



Call for Papers – International and Transdisciplinary Research Workshop “home”

University of Pretoria, South Africa, Sept. 30th – Oct 2nd, 2024

In countries worldwide, housing has become a challenge for the population, for politics and policies, for welfare organisations, and for civil society. The worldwide housing crisis has repercussions in many areas of societal life; and these are reflected in challenges for a number of academic disciplines. We can only briefly hint at some examples:

- *Economically*, in many contexts the demand of adequate and affordable living space exceeds the supply.
- *Socially*, there are vast difference in the average living space per person within countries as well as in international comparison.
- *Politically*, with worldwide migration, for people to find a home in the country they live in, it is necessary to provide conditions under which social cohesion among groups of different origin can be reached.
- *Legal aspects* concern the question whether a place can actually be called a home, as in the case of informal settlements and legal or illegal eviction.
- *Architects* have an integrative function in solving the problems of housing, taking into account not only financial and spatial, but also social, ecological, and aesthetic aspects that help people to feel “at home”. Moreover, often they are the ones who develop visionary ideas for the future of housing.
- In the perspective of *urban planning*, settlements can only become a home if they are structured in such a way as to enable social life and present sufficient public space, while at the same time paying attention to the architectural form.
- *Culturally*, in all societies, the way people structure their lives is epitomised in the way they structure their household and create a home for themselves and their families.
- *Philosophically*, it is a perennial question what it means to dwell and/or to be at home and how philosophical conceptions of the human being relate to this question.
- Seen *theologically*, religious traditions play a role for society and for the concept of home. Church buildings can serve as a heterotopia in a stressful, sometimes hostile environment. Congregations can help to establish a community network. Theological social ethics consider questions of justice in the context of housing (justice of access, intergenerational justice).

The workshop is hosted by people working in the context of Christian Social Ethics and Public Theology, but it deliberately aims at bringing in the experience of the different disciplines named above, as well as the grassroot knowledge of those working on the cutting edge of housing provision or housing activism. Ideally, contributions should explore the topic of housing within the context of a particular geographical region. Theoretical analyses and best practice examples are equally welcome. Contributions should be framed in a way that reflects a vision of the good life – within, but also beyond a specific religious tradition or geographical context.

Johannesburg and Pretoria are two metropolitan areas situated in the Gauteng City-Region, one of the fastest growing urban areas in the world. Although still reflecting apartheid geography of divided cities, there are also new urban constructs, and a proliferation of wealthy estates alongside sprawling

informal settlements. The demand for housing that is affordable and accessible, is far greater than available or new housing on offer. During the conference, we will visit sites and/or be exposed to some contested spaces, some innovative housing responses, and some voices that work in the area of housing activism, using local contexts as backdrop to our reflections.

Submission of abstracts: March 1st, 2024 to

Prof. Dr Stephan de Beer, University of Pretoria (South Africa), stephan.debeer@up.ac.za and

Prof. Dr Thomas Wabel, University of Bamberg (Germany), thomas.wabel@uni-bamberg.de

Notification of acceptance: April 1st, 2024

It is our aim to keep the *participation fee* as low as possible. Even though we are trying to secure Third Party Funding for our Research Workshop, this is uncertain. We therefore encourage those interested to apply for funding in their home countries.

Furthermore, we are planning for a double blind peer reviewed conference proceedings document with an ISBN following the South African Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) requirements for accreditation.

Stephan de Beer

Thomas Wabel