Within the last 10 years, research about women's movement has been one of the major 'growth areas' in geography. 10 years ago, a geography of women was unthought of. Now there are hundreds of articles on various aspects of the subject - there are a growing number of undergraduate courses, graduate dissertations on women. The American Association of Geographers has an active committee on the Status of Women in Geography, concerned with both the position of women in the discipline and with the geographic study of women.

When I went to Biltmore, 2 years ago, I was introduced to the other geography doing research on women. In the last 2 years, there have been a dozen articles published - memoranda, meetings. A committee on women in geography established - and a lot of work has been done on this subject.

For someone like myself, involved in this research, where is all this energy coming from? Why has it emerged now? Most significantly, what are its implications for our geography? Can we re-examine our methods and theories? Why should we change it all in the context of urban studies?
There are two kinds of questions I want to talk about this morning. I'm going to try to convince you that it's at least worth an hour of your time to consider this work.

It's now possible to see that there is a field that we can call the geography of women. I would argue that it's important to look at this in the context of looking at the city.

Not only because the work exists—because geographers are making statements about women in the city—but because in examining women's geography, we have been forced—forced to question ways of thinking about women and women's questions about the city.

Our perspective on the city—questions that have implications for the whole of our theory and our method in urban geography.

I want to ask two questions this morning: answer the second.

1) Why has the geography of women emerged now? What changes in society have made it first conceivable, now apparent, necessary for geographers to study women? For geographers.

2) How have geographers analyzed these conditions? What have geographers said about society and women's roles in society?
What are the implications for urban study and method as a whole?

This last one - I'm going to offer some ideas or - ongoing question - hope to get some ideas from you.

So - what was happening in society that led geographers to study women and the environment?

15 years ago - Betty Friedan wrote a book called the Feminine Mystique. It was a discussion of a vague discontent felt by a large no. of American women - discontent with their daily lives + with the myths about their roles + character which were supposed to explain these lives.

The book raised a storm of controversy - greeted with division, at times with anger, with attempts at dismissal. But most important - it was greeted by many with a feeling of identification + relief by a lot of women - relief that the identification with the discontent - relief that they weren't alone in feeling that something was wrong - something significant was changing in their lives, lives weren't the same as they'd expected them to be.
The FeM Mystique + the Storm

It created were the first widespread
expression of the fact that
changing social conditions
were leading to concrete changes
in women's position - to conflicts
in women's lives which the
prevailing ideology about
'women's place' + 'women's nature'
paved to mask.

The conditions of women's lives
were changing - are changing -
more rapidly + significantly than
within memory - changes are social-
aflect the whole nature of social life -

What is happening?

1st - women - especially married
women - are entering the labour
force in growing numbers -
women form just under 50% of the
labour force + more than ½ of these
are married women.

Within the wage sector - women's
work tends to differ from men's -
women are concentrated in
- Specific. Sexually soggy jobs -
- Providing the bulk of the
labour force for the public
equivalent of services formerly
performed in the home - eg:
- Teaching, nursing, food services,
- in many of consumer goods
intended for the home -

In a sense - many women are doing, for wages
the kind of work they used to do - and
continue to do - in the home. They also form
the major component of the part-time sector.
So - women since the late 40s have been drawn into the wage sector to fill demands for growing clerical + service sector. Their participation has been a function of changes in overall employment structure and has also helped create these changes.

So women's labour force participation is symptomatic of demands on the labour force created new demands on the labour force. Simultaneously more women have come to share the concept of the wage labour force - and to act in unions etc as members of the labour force.

But women's concerns as wage workers are specific - women as a group are among the most devalued workers - women tend to be concentrated in sectors with low wages - insecure conditions - the sectors in which women work tend to be poor pay - insecure conditions - low rates of unionization - women's concerns tend to be those of single working women - in addition - married women - those single parent families - have the 'extra shift' + emotional committ - of their 'other role' - as housewifes + mothers - so even in women labs fe-

At the same time that women are increasing important reminder + structural part of the wage labour sector - their 'other role' + as housewifes + mothers is also changing -
The demographic nature of the family is changing - while more women than ever marry, have children - families with having fewer children - having them closer together -

