

The School of Social Science Seminar Series Presents:

Post-Individualist 'Living Togetherness': International Perspectives on Social Sustainability in Collaborative Housing and Intentional Community

**Dr Helen Jarvis, Geography
Newcastle University, UK**

Date: Monday 21 February 2011
Time: 1pm - 2:30pm
Venue: School meeting rooms via video link
Kingswood Campus Building P.G.26
Bankstown Campus Building 1.1.30

ABSTRACT

Around the world there is growing evidence of renewed interest and experimentation in 'post-individualist'-collective, collaborative, including 'off-grid' housing and community development. In Australia, as elsewhere, the high costs of social isolation and under-utilised domestic space has led planners and policy makers to seek new ways of bringing people together. Yet, the state vision remains narrow: remarkably little attention has been paid to existing social experimentation in a variety of intentional community settings. While existing research emphasises the excessive energy and environmental cost of the private family home as a symbol of wealth, this paper sheds light on neglected issues of social sustainability and the 'glue' binding individuals to community practice. This paper relates evidence of disaffection with Western single family dwelling in Australia to a wider international perspective. After establishing a simplified typology of sub-categories and motivations, the paper critically examines the infrastructures of daily life which evolve from, and ease, collective activity and the shared occupation of space. Ethnographic vignettes are employed to illustrate alternative solutions to everyday 'dilemmas' and the ways in which these coincide with a shifting and blurring of privatised dwelling and collective identity. The paper concludes by speculating on the contemporary significance of collective living arrangements and the role this might play in future sustainability.

SPEAKER

HELEN JARVIS is Senior Lecturer in Urban Social Geography at Newcastle University in the UK. Major publications include *The Secret Life of Cities* (2001 Prentice Hall); *Work/Life City Limits* (2005 Palgrave) and *Cities and Gender* (2009 Routledge). Helen has published extensively in such journals as *Housing Studies*, *Regional Studies*, *Environment and Planning*, *Time & Society*, *Housing Studies*, *Work, Employment & Society*. Helen gained her doctorate from the London School of Economics in 1997. This was followed by a post-doctoral position followed at Cambridge University (Property Research Unit). In 1999 she was awarded a prestigious ESRC fellowship which paid her full salary and research costs for three years. During this period she spent several months in the USA as visiting scholar at both the University of Washington (in Seattle) and the University of California at Berkeley. In May 2010 she was selected Christiania Researcher in Residence (Copenhagen, DK) and through this initiative she continues to work closely with this unique intentional community

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