

Publication

Human Territoriality and the Downfall of Public Housing

JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

ID 3727741

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Year 2017

Title Human Territoriality and the Downfall of Public Housing

Journal Public Culture

Volume 29

Number 1

Pages / Article-Number 165-190

This article examines theories of human territoriality and their historical role in the demise of public housing in Western Europe and North America between the 1960s and the 1980s. The neglect and privatization of the public housing stock and the withdrawal of the state in direct provision in this period are often subsumed under the category of neoliberalism. This article unpacks this narrative by focusing on the intersection between architecture and social science. It argues that the neoliberalization of housing not only constitutes a transformation of housing economics, from public to private funding, or design, from highrise blocks in large estates to semidetached or detached individual dwellings; it also constitutes an epistemological turn, which revolves around the shift from "habitat" to "human territoriality."

Publisher Duke University Press

ISSN/ISBN 0899-2363 ; 1527-8018

edoc-URL <http://edoc.unibas.ch/53861/>

Full Text on edoc No;

Digital Object Identifier DOI 10.1215/08992363-3644445

ISI-Number 000389788200009

Document type (ISI) Article