Evaluating the Publicness Dimension of Public Space with Bibliometric Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Discussions about the publicness of public spaces have started to take place more in the literature in recent years, depending on the privatization of urban spaces all over the world, especially after 1980. The wide scope of the subject and the fact that it is studied in other fields of social and human science other than spatial planning and design offers a very broad perspective. This diversity and richness of information bring some difficulties in determining and systematizing the information on priority fields of study. In this context two research questions emerged (1) what are the prevailing themes related to the publicness of public spaces and (2) how did these themes come together? In this study, the "all open access" SCOPUS Database and VOSviewer were used to conduct a bibliometric analysis of the publicness of public space documents. In this context, co-word analysis which is accepted as one of techniques of the bibliometric analysis has been applied. As a result of the analysis, themes (social media, public sphere, public, public art, etc.) and some subthemes related to the publicness of the public space were found and the relationship of these themes with each other was determined and visually displayed. Afterward, it was examined how these themes are handled in the literature. As a result, a conceptual layout has been created to guide the researchers who study the publicness of public space.

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INTRODUCTION

The economic value of urban space has increased especially in recent years due to population growth and urbanization, and this situation has led to more discussion on the status of public spaces, which are common living spaces and important for social sustainability through the encouragement of democratic participation. Public spaces have been an important subject of urban studies and the desire to reach the ideal in the physical or political dimension of public space has found an important place in these studies. While some researchers argue that the end of public space has come (Sorkin, 1992; Banerjee, 2001; Mitchell, 2003; Madden, 2010), others assert that public space is going through a normal process of change (Krieger, 1995; Loukaitou-Sideris and Banerjee, 1998), and yet another group claims that public space has never been truly public throughout history (Fyfe, 1998).

The most important fact accepted in the light of all these discussions is that the public space has changed, and new forms of public space (physical or virtual) have emerged depending on the change in the lifestyle of modern society and traditional forms are not as popular as before, and Banerjee (2001) also states that privatized space is at least as popular as publicly owned public space. The important point here is to determine the effects of the possible results of all this change on the social and spatial structure and to produce policies in this direction. However, the transformation of public space in the face of economic policies over time and the uncertainty of the boundaries of the concept of publicness present a very broad perspective in the literature. The research question of this study is how the publicness of public space is studied with which themes and how other related themes contribute to the field. Finding the answer to this question is important for the researchers who will study the subject to see the themes and sub-themes related to the publicness of public space and to construct their conceptual relations.

