
Suburbanization of Brussels popular households : quanti-qualitative approach in geography

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Abstract

The golden sixties and the social relegation have marked cities organisation till now. Suburbanization of middle class households in social ascension has been accompanied with the depreciation of housing quality in the city centre. These dynamics are no longer satisfying for understanding the current transformations of residential spaces: gentrification in popular neighbourhood, relegation in rural or less accessible places etc. are drawing new dynamics. In Brussels, for the last 20 years, Regional authorities seek to attract and retain middle class households. In combination with the importance of international activities, metropolisation, availability of capital or gentrification dynamics, this has produced a massive growth of land value and rents. In the same time, the destabilisation of the wage earner system and the increase of short-term contracts are renewing the value of the "ownership": having a house is a way to secure life while the work isn't anymore.

How do Brussels' popular households manage to address this situation? Where do they go when they leave the city? And how the analysis of these destinations lead us to a better comprehension of the multiple fractures inside popular classes?

In this presentation, we intend to explore the residential movements of popular classes inside and around Brussels, by combining a quantitative approach and a qualitative one. On the one hand, we will explore the geography of these movements, where do popular households go ? Which factors (individual, social, demographic, ...) explain the best this geography ? On the other hand we'll try to catch the reasons why households have decided to go somewhere in some conditions rather than anywhere else, rather than staying in Brussels.

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