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# Residential Attractiveness as a Public Policy Goal for Declining Industrial Cities: Housing Renewal Strategies in Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne (France)

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**ABSTRACT** *Residential attractiveness is a relatively new concept coming from a territorial development paradigm based on competitiveness and public policies in order to restore the social mix by an inverted social diversification. Residential attractiveness is progressively becoming a central feature of public policy in renewal processes for declining cities. Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne are emblematic cases of these housing renewal strategies. These cases reveal strategies of attracting new populations to nurture economic growth: the former population seemingly a social burden. Politically sensitive questions asked in a social context are, what are the results of residential attractiveness as a public policy goal? Considering the case of Roubaix, some results of this policy are presented.*

## 1. Introduction

Housing renewal policies have been implemented in France since the 1960s. These policies started with “urban renovation”, a process of tearing down parts of ancient inner city areas to modernize and adapt them on a functional basis. After the housing reform in 1977 and the development of heritage preservation policies, neighbourhood revitalization and housing heritage preservation became the major way to modernize and curb the unattractiveness of these areas. In most French cities, particularly in the core of urban districts (e.g. Lyon, Rennes and Lille), this policy has been successful. However, at the turn of the century, the Government re-instated this policy because some ancient inner city areas concentrated on economic, social and physical issues, such as deserted residential areas,

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impoverishment and socio-spatial specialization. This policy became the housing renewal strategy, with the creation of a new tool, mixing traditional upgrading tools with an urban renewal project.

Many cities facing a long-term urban shrinkage (Pallagast *et al.*, 2009) implemented this strategy to curb their population losses and create “residential attractiveness”. In the meantime, urban shrinkage, defined as a systemic undermining of urban society, could counter the outcomes of this policy. In fact, the combined effects of deindustrialization and suburbanization were causing long-term population losses, and a growth of deprivation. In most cases, the shrinking cities have been former industrial centres, impacted by huge economic changes (Scott & Storper, 2003) since the end of 1970s. These negative effects devitalized the urban fabric in the ancient inner city areas shaped by nineteenth century industrialization leaving behind many brownfields. Consequently, local authorities faced atomized and deficient private market actors, as the housing renewal strategy was based on the stimulation of private investment.

This paradox makes one wonder how a shrinking city might create residential attractiveness while the local authorities are facing a deficient private market, particular residential functions and an extensively deteriorated urban fabric.

To address this paradox, the cases of Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne, which are emblematic cases of urban shrinkage in France, are reviewed.

Three steps are followed. The first defines the residential attractiveness concept as a policy response to social mix issues and the competitiveness paradigm. Then, residential attractiveness as a public policy goal and a territorial issue is examined for every case study, and finally some results of this policy goal are analysed considering the case of Roubaix.

## **2. Residential Attractiveness: A Multiple Scientific Definition and a Public Policy Goal**

Residential attractiveness is not clearly defined. Multiple definitions exist for this concept, entangling economic, demographic and policy debates.

### *2.1 A Concept Linked With a New Paradigm of Territorial Development: Competitiveness and Globalization*

The first definition of this concept is linked with territorial development and competition. Due to the effects of globalization, European integration and French decentralization, local authorities are competing with each other (Ingallina, 2007). In the political agenda, residential attractiveness becomes a media success in a territorial marketing strategy (Alexandre *et al.*, 2010). Attractiveness appears as a potential, for local authorities, to attract different kind of resources, economic, financial and human. However, a territory has some pre-existent resources crossing different kinds of elements such as geography, accessibility, demography, political organization, economy, housing and social conditions, services, environment and culture. These elements are objective and symbolic resources. Nothing is new in this definition of attractiveness: it is approximately the same criterion for becoming a global city or an international city as it was defined in the 1990s (Fry *et al.*, 1989; Soldatos, 1991; Sassen, 1996, 1999).

Residential attractiveness is clearly linked with the development of city branding and territorial marketing (OECD, 2006; Ilmonen, 2007; Maynadier, 2010) defining the city as a product, an identity and not only as a particular space offering products and services to a population. It is a concept developed to make a territorial response, a policy strategy to become a local winner in a context of globalization and competitiveness. Thus, Ingallina (2007) links the competition and the urban policies in her definition of attractiveness. Attractiveness is “a relative build-up”, comparing to other territories, cities, “which is becoming a frame of reference and is affecting the behaviour of local stakeholders” (Ingallina, 2007, p. 10). The concept is influencing the development of marketing strategies, urban renovation projects and flagship projects in order to develop a peculiar identity capable of attracting and retaining populations and activities.

## *2.2 The Increasing Residential Mobility: Legitimizing the Residential Attractiveness Concept*

The legitimizing of the residential attractiveness concept is also due to creative class debates (Florida, 2002, 2005). Florida argues that city growth is increasingly led by the attraction of the young and well-educated population. Economic and employment bases are not sufficient to cause durable city growth. Residential migrations have taken the lead in the local economy as well as among numerous and creative companies. According to Florida, the old formula was that companies moved to cities, then attracted people to live there. In a new territorial paradigm, the well-educated population is moving to cities not only get jobs, but also to find cultural entertainment, restaurants, clubs, tolerant neighbourhoods, all elements that build “quality of life”, and attractiveness.

Simultaneously with the development of the creative class theory, in France, some geographers and economists developed the theory of residential economy (Davezies, 2004, 2008; Veltz, 2004; Gonnard, 2006) based on the theory of economic basis that postulates that local spaces are getting resources from their capacity to export. Basic activities are exporting from the cities and bringing wealth from the outside. Secondly, the internal circulation of income, due to local demand, develops domestic employment, in the non-basic activities like services. However, in a context of an increasing residential mobility, L. Davezies shows that revenues from the economic and productive basis are becoming lower than transferred funds linked with public jobs, retirement revenues, social benefits or tourism revenues. As a result, the revenue due to residential economy plays an important role in local development. Beyond this identification, in L. Davezies' views, the role of this residential economy is a new way of development for local territories and authorities, differing from territorial development based on infrastructures and developing economic zones:

Finally, two growth schemes are combining at national scale: the first one is based on the offer (...); the other one is based on residential attractiveness (...), developing multiplicative effects on employment and revenues which are promoting social and territorial cohesion. (p. 70).

For example, in most of the new planning strategic documents such as the Territorial Cohesion Schemes (SCoT), a chapter is devoted to the residential economy and its role in territorial development. This is the case for Nantes, Bordeaux and for the Paris

region but also for more rural region such as the inner Flanders or smaller cities like Limoges or Le Mans. The weight of mobility of revenues and people offers a development path based on attracting and keeping population and revenues in a given territory. If a residential economy is first developed in rural areas and middle-sized cities, the biggest ones are increasingly involved in that kind of strategy focusing their attention on families and well-educated middle classes.

