Home on the move: tracing identity and implications for citizenship

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Introduction

Home is a multidimensional concept and it is often perceived as non-territorially bound. I employ the term "home on the move" to describe what lies beyond housing pathways. Home on the move manifests itself not only in traditionally mobile populations but also in the lives of the new cosmopolitan class which is inspired by the increased fluidity that globalisation entails. Consequently, literature covering home on the move has been written from a series of different perspectives. The purpose of this review is to assess the ways in which the notion of home on the move transgresses the thin line between nomadism and cosmopolitanism. I will then attempt to unravel how home on the move has been linked to perceptions of identity. Finally, I will explore how home on the move facilitates or impedes rights bound to citizenship within the framework of the Westphalian state.

Another way to look at home

Home on the move is conceptualised in various ways throughout the literature. Jackson (1995) dedicates his book to the Warlpiri people, for whom home does not constitute a fixed place, but a trajectory throughout the places that have marked their lives. The role of mobility in defining home is further described in Bose (2012), Dufty-Jones (2012), Dyer (2010), Pant (2005) and Rangwala (2004), where various tribes' centuries-old traditions of seasonal migration contest the notion of fixed home. Home is, as Hitckcock (2002) adds, any place that makes us feel at ease with ourselves. For Roma people migration is not simply a matter of survival, but a journey to (re)discover themselves (Drakakis-Smith, 2007; Hepworth 2012; Martínez Guillem, 2011), an idea also applicable to the Warlpiri (Jackson, 1995).

An alternative manifestation of home on the move relates to transnational migration. So it is interesting to read how Joseph (1999) adheres to the aforementioned notion of home as a journey, where part of home follows the migrant and part of it stays behind, where supposedly his heart is. Through migration the notion of "transnational home" emerges (Munch, 2001).

Contrary to home-as-a-trajectory ideas, D'Mello & Sahay (2007) and Easthope (2009) point out that it may not always be possible to position home in such a trajectory. This is especially evident in the case of the new cosmopolitan class, for which time and space become increasingly intertwined, a phenomenon described as time-space compression (D'Mello & Sahay,
2007). Home then becomes re-negotiated and it is understood in different ways by different people.

**Identity formation**

The domain where we feel "at home" reflects how we ultimately define ourselves. Joseph (1999) cherishes this view and describes the dynamic character that identity acquires while it embarks on a nomadic journey, which is often cyclical (Pant, 2005). D'Mello & Sahay, (2007, 184) describe this cyclical course as "a constant ‘to-and-froing’ between cultural, technological, spatial and existential spaces and places". Easthope (2009) claims that identity is linked to both place and mobility and that power relations are fundamental in the process of identity crystallisation. Hitchcock (2002) uses the example of the San in Botswana, whose mobile nature is increasingly under pressure by the modern state of Botswana. This has not, however, prevented them from developing a crystallised identity based on their nomadic way of life.

Identity formation is, however, not always a corollary of place. Sajed (2010) introduces the notion of hybridity in processes of identity formation as a result of home on the move. D'Mello & Sahay (2007) acknowledge this by referring to the complexity of the relationship between place and identity. Ibrahim (2011) uses the example of the Jatt tribe in Gujarat (India) to explain the tension that occurs when mobile populations challenge the prevailing patterns of fixed identity. Easthope (2009) uses a socio-historical approach and sociological theories to express a new shift that is slowly taking place: from place-based identities to mobile identities. This new shift, manifested in the rise of cosmopolitanism, is no different than centuries-old nomadic identities. Dufty-Jones (2012) characterises the new cosmopolitan movement as poststructuralist. Cosmopolitanism, Thompson & Tambyah (1999) claim, goes beyond identity; it is a cultural orientation and an ideological system expressed by mobility on the grounds of the pursuit of new opportunities and knowledge.

As the Jatts example demonstrated, home on the move sometimes results in the formation of controversial identities. Mobile groups are then identified as threatening (Mau, 2010), or as needing to be "civilised", as is the case of the Negev desert Bedouins (Rangwala, 2004). Other communities, such as the Roma, are perceived as inassimilable (Martínez Guillem, 2011; Woodcock, 2007) and are often deemed persona non grata (Drakakis-Smith, 2007). Even groups which are not constantly on the move, such as the Maghreb immigrants to France, are often
marginalised (Sajed, 2010). What is common in all these examples is that mobile populations are perceived as "other". However, this term is not unanimously accepted among academia. Joseph (1999), for instance, claims that any attempt of a people to construct an identity which anchors itself in "otherness" is artificial.

**Differentiated citizenship**

Dynamic and hybrid processes also manifest themselves in citizenship. Joseph (1999) talks about conditional citizenship and Pant (2005, 85) elaborates on this by stating that "concepts of citizenship based on universal rights and responsibilities do not in themselves guarantee equality of voice, access or influence within the state or in society". Dyer (2010, 310) acknowledges that "an underlying status inequality dividing the settled from the mobile is a global phenomenon". (Drakakis-Smith, 2007, 482) summarises the hard truth by stating that "without a fixed, authorised address, families face economic hardship related to employment, access to education, health and welfare, and forced mobility".

As demonstrated before, the state plays a pivotal role in the process of exclusion and marginalisation. Often the problem is not differentiated citizenship, but enforced citizenship that is attributed to traditionally mobile populations, such as the Sami people, whose natural area transcends national borders (Lantto, 2010). The rationale behind enforced citizenship lies behind the belief that mobile populations may be a threat for state stability, as the example of the Jatts in the Indian state of Gujarat showed (Ibrahim, 2011). Enforced citizenship relies on a complex interplay between race ("other") and mobility, as the case of the European Roma demonstrates (Hepworth, 2012).

However, a home on the move does not in all cases imply "otherness" and marginalisation. A prime example is the cosmopolitan class, which exercises its right for mobility on the grounds of human capital. This idea is expressed through the notion of governmentability, which "allows for new understandings of the way in which our knowledges about mobility and mobile practices/performances are structured through utilizing our freedom" (Dufty-Jones, 2012, 219). Ultimately, "citizenship is the ability to be politically engaged and shape the fate of the polity in which one is involved" (Bose, 2012, 2).
Conclusions and suggestions for further research

Home on the move is a multidimensional concept expressed in various ways through the experiences of seemingly unrelated people: nomads, (transnational) migrants, and the cosmopolitan class. In all three groups, home constitutes a determinant of identity formation and the citizenship that corresponds to this identity. The implications of home on the move for identity are inherently related to processes of inclusion and exclusion which are in turn regulated by power relations. However, the rise of globalisation and the emerging erosion of the Westphalian state give impetus to the re-negotiation of the very term "home". The new mobile cosmopolitan class challenges power relations and enables (a selected group of) people to embark on a life journey, characterised by tremendous mobility and by time-space compression. Since these new realities remain largely vague, more and continuous research will be necessary to map and comprehend them as they unfold.

Literature


D'Mello, M. & Sahay, S. (2007) "I am kind of a nomad where I have to go places and places"... Understanding mobility, place and identity in global software work from India, Information and Organization, 17: 162–192.


