

**RGS-IBG ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE 2008**  
**Geographies that Matter**  
**London, 27-29 August 2008**

**Session Conveners:**

Dr Mordechai (Muki) Haklay, UCL Department of Geomatic Engineering – [m.haklay@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.haklay@ucl.ac.uk)

Dr Laura Vaughan, UCL Bartlett School of Graduate Studies – [l.vaughan@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.vaughan@ucl.ac.uk)

**Call for papers for a session on the geography of suburban space**

The widespread perception of suburbia as synonymous with social and architectural homogeneity belies its spatial, social, ethnic and economic diversity. With the increasing pressure to build large numbers of new homes there is a real danger that such a perception becomes self-fulfilling. Avoiding such an outcome is not simply a challenge for recently planned settlements. The critical question concerns the extent to which existing suburbs can adapt for future growth.

There is an urgent need for scholars and planners to recognise how suburbia contains a great variety of distinctive places for living and working. Such an improved understanding of suburban settlements must be grounded in historically informed research into the process through which the suburbs became absorbed into urban networks and their emerging position within increasingly complex, multi-scaled urban regions.

Until suburban settlement forms are approached as a distinctive genus in their own right the planning debate will continue to revolve around the pros and cons of brownfield intensification and the absence of adequate transport and public service infrastructures. Such debates, although important in their own right, tend, in the absence of an appropriate research framework, to recycle the politically charged questions of the 'urbanisation of the suburbs' and the perennial problem of under-investment in urban infrastructure.

This session intends to move the debate forward by proposing that historical suburban settlements raise fundamental socio-spatial issues that require sustained collaboration between a range of disciplinary fields, including geography, history, architecture, urban design and planning, before they can be properly understood and addressed. The session will create a forum for discussing these issues as part of the emerging field of suburban studies.

The session organisers invite proposals for papers that present theoretical and empirical contributions into the subject of suburban environments, ideally with a focus on the UK. We welcome proposals that explore:

- the relationship between shifting patterns of economic, social and cultural consumption and the way in which people move around suburban environments;
- the effect in practice of the intensification of areas of low density housing;
- the adaptability of suburban morphologies
- the role of suburban centres as places of production as well as consumption and the implications of these questions for the traditional high street and the practice of urban design.

Proposals for papers with a 200 word abstract for this session should be sent to either of (or both) the addresses below by **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> January** at the latest.



## Addresses

Dr. Muki Haklay: Senior Lecturer in GIS

Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering  
University College London (UCL)  
Gower St. London WC1E 6BT

T: +44 20 7679 2745

E: [m.haklay@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:m.haklay@ucl.ac.uk)

W: <http://www.ge.ucl.ac.uk/~mhaklay/>

Dr Laura Vaughan, Senior Lecturer in Urban and Suburban Settlement Patterns

UCL Bartlett School of Graduate Studies

Department of Civil, Environmental & Geomatic Engineering  
University College London (UCL)  
Gower St. London WC1E 6BT

T: +44 20 7679 1981

E: [l.vaughan@ucl.ac.uk](mailto:l.vaughan@ucl.ac.uk)

W: <http://www.space.bartlett.ucl.ac.uk/people/laura/>