In this context residential attractiveness is an expression coined by local political leaders and researchers to provide a response to territorial competitiveness and understand the residential role of their local spaces. Some researchers like H. Alexandre, F. Cusin, and C. Julliard (Alexandre *et al.*, 2010, p. 9) intend to define the concept. For this group of researchers, residential attractiveness is defined by “the attraction force (the capacity to attract flows and to durably retain people or revenue) and the appeal (the capacity to become desirable for any kind of reason)”. One is measurable: the attraction force as the out-migration balance. The second is qualitative: the satisfaction of inhabitants, the motivation of mobility (choice versus constraint) and the attachment to place, etc.

### *2.3 A Concept Mobilized in the French Urban Renovation and in Social Mix Policies*

In France, residential attractiveness is also mobilized in a different way. Since 2003, and even more since 2005, the French urban renovation has been addressing social housing areas and the most deprived areas, and developing a new kind of intervention: the National Urban Renovation Agency (ANRU), which funds the demolition of social housing units, developed during the 1960 and 1970s, to create social and housing diversification. This social and housing diversification postulates an inverted social mix to limit and stop socio-spatial inequalities. In the most deprived and socio-specialized areas, public policies must develop new housing supply to attract people, wealthier than the local population. This concept is defined as “the major tool for improving social mix in the neighbourhood by giving attractiveness for new populations” (ANRU, 2007, p. 24). Consequently, residential attractiveness, in the urban renovation cases, is a micro-territorial policy for restoring the social balance and curbing a socio-specialization momentum.

### *2.4 Critics of the Concept: The Paradox of Residential Attractiveness*

If political leaders increasingly use residential attractiveness, scholars also increasingly criticize it. First of all, the concept targets the wealthier and upper middle-class: for political leaders, families and well-educated young professionals are fashionable and desirable people but their massive in-migration might undermine the social mix and reject the lower middle-class from city centres. Some scholars insist upon the difficulties in creating social mix and the risk of attracting wealthier middle-class in deprived areas because it could create an uncontrolled gentrification process in which lower middle-class and working class could lose their place in urban cores (Bidou-Zachariasen, 2003; Peraldi, 2004). For Kirszbaum (2009), the social diversification policies are “a deliberate gentrification”. In his view, if the urban renewal implemented in the 1950s in the USA was considered as a “negro removal”, the French urban renovation, in France, could be similar to a “pauper removal”, involving subsequent discrimination.

Likewise, residential attractiveness as a public policy goal is a territorial and a political paradox because, as Ascher (2010) argues:

local development is more and more implemented through the ability of attracting the young and graduated middle class. Which causes some issues (...). These social classes only represent a minor part of employment, but they constitute a key resource for development (...). It might cause some difficulties because local public authorities may be compelled to do much to attract and keep a minority and wealthy social group although, otherwise, they would not meet requirements of local and poor social group (...). But, it is politically tricky to communicate about what they do to attract wealthy newcomers although some serious social problems exist.

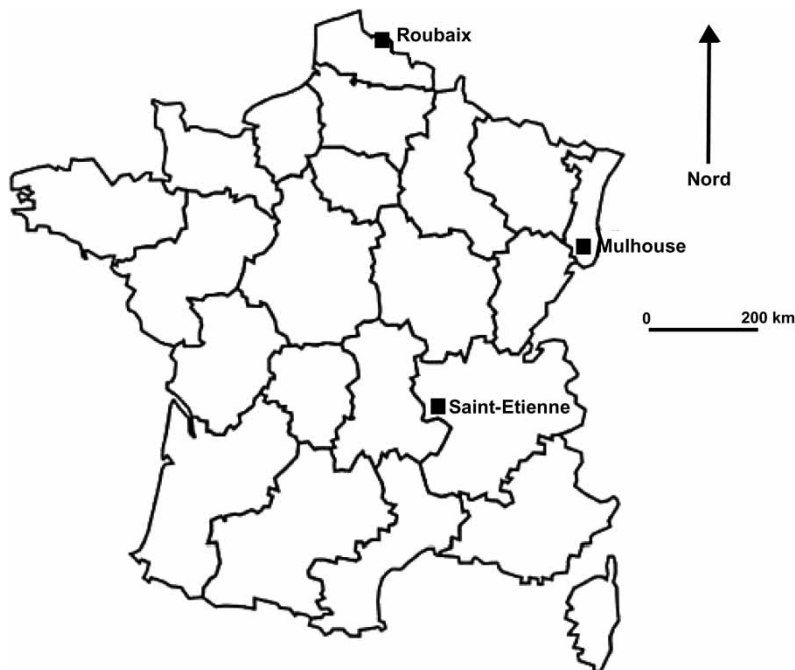
The main paradox of this policy could be summarized by these questions: for whom public authorities are developing policies? Who are the fair and legitimate beneficiaries of public policies?

To begin with, residential attractiveness could be defined as a housing policy and strategy to curb demographic losses, restore the social mix and develop the productive aspect of the residential function of cities by the attraction and the attachment of population to take place. The population targeted is mainly the well-educated population and the upper classes or the upper middle-class, considering the creative class debates and the role of professional and managerial workers in the local development theories.

### **3. Case Studies: Residential Attractiveness, a Key Question in Ancient Inner City Areas but a Different Semantic and Policy Reality in the Three Cities**

Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne are three French emblems of de-industrialized shrinking cities (see Figure 1). Since 1968, the three cities have lost between 5.5% and 20% of their populations.

Their economic backgrounds were based on the booming activities of the first industrial revolution, such as steel, engineering and armament industries for Saint-Etienne, the woollen mono-industry in Roubaix and cotton textile and mechanical industries in the case of Mulhouse, that ranked them among major and ancient industrial cities in France. Globalization is undermining these industrial specializations. Textiles in Roubaix or Armaments in Saint-Etienne gradually disappeared. The three cities have lost between 5000 and 22,000 jobs since 1968 and even more industrial jobs. At an urban area scale, the number of jobs is growing but not for industrial workers. Professional, managerial and intermediate workers are increasing, illustrating the shift from manufacturing activities to services. At the city scale, a sort of "spatial mismatch" between jobs and the working population is growing because the working population is still made of industrial workers. In the three cities, between 32% and 42% of the working population are industrial workers although only 20% of jobs are industrial. Conversely, professional, managerial and associate professional are representing between 20% and 25% of the working population while 45% of jobs are dedicated to these workers. Consequently, unemployment affects between 15% and 28% of the working population because of deindustrialization and this shifts the local employment market (INSEE, 2006). The source of this sort of spatial mismatch is also due to a selective suburbanization, especially till the 1990s.



**Figure 1.** Localization of Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne.

### 3.1 Portrait of a Lack of Residential Attractiveness in Shrinking Cities

Considering the definition of Alexandre *et al.* (2010), the case studies present a negative residential attractiveness of city centres since 1968, spreading progressively to the whole built-up areas. Lille-Roubaix metropolis, Mulhouse and Saint-Etienne have been experiencing the same trend since then. From 1968 to 1982, a negative out-migration balance concerned the city centres but a positive out-migration balance was developing in the first suburban rings. After this period, the negative out-migration balance concerned the whole district. The suburban rings experienced an annual population growth due to out-migration from 30% to 20% over the first period. After 1982, the annual population growth due to out-migration decreased to 5% to the maximum, for one or two communes, and the majority of communes experienced a negative out-migration balance.

