

THE PROGRESS IN URBAN SOCIAL SPATIAL DIFFERENTIATION STUDY OF CHINA

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ABSTRACT: Urban social geography and its subfield—urban social-spatial differentiation have been developed since the 1960s. In China, with the development of urban geography during the 1970s and prosperity in the 1980s, its study fields have been expanded, the research technology and theory have been renewed. There are two main sub-methodologies of urban social space study: ecological and comparative methodologies. Since Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou metropolitans are located at the window of China to overseas, it is reasonable to chose them as the main research regions, and the study on them has been strengthened since the 1980s. The research fields can be classified into five sub-fields: (1) social structure transformation and economic transit; (2) the change of cognition and behavior differentiation; (3) the relation between culture transformation and space differentiation in organization; (4) land use differentiation and the transit of planning method; (5) material environment differentiation. We should strengthen the study of internal relation between resident space structure changing with time and space, and landuse; the division of a consumer and provision markets which can further understand the mechanism of social spatial differentiation; the effect of resident segregation; what 's its benefits which can be accepted by community; and, how to the study result of community replacement, state house distribution policy and management into the social practice.

KEY WORDS: urban social space, progress in geography, social spatial differentiation, urban social geography

Urban social geography and its subfield—urban social-spatial differentiation have been developed since the 1960s. Till now, by its basement and theory, it can be divided into three stages and four research schools: 1) methodological description stage; 2) behavior study stage; 3) radical Marxism stage which can be subdivided into two schools—structure and later structure study (Kang, 1987; Ley, 1983; Li, 1987; Knox, 1995; Gu, 1994; Cadwallader, 1985; Cui, 1992; Zhou, 1995).

In China, with the development of urban geography during the 1970s and prosperity in the 1980s,

its study fields have been expanded, the research technology and theory have been renewed. Recently, some new urban social problems have emerged, which make urban social geography earn much more space to fill the blanks of urban geography because of its structure defect and requirement for understanding the property of urban social problems, which strengthen the practice of research. Particularly, under the leadership of Premier Zhu Rongji, the government will take solving urban unemployment, housing and social welfare and so on as the main duties, thus renewing the study fields, methodology and the social practice

of the above studies(Xu , 1988 ; Heitner , 1992 ; Shen *et al.* , 1990) .

1 METHODOLOGY

There are two main sub-methodologies of urban social space study: ecological and comparative methodologies. The former originates from Park 's Chicago Schools. Park , Burgess and their followers tried to absorb ecological process (condensation , distribution , congestion , diffusion , degradation , invasion and replacement) into their description in organization and change of urban social space , therefore , they regarded a city as an ecological system , in which the basic process is competition and cooperation , then drew out and moderated a series of urban models: concentric , sector and multi-nuclear.

As a kind of urban study methodology it includes not only experiential experiment , but also the idea of social creature evolution , under the background of methodological revolution in the 1960 's , we have shared many urban social space models in deduction or multi-element space based on social area analysis of multi-factor statistics.

In the late 1980s , Chinese scholars of urban planning and geography did some ecological factor studies under the support of state statistic system and field research. They found three dynamic structure elements: population density , education level and family , which differ to those results of Murders and Shevky 's. Moreover , those dynamic mechanism of social-spatial differentiation indirectly reflect the basement of comparative study(Xu , 1989 ; Zheng , 1995 ; Yu , 1986 ; Lo , 1975 ; Yavda , 1987) . They deduced that the history , urban functional planning and housing welfare would cause the social-spatial differentiation of Guangzhou in the 1980s.

In general , spatial comparative analysis of urban social geography , includes not only different regional horizon comparison , regarding a city as a region , based on same culture or subculture background explaining its causes and dynamic differentiation but also vertical comparative research , that is , the influ-

ence of different history background to above causes and itself variation , and still then includes international or inter-regional comparative study based on multi-culture , social differentiation , reasons of polarization and their trends(Li , 1998 ; Gu , 1997) . Since Beijing , Shanghai , Guangzhou metropolitans are located at the window of China to overseas , they settle in the front of social variation from traditional social space to later modern social space , it is reasonable to chose them as the main research regions. Study on Beijing shows that the developing differentiation of social-spatial structure has a close relation to socialist economic reformation , renewed urban function , international investment and development of high-tech industries.

