University of Sheffield

Workshop on Geographies and Histories of Race and Housing

Structural racism has been central to housing systems and politics across time and space. Both racialised and seemingly "race-neutral" state and market processes have governed questions of access, allocation and location, unevenly organising the type of housing, tenure and spatial conditions in which people live. These processes, in turn, have been influenced by changing political economic circumstances, including colonial histories and presents, and contemporary populism, xenophobia and racialised politics.

Hostile media and political debate that has long sustained inequalities of race and space, has become increasingly charged in recent years. It has brought to the surface vexed questions about which populations 'deserve' housing, and how the relationship between race, citizenship and national belonging should be reimagined to inform the ways that housing is governed and distributed. Accompanying the hostile discourse is a material politics advanced by state institutions, political parties and street level mobilisations, that has targeted the homes and neighbourhoods of communities racialised along axes of ethnicity, caste, immigration status, religion and class.

But despite this hardening of a racialised politics, people continue to organise against marginalisation, adopting both 'visible' campaigning and activist tactics, and quieter forms of mutual aid and solidarity.

To explore continuity and change in the relationship between housing and structural racism, we invite participation in a 2-day workshop at the University of Sheffield from 22nd – 23rd of March 2027.

The workshop will enable a space of interdisciplinary dialogue to share and advance ideas with the aim to develop a special issue of an academic journal addressing race and housing. We invite participants to engage with a range of politically urgent themes spanning multiple national geographies. We especially welcome work that takes a longer-term historical perspective in understanding the present:

- How have (ethno)nationalism and anti-immigrant mobilisations influenced housing, and how do such agendas implicate race and racism?
- How has racism shaped colonial projects which have made/unmade residential space and national ideas of home?
- How does race structure, and how is it structured by relations between markets, the state and housing provision? How might different theoretical perspectives, such as racial capitalism, help shed light on these relations?
- How has racism shaped the governance and management of housing and what have the geographic consequences been (e.g. segregation and stigmatisation)?
- How does attention to infrastructural violence, particularly to the material aspects of housing, help better understand racial inequalities?
- What role does anti-racist housing struggle, ranging from explicit campaigning to every-day community support, play in challenging structural racism and developing alternative policies and politics?

We also welcome proposals on other related topics.

Please complete the linked form which includes space for a 300-word abstract **by 4th of December 2026**. We will aim to notify accepted participants by the 18th of December.

Workshop Format

We will ask for a 2000 – 2500 word draft, due by the 15th February 2027, to be circulated to all participants in advance of the workshop. Each participant is invited to highlight key aspects of their paper, with 1- 2 discussants from the workshop sharing feedback, after which we will open the floor to the workshop audience. We plan to invite speakers to submit their work for an open call special Issue proposal (in a housing or geography journal, TBC) with submissions subject to academic peer review. Unfortunately, we cannot guarantee that all papers will be accepted.

There will be opportunity for hybrid participation. We will confirm details closer to the time.

Who can contribute?

The workshop is open to researchers working within and outside of academic institutions, at all career stages, including post graduate students and those affiliated with advocacy and voluntary sector organisations. Contributions are welcome from a range of disciplinary traditions including, but not limited to, geography, housing, planning, political science and sociology.

Costs

We can cover one night's accommodation and UK-based travel journeys for a limited number of participants. If you require funding, please do let us know when you submit your abstract. We will prioritise early career and precariously employed researchers. Lunch will be provided on both days.

Organisers

The workshop is co-organised by academic and independent researchers at the University of Sheffield (School of Geography and Planning and Management School) and University of Manchester. The organising team includes Nabeela Ahmed, Pratichi Chatterjee, Jess Field and Richard Goulding.

The workshop is partly supported by the Housing Studies Charitable Trust's Early Career Fellowship.

If you have any questions, please email Pratichi Chatterjee p.chatterjee@sheffield.ac.uk