This means smaller families - more + more 1 or 2 person households -

Women are no longer full time - smaller families - growing up, and into their lives -
In the last 40 years - more + more of the services formerly performed in the household were 'socialized' - taken over by the public sector -

Increasing concentration of people in cities - need for co-ordinating skills - health - the movement of millions of people led to -

development of public education -

Public care of elderly + handicapped -

Public medicine - Public transit - planning -

Need for constantly expanding markets led to commercial production of many goods formerly produced in the home -

Growing need for common plan. co-ord. of services -

As these formerly family-private matters became more public + more central to family + common life - women were forced to become more involved in community issues - in actions - around location of services - planning etc. - as part of their domain -
So in short - women's increasing lab for part-time signalled extended changes in employer structure. Growing number of women with dual roles placed new demands on both workplace + community - and changing not of families + community life. New demands for services + transit-planning demands - for housing, community issues - because of their dual roles - defined these in new ways.

These issues were the basis of women's movement. Since the publication of the Femin Mystique, millions of women have asked questions about women's position - and acted to change it. They looked at their situation + defined their problems as women's problems - or as problems of society which affected women in specific ways. The Femin Mystique gave rise to feminism - the re-examination of the whole society from the perspective of how it affects women. Women organized - in the wage workplace & in the community - to demand services-ranging from workplace daycare to redesigned transport routes to new community services - and these were defined as women's demands - as cooool loudly, insistently enough - they became social problems - worthy of the attention of social scientists - including geographers.
The geography of women has developed in response to this. These are the conditions - or at least an outcome - of the second question: How have geography, in women's labour force participation, domestic and community changes - with the phenomenon of feminism?

The geography of women is premised on three fundamental assumptions:

1. Women, in their daily lives and historical roles, enter into social relationships which are significantly different from those of men.

2. These different social relationships mean that women will have significantly different perceptions and make different uses of space than will men.

3. These differences may be important in understanding the development of urban form and activity, and in urban planning and policy formation.

Alison Hayford expresses these premises when she says

...almost everywhere women's lives are different in nature from men's; their relations to the earth, to its resources, and to the productive systems that people have evolved for making use of these resources, are not the same as, nor even parallel with those of men. (Hayford, 1974, 1)

The aim of the geography of women has been to define the nature and the parameters of these differences.

Work in the field began by questioning the assumptions about women's roles implicit in standard models of urban structure.

Writers claimed these models assumed a 'society made up of patriarchal nuclear families with a traditional division of labour between the sexes.' (Burnett, 1973, 57) These assumptions weakened the explanatory and predictive power of models as theoretical and planning devices. Firstly, these assumptions are empirical oversimplifications. Not all women are full time housewives, not all people live in nuclear families and women's increasing labour force participation, especially that of married women, cannot be ignored, or assumed to be the same as men's.
from theoretically examining fundamental changes in family structure and female labour force participation as possible parameters in urban change and development. These assumptions therefore preclude incorporation of these vital demographic and labour force changes into planning policy. It is impossible to examine, for example, the effect of women's growing labour force participation and changing family patterns on income distribution in the city, on shopping, journey to work and residential patterns, and on needs for specific social services. Planning policies which neglect these considerations may exacerbate the difficulties faced by urban residents, especially those difficulties faced by women whose lives no longer conform to the 'traditional' pattern.

Some geographers attempted to overcome these limitations by examining what had been assumed through applying these models to the measurement and analysis of women's spatial activities - they asked: Where are women, and what are they doing in the city?

Most of this work was comparative, assuming a behavioural and perceptual norm in the city, (that of a comparable group of men: husbands, co-workers, or of white middle class, heterosexual men in general) and studying women's perception and behaviour relative to this norm. These comparisons laid the basis for an empirical definition of women as a distinct population 'subgroup' in the urban ecological tradition, and for specifying the parameters of this distinction.

