

Home under late capitalism sociology essay

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Introduction

In this essay I will start by giving the meaning of and the difference between privacy, privatism and privatisation. Then I will dwell on the different points of view on home. Finally the meaning of home in the late-capitalism will be discussed with the use of current developments like gated communities and the wish for a higher home-owner occupation rate by the Dutch government.

Differences - privacy, privatism and privatisation

When searching for a definition of home it is often described as a haven or refuge. It is represented as a place and/or space where people have shelter and rest (Moore, 1984). This view on home is based on several related ideas like the distinction between public and private, and the inside and outside world (Wardaugh, 1999; Altman and Werner, 1985). The inside is a limited space and represents a comfortable, secure and safe space (Dovey, 1985). The outside however is more diffused and seen as a dangerous space. Here there are different rules of engagement (Mallett, 2004). The other this view of home is the distinction between public and private. As a refuge a private home is a familial realm, clearly differentiated from public space and removed from public scrutiny and surveillance (Mallett, 2004). The public is associated with work and non-familial relationships. In contrast, the private realm of the home is typically understood as a space that offers freedom and control (Darke, 1994), security (Dovey, 1985) and scope for creativity and regeneration (Allan and Crow, 1989). The space provides a context for close, caring relationships (Mallett, 2004). The understanding of home as a distinct private zone is informed by three related concepts (Saunders and Williams, 1988): Privacy: at home refers to freedom from surveillance and external

role expectations Privatism: is the process whereby people are increasingly withdrawing from communal life and centering or orienting their activities around the home. Privatization: refers to the shift away from public or state owned housing towards owner occupied housing and privatized consumption.

Different views on home

The literature review by Mallett shows that in the academic literature the concept of home has been understood in different ways. Home has been seen as socio-spatial entity (Saunders and Williams, 1988), a psycho-social entity (Giuliani, 1991; Poteous, 1976), as an emotive space (Giuliani, 1991; Gurney, 2000), or as a combination of the three (Somerville, 1992, 1997). The common factor in all these theories is that while a person's home is usually understood to be situated in space (and time), it is not the physical structure of a house or the natural and built environment of a neighbourhood or region that is understood to make a home. While homes may be located, it is not the location that is 'home'. Instead, homes can be understood as 'places' that hold considerable social, psychological and emotive meaning for individuals and for groups (Mallett, 2004). The connection between home and place has already been recognized by a number of academics. The shared opinion among those who discuss place-identity is, " without exception, the home is considered to be the ' place' of greatest personal significance" (Prohansky et al., 1983, 60). Also Heidegger states that the home is " the key location in which a spiritual unity is formed between humans and things" (McDowell, 1999, 71: Easthope, 2006). And that for Bachelard, home is " a key element in the development of people's sense of

themselves as belonging to a place" (McDowell, 1999, 72). Bourdieu used the house (here seen as the home), in his discussion on "the regulated improvisation effected by habitus" (Casey, 2001: 410). The geographer Yi-Fu Tuan coined the term topophilia to describe "the affective bond between people and place". He said that this bond may be stronger for some individuals than for others but can act differently if people are from different cultures (Duncan & Duncan, 2001, 41; Easthope, 2004, 130). Massey goes against the idea of the home as a bounded place of security and retreat. Her statement is that "a large component of the identity of that place called home derived precisely from the fact that it had always in one way or another been open; constructed out of movement, communication, social relations which always stretched beyond it" (Massey, 1992, 14). The home has to be seen as an open place, maintained and developed through the social relations that stretch beyond it. According to the citation, one's home can be understood as a particularly significant kind of place with which, and within which, we experience strong social, psychological and emotive attachments (Mallett, 2004). But some spaces in our houses were never entirely private or restricted. Public, social spaces such as the parlor also featured in historical house designs and people other than the inhabitants of the house entered, worked or socialized in this sphere (Hepworth, 1999). Nowadays house designs include open plan or flexible living spaces, separate rooms for parents/children's, and studies or home offices. This evolution contradicts with the definition of home as a private haven or refuge from work and the outside world. A big revolution in the late-capitalism is the rise of technology. The personal computer, the fax/phone, email, internet and the mobile phone has made it possible for more people to work from <https://assignbuster.com/home-under-late-capitalism-sociology-essay/>

