

On the Edge: The contested cultures of English suburbia

Rupa Huq

Suburbs and the relationships that sustain them have been subject to tremendous changes in the last fifty years, with changing work patterns, changing family lives, changing patterns of home ownership and a massive shift in the structural relationships between inner cities and their surrounding urban environment.

But this transformation has been largely overlooked, and the suburbs have lived on in the collective imagination as places that are homogenous and/or boring.

But suburbs have always come in many shapes and sizes, and this book documents widely varying forms of suburban life to construct a compelling narrative of suburban diversity and variety. Huq demonstrates conclusively that those who still fondly imagine the suburbs as the preserve of maiden aunts on bicycles, the domain of archetypal Englishness – or less fondly as places of stifling conformism and stagnation – are wide of the mark. In this sense her re-imagining of the suburbs is also a re-imagining of Englishness.

In an analysis that ranges across gender, ethnicity, class, religion, lifestyle, consumerism, family life, gentrification, property relations, political representation, city life and globalisation, Huq presents a convincing case for the need to radically rethink the way we understand contemporary suburban life.

Rupa Huq is Senior Lecturer in Sociology at Kingston University. Her first book, *Beyond Subculture: pop, youth and identity in a postcolonial world*, was shortlisted for the British Sociological Association's Philip Abrams Memorial Prize. Her dabbling in politics include being a candidate in the 2004 European and 2005 Westminster Parliamentary Elections as well as serving as Deputy Mayoress of the London Borough of Ealing from 2010–2011. Extra-curricular interests include DJing. She has lived for most of her life in suburbia apart from her periods studying at Cambridge and Strasbourg Universities and a stint working at University of Manchester.

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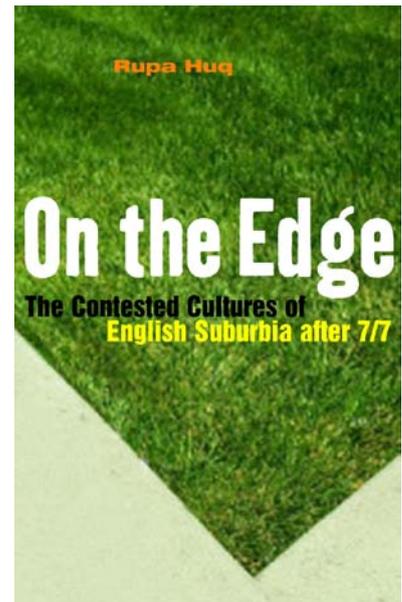
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