

Call for Papers: Sustainability and the Home Frontier

Date : January 21, 2013

Urban Geography Research Group Sponsored Panel Session at the Royal Geographical Society/Institute of British Geographers Annual International Conference 2013 (London, August 28-30)

SUSTAINABILITY AND THE HOME FRONT(IER): Between governmentality and embodied environmentalism?

The [Sustainability, Environment and Culture of Materials Research Group](#) at UCL is inviting proposals for papers or presentations for a panel at the RGS/IBG Annual International Conference 2013. The panel is sponsored by the RGS/IBG [Urban Geography Research Group](#).

Panel theme

The household “looms very large” in debates about urban environmental sustainability (Lane & Gorman-Murray 2011). Mitigating the environmental impact of cities is no longer framed as simply a public issue or the duty of legislative bodies, but as a collective concern to which citizens should contribute within their own homes. Although ‘home’ and ‘city’ have never been discrete private and public spheres, ‘green governmentality’ has meant they are more deeply entwined in material and behavioural networks than ever before. Interventions include strict recycling regimes, reducing household energy demand through retrofitting schemes and increasing so-called “sustainable behaviours” such as energy monitoring, ethical consumption and local food and power production. Consequently the household is a critical geographic scale for understanding how urban governmentality and everyday practices of sustainability collide.

However, as Hawkins identifies, the household in environmental policy is “highly normalized and constituted through specific empirical processes” (2011) that often overlook the complexity of home as a site of cultural meaning, a political space, and frontier for interactions between public and private bodies, ideologies, technologies and materials (Gibson et al. 2011; Blunt 2005) that shape domestic sustainability practices. Such normative understandings of house and home matter for how city-wide policy interventions are conceived and implemented, and raise important questions about sustainability and social justice.

Call for papers

This session seeks to interrogate these normative understandings through multi-disciplinary methodologies. We invite submissions that explore ways in which urban environmental justice and sustainability find meaning in domestic contexts. This could include, but is not limited to,

explorations of the following:

- Materiality and sustainability in the home
- Household energy usage and urban infrastructure
- Sustainability interventions, embodiment and performance
- Social justice and household sustainability policies and practices
- Empirical studies of initiatives such as council-sponsored retrofitting schemes
- Scales of green governmentality – city, community, home.

We invite proposals for papers or presentations of 20-25 minutes. Please send an abstract (up to 400 words) including your name, university and department to saffron.woodcraft.11@ucl.ac.uk by February 4, 2013.