The analysis of the out-migration balance of the three city centres shows a typical residential career (Authier, *dir.*, 2010). The most representative residential career concerns owner-occupation: young families, working populations, are leaving the city centre in order to buy a home in the suburban rings or outer rings. In Mulhouse (Table 1), 76% of negative out-migration balance is due to this residential career. Working families (84%), professional, managerial and intermediate workers (50%) and relatively young people (51% between 25 and 39 years of age) compose most of the owner-occupiers.

Beyond the analysis of out-migration balance, the residential mobility moving into the city centre presents a dual social profile. According to the methodology of populating studies (Lévy, 1998, 2003), 28% of the incoming flows have a higher profile than the local population in Mulhouse. It socially diversifies the local population composed of

**Table 1.** Mulhouse—source of the negative out-migration balance

	Balance	% of balance
<i>Outmigration balance by social categories</i>		
Professional and managerial	–561	16
Associate professional	–1045	29
Clerks and sale workers	–178	5
Manual workers	–1275	36
Retired people	–307	9
Others	–223	6
Total	–3589	100
<i>Outmigration balance by types of households</i>		
Singles	106	–3
One-parent families	–42	1
Two working parent families	–2506	70
One working parent families	–935	26
Unemployed parents families	–212	6
Total	–3589	100
<i>Outmigration balance by housing occupation of households</i>		
Home-owners	–2714	76
Tenants	–276	8
Social housing tenants	–548	15
Others	–51	1
Total	–3589	100

42% of industrial workers and 15% of unemployed people. They are young professional, managerial and intermediate workers. Meanwhile, 20% of the incoming flows are unemployed people or those who never worked before (inactive people). This induces pauperization because their proportion is higher among newcomers than in the total population.

Consequently, the selective process of residential attractiveness in our case studies undermines the social mix. Newcomers' social profiles contrast with the former inhabitants regarding both a wealthier population and more deprived people.

This selective lack of residential attractiveness is partly due to residential functions, particularly the old rental private offer and less homeownership opportunities than in outer rings. Indeed, considering the residential function of the different housing stocks of Roubaix, the old private rented housing is massively degraded (44% is considered as potentially unsanitary dwellings) and has a social and a shelter function for deprived people: 28% of the inhabitants of this housing supply is unemployed, more than in the social housing stock, 9% are inactive people, 27% are single parent families and more than 58% of the population leaves before 5 years of occupation. Thirty-two per cent of inhabitants of this housing stock are newcomers coming from outer areas. Consequently, the most deprived people of the city are concentrated in this old private rented housing, and the population living here is also an inflow of newly deprived people coming from the district scale, illustrating the fact that this segment of housing plays the role of a “de facto social housing supply”.

To summarize, residential attractiveness is crucial for these shrinking cities, in particular for the old private rented housing which has a concentration of deprived people in poor living conditions. Residential attractiveness is a double issue:



- A social mix issue with the concentration of deprived people in specific areas and a selective negative out-migration balance.
- A population issue because natural increase does not outweigh the imbalance, weakening the demographic weight of the city centre and the built-up area.

### *3.2 Residential Attractiveness Strategies: The Key Question of Ancient Inner City Areas*

*3.2.1 At the heart of the strategy, one national tool: a gentrification policy?* The three cases studies are part of a same national policy, using the same national tools: the National Housing Upgrading policy. Local authorities implement in their ancient inner cities two tools coming from this national policy: the ORI (Housing Restoration Operation) and the OPAH-RU (Urban Renewal Housing Upgrading Operation). The first is based on the expropriation of private renters if they do not upgrade their houses. The latter could receive subsidies from ANAH (National Housing Upgrading Agency) and the local authorities (cities, regions, etc.). A specific level of rent conditions these subsidies: the cheaper the rent, the higher the subsidies. More often, the authorities expropriate or pre-empt a number of houses in disrepair in order to sell them to new investors who must upgrade their houses and create high-quality accommodation. The second is implemented in blighted residential areas. Owner-occupiers and renters receive subsidies from the ANAH and the local authorities if they upgrade their houses. Subsidies are socially conditioned. This policy is often considered as gentrification (Clerval & Fleury 2009; Clerval, 2010) because the subsidies offered are encouraging the development of owner-occupation in inner cities, which are desirable places to live for upper middle-class that are attracted by heritage and qualitative urban life. The upgrading and the heritage are considered as a key attractiveness factors for these social groups, which are called by Authier (2002) the “transformers”. In fact, the upgrading is a way to decrease the value of the home when purchased and a way to increase it when sold. Private renters also play a major role in gentrification: if the upgrading financed by public subsidies is a way to increase the quality of accommodation, it is also a way to increase the level of rents and pushing away some of the deprived tenants. Those two types of owners are thus using the rent gap (Smith, 1979). The opening to this “new population” and “new investors” increases land values and can cast off the most deprived people in suburban rings or in social housing estates. In the French context, the gentrification process due to this policy is well-known thanks to previous studies (Bidou, 1984; Authier, 1995). In this context, the choice of this policy to restore their residential attractiveness is clearly linked with this debate.

However, these local authorities are involved in the reform of this policy in which local authorities must develop initiatives to counter the gentrification process. In addition, Mulhouse, Roubaix and Saint-Etienne have blended their interventions with the “Politique de la Ville” and the ANRU, reinforcing social intervention. Every local authority has to protect tenants facing private renters and to re-house tenants concerned about expropriation or pre-emption.

At first glance, this is an ambivalent policy because if it is clearly linked with the French gentrification debates and seems to look like the classic gentrification process, the gentrification risk is reduced after the recent reforms. An assessment is necessary to understand if the reform works. After the description of the strategic programme in which local authorities are involved, the way the residential attractiveness is defined is the focus of the analysis.

### 3.2.2 Three local definitions of residential attractiveness: the part of local context?

3.2.2.1 *Mulhouse: residential attractiveness as a social diversification to change residential function of ancient inner cities.* Since 2001, residential attractiveness is the heart of the housing strategy of Mulhouse. It appears in every planning tool. Residential attractiveness strategy is clearly defined as a social diversification strategy to change the residential function of the ancient private rented housing. Residential attractiveness consists in attracting upper class and affluent middle-class to reach a balanced social mix. The social diversification is supported by the City council since the goal is stated on public documents. The change in residential function of the ancient inner city areas is clearly expounded. Ancient inner city areas are presented as a “sociological and geographical barrier” and the City council develops the new residential function of the areas (Ville de Mulhouse, 2007):

