

Seminar 14: Housing Systems and Homelessness (Room: TBD) - Chair: Nóra Teller, HU

Bart Put & Inge Pasteels, BE: The Role of Landlords' Experiences in the (In)accessibility of the Private Rental Market for Vulnerable Tenants

Recently, the long waiting lists for social housing have received a lot of media attention in Flanders, the Dutch-speaking region of Belgium where approximately 6.8 million residents live. The most recent figures from the Flemish governmental agency for housing show that there were 176.026 candidate renters on the social housing waiting list in 2022 in Flanders, representing a 14.3% increase over a four-year period. Additionally, figures show that candidate renters have to wait around four years on average before being assigned a social rental unit. Because of the long waiting lists for social housing, many low-income tenants are forced to seek for a dwelling on the private rental market. However, this market often presents barriers, including rising rents and landlords unwilling to rent to 'high risk' tenants. Existing research pays considerable attention to processes of selection and discrimination by landlords. However, less attention is given to experiences of private landlords in renting to vulnerable groups. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the perspectives of private landlords towards vulnerable tenants. To this end, 91 in-depth interviews were held with private landlords. Qualitative content analysis of the interview transcripts reveals that landlords' attitudes towards vulnerable tenants cover a broad continuum, ranging from 'socially engaged' to '(quasi-)closed'. Moreover, findings indicate that the attitude of private landlords can shift over time, moving towards the 'closed' end of the continuum. This shift is often a result of generalizing negative experiences from renting to vulnerable tenants, long and exhausting legal proceedings that followed, and the feeling of being let down by support services when asking for help. These negative experiences often translate into a range of different landlord strategies, which in turn decrease the accessibility of the private rental market for vulnerable groups.

Dr. Bart Put is a sociologist and researcher affiliated to PXL University of Applied Sciences and Arts (Belgium). He has carried out research on family transitions and housing, rent issues in the private rental sector, processes of eviction and social work during COVID-19. His scholarly work has previously been published in international peer-reviewed housing and social work journals.

Dr. Inge Pasteels is a sociologist, statistician, and currently Head of Research of the PXL People & Society Research Centre of Expertise. Her area of expertise covers family sociology topics such as high conflict divorce and repartnering mechanisms, housing transitions of adaptive and flexible families, alongside rent issues in the private rental sector and social work intervention strategies more generally. Her work has previously been published in peer-reviewed journals centering on demography, family sociology, housing and social work.

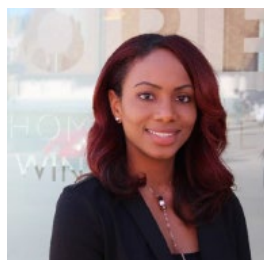
Marie Cecile Kotyk, CA: Seeing in Colour: A Framework to Address Anti-Black Racism in Housing and Homelessness

This doctoral research focuses on raising awareness of the role systemic anti-Black racism plays in creating housing instability in Black communities and creating a framework to address anti-Black racism in the housing and homelessness sector. Utilizing a multi-method approach, including design science, Afrocentric, and autoethnographic research methodologies, this research conducts in-depth semi-structured interviews with eight Black individuals with lived/living experiences (BPWLE) in Calgary and nine Black key informants (KI) across Canada to better understand the impacts of systemic anti-Black racism. The interviews with BPWLE and KI highlighted the pervasiveness of anti-Black racism across sectors and the need for housing policies and practices to be grounded in equity and anti-oppression.

As a result of these interviews, a Black Housing Equity Framework (BHEF) was developed. The BHEF encompasses guiding principles aligned with the values and approaches of Black communities, as well as operational questions to

guide policymakers, housing practitioners and other stakeholders in developing equitable policies and practices. The BHEF is a crucial step towards recognizing and addressing the systemic anti-Black racism and discrimination that Black communities face when accessing and maintaining housing.

Presentation Description: Utilizing a multi-method approach oriented on lived experience, the doctoral research will present the unique stories of Black Canadians with lived/living experiences of housing instability, homelessness, and racism to raise awareness of the intersections between race and housing. It will discuss the results of semi-structured interviews with Black key informants who are experts in addressing systemic anti-Black racism in their field. Additionally, the presentation will introduce the Black Housing Equity Framework, which is based on Afrocentric guiding principles and includes a Black equity assessment tool. The first of its kind in Canada, this framework can help policymakers and housing practitioners address systemic anti-Black racism in their policies and practices, thus promoting equitable housing options and outcomes for Black Canadians.



Marie Cecile Kotyk is an urban planner and housing practitioner with 15 years of progressive experience in the public and non-profit sectors. She specializes in designing and managing community development projects, addressing affordable housing challenges and homelessness, and conducting community research to address spatial justice concerns and racial inequities in the built environment.

Her passion for social justice and racial equity led her to pursue her doctoral studies in the Doctor of Design program at the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning, and Landscape Architecture. Her research aims to address systemic anti-Black racism and advance Black inclusion in the housing and homelessness sector. In 2023, she was awarded the Alberta Human Rights and Multiculturalism scholarship at the doctoral level for her research. She is the

founder and principal consultant at Kotyk Consulting and a sessional instructor at the University of Calgary's School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape Architecture.

Jan Weckwerth, DE: Precarious Housing as a Gateway into and out of Homelessness

The deregulation and commodification of the housing market in Germany has led to a substantial shortage of affordable housing. The drivers of this current housing crisis are already well-known factors such as the withdrawal of the state and the decline in social housing. Furthermore, real-estate companies have recently tapped into the low-price segment as a lucrative business model. These developments not only result in the gentrification of previously lower-income neighborhoods, they also cause an increasing competition at the bottom end of the housing market and, thus, to further displacement processes of the – from a (socio-)economic perspective – most 'unattractive' groups of tenants into the most precarious housing situations or even into homelessness.

Such devastating consequences of housing policy affect not only metropolitan areas, but also smaller cities. In the case of the medium-sized German university town of Göttingen, these are particularly evident in three run-down and deprived 'sink estates' in which poor and marginalized people are spatially concentrated.

This study explores the reproduction mechanisms of the precarious housing status in relation to homelessness on the basis of semi-structured interviews with experts from the city administration and local assistance systems as well as with (former) residents who (mostly) have experienced homelessness. A multidimensional and multifaceted "denigration of place" (Wacquant/Slater/Borges Pereira 2014) on the part of various actors and institutions is revealed. These properties function as a gateway into and out of homelessness: they are often the last step before homelessness and usually the first – and only – option after a period of homelessness. This further leads to dependency on the rental situation and undermines individual resistance and collective organization. People can hardly escape from this environment and are ultimately kept in precarious living conditions.



Jan Weckwerth is a postdoctoral scholar at the Georg-August-University Göttingen, Germany. He received his Ph.D. from the Alpen-Adria-University of Klagenfurt, Austria. His research interests include social inequality, in particular class and lifestyle analyses, as well as urban sociology, housing and homelessness, the sociology of professions, and the sociology of culture and film.