Moreover , those differentiations have caused their own social portraits , and the unbalanced expansion of urban space. On the other side , scholars in Shanghai deny the necessary relation between verso "U " model of a social space differentiation and the stage theory of Kunze 's in economic starting , developing and mature , for instance , Taiwan 's developing case is the best disproof (Lee , 1990 ; Yang , 1995 ; Zhang , 1997) . This new approach will have some important effect on later social-spatial analysis , it will be benefited through cooperation of national research and west theory and methodology.

2 STUDY FIELDS OF URBAN SOCIAL-SPATIAL DIFFERENTIATION AND THE REVIEW

2.1 Differentiation on Land Use and Construction Environment

Through the macro-scale study of space differentiation of urban morphology , material environment and its structure , we can get some information —urban morphology could be regarded as the interweaving of those problems , such as housing , life quality , urban policy , image and behavior of residence , even the problems of resident space within urban social-spatial dialectics.

As the main research object of urban social-spa-

tial differentiation, based on market school, relevant studies can be divided into two aspects. 1) The differentiation of house provision market, which can explain the effect of state policy, administration, estate institutes on resident segregation (Lee, 1990; Zhu, 1997; Wang, 1995). Some researchers point out that during variation (reformation) the main cause is the policy of house distribution and elements of provision market. But the author thinks that the management, the interest of financial institute request, the value of estate and the attitude of financial institute should also be regarded as direct causes of differentiation. Then, the divided results of those above markets will develop the differentiation of resident space structure. Compared to accidental estate market mechanism, within Chinese market, the position and function of the builder and developer are undeveloped, who did little about the organization of urban resident space. For instance, in 1995, the rate of the house sold out

by them to the total market sale was only 23.13% in area and 29.33% in value. Moreover, the developing level of market, land owner constitution and culture background, empty house chain, resident penetrating effect which is popular in western market and resident segregation, seldom happen in China till now. 2) The consumership market differentiation (Zhang, 1997). Referred to different purchasable power of residence and their house requirement, some researchers have divided it into three levels of sub-market, which are 25% (low income), 64.4% (medium income) and 10.6% (high income) of residents. Within field research, they found out that the main reason of regional differentiation of resident space is house area per person, not the quality which is reflected in developed western country. During 1990 - 1995, the consumership market of Guangzhou has changed greatly (Table 1).

Table 1 Financial resource of consumer market (%)

Year	Salary	Private	Legacy	Bonus to relative	Financial investment income	Second career	Invention reward	Accident income	Others
1990	31	21.5	5.4	24.7	5.4	8.6	0	1.1	2.2
1995	36.3	17.5	5.3	5.3	10.5	18.7	3.5	1.8	1.2

Data resource : Guangzhou Estate Information Centre

These results are both similar to those of Beijing's and of western middle class but the latter's differentiation are much greater, more or less, all relating to the emergence of knowledge economy, internationalization of capital (Yang, 1994, 1995; Gu, 1997).

Those above spatial differentiation of urban morphology and residential structure will be finally displayed in the rank dividing, functional changing and evaluating of land use, which is suburbanization in Europe and America, where through mediating the function, space, volume and quality of suburbs, it has been regarded as the indeed destination of urban middle class. In China, relevant suburbanization behavior mainly attributes to advanced clerk of

foreign companies, private companies' owners and film stars, who have much higher income and different consumership value. Therefore, they have different positions in their own social space system, even if the time of paying off the mortgage. In the west it takes only 6 years, but in China, it prolongs to over 30 years. Even though, we should acknowledge that the residential segregation exists in Chinese urban areas, however, the studies of their traits, developing mechanism, particularly in those new stage since open-policy, are still in their beginning. Therefore, with free choice of residential location, we should also pay attention to the impact of family cycle on the organization and differentiation of urban residential space, whether it is popular or not.

