

URBAN TALK  
May 31, 2016 | 18.00 Uhr | Halle 4

Kavita Kulkarni  
Race and the Affective Economies of Housing in Postwar Central Brooklyn

The ideal of home ownership was a central, albeit artificially constructed, tenet of the American Dream in the postwar United States. Access to this ideal, however, was foreclosed to nonwhite Americans through structural and systemic constraints, most famously through the discriminatory financial practices of the Federal Housing Authority. Social scientists invested in the social psychology of housing—an emerging topic of interest in the postwar era given the promise of social engineering and the palpably racialized division of urban centers in the US—drew attention away from structural housing discrimination perpetrated by the government, focusing instead on the emotional and psychological bases for 'white flight' and other ostensible manifestations of race-based fear and hatred in the private market. This talk will consider how this approach to race and housing within the social sciences contributed to a fixation on racial integration and anti-discrimination legislation, a symbolically powerful but ultimately ineffective solution to the foreclosing of 'home' for nonwhite Americans. Drawing from ethnographic and archival research, the speaker will place such considerations in the context of postwar Central Brooklyn, New York, and address alternative government interventions that effectively and materially empowered nonwhites in ways that fair housing legislation did not.

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Kavita Kulkarni is a PhD candidate in the Department of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University. Her current research—an ethnography and cultural history of racialized spatial imaginaries in Fort Greene, Brooklyn from the postwar era to the 21st century—examines how difference is produced, performed, and mediated in urban public space during periods of economic and symbolic revaluation.

**31/05**  
**18.00 Uhr**  
**Halle 4**  
**ifa**  
Institute for Architecture  
TU Berlin, Straße des 17. Juni 102  
10523 Berlin

**Habitat Unit** **um** URBAN MANAGEMENT **TU**

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