

[From Property-Owning Democracy to Generation Rent? Analysing Theresa May's Housing Rhetoric from the Perspective of the Discourse Historical Approach]

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[Abstract] *Since the 1920s, British Conservatives pursued the concept of property-owning democracy, with home ownership viewed as a guarantor of social stability and personal autonomy. However, recent increases in housing costs have made the “British Dream” of home-ownership more elusive than ever, with renting becoming a lifelong prospect for large swathes of people. Using the Discourse Historical Approach, a method falling within Critical Discourse Analysis, the article analyzes the 2019 housing speech by Prime Minister Theresa May to ascertain whether the changing situation has been reflected in the Conservatives’ housing rhetoric, traditionally driven by a property-owning ethos. Examining May’s argumentation and language use, it concludes that May’s proclaimed commitment to renewed council house construction represents both a long-overdue acknowledgement of the housing affordability crisis and a pre-election strategy to win Labour voters.*

[Keywords] Discourse Historical Approach; DHA; Critical Discourse Analysis; CDA; council housing; Theresa May; property-owning democracy