The increase in privatization policies and, accordingly, the involvement of more actors in the management of public space has brought along conflicts of interest, discussions on how to ensure the public interest, and how to determine the boundaries of the public space (De Magalhães, 2010). The concept of public space has a very broad perspective and is associated with many issues such as ownership, democracy, public art, social media, and the public sphere. The fact that different disciplines have discourse on this concept has been effective in the formation of this situation.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In order to answer the research question, a bibliometric analysis of the two keywords (public space and publicness) that form the backbone of the study was carried out using the SCOPUS database. First of all, basic information such as the change of studies in which these two keywords were handled together (all open Access) according to years, which disciplines and which researchers were studied the most, were accessed, and various graphs were created in this direction. SCOPUS analysis shows that there has been an important increase in the studies of the publicness of public space, especially in the last 20 years. Identifying the main journals and authors in which the studies were published, facilitated the detailed analysis of the literature. In addition, studying the subject in different fields in addition to social sciences provides information on the prevalence (Figure 1).
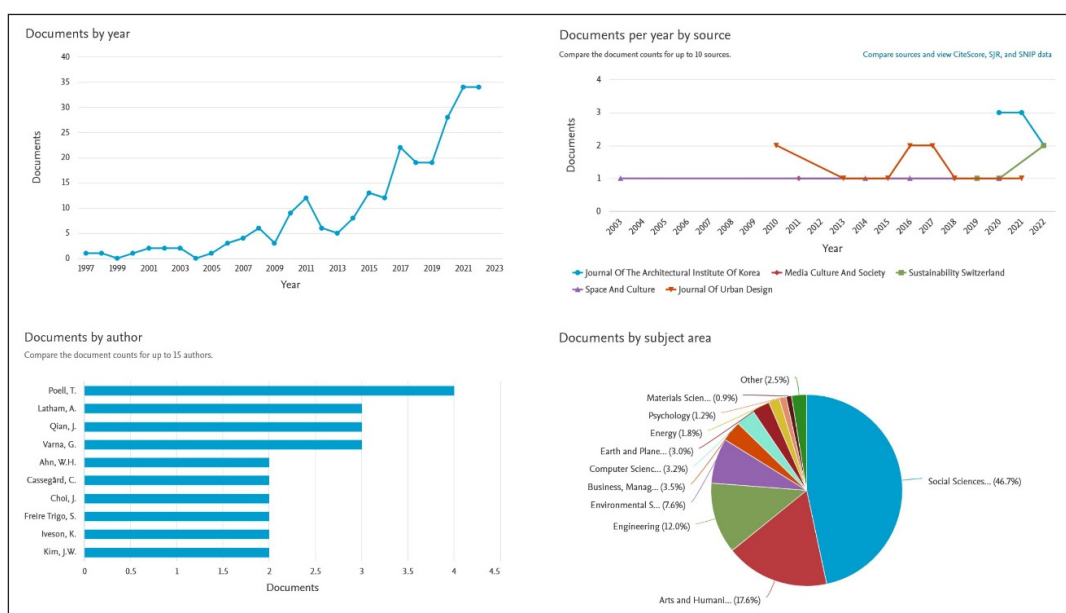

Figure 1 SCOPUS Analysis of Public Space and Publicness Documents.

In the beginning, information such as the change of studies in which these two subjects were evaluated together according to years or by which researchers were studied is necessary to provide a guide on the subject. However, this level of analysis may be insufficient to understand the holistic relationship of concepts with other themes and the reasons for this relationship. Therefore, a more detailed literature analysis is needed.

While making a literature analysis is essential for approaching the subject with a critical and analytical evaluation, it can cause a bias towards the method, especially when using qualitative techniques. Therefore, the use of bibliometric analysis based on quantitative techniques is recommended because it reduces bias and is more objective (Donthu *et al.*, 2021).

Considering this situation, co-word analysis, which is one of the bibliometric analysis techniques, was used in this study. Co-word analysis is conducted to discover the relationships among themes in a research area by considering the written source and it suggests that words are frequently seen together have a thematic relationship with one another (Donthu *et al.*, 2021).

In this study, a visual mapping was created with co-word analysis, and thus, other themes related to the concepts of public space and publicness were revealed and study patterns were seen. Thus, the literature analysis was handled in a more objective framework. In this context, the studies that include the words both public space and publicness were searched in the details of the article title, abstract, and keywords on the SCOPUS database, and these results were limited to the studies with "all open access". The purpose of this limitation arises from the need for full-text access when discussing results from visual mapping results.

THE PUBLICNESS OF PUBLIC SPACE

The results obtained from the SCOPUS database were transferred to the VOSVIEWER software. To evaluate from a broad perspective, each keyword in a study had to appear at least once. In this direction, 434 keywords were examined.

The most repeated and prominent keywords on the visual map after the concepts of publicness and public space which are the backbone of this study were evaluated. In this direction, frequency analyses of the top ten keywords are given in Table 1. This analysis gave us a preliminary idea of how public space and publicness are interpreted in the literature. Determining the most repeated keywords also provides convenience in terms of interpreting the visual maps in the following sections.