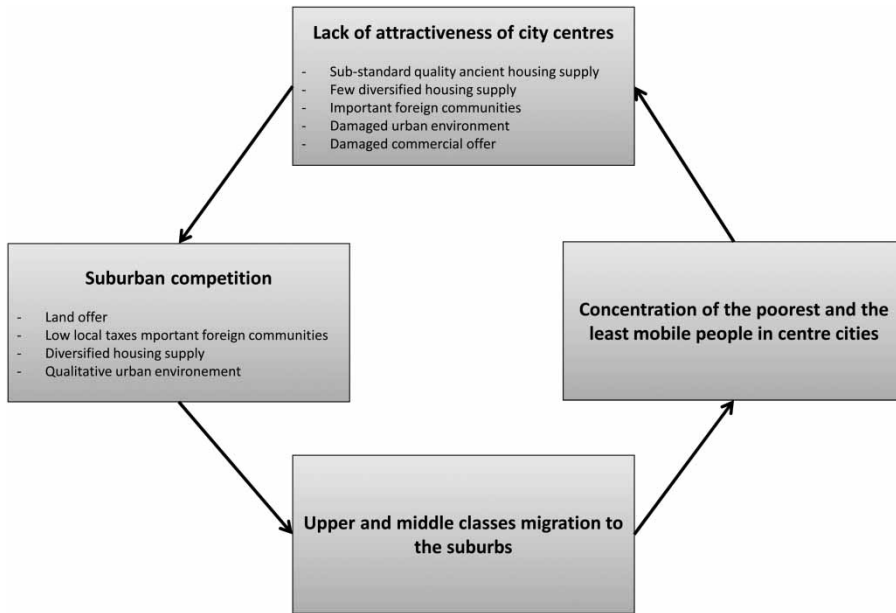
- Briand is entitled to stay a working class neighbourhood and to get back a corner shopping dynamic along Briand avenue, a structural thoroughfare;
- Franklin will keep its hyper-centre dynamics, with commercial base, tertiary activities in and around Franklin Square and with an intermediate owner-occupation housing supply and intermediate housing rental supply for the middle-class;
- Neppert will continue its change into a residential neighbourhood, offering an intermediate renter and owner-occupation supply between upmarket supply of Nouveau Bassin and working class supply of Wolf–Wagner.

This residential function change is reworded in the operational convention of the Housing Upgrading Operation. The main goal of this operation is to “improve attractiveness of these estates and facilitate the coming or “place attachment” population favouring social diversity, by the creation of large-size homes and intermediate rental homes.<sup>1</sup> In short, Mulhouse’s strategy for inner city areas is twofold:

- Connecting the private market housing with higher market prices in order to gentrify.
- Limiting the risks of a significant gentrification by the development of social housing.

Strategic goals are implemented for shifting the residential function of ancient inner cities and private rented housing. Quality renovation is a way to restore the social mix by attracting the middle-class. The importance of social diversification in the definition of residential attractiveness attests to a classic gentrification strategy justified, for Agencies and representatives of National Government, by a socio-spatial specialization of old inner neighbourhoods.

3.2.2.2 *Roubaix: a reworded definition due to an adjustment to ANRU doctrine.* In Roubaix, residential attractiveness is a reworded strategy, different from Mulhouse. In the early 2000s, residential attractiveness appears as a territorial context in the strategic documents. For example, the document at the origin of the urban renovation project (GERAU, 1999) postulates the lack of attractiveness of city centres through a vicious circle (see Figure 2). Ancient inner cities are identified as the core of structural difficulties.



**Figure 2.** Lack of attractiveness in Roubaix—a vicious circle for local authorities.

Patrimonial renovation of ancient private rented housing stock and the housing market are considered as key factors of redevelopment and urban renewal for Roubaix. One of the two main goals of the initiative is

increasing the neighbourhood attractiveness by encouraging social mix development and de-specializing [action of limiting a concentration] the social and housing functions. The initiative must both open the neighbourhood to new populations and make these neighbourhoods better places to live for the local population.

For local authorities, residential attractiveness, in the early 2000s, is a territorial context and a strategic goal to bring back a social balance undermined by social specialization due to upper classes out-migration in a suburbanization context. Renovation of ancient inner neighbourhoods might create a diversified private housing stock for a new population, which is allegedly wealthier.

Since the early 2000s, the residential attractiveness issue is changing and is reworded, as shown by the Financial Convention of Urban Renovation Project with the ANRU.<sup>2</sup> One of the strategic targets of the housing project is “developing a residential attractiveness in Roubaix for new populations attracted by heritage and cultural amenities and fixing emerging middle classes”. In the urban project, residential attractiveness is implemented by “reusing well situated brownfields close to the city centre to attract households looking for a qualitative urban life and consuming cultural opportunities which reinforce the customer catchment area of city centre”. This kind of definition is a clear reference to the gentrification theory and the creative class. To address this policy goal, Roubaix City Council is adopting a programme of populating for the development of new housing operations. By recycling brownfields, the new housing has to play a role in:

- Competing against not repaired private housing by the development of a new qualitative social supply.
- Creating qualitative homes for middle-class through the building of middle or low-income buying programmes.
- Creating and stimulating a qualitative private rented supply to attract the upper and wealthier middle-class.

Recycling brownfields is one of the conditions for signalling a market value for ancient private housing. It is a growth-oriented strategy in order to transform deserted and deprived areas into more attractive sectors for the middle classes and investors.

Therefore, in the case of Roubaix, residential attractiveness is changing over time from structural interventions in private housing market to a housing marketing strategy with a definition of a target and a housing product. The target of this project is close to the “creative class” (Florida, 2002), mixing the young population with a high cultural capital and wealthier and upper classes eager for cultural consumption. Residential attractiveness, in this case, looks like gentrification. The focus on new housing supply is linked with the social diversification, one of the major policy goals of the ANRU.

*3.2.2.3 Saint-Etienne: from an urban renovation project to a metropolitan and strategic project.* If Saint-Etienne implements a residential attractiveness strategy for the renovation of its ancient inner city areas, the definition contrasts with the two other cases. In fact, the context is clearly different from Roubaix and Mulhouse as can be seen in the Financial Convention of Urban Renovation Project: “Saint-Etienne completes its economic reconversion”, however, “it cannot break up the residential attractiveness decline spiral. The sustainability of its recovery and its capacity to contribute to a sizeable European urban area are still undermined by a worrisome social and demographic evolution”. “The population loss affecting Saint-Etienne is a sign of structural imbalances which are worsening, fed by a spiral mixing decaying urban fabric and resident impoverishment”.<sup>3</sup> Since 1990, Saint-Etienne lost 15% of its population while the area’s population figures remain stable. It is a long-term process of “urban perforation”, as local authorities call it. Whereas residential attractiveness in Roubaix and Mulhouse is focused on social specialization and resident impoverishment, the main phenomenon in Saint-Etienne is the demographic shrinkage and its consequences on its urban fabric and social balance. Saint-Etienne’s residential attractiveness strategy clearly contrasts with the two others.