2.2 Spatial Differentiation of Neighborhood Community

As mentioned above we can regard land use and building environment as the spatial embodiment of social segregation. Since this kind of spatial embodiment can turn the spatial structure differentiation into the internal organization differentiation of social spatial dialectics, we will expand our research on the following fields:

2.2.1 *Informally regional group and its spatial segregation*

Some scholars in Beijing focus on the phenomenon of "Zhejiang town", which belongs to a kind of immigrant community system and is located in the suburb of Beijing. They find, because of low level of communication with chapter community, untidy internal organization, low level of community conference, but strong blood-region relation, which contribute to its stronger self-control and self-defend function, this kind of social margin group based on regional relation is different from the neighborhood and community of chapter community. Therefore, they conclude that this is a kind of immigrant urbanization under the background of open-social system (Hu, 1997; Xiang, 1993). For this meaning, we will study its space embodiment to avoid some relevant social problems.

2.2.2 *Spatial segregation of neighborhood and community*

In the early 1980s some experts had done some ecological factor studies on Shanghai and Guangzhou, the results show that internal spatial structure of Guangzhou could be divided into old city area, official resident area, worker resident area, diffused farmer resident area and expert resident area. Moreover, some researches on Beijing metropolitan recently prove that with floating rural population immigrant, huge global capital investment and initiation of knowledge economy, spatial segregation phenomenon—hut area in south Beijing contrasting to villa area in northern Beijing turns up (Xu, 1989; Gu, 1997; Yang, 1995). which contributes to the devel-

opment of estate, but mainly to the traits of economy, society, culture and value during the turn-off stage.

Other experts show interest in studying the consequences of origination of state work-unit system in China. They point out that this kind of resident space resulted from the interweaving of urban planning and house distributing within unit or institute under socialistic planning system. However, with new house policy carrying on, changing employees' attitude, the key role of unit in resident space organization will not change greatly in a short time, because its dynamic mechanism is different from free market in the west, and housing welfare will still exist in some time, specially for most government employees, school teachers and so on (Cai, 1996).

Their income, consumership, value and behavior have changed greatly among Chinese urban residents, thus have been resulting in many different social groups. The stricter they regulate their organizations and behavior, the more clubs and groups will emerge. Their emergence and development will influence the differentiation traits of social space, urban life styles, the ideas of neighborhood or community, and at last end in the changing of requirement of building environment. After all, such study has still hardly been developed. So, Chinese experts show some interest that how the culture factors impact on residential space and urban landscape, and what those impacts would be.

2.3 Differentiation of Image and Behavior

In general, we take the image and behavior of resident as the reflection or reaction of built environment (built structure), it can't exist without the latter alone.

In the late 1980s, a few experts have tried to use the western methodology to investigate the spatial differentiation of Guangzhou, in which they found that the reasons were still similar to B. Heights' research, who studied the image space of Los Angeles in the 1960s—the education level, location of residence,

traffic effect and method. As the point of ecology, those reasons have close relation to the ecological position, the control of urban community resource, and the proximity to central position of different classes (Lee *et al.*, 1986). Unfortunately, relevant studies are still too few to call for deserved attention. Then, because of transformation of political-economic factors within China, clearly different social groups, in order to find suitable planning method and theory, we should prove the right social organization and structure in case of residential segregation in the west.

The controlling of urban life space and the evaluation of urban life quality include space planning of building environment, on the other side, it include the evaluation, image of building environment. From the study focusing on differentiation consumership space of northeast in China, scholars proved that there were four kinds of consumership types and relevant spatial structures, which were caused by traffic method, resident location, physiological factor, and social-economic difference. Similarly, some researchers have pointed out that those results could be used in commodity network planning, and other researchers are using time geographical study, which was created by Hargstand, to investigate the trait of urban resident life space and its spatial differentiation (Zhang, 1992; Xu, 1997).