Publicness is accepted as an important concept to define the "public" dimension of public space. Although the "public" word definitions have partially changed over time in the cultural and political arena since the 14th

KEYWORDS	OCCURRENCES	TOTAL LINK STRENGTH	LINKS
Publicness	33	152	136
Public space	25	132	121
Social media	10	49	47
Public sphere	8	36	33
Public	4	27	25
Public art	4	25	23
Visibility	3	21	21
Inclusion	3	21	6
Space	3	20	18
Materiality	3	19	19

Table 1 Top 10 Keywords Based on Count.

century, its counterpart in urban studies corresponds to the collective social unity and the correspondence of this unity in the space with state ownership. The detail here is that the society and the state, which make up social unity, do not always offer a consistent relationship. The fact that the definitions of society and state do not always overlap (Li, Dang and Song, 2022) increases the uncertainty of the boundaries of "public", especially in the political arena. The ambiguity in the boundaries of the concept of "public" naturally causes uncertainty in the concept of "publicness". It is open to discussion on how publicness will be ensured, what is the ideal publicness for different types of public spaces, or whether publicness can change according to cultural context or geographical situation. The biggest problem in the publicness of public space is to exclude certain groups, and visibility and accessibility are accepted as the foundation of publicness (Madden, 2010; Karaçor, 2016).

According to the analyses, several clusters are formed as seen in Figure 2. The role of the researcher is to reveal which common themes come together around these clusters and how they are related. As a result of the co-word analysis on the publicness of the public space, the other two main themes that we encounter as related subjects are the public sphere and social media. In the literature analysis, different themes related to these two concepts were also determined.

One of these themes is migration, and this concept is generally evaluated together with the themes of inclusion, commonality, ecology, hospitality, and hostility. In this context, Milbourne (2021) dealt with the issue of migration through community gardening and explored how these spaces offer an approach to publicness between public and private ownership debates. Additionally, Quinn *et al.*, (2021) investigate how festivals in outdoor public spaces of the cities achieve cultural inclusion policy objectives.
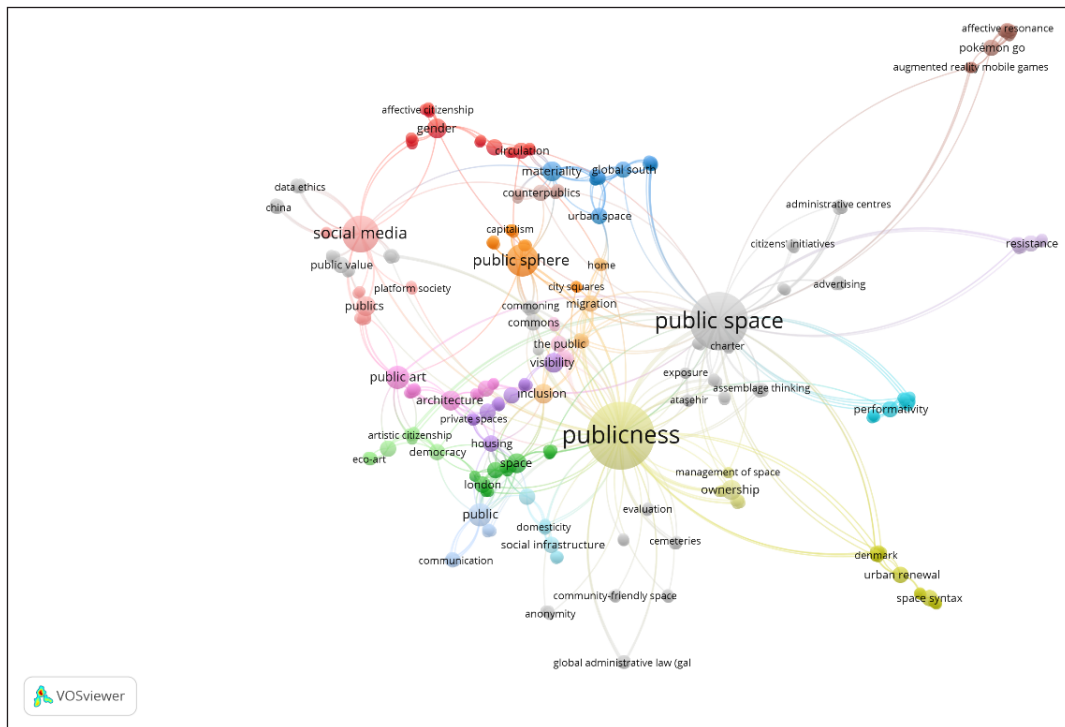
Figure 2 A Visualization Map of Co-occurrence View of Key Words in Publicness of Public Space Research.