For instance, the Local Housing Program tries to reactivate the housing market through vacancy eradication and massive housing demolition (5000 home units in 6 years). A large-scale strategic planning document (SCoT)<sup>4</sup> follows a strategy aiming at “reversing trends” through the concentration of new house building in Saint-Etienne City: from 18% today to 30% in 2020. Residential attractiveness is implemented through promoting complete residential careers for residents, as well as “production socially accessible supply” and “development of multi-family housing units, terraced houses, large-size housing and upmarket housing supply”. In this document, residential attractiveness is a housing diversification to compete with suburban supply. If the product is defined, the target is not because, unlike Roubaix, the main goal of Saint-Etienne is to regain growth whatever the social level of the new population. In old inner city areas, Saint-Etienne has a more classic approach but local authorities came up against urban

fabric trouble: degraded condominiums requiring a sizeable financial intervention. Upgrading costs of degraded condos hamper the ambitions of public policies. Consequently, since 2004, the Government has mobilized significant financial resources on a vast reconversion project. The aims combine economic, environmental and residential goals with the purpose of stopping population haemorrhage and urban shrinkage. The project is economically based on design and creativity, an environmental programme through renovation of public spaces and a large-scale housing renewal scheme concerning three other areas than the Urban Renovation Project. Through the concentration of action, Saint-Etienne hopes to halt urban decline by signalling the economic and residential shift of the city.

*3.2.3 Preliminary conclusions.* In short, residential attractiveness differs as a public policy goal in every city due to the local context. Saint-Etienne is more affected by a demographic decline than Mulhouse and Roubaix. Residential attractiveness strategy is less socially targeted even if socio-spatial specialization exists in Saint-Etienne. In Roubaix and Mulhouse, social diversification is the major stake because impoverishment and social specialization of ancient inner city areas are massive due to a very strong economic crisis and a very difficult economic reconversion. In these two cases, residential attractiveness as a territorial issue is neither demographic nor economic but corresponds to a lopsided social balance.

In France, public authorities, beyond a social diversification goal, are looking for a strategy of social inequalities reduction before a redevelopment project facing a multiform and multi-scale decline. This is linked with the lack of a national policy to address this issue. Local authorities use existing tools and financial supports, the “Politique de la Ville”, and try to combine it with their own policy goals. If the lack of attractiveness appears as a vicious circle, it is not taken as a global phenomenon due to economic crisis and suburb competition. A global vision of urban shrinkage does not exist.

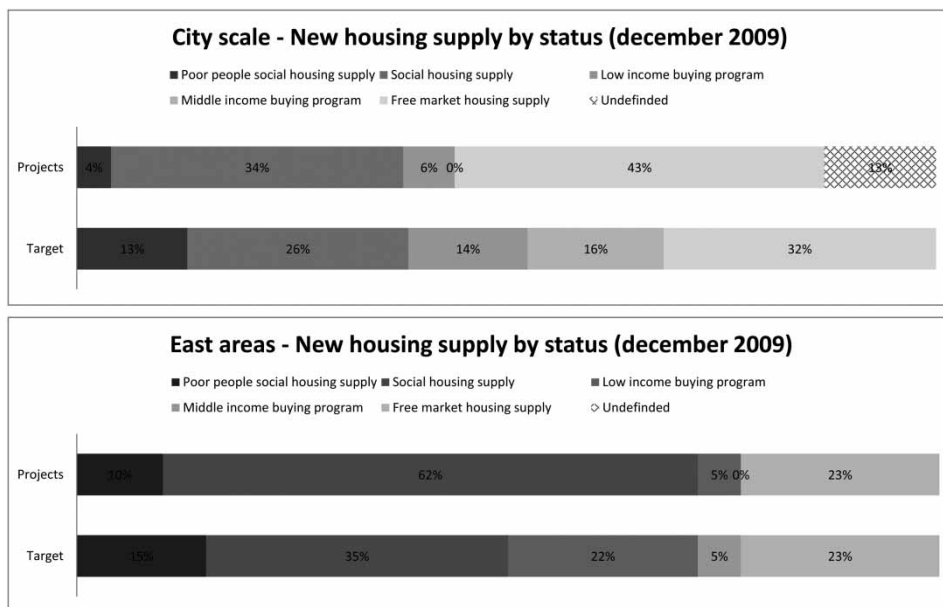
Finally, residential attractiveness is linked to the gentrification concept, regarding the definition of the targeted populations and the way the local authorities implement their strategies. This strategy in socio-specialized neighbourhoods and massively degraded estates can be put into question in its effects on social balance, on its qualitative and quantitative effects. The case of Roubaix is a good example to assess the point.

#### **4. Evaluating Residential Attractiveness Effects—the Case of Roubaix**

In Roubaix, residential attractiveness appears like a strategic programme to restore the social diversity of the city.

##### *4.1 Effects, Efficiency and Pertinence of New Housing Supply Strategy*

A status and typological diversification analysis of new housing supply have been developed, in reference to Roubaix City Council “populating strategy” (see Figure 3). Some housing targets have been adopted. In this strategy, low and middle-income owner-occupation are considered as the better answer to develop social diversification and to restore social mix. Thirty per cent of new housing are targeted in this type of supply. But, in december 2009, the new housing production still did not comply with targets because only 6% of the production corresponds to this supply. The imbalance is due to:



**Figure 3.** Status new housing supply characterization—a quantitative analysis.

- The difficulty in developing intermediate supply between social and private housing at a city scale: It is due to the market equation of property developers. First, real estate prices are quite low and the new intermediate housing has to compete with cheap ancient homes and suburban rings supplies. Secondly, the local population is very poor and mostly unable to become owner-occupiers. Consequently, property developers refuse to invest in Roubaix because the demand and expected returns are considered weak.
- The lack of attractiveness of urban regeneration perimeters. This is why the production is geographically unbalanced. The perimeters are the most deprived and derelict areas in the city. Only the new social housing supply is developed because social housing companies have direct subsidies from the ANRU to build new homes and because some of them are State organizations.

This imbalance fixes and replicates the social specialization of the area. This is the opposite of what housing diversification standard intends to develop.

On the other hand, one can wonder whether or not the new private housing supply might be a market for social diversification. In fact, today, with high land prices and real estate values, new private housing supply plays the role of an investment for upper classes who want to develop capital for their own retirement or their children. In France in 2010, more than 63% of the new housing programmes are bought by investors.<sup>5</sup> A marketing analysis is developed (see Tables 2 and 3 and Figure 4) (Miot, 2010) to answer whether the new housing supply is a social diversification market.