2.4 Social Differentiation

Social dividing is generally the destination of sociologists, but the beginning of geographers. As the view of globe, though urbanization or urbanism is always regarded as the sample of economic growth and social development, the urban social-economic situation has not turned better with the increasing speed of urbanization. From 1976 to 1996 Habitat I & II UN conferences, we can find that some problems within urban social space, such as poverty, unemployment, health security and social security congesting into urban region turn worse with urbanization process (Xu, 1997; Cai, 1997).

Researchers in Institute of Geography, the Chi-

nese Academy of Sciences choose Beijing metropolitan as an example to study urban social segregation, trait of residential segregation and its developing mechanism. Since sociologist have begun the study of urban poverty, they turn their focus to upper class. Together with the investigation of State Statistical Bureau, we can draw out the upper class composed of high income resident, such as private owner, manager, and technology elite have the economic ability to go after expansive commodity, such as villa and car, whose consumership trend, family value, life value influence by materialism, which is different from other resident. Their appearances have been changing urban social structure, spatial structure and ecological environment.

For other extreme of social segregation—the poverty, its study object is still composed by low income group in general, for example, single parent, the old without offspring, unemployed immigrants etc. However, the former state work-units reform their economic form, while the traditional clerk class which similar to middle class of the west divide further, some become the new poverty in city, others become the member of new middle or upper class. This trend is similar to the study of the western scholars (Xu, 1997; Wang, 1997; Jard *et al.* 1995). However, what is their influence on our social class, and what can we do to guide our urban development and what is the planning value?

2.5 The Study on Dynamic Mechanism of Social-spatial Differentiation

Although those studies based on ecological factor can deduce the situation and trend of urban socio-spatial differentiation, but they can't support or prove urban planning and social planning, thus relevant studies request the research of the dynamic mechanism of differentiation.

As to the polarization of Beijing, the research deduces such causes: 1) urban function change, which includes employment requiring structure and its total number, will produce different careers and in-

comes; 2) global capital investment and its distribution differentiation intensify the increase of the income differentiation among careers. Moreover, interweaving the change of industrial space location, real estate market, private and collective consumership, life value and residence selection, at last cause resident segregation; 3) the immigrant floating rural labor reflects that resident location and its quality are similar to income and employment, which in some degree explains the phenomenon of verso "U" developing model.

The author thinks that from material structure or building environment, for instance, the resident structure differentiation to social polarization, together with its space embodiment—the social-spatial differentiation, which compared to the dynamic mechanism study formula of socio-spatial differentiation, that is to say, the socialization of material structure, together with its space embodiment continuum, is the property of dynamic mechanism.

3 THE FUTURE STUDY

3.1 Social-economic Statistic Data

New developing sciences and researches always delay due to short of relevant data and its nonstandard. The development of urban social geography requires reform of original social-economic statistical system, which make it caters for the study of new geographical phenomenon: 1) deforming the statistic area, which makes existent material structure and jurisdiction system have good relation to social area; 2) convenience to history and multi-cultural comparative study, relevant research is invaluable, affects the developing and direction of study.

The greatest defect is that Chinese residential differentiation research cries for really comprehensive field study. This defect made relevant research depend on not-so-good statistic system, at last little progresses have been made, but still rely on the western theory and method.

3.2 Study Fields

While the reform of housing distribution policy, the commodity traits of Chinese urban residence house embody in some degree. The free house market inquires more attention on urban social-spatial differentiation. Thus, we should strengthen the study of internal relation between resident space structure changing with time and space, and land use; the dividing of a consumer and provision markets which can further understand the mechanism of social spatial differentiation; the effect of resident segregation; what's its benefits which can be accepted by community; and, how to the study result of community replacement, state house distribution policy and management into the social practice.

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