One other prominent concept regarding the publicness of public space is ownership. On the one hand, this concept was found to be associated with the words governance and management, publicly owned public space, and management of space. On the other hand, it was found to be related to outsourcing, contracting, satisfaction, citizen, and performance. The prominent studies on ownership are mostly empirical studies, and they have evaluated and analyzed publicness in various public spaces through ownership and management (Varna and Tiesdell, 2010; Németh and Schmidt, 2011; Langstraat and Van Melik, 2013).

Another remarkable concept in the publicness of public space is neighborhood planning, which has been associated with policy analysis, meeting places, social encounters, social housing, and urban renewal. Akkar (2005) explains how image-oriented urban renewal blurs the difference between public and private spaces in post-industrial cities; Aernouts and Ryckewaert (2015) evaluated how public housing lost its publicness through various spatial and political theories. Latham and Layton (2019) focuses on the social infrastructure and public life dimension of public space and brings together four interrelated branches of social scientific research: work on infrastructure; sociality and encounter; publicness and public space; and the politics of provision.

Performativity is a further theme in the publicness of public space, and on the one hand, this theme is generally evaluated with public health and public interest. On the other hand, it was found to be related to alternative publicness, right to the city, critical production, pseudo-public space, and performative spatial practice. Ho, Lai and Wang (2021) evaluated the relationships among

'publicness', user satisfaction, and quality in different types of open spaces in Hong Kong. Ringeling (2015) focused on related concepts such as public interest and public values since the loss of the concept of public.

Simpson (2011) examined the performative transformation of streets by taking into account the practices of street artists and focuses on the temporary social connections arising from these activities and what these can do for the experience of the streets regarding production of sociality and conviviality.

PUBLIC SPHERE: THE POLITICAL DIMENSION IN THE DISCUSSION OF THE PUBLICNESS OF PHYSICAL PUBLIC SPACE

The public sphere, which has an important place in the discussions of the political dimension of the public space, is used with different meanings in the literature. Defining the public sphere through the public space has been effective in the emergence of this diversity of meanings, which has changed both physically, culturally, and politically throughout history. According to Habermas (1991), the public sphere was a medium of social interaction consisting of physical space and forms of expression. In contrast to the visible and tangible structure of public space, the public sphere offers a more conceptual and abstract framework. Although the framework is quite wide and comprehensive, it is accepted that the publicness of public space should be empowered to create a public sphere. According to Low (2017), clarifying the relationship between the public

sphere and public space contributes public spaces to being seen as an area of political practices and helps to exceed some of its limitations. In order to interpret the relationship between these three concepts, it is necessary to analyze which other subjects are considered together.

While the concept of the public sphere met with the words public space and publicness, it also revealed its subsets (Figure 3). In this context, the concept of public art meets the concepts of public space and publicness through the public sphere. On the one hand, the concept of the public sphere is associated with the concepts of capitalism, liberal democracy, and pluralism, and on the other hand with the concepts of collective vision and commons. Considering the studies carried out under this title it was found that Biesta (2012) seeks to answer the question of what kind of educational activity can be suggested to restore or revitalize the public sphere. In addition, Cassegård (2014) clarifies the relationship between the concepts of public space and public sphere by separating the two dimensions of publicness in the classical concept of the public sphere.

Smith (2015) studied the relationship among artists, art, and urban space and analyzed the political process to examine the results created by forms of artistic impression in the public sphere. Chiodelli and Moroni (2015) discussed the relationship between the public sphere and public space through the discussion of the loss of city squares and the replacement of shopping malls as public spaces.