The figures allow an analysis of the price adequacy of the new dwellings considering the scale of tax income of the local population. The main criteria for the analysis are a paid-in corresponding to the annex buying expenses, a 33% debt-limit and a 4% interest rate over 25 years for owner-occupation. For tenants, a same criterion is developed: the rents must

**Table 2.** Housing costs by apartment complex and typology<sup>a</sup>

Number of flat available	Type of flats	Prices	Prices/m <sup>2</sup>
<i>'Epicentre' apartment complex</i>			
8	Two room flats	betw. €141.000 and €153.000	€2711/m <sup>2</sup>
8	Three room flats	betw. €183,000 and €197,000	€2614/m <sup>2</sup>
5	Four room flats	betw. €215,000 and €250000?	€2500/m <sup>2</sup>
1	Five room flat	betw. €246.000 and €277,000	€2320/m <sup>2</sup>
<i>'InterUgne' apartment complex</i>			
16	Two room flats	From €197.500	€2564/m <sup>2</sup>
1	Five room flats	from €249,500	€2465/m <sup>2</sup>
4	Houses	from €250.000	€2604/m <sup>2</sup>
<i>Without parking lots (€12,000/lot)</i>			
<i>'VOas Sarraill' · apartment complex</i>			
2	Two room flats	betw. €130.900 and €133.400	€2618/m <sup>2</sup>
2	Three room flats	betw. €183.10Q and €187,600	€2578/m <sup>2</sup>
<i>'Carré Saint-Jean' · apartment complex - PBR</i>			
3	Three room flats	befav. €181.700 and €189 700	€2711/m <sup>2</sup>

<sup>a</sup>Source: Ville de Roubaix (2010a).

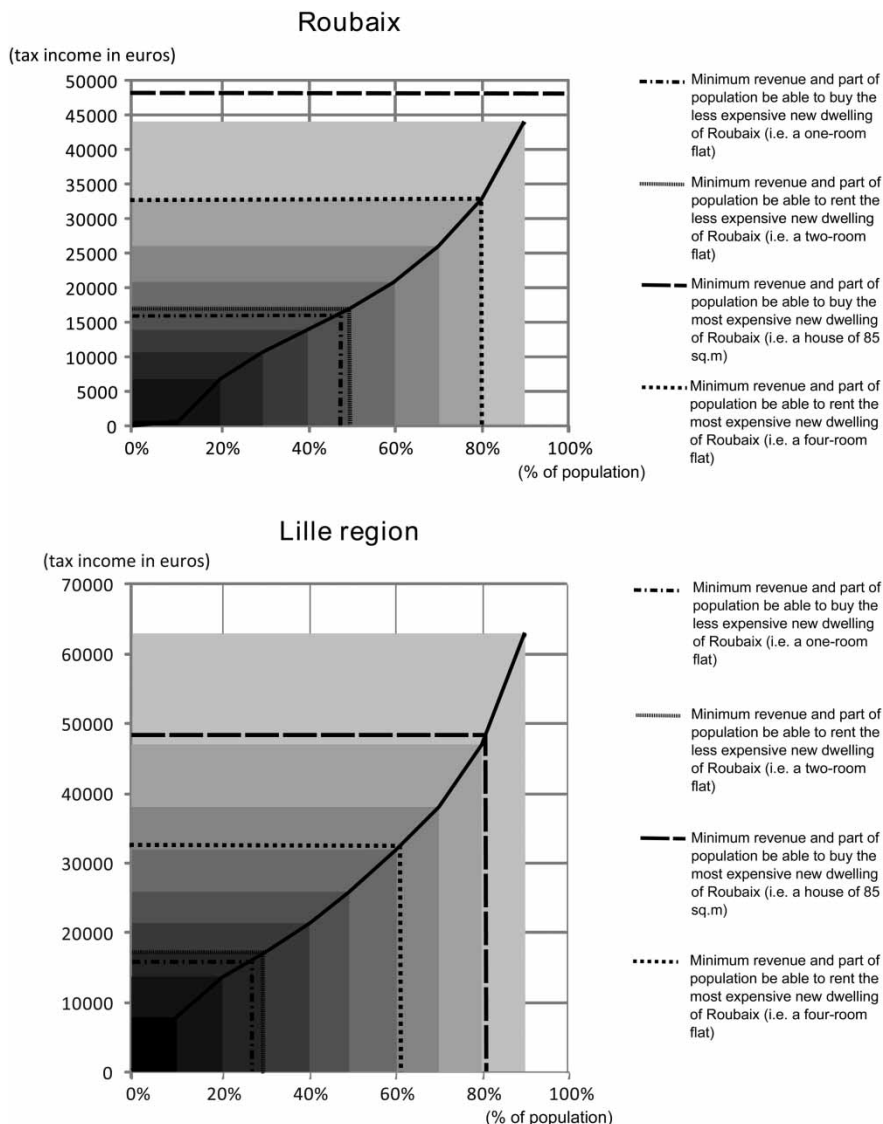
not exceed a third of the household income. For the less expensive apartment, i.e. a 32sq.m one-room flat of, only 52% of Roubaix's population and 72% of Lille's region population can afford it. At the end of the scale, only 18% of Lille region's population and less than 10% of Roubaix's population can afford the most expensive new dwelling, i.e. an 85 sq.m three roomed house. The social adequacy of the prices of the new private dwellings is consequently poor, all the more considering the competition of the suburban rings. For the new private rented dwellings, only the 50% of Roubaix population can rent the less expensive new two-room flat and only 20% for the most expensive four-room flat. Given the income scale of Lille's region population, 80% can rent the less expensive flat and 40% the most expensive one.

The level of rents for new rented dwellings in Roubaix is below the national rent-limit (€12 per sq.m versus €15.05 per sq.m) for residential investment programmes developed with incentive tax cuts but these rents are higher than Lille's region market

**Table 3.** Example of rent level in new housing programme in Roubaix<sup>a</sup>

Rental prices for flats in new housing programme		
Carré Saint-Jean		
Size	Rents	Charges
Two-room flat	€470	Not included
Two-room flat	€520	Not included
Three-room flat	€750	Not included
Three-room flat	€760	Not included
Four-room flat	€790	€90

<sup>a</sup>Source: Ville de Roubaix (2010a).



**Figure 4.** Scale of tax income in Roubaix and Lille region per deciles.

prices (€8.1/m<sup>2</sup>) (Olap, 2009). In consequence, the private rented housing supply is both disconnected from the local market and from the local population in terms of prices. Moreover, it is inefficient in reference to the massive ancient private disrepaired supply existing in Roubaix: 44% of ancient private rented housing are considered potentially unsanitary dwellings.

To further the analysis, consider four case studies of households with the middle-class attraction goal. The same criteria are used in the analysis: a 33% debt-limit, a 4% interest per year over 25 years and the household has no debt.



- *The case of a teacher family with 2 children and a 10-year career:* Based on wage levels of the Education ministry, this couple earns €43,080 per year after tax. With €20,000 paid-in, this family could buy a home for €203,000, i.e. a 77 sq.m four-room flat in Interligne apartment complex, without a garden and parking lots.
- *The case of a clerk family in the middle of their professional careers with two children:* Based on the average of the National Statistic Institute (INSEE, 2008), they earn €33,472 per year after tax. With €10,000 paid-in, this household eligible for a middle-income social housing supply, and could buy a home for €168,000, i.e. a two-rooms flat in Roubaix city centre.
- *The case of a medical-assistant family with one child and 5-year career:* Based on salary levels of National Health Administration, this couple earns €30,336 per year after taxes. They are eligible for social housing. With €15,000 paid-in, they could buy a home for €144,000, i.e. a two-room flat.
- *The case of a young professional employed in public administration with a 2-year career:* Based on wage levels of the Roubaix City Council staff, he earns €16,800 per year after tax. With €10,000 of paid-in, he could not buy anything in Roubaix.

