

Call for Papers

Imaginarities and Strategies for Good Care and Good Housing in Times of Transformation

International Conference

Vienna University of Economics and Business

Vienna, 23rd – 24th May 2024

Care and housing are **key provisioning systems, intertwined and co-constitutive**. They contribute to sustaining livelihoods and are foundational for human flourishing. Care, on the one hand, is not restricted to one's own place of living, but shapes and is shaped by spatial relations in specific localities or transnational networks. Care and Care work are provided in a specific built environment with different configurations of housing, depending on appropriate infrastructures, including buildings, retail, green and leisure facilities. Housing, on the other hand, is always entangled with care – not only for others, but also for one's own habitation, the residential environment, and local communities. As it offers the material place for diverse reproductive activities, the care (work) taking place in the respective spaces is disarrayed when housing becomes unaffordable or precarious. In addition, how neighbourhoods are developed, and how other key provisioning systems (mobility, health, food, energy, etc.) are organised, decisively influences the capabilities of residents to give and receive care and to shape the respective environment by 'doing housing'. Last but not least, the provision of both, care and housing, is closely entangled with specific society-nature relations that enable more or less reciprocal, just, and sustainable practices of doing care and housing.

In the ongoing social-ecological, geopolitical, and digital transformations care and housing are decisive but **contested terrains for shaping new arrangements of organizing livelihoods**. As multiple crises escalate, it becomes increasingly harder to ensure human flourishing without exacerbating mechanisms of exclusion or transgressing planetary boundaries. Currently, diverse struggles unfold about reinforcing or changing existing forms of provisioning, (dis-)empowering actors – be it as residents, workers, care-receivers and givers, family members or migrants. It is, thus, urgent to identify pathways to develop and shape ongoing transformations in an inclusive and sustainable way. While profound change is unavoidable, collective actors in the 21st century have to explore new imaginaries as well as strategies to actualize such visions. This includes struggles over private and public spaces, about transforming private practices as well as forms of collective agency.

Why a conference on imaginaries and strategies for good care and good housing? The conference aims at discussing these contested developments in the fields of care and housing and envisioning future perspectives. **Imaginarities** are necessary to identify desirable futures of how societies can re-organise the foundations of our social, economic, and ecological systems. Aiming at a good life for all within planetary boundaries, including *good* care and *good* housing, is a widespread, but ambitious objective for ongoing transformations. The community shift and tendencies

toward communitisation, within care regimes, aims at prefigurative forms of such provisioning. Community-oriented arrangements can be based on reciprocity and redistribution, that facilitate human flourishing, even under adverse framework conditions of financialization and austerity. However, these community initiatives are strongly interrelated with the welfare state and different modes of care and housing provision, with professional, and lay work etc. They facilitate desirable practices of doing care and housing in niches of the given provisioning of social services and beyond and are more or less able to change “the rules of the game”. Multiple **strategies** are necessary to identify the potential for actors to change these framework conditions, be it institutions (e.g., social infrastructures, legal and fiscal systems) or structures (e.g., gender relations) to transform contemporary financialised capitalism. Currently, economic and social policies are still subordinating the reproductive sphere to the sphere of production, commodification and finance, and short-term consumer wishes to long-term needs of sustaining the social and ecological background conditions of our civilisation. Actualizing visions of a *care-ful* future will, therefore, only be possible if the always-contested relations between the productive and the reproductive sphere are re-organised – at the expense of the former. Such re-organisations will be conflict-prone, often negotiated in uneven relations and on multiple levels simultaneously – from the home and the neighbourhood to the region, the nation, and the EU.

Against this background, the conference “Imaginarities and Strategies to Transform Care and Housing in Times of Transformations” seeks to problematise these transformations and their diverse manifestations to envision imaginaries and strategies that foster socially just and ecologically sustainable ways of living together. Of particular interest is research that relates transformations in the provisioning of care and housing to other provisioning systems, for example mobility or health services, as well as to society-nature relations that facilitate remaining within planetary boundaries.

The conference is organized in three tracks: 1.) transformative imaginaries for *good* care and *good* housing; 2.) transformative strategies for a good life within planetary boundaries; 3.) a transdisciplinary track on ‘Wirtschaft neu denken [Re-thinking the economy]’ (in German). Academic contributions are invited to all tracks, practitioners to the third track.

Track A: Transformative imaginaries for good care and good housing:

- **Imaginarities for Caring Futures in Careless Times:