Madden (2010) evaluated the spatial equivalent of social and technical transformation in terms of democratization, citizenship, consumption, commerce, and social surveillance through the example of New York City's Bryant Park.

Georgiou and Titley (2022) studied publicness during the pandemic, with a particular focus on the circumstances that were created or limited for participation, solidarity, and collective action.

The only common word that is directly related to all three of the concepts of public sphere, public space, and publicness is the word city squares. In this context, Kahraman and Türkoğlu (2022) focused on the complex and dynamic situation of publicness and the functional and spatial change of urban squares. In this direction, they discussed the historical development of city squares with procedural and topographic approaches.

THE ROLE OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN PUBLICNESS DISCUSSIONS

Another noticeable concept in the analysis is the concept of social media. Social media has recently been part of today's life and has become an important subject of discussion in social sciences. In particular, the extent of the publicness of social media and its contribution to publicness draw the attention of researchers. The increase in interest in this subject is related to the debates on the decline of public space and it is not being as demanded as it used to be. The ease of organizing social media and
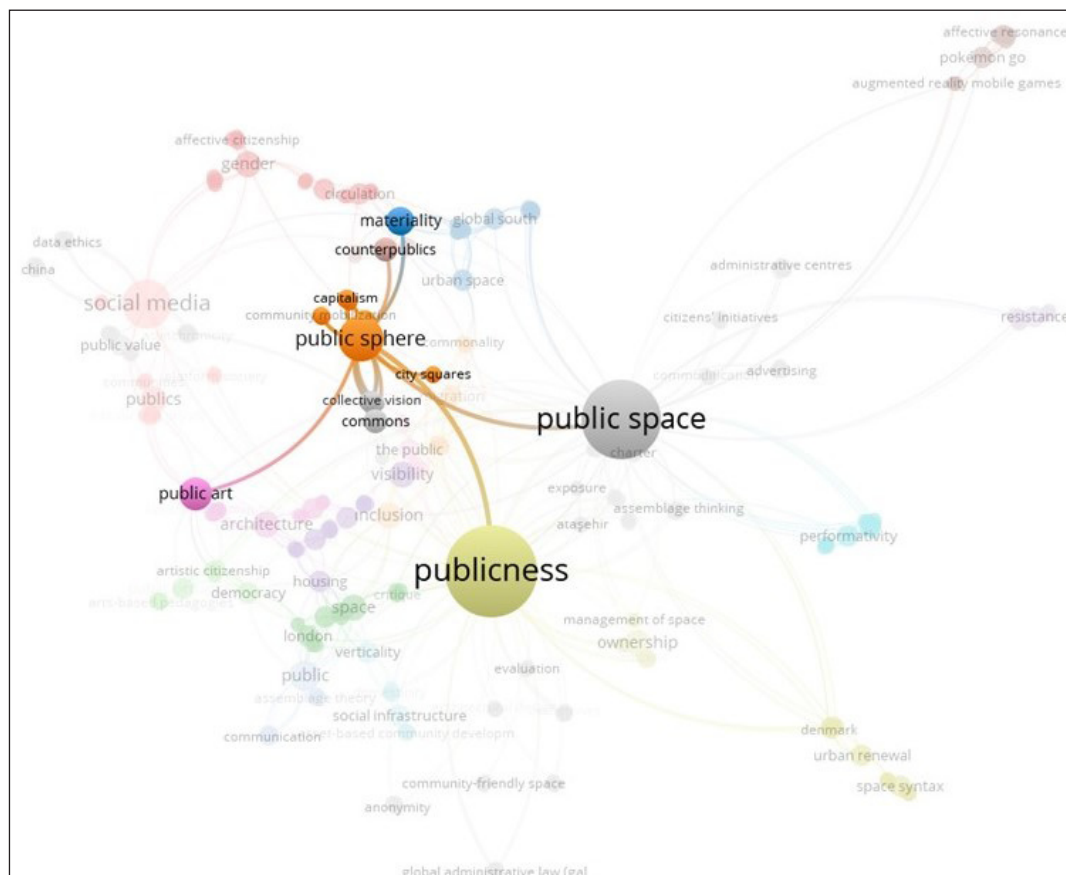