New private housing supply is not affordable for the middle-class and cannot play the role of a social diversification market because prices are too high. Moreover, this supply competes with suburban housing supply which presents better amenities for families (parking lots and garage, gardens and numerous and bigger rooms) and ancient housing supply that in Roubaix offers gardens and a bigger size than new flats. For instance, a house with a small garden in Roubaix's old inner city was worth €90,000 up to €270,000 with an average price at €135,000. However, this supply is not really attractive because it requires important upgrading expenditure, as 65% of dwellings are considered sub-standard. For the middle-class housing market, a double price competition exists against Roubaix's new private dwellings.

In short, the social diversification goal by the development of new private dwellings might be inadequate socially and financially speaking. Affordable housing is necessary to reach this strategic policy. This new dwellings appears to be a production dedicated to residential investment or only for the upper classes of the city or for the middle-class of the Lille region.

In other words, the new housing development strategy fails to reach its targets for three major reasons:

- today, the City council does not manage to attract property developers in the most degraded estates in which social specialization is massive.
- at a city scale, new housing private tenure could not play a role of social diversification because prices are too high for the local population and because it offers poorer quality than ancient or suburban housings.
- Nine hundred new private homes have been sold since 2009 and 2480 private homes must have been built before 2013. It represents 6.25% of Roubaix's housing supply. Therefore, we can wonder how 6.25% of housing supply could create not only a social diversification but also a competitive offer against uncomfortable private supply existing in Roubaix.

To sum up, housing diversification standard is a growth-oriented strategy. This is risky in a shrinking city because it could reinforce the social specialization, develop vacancy

risk, create artificially new housing supply, and property developers who had fled from Roubaix in the 1990s could leave the city.

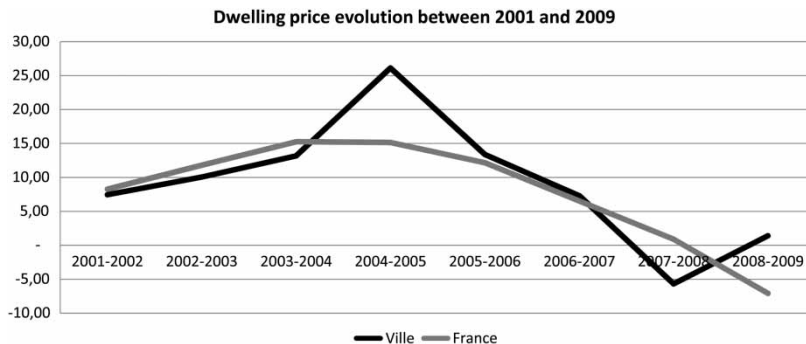
#### 4.2 Effects, Efficiency and Pertinence of Market De-specialization Strategy

Different sorts of indicators have been implemented in order to assess the effectiveness of the market de-specialization:

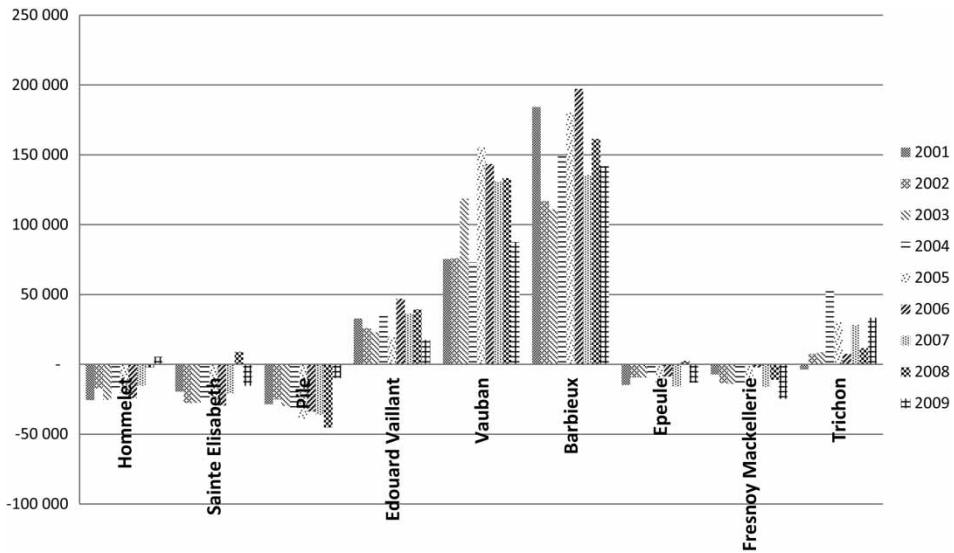
- A mid-term analysis of ancient housing market functioning since the beginning of housing renewal intervention (2001–2009) with emphasis on geographical buyer origins and prices.
- A selective analysis of private investment in housing upgrading through the operational intervention of Housing Upgrading Operation and Housing Restoration Operation.
- A mid-term analysis of private investment in housing upgrading in the whole city and besides public intervention.
- Roubaix City Council develops a particular study of residential careers of newcomers and residential function of different housing supplies.

The functional analysis of transactions points out that the steady price growth in Roubaix, between 2001 and 2009, is a growth without clear shifting. In fact, if prices are increasing, territorial imbalances are perpetuated and no clear catching up effects could be measured notwithstanding the fact that property developers are coming back to Roubaix's city centre. In 2001, Roubaix was one of the cheapest cities in France and if the growth is fast during the considered period, only 2 years witness a faster growth rate than in the rest of the country (see Figure 5). In 2010, Roubaix still remains one of the cheapest cities in France.

Price increase does not correct territorial imbalances in Roubaix. At the city scale, the cheapest areas continue to remain the same. Figure 6 shows changes in house prices within areas concerned by the Housing Upgrading Operation (OPAH-RU) and the three most expensive neighbourhoods of Roubaix. Trichon, Hommelet and Sainte-Elizabeth, the nearest ancient areas from the city centre, might experience price correction since the beginning of the operation. Pile, Epeule, Fresnoy did not experience any imbalance



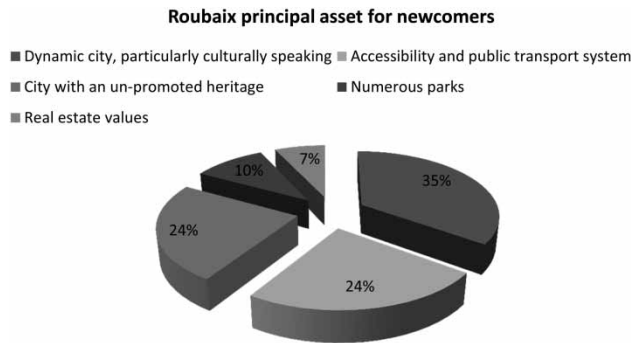
**Figure 5.** House price changes in Roubaix and in France (corriger dans graphique).



