative buildings are densely packed, and the square has become an accessory to the building. The gradually clear axis and deep layout symbolize the establishment and stability of the monarchy, giving the people staying here a strong sense of ceremony, thus generating awe of power. The ancient Roman bathing place is a space where the public domain and the private domain coincide with each other. Private investment in the construction of public bathing place buildings can often win public votes for candidates. The bathing place has also become a symbol of local democracy under centralized power. In a closed private space, people attach more importance to selfish desires than to the pursuit of virtue. Citizens can complete public life such as settlement litigation in the bathing beach. The royal bathing beach also includes a large number of auxiliary public spaces such as libraries, lecture halls and shops.

3.3 Spatial Experience of Medieval Urban Public

Although medieval European cities were small in scale, extremely crowded in space, and the death rate of their population was much higher than that of villages, people continued to converge

towards cities due to the high returns brought by trade. Marketplaces, churches, city halls, porches and verandahs are the main urban public spaces. European bazaars originated from periodic religious festivals. It was not until the middle ages that markets and bazaars with fixed sites and long-term operation appeared, and reached their peak in the 11th and 12th centuries. Due to the decisive influence of commercial activities, the lack of fixed market space often determines the structure of the city and becomes the area where people gather most easily. Nobles and dignitaries complete their political deliberations in the city hall, public porch and cool gallery. The city hall and square are located in the center of the city. Citizens can arrive here at the same time no matter where they live and hold a public meeting on the square representing the city's common good. Gothic church is the most characteristic building in the Middle Ages. Citizens gathered in the church on Sunday to take part in religious activities and public life. The concentrated wealth, top artists and artisans, and devout believers created a miraculous towering space, which convinced people of the power of religion. The development of the three public spaces of bazaar, church, city hall, public verandah and porch reflects the pattern of the separation of economic, political and religious powers in the Middle Ages.

3.4 Experience of Urban Public Space in Renaissance

Renaissance cities have given birth to the predecessor of "bourgeois public sphere". Noble and oligarch governments transmit political ideas through public space, and the construction of public facilities can also effectively ease contradictions within the ruling class. The embryonic form of urban planning theory has begun to appear in this period. Beautifying the city appearance is the primary task of the design, emphasizing the overall sense of public space construction. During this period, strict symmetrical squares, straight roads, majestic monuments, elegant fountains and numerous parks appeared. "It has strengthened the city people's psychological identity and sense of identity with the unity of the city ". In the 15th century, Florenca had 50 squares, large and small. Surrounding the squares with different functions were houses of prominent citizens, government agencies and numerous shops, theatres, pubs, etc. In addition to the square with political, religious and commercial functions, other places are more for civil society life and daily leisure, and various social organizations such as fraternities also appear around the square.

3.5 Experience of Urban Public Space during the Enlightenment

Habermas thinks that libraries, cafes, theatres, museums, clubs and other spaces are places of activity in the bourgeois public sphere, which provide conditions for the formation of modern democracy. The beer hall, which began to expand rapidly in the first half of the 16th century, is a place where people at the bottom gather and get information. People without good educations transmit information through oral news or ballads, and express their feelings and demands at the same time. Cafes that began to appear in Europe in the middle of the 17th century were originally aristocratic clubs. With many political groups holding activities, discussing politics and issuing publications or leaflets in cafes, cafes gradually became an important public living space. Through the unremitting efforts of aristocrats and bourgeois elites seeking political ideals, cultural and educational spaces such as libraries, art galleries and museums have gradually opened up to the public, and various associations and publications have gradually entered the public's field of vision.

3.6 Experience of Urban Public Space in Industrial Period

With the rapid development of industry, international cities such as London and Paris reached unprecedented population peaks at the end of the 18th century. Huge slum cities appeared. The

1901 British census showed that the number of people per acre in the 11th residential district of Harlem in New York in 1893 had reached 1,000. The cramped and embarrassed urban space led to the continuous shrinkage and deterioration of public space.

Modernist design thought takes "form follows function" as its slogan, and actively responds to new production and life styles. A city planning scheme with clear functions brings new problems while improving people's living environment. Taking Voison planning of Le Corbusier as an example, the organization of urban space gives priority to efficiency, but seriously damages the close relationship between public space and the surrounding environment and people. The following commercial time is under more and more pressure of capital and privatization, gradually changing the social and material existence form of public space. The fragmented life of the public has led to a sharp decline in the public sphere.

3.7 Experience of Contemporary Urban Public Space

Political life in the public sphere in the information age has gradually expanded and shifted from the physical space where people communicate face to face to the virtual space such as media and network. Public life is increasingly not limited by the differences of class, ethnic group and space. Arena believes that Reflections on Depoliticization (Apolitia), which was only needed by a few people before, has become the right of all people. Urban residents rely on network terminals to complete the free switching of work, life, social intercourse, education and other contents at the same time.

Public spaces in contemporary cities need to provide more diverse spatial experience for urbanites and encourage people to participate in various forms of public life. King's Cross regional renovation is the largest renovation project in the city center of London in 150 years. Repairs and darning are used to renovate the material space left over from the industrial era in the region. About 40% of the regions are fully open public spaces, creating London's largest outdoor free Wi-Fi experience area for crowds. All kinds of citizens, including families, workers, students, the elderly and the young, regard this place as a place for work, life and public life. This can be seen as the metropolis's adjustment to the new economy and its respect for the new era.

4. Conclusion

City is a continuously developing thing to make people's life better, in which public life is an important component, and people get a sense of participation and social identity in public life. From the development process of European cities, we can see that the contemporary public life has become a wider demand across different classes, and its forms tend to be diversified. Urban public space is also developing towards open sharing and compound functions.

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