Figure 3 A visualization Map of a Co-occurrence View of Key Words Related to the Public Sphere.

expressing democratic rights hindered the transformation of public space into a political arena. Especially during the pandemic process, people all over the world were able to meet in a virtual environment around common interests or discussion topics through social media. Figure 4 shows which concepts the publicness of social media is associated with. What is noteworthy here is that the themes of public space and social media were not studied directly, but were evaluated together with counterpublics, materiality, and the public sphere or through gender, communication technologies, and affective citizenship. The point that draws attention here is that the public space has been largely disabled and the relationship of publicness with social media has come to the fore. Naturally, publicness and social media were mostly associated with abstract and political sub-themes. Fuchs (2014) touched upon the role of the concept of the public sphere while critically interpreting social media. Criticizing Habermas's idealist interpretation, he advocates a cultural-materialist public sphere based on political economy. Mitchell (1995) focuses on the alterations and practices of public space, then examines the role of public space in modern democracies.

Gender is an important issue in the discussions of publicness, and Polletta and Chen (2013) explained women's involvement in the space that makes up the public sphere by referring to the sexist character of public speaking. While examining how gender is represented through space and the creation of various types of

spaces in an Istanbul neighborhood, Mills (2007) draws attention to the multiple and variable nature of the connections between space and gender and reveals the borders between private and public space.

While social media appears as an important nodal point in the literature within the discussion of publicness, the important point that draws attention here is that there are relatively few studies that directly deal with the issue of social media in public space and public sphere. This situation may be related to the fact that the public space is not the main subject in social media studies and the publicness of social media is predominantly discussed.

CONCLUSION

In this study, we evaluated the open access SCOPUS databases conducted until 2022 on the publicness of public space using bibliometric analysis. The most repeated and prominent keywords given in Table 1 show us from which perspectives the publicness of the public space is discussed, and this study was carried out on social media and the public sphere, which are the strongest themes associated with the publicness of the public space. This study is important in terms of showing how bibliometric analysis contributes to researchers, especially in the literature analysis of urban studies. It is important to understand the concepts related to the themes that are studied in urban sciences as well as in other fields and

Figure 4 A visualization Map of Co-occurence View of Key Words Related with Social Media.

that present scientific data with large volumes and quite complex networks to the researcher. Therefore, it has become increasingly popular to use bibliometric analysis in scientific studies. Although bibliometric analysis is a useful method for systematizing and summarizing the literature, it also has limitations. Especially when performing co-word analysis, bibliometric information received from scientific databases should be reviewed by the researcher in case of duplicated or incorrect words. In addition, bibliometric analyses provide short-term or retrospective predictions about the research field. For this reason, it is recommended that researchers should not make long-term predictions about their subjects (Donthu et al., 2021). Despite all these limitations, bibliometric analyses can be helpful in systematizing scientific knowledge, especially when studying comprehensive subjects. Thus, researchers can easily find their way in line with their research questions.

We conclude important results not only methodologically, but also by systematizing the different perspectives of publicness of the public space. The analyses show us that the studies on the publicness of the public space mainly develop around the main themes of social media and the public sphere. In addition, some sub-themes that bring together these conceptual relationships have also been determined. The public sphere, which is directly related to both the publicness and the public space (Figure 3), focuses especially on the discussions of capitalism when evaluated in terms of its internal dynamics. The physical interventions to the cities and the commodification of the space are interpreted as the loss of the public sphere. Social media, another prominent theme that is highly related to publicness (Figure 4), is seen as an alternative to physical public space and a new platform, and is also important in terms of citizen participation. As a matter of fact, the relationship of the social media theme with the platform, society, public and affective citizenship sub-themes shows us this information. This information is critical for future studies related to discovering the research gap and noticing which perspectives of the subject become more attractive in the field.

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