**Figure 6.** House price differential between area averages and city average in the three most expensive neighbourhoods and in the neighbourhoods concerned by the OPAH-RU between 2001 and 2009.  
*Source:* Miot (2010).

correction. It appears that exterior factors can explain price correction, more particularly the City Centre Project, inaugurated in 2001, which renewed commercial supply in Roubaix with the development of two city centre shopping malls and a massive public space renovation. This operation is close to Sainte-Elizabeth's neighbourhood. In Hommelet, price growth can also be explained by the creation of two new urban parks in the central part of the neighbourhood. As for Trichon, the area has higher qualitative homes than elsewhere and numerous cultural infrastructures are located there, such as the municipal museum, two concert halls, etc.

However, if the price growth does not correct the territorial imbalances, the steady price growth of real estate in Lille agglomeration creates a social and geographical de-specialization in Roubaix's housing market. Considering buyers' geographical origins, the proportion of newcomers increases for Lille's region and for further places. Between 2001 and 2009, the part of newcomers increases from the Lille's region and from outside it. For example, newcomers from the Lille region increase at the city scale from 34% to 41% and meanwhile, Roubaix inhabitants' transactions decrease from 60% to 49%. This shift might be explained by the price growth in Lille and its first suburban rings, which has become the most expensive cities in ancient housing after Paris region since 2009. A significant part of newcomers are young households who cannot afford a home or a flat in Lille city or attractive suburban rings. More than 25% of newcomers present a gentrifying profile (Authier, 1995; Bidou-Zachariasen, 2003) and are coming from attractive suburban rings or Lille city (Ville de Roubaix, 2010a, 2010b).<sup>6</sup> They are young households, more often young professional and intermediate workers without a family, and it is their first home purchase. Individual houses with a small garden and urban and cultural life and heritage attract them (see Figure 7). Astonishingly, they are those with the strongest rate of approval for urban renovation discourses and represen-



**Figure 7.** Newcomers' image of Roubaix.

tations, even if they never lived in Roubaix previously. For these newcomers, purchasing their homes in Roubaix may be like placing a bet: they are expecting a quick return thanks to the price growth and Roubaix is not their first choice but a trade-off between urban life, price and localization.

Strictly considering the Housing Upgrading Operation, the effects seem to be meagre. For homeowners, housing upgrading efficiency does not assess the quantitative goal. At the end of the operation, only 580 homeowners received some subsidies for upgrading their homes. The average upgrading costs are about €9000 and over 10% of homeowners renovation do not reach €3000 although up to 70% of costs could be financed and all the subsidies are paid in advance by public authorities. Consequently, Housing Upgrading Operation does not reach the promotion of qualitative renovation for homeowners because Roubaix's homeowners are mainly insolvent and among the poorest people in the city, and they live in highly degraded houses, which require major financial intervention. But, 15% of new homeowners have participated in the programme with a higher level of renovation (€15,000 of upgrading costs). In this context, the de-specialization market strategy seems to be more adequate than the new housing supply diversification strategy in order to attract new demands in deprived areas. These different results could be considered as evidence of a gentrification process. Newcomers are more and more often gentrifiers. Cultural heritage and amenities play a role in their attraction to Roubaix as much as other neighbourhoods studied in France or in other OECD countries. However, the "place attachment" of this population is not a gain. Their residential careers are at the beginning and some difficulties exist in their residential appropriation, especially concerning security in the neighbourhood.

Considering the rental private supply goal, in 2010, 433 houses have been completely renovated by investors. In terms of figures, the target is not reached but qualitatively, the Housing Upgrading Operation exceeds targets: €76,000 of renovation works. Concerning the type of housing supply which is renovated, more and more social rents are developed by investors (€5.5/m<sup>2</sup>) because more subsidies are offered for this type of rent, considering the National Housing Agency standards. A larger number of investors is seeking important tax cuts as well as assurance that their homes will be rented. The development of social rents does not match the initial goal of public authorities. In a splitting metropolitan housing market, lower rents could attract the poorest from the entire Lille metropolis, reinforcing the social specialization of Roubaix.

In short, market de-specialization succeeds in creating qualitative renovation but might fail in blocking social specialization of ancient inner cities. The city of Roubaix is facing new stakes considering these results: how can Roubaix keep the newcomers from Lille city and suburban rings? Given the preliminary gentrification movement, how can Roubaix reach a social mix between newcomers and the former population?

## **5. Conclusion**

Residential attractiveness is a relatively new concept coming from a territorial development paradigm based on competitiveness and public policies to restore, by an inverted social diversification, the social mix. In our case studies, it is a dual issue. It is a demographic challenge because either a city is losing population or its growth is near zero. It is also a selective process, due to the residential function of part of housing supply, which undermines the social mix.

These cases are emblematic of residential attractiveness issues and they explain why these cities are involved in public policies to restore it. As a public policy goal, residential attractiveness is simultaneously a way to re-establish a social and territorial balance, an instrument of gentrification to shift the residential function of ancient private rental housing supply and a way to impede demographic shrinkage. Considering Roubaix's results, if housing market and prices are a key resource for local development, the policy costs are high for unsatisfying results and the policy could affect the most deprived people for whom housing prices constitute an increasing share of their incomes. Consequently, housing and market, in shrinking cities, are clearly a part of the solution but also a part of the problem. Local authorities must be careful with the market and growth-oriented strategies because, with few existing controls, they could reinforce the multidimensional process of shrinkage.

Moreover, one of the major characteristics of residential attractiveness is the territorial imbalance correction through the attraction of a new population. It has to do with the gentrification phenomenon and the attraction of social classes nurturing the economic growth, described by R. Florida. Therefore, one has to agree with the main critics about residential attractiveness: although the well-educated and wealthier population must live for the benefit of the local economy, the deprived local population is not the centre of public policies. The main territorial and policy stake is to attract and develop the "place attachment" of the wealthier newcomers, which is quite awkward. Public policies seem to drop development perspectives for local populations, as long as a balanced and theoretical social mix does not exist. Employment and rising social difficulties for deprived people, are more or less given up and efforts are concentrated on attracting a desirable population. Public authorities, rather than acting against poverty, unemployment and social inequalities, are taking steps against territorial inequalities (Tissot, 2007).

Consequently, through these cases, we can wonder if urban shrinkage might not get worse because the number of poor and deprived people remains steady and policies centred on the attraction of wealthier people might be the cause of high outlays for debatable results in the case of Roubaix. Facing urban shrinkage, as a multidimensional process of economic, demographic and social weakening of a city, other ways may be explored, and, more specifically, a project combining economic, urban and social solutions as in the Stadtbau Ost and West programme in Germany or the project experimented in Saint-Etienne.

## Notes

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3. ANRU (Ville de Saint-Etienne, 2005).
4. EPURES, Syndicat mixte (Sud-Loire, 2008).
5. Fédération des Promoteurs Immobiliers de France. Available at <http://www.fpi-france.fr/Upload/etude38.pdf>
6. Data coming from a sociological investigation carried out 100 newcomers during the summer 2010 (Ville de Roubaix, 2010a, 2010b).

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