home (Duncan, 1996). This meant a shift towards privatism. While some experience this as an intrusion, others welcome the flexibility it enables. It also affected the privacy, because with internet and websites like Google.com you can find anything about anybody. Other critics suggest that the characterization of home as haven is an expression of an idealized, romanticized even nostalgic notion of home at odds with the reality of peoples' lived experience of home (Wardaugh, 1999). They reject the view that this so-called private haven is a secure, safe, free or regenerative space (Wright, 1993), for a significant percentage of women, children and young people who are subject to violence and sexual abuse in the home environment (Wardaugh, 1999). Home for these people is a site of fear and isolation, a prison, rather than a place of absolute freedom and ontological security (Giddens, 1984, 1990; Dupuis and Thorns, 1998). Goldsack (1999), argues that men will face more risks in the outside sphere while, women 'more likely to be raped, assaulted and even killed at home than in any other place' (Goldsack, 1999, 123). Wardaugh (1999) goes against the classification of home as haven and supports a notion that 'counterposes inside with outside space' (Wardaugh, 1999, 96). Consistent with this view all forms of privacy, safety, security, comfort and refuge are not obliged with the inside of home, but can also be found outside. In comparison: danger, fear and insecurity are not only located in the outside world. She argues that home is not some sacred space of belonging, with fixed and impenetrable walls. It is rather a space of unavoidable 'tensions surrounding the use of domestic spaces' (Sibley, 1995; Wardaugh, 1999). Wardaugh also comes up with the idea that home as a haven in fact creates 'homelessness'. 'Those who are abused and violated within the family are likely to feel "homeless at

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home" and many subsequently become homeless in an objective sense, in that they escape - or are ejected from - their violent homes' (Wardaugh, 1999, 96 - 97). Equally those who reject or are unable to conform to conventional ideas and expressions of gender, sexuality and class might be both symbolically and literally ' excluded from and notion or semblance of home' (97). This resonates with Sibley's view of home as a potential space of ' exclusion' where a ' fear of difference', of ' non-conforming people, activities or artifacts' can be projected onto the ' objects and spaces comprising the home' (1995: 91). Ironically many researchers who reject the idealized characterization of home continue to conflate home and dwelling and thereby preserve a clear demarcation between inside and outside. A more radical critique of the understanding of home as an enclosed, private space - a haven from the outside world is provided by some of the cross-cultural research. For example, Jackson (1995) implies that nomadic peoples, ' for whom dwelling is not synonymous with being housed and settled' do not focus on ideas of home as a private place clearly differentiated from the outside world. He states that for the Warlpiri of the Tanami Desert in Central Australia . . . ' home is where one hails from . . . , but it also suggests the places one has camped, sojourned and lived during the course of one's own lifetime' (122). Similarly, for the people of Nuakata Island, Papua New Guinea, home is variously translated as matrilineal village(s), or the island itself, and is not a private physical dwelling that is clearly differentiated from an outside world (Mallett, 2003). Rather it equates to the lands and places where one's matrilineal forbears stayed or dwelled. While these spaces are not private, enclosed dwellings, they are possessed spaces or territories with

defined, though not always visible, boundaries that must be observed and respected by those who do not belong there.

Conclusion

It is like Mallett (2004) states: " In recent years there has been a proliferation of writing on the meaning of home within the disciplines of sociology, anthropology, psychology, human geography, history, architecture and philosophy". Easthope, H (2006) Returning to place : the return migration of young adults to Tasmania. PhD thesis, University of Tasmania. <http://allie-c.blogspot.nl/2005/03/mcdowell-1999-ch-3-home-place-and.html>