
Housing displacement: A socio-spatial agenda

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Abstract

Cities and in particular inner cities are being redeveloped through urban renewal and gentrification which often contribute to the displacement of low-income households (Atkinson et al. 2011; Slater, 2006). Housing displacement is a growing problem internationally and highlights the difficulty for low income households to access affordable housing and security in tenure, constrains their choices in location and threatens a basic human right of decent housing for everyone.

This paper reports on findings from a study of different triggers (gentrification and urban renewal) producing displacement in the city of Brisbane, Australia, which for more than two decades has been the fastest growing metropolitan region in Australia (Steele and Gleeson, 2010). The preliminary results demonstrate that both inner city and outer suburban areas are subject to gentrification pressures. This suggests a departure from the familiar pattern of low-income households displaced from the inner city to the outer city (Weller and van Hulten, 2012), and suggests important implications for households at the periphery of the city also subject to displacement pressures. Therefore, low income households are probably displaced further away from services and jobs; end up in poorer quality housing and in a very competitive housing market to access affordable housing.

These results suggest spatial inequalities at the expense of low income households. Therefore, a better understanding of the urban renewal and gentrification processes occurring in developed cities is required and how this links to housing displacement as a context specific socio-spatial agenda.

Keywords: Housing displacement, spatial inequalities, gentrification, urban renewal

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