Much of this work was directed at analysing and planning for women's growing labour force participation, especially studying the spatial constraints produced by married women's dual roles as housewives and wage earners. It was found that wives generally have more restricted activity spaces than their husbands, and that wage earning wives have more restricted activity patterns than full time housewives (Everitt, 1975; Hanson and Hanson, 1975; Hanson et al., 1976). More specific work suggested frameworks for analyzing specific commuting constraints on married women (Andrews, 1976; Madden, 1977), and for locating facilities to overcome such constraints and increase married women's labour force mobility (Hanson and Hanson, 1975; Palm and Fred, 1974). Other studies documented restricted activity spaces for other groups of women: full time suburban housewives (Michelson, 1973), elderly women (Helms, 1974; Sen and Kelley, 1976), female criminals (Rengert, 1975), and legal prostitutes (Symanski, 1975). The theme permeating all this work is that of women's restricted activity spaces, and the fact that such restrictions remain and may in fact be exacerbated with women's entry into non-family roles while maintaining their domestic roles.
So this work lay the basis for some specific reforms and challenged the myth of female equality and questioned the assumptions of many urban models.

But other writers claimed it was necessary to go further. This empirical work has documented spatial restrictions on women—
but it is necessary to ask—
why do these constraints exist?
How did they arise? How can we eliminate them? This work took
women's restricted activity spaces as a starting point and attempted to analyze them as an expression and reinforcement of women's restricted social position.

This literature saw the sexual division of labour as a space-structuring force, and saw the city form as reinforcing women's restricted social position (Burnett, 1973; Bruegal, 1973). Cities were viewed as contributing to specific conflicts for women, and as institutionalizing these conflicts. The primacy of the household role in women's activities restricts their appropriation of urban space, while the home itself was viewed as an 'annex to urban life, a means of reducing women's space for development' (Enjeu and Save, 1974, 12). On a micro-scale, it was argued that the sexual division of space assigns interiors to women and exteriors to men and that this assumes a moral status, becoming normative and self-reinforcing (Lloyd, 1975). On the scale of the city as a whole, the home, in its residential neighbourhood, separated from production and central political power, restricts women in all spheres of life. (Heyford, 1974; Mackenzie and Seymour, 1976).
This work challenged many myths about women's roles — many assumptions about urban activity. It laid the basis for specific reforms for planning policies to try to eliminate some problems.

But more and more people are coming to realize that many of these questions aren't 'women's problems' — per se — but social problems — problems created by the way in which social life structures women's lives and the way in which the city expresses these structures.

The question becomes not: how do we understand women in terms of our given spatial models — but: how do we develop perspectives on the city and on urban life which help us understand the basis of these restrictions on women's restrictions on people?

Women's spatial constraints are largely a function of the fact that home + work place are spatially separate in the city — and this is a historical development — Medieval pre-industrial cities home + work place were integrally, were one way social roles from tutorial step into industrial-residential districts promised on and formed ' nuclei ' type of family — wage wage + non-wage full time housewife — professional assumes a position between home-wage work, assumptions that do not longer apply to many people — and the problems that arise: commuting stress + costs — expanded forcen...
Perhaps we have to re-examine urban structure and the social relations it expresses in terms of changes in social relations. Here I want to make a plea -

Suggestions about the implications of considering the issues raised by women's changing roles -

At the very least we have to stop assuming a norm of a nuclear family with a male wage earner and dependent wife and children. We have to take a serious look at demographic and labour force trends without assuming a sexual bias and try to plan with these in mind. The kinds of families we may have - the kinds of home/workplace relations we can establish may be very different from traditional patterns.

But more - we have to redefine both the workplace and the community. We have to look at employment developments - see women as an essential part of the labour force - and recognize that their dual role - and the extension of more domestic concerns - parenting to men may force us to redefine or be examined - locations of workplaces - services - transport -

Similarly we have to redefine the community - for domestic workers - women - men - it is a workplace - we can't assume as many of us have done - that it is a separate from leisure - The kind of demographic structure/the demands of wage earning parents must be considered -
Most important—and most difficult—
we have to try to see the city as
a whole—as a system where
wage work + family community
life are intimately connected to
mutually dependent. We have to see a
system
where both processes of producing
the goods + services for sale + the
processes of bringing + socializing
children + caring for adult workers—
males + females—go on.

