

Revisiting suburbia – Revisiter les espaces périurbaines

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38th Annual Conference of the Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries

Canada, over the last several decades, has become not only a highly urbanized country but, in fact, “an overwhelmingly *suburban* nation” (Bourne 1991: 25, emphasis added). There is little doubt that Canada’s urban experience in the early part of the 21st century is actually, in large parts, a *suburban* experience. And while suburbia as such is not a new topic for academia, suburban Canada has undergone massive changes over the last few decades. As the Canadian space economy has been restructured through processes of global economic change, the spatial structure of Canadian metropolises and the relations between centre and suburbs have been modified accordingly. Changing immigration and internal migration trends have had a notable impact not just on the traditional immigrant reception areas of the inner cities, but on the outer city as well, with an increase in ethnic diversity as well as the emergence of ethnoburbs. Socioeconomic polarization and poverty have taken root in the suburbs, just as new lifestyles and family arrangements have found spaces in suburbia, which today appears more diverse, more vibrant and less homogeneous than ever before. “We’re a long way from Levittown, Dorothy”, as Drummond & Labbé (2013: 46) succinctly put it. So...

- How to make sense of the changing spatial structures and patterns of Canadian sub-/urbanisms?
- What historical and current factors can explain the emergence of new suburban landscapes?
- What drives economic restructuring, socioeconomic segregation, cultural and social innovation in present-day Canadian suburbia?
- How do demographic and sociocultural values change impact on the politics of suburbia and city?
- How is all of this reflected in cultural constructions of city and suburbia? And how do these cultural constructions influence value systems, moral codes, and political decision-making?
- If suburbia becomes more elusive than ever – as space, as place, as utopia or dystopia – do we need new concepts and approaches to comprehend contemporary sub-/urban life in Canada?

Call for papers

The Association for Canadian Studies in German-speaking Countries aims to increase and disseminate a scholarly understanding of Canada. Its work is facilitated primarily through seven disciplinary sections, but it is decidedly multidisciplinary in outlook and seeks to explore avenues and topics of, and through transdisciplinary exchange. For its 2017 annual conference, the Association thus invites ***papers from any discipline that speak to the conference theme of “revisiting suburbia” with a Canadian or comparative focus.*** (Papers can be presented in English, French or German.) We are particularly – but not exclusively – interested in the following four main aspects:

1) Cultural production in and of suburbia

→ investigating both the production of (changing?) cultural representations of Canadian suburbia, e.g. in literature, film, music, architecture or fine art, as well as the changing conditions of suburban cultural production themselves; addressing the overreaching question of how Canadian culture has been changed from and by the suburbs and their residents

2) Diversity, discrimination and inclusion in suburbia

→ analyzing the processes of socioeconomic change in Canadian suburbia, their causes and

rationales as well as their implications for social cohesion and political life; shedding some light onto the transformations of the social and their connections to other spheres of Canadian life

3) *Post-suburban restructuring? Economics, governance, and sustainability*

→ exploring the intersections and connections between space, nature and the ecological, the political, the economic and the social, as they are configured within a wider, “post-suburban” landscape

4) *Contesting (conceptual) boundaries: between city, (post-)suburbia and the rural*

→ focusing on the changing meanings and conceptual understandings of suburbia and the urban (and the rural) in general; charting possible new avenues for research on Canadian cities and suburban spaces in their various guises

Contact and abstract submission

Paper proposals/**abstracts of max 500 words** should outline:

- methodology and theoretical approaches chosen,
- content/body of research
- which of the four main aspects outlined above the paper speaks to (if any).

In addition, some short biographical information (max. 250 words) should be provided, specifying current institutional affiliation and position as well as research background with regard to the conference topic and/or four main aspects.

Abstracts should be submitted to the GKS no later than **May 23, 2016** to gks@kanada-studien.de – which also acts as a general inquiry contact point.