This perspective contains a hallowed
géographic split—

Women's dual roles point to this
interdependence—although wage
work + family/community work
may be separated in space + time,
they are united in women’s daily
lives—analyzing more family responsibil-

This perspective contains a
hallowed geographic split—Most
urban geographers have concentrated
on either production—ie industrial
location

or on community—as a separate
sphere—ie residential location, service
location. This is perpetuated by the separation
of economic/social geographies to see the
whole from production—community—
their
connections—their change—

As their spatial separation is not
created—we must prepare consider
possible of creating new patterns
Finally - we have to be aware of new alternatives being created all around us - to look seriously at what women are doing in the work place + the community - in response to these changes - to look at things like co-op day care - community self help - at the union demands for work place day care + flexible hours - ask what needs are these fulfilling - what does it portend for the future.

In conclusion - a short potmio-

We've all grown up - or at least spent our adult lives in a society going through rapid + constant changes - And throughout our lives - there have been these fundamental changes in women's lives which create fundamental changes in men's lives - because of the growth of feminism this change has affected us personally - socially + which in the workplace expressing itself spatially - and which is creating new urban demands -.

The questions raised by changes in women's roles - and by feminist theory + organization in response to these great changes demand from us some critical imagination - not utopian an awareness that neither the family + the wage work sector are changing in fundamental ways - + that our lives - as urban dwellers - can only suffer if we, as geographers, fail to respond.
WOMEN AND THE ENVIRONMENT
READING LIST

The emerging 'geography of women' provides us with some ideas about how women's social roles are expressed in their environmental relations. But the full implications of changes in women's position and of feminist analysis and action for geographic theory and practice are only now becoming evident. In order to explore these implications, we have to go beyond the current geography of women and examine some emerging themes in feminist and in urban and regional analysis.

More and more, feminist and urban and regional literature (and organization) are raising similar issues. The language may differ, but the problems and priorities, as well as the developing theoretical frameworks, have much in common. This is especially true of work concerned with community organization and 'social reproduction'. Examining this implicit similarity -- making it explicit -- may provide a promising way of exploring the theme of 'women and the environment'.

I suggest we do so through asking two broad, interconnected questions. First, why has the subject of women and the environment, and concomitantly, the geography of women, arisen now? Second, how can we connect feminist with urban and regional theory and practice? In the first two seminars, we could concentrate on exploring some of the concrete issues which have raised questions both for the geography of women and for a reanalysis of urban and regional life. In the second two, we can try to bring together some of the priorities and problems raised by feminists with some of the priorities and problems in recent urban and regional theory. Although this reading list leans heavily toward literature on Western industrial cities, the implications of the theme can be extended to other milieux.

Notes for getting through the list

1. Everyone should try to read those items marked '+'. In some areas I've also listed some supplementary readings for those interested in pursuing a subject. These are not exhaustive.

2. As a lot of this material is not easily available, I've made Xerox copies of some items. These are marked X and are available in a file in Reserve under my name.

S. Mackenzie,
February, 1980
McGill University, Montreal
SEMINAR 1 WOMEN AND THE CITY

Changes in women's wage labour and family-community roles have posed 'problems' for urban life and urban planning. For an overall analysis of these changes, see:

- Bridenthal, Renate (1976) The dialectics of production and reproduction in history Radical America 10 (2) pp. 3-11

For a graphic description of changes in women's labour force participation in contemporary Britain, see

- Counter Information Service Women Under Attacke Anti-report No. 15 London:CIS (just leaf through this)

For more detailed discussions of the implications of these developments see:

Beechey, V. (1977) Some notes on female wage labour in capitalist production Capital and Class 3 pp. 45-66


For a discussion of changes in family-community roles in Britain (the area of reproduction of labour power) see

- Conference of Socialist Economist (1977) On the Political Economy of Women CSE Pamphlet No. 2 Read the article on 'Women, the state and reproduction' pp. 17-34

For a discussion, see


The same social forces also changed the nature of urban life — some would argue — leading towards the greater importance of collective goods and services (what Castells calls collective consumption) and towards a politicization of everyday life. For broad discussions of some of these themes, see


Finally, see


whose discussion draws some connections between the two areas above.
SEMINAR 2 THE GEOGRAPHY OF WOMEN

Problems raised by women's changing roles led geographers and people in related disciplines to criticize the 'neglect' of women. A classic article, arguing from a radical feminist position, is:

+ Burnett, P. (1973) Social change, the status of women and models of city form and development. Antipode 5 (3) pp. 57-62.

See also


both of whom present arguments for more research on women

Writers asked - what is specific about women's environmental perception and behaviour? For a review of the 'answers', see


See also

X Hayden and Wright, G. (1976) Architecture and Urban Planning Signs 1 pp. 923-933. also an interesting review


Everitt, J. (1974) Liberation or restriction? The job as an influence on urban environmental perception and behaviour Antipode 6(2) pp. 20-25


Other writers attempted to argue that women's environmental relations must be placed in their social context and have employed a broadly socialist feminist framework. For a short discussion of socialist feminist theory see

For a more detailed discussion of changes in social reproduction in an urban context, see:


For arguments on the application of this perspective to geography see


+X Poord, J (1980)

+X Mackenzie, S (1980) Women's place - women's space forthcoming in Area

For dissenting views, arguments against the current geography of women, see


The development of a feminist perspective and 'feminist forms of organizing' in response to changes in women's position poses new political perspectives on the city and region, and new priorities and strategies for urban action. On one hand, for a picture of the contemporary city as monolith, see


On the other hand, for an optimistic assessment of the possibilities for opposition and for the creation of alternatives, see:


C. Cockburn writes: 'That women's action till now has been relatively weak and momentary, that it lacks the sanctions of large scale organization, everyone knows. But it has one great power - unexpectedness. Women's action is revolutionary because its nature is to cut across all the fossilized expectations of industrial negotiation and electoral politics; thus it is less easily bought off. It seems to me that we are trying... to use group strengths and sustain each other in action when the costs for us as individuals become too high.' (Cockburn, 1977, 70) For an overview of feminist priorities and strategies from a libertarian perspective, see


For a more detailed discussion of women and community action see:


For a case study which outlines some of the problems, see

+ Charlton, V. (1977) Alesson in day care in M. Mayo, op. cit. pp. 31-44.

For a less optimistic view of women and community organization

Feminism proposes not only a new organizational form, but a new relationship to theory. For discussions of this see:


For a discussion of some possible futures for urban theory, see:


And finally, as a cautious but bravely optimistic discussion from within the discipline, see:


You could also look at

x Rowbotham, S. (1979) Section V Prefigurative political form in Beyond the Fragments op. cit. pp. 71-78.

for a discussion of the relationship of the 'traditional left' and feminist forms of organizing. For discussions of the relationship between radical feminism and socialist feminism, see

Eisenstein, Z. (1979) Developing a theory of capitalist patriarchy and socialist feminism in Z. Eisenstein, Ed., Capitalist Patriarchy and the Case for Socialist Feminism op. cit. Look at pp. 16-34. (This is not a 'standard' view of the question, there isn't a 'standard' view, but this article is fairly comprehensive and comprehensible)
Demographics -

Re changes in demog + labour force structure -

- Women, especially married women entering labour force - do different kinds of work than men
- Part of + reinforce changes in labour force structure (i.e. to part time / tertiary sector - service) (see West in Kuhn + Wolfe for back ground)

So women politically impact the labour sector in specific way (they are disadvantaged workers in 'human sectors' e.g. - 'beer workers in Canada', 'feminist union' - Service Strikers last winter here - Also - impact on whole structure of work - And the dual role - Implications for how demands - (i.e. childcare - maternity leave - school jobs - flexible hours etc) - On workplace + community)

At the same time - changes in repro produces collective organization + politicization of this sector -

New demands - re necessity of capitol - who reproduce -

Demog changes - (see CSE Pol econ on this) Compressed fertility - smaller families - More 1 + 2 person households - need mobility -
More and more, feminist and urban regional literature are raising similar issues. This is especially true of analysis concerned with community organization and collective. The language may differ, but the problems and priorities—community organization and as well as the developing theoretical frameworks—have much in common. This is especially true of work concerned with community organization and "collective reproduction." At this point, the exam...
O.K. So

+ level of feminism - new demands
+ perceptions of space -

See Peterson et al.
+ Wilson, E. in Women in the Community

So what are the implications for geography and the city -

See Burnett (1973) - critique of 'traditional models' -

+ Tivers, J. (1978) - USA Newsletter - New Perspective -

Readings I'd suggest:

Peterson, Burnett, Tivers '78b
+ something from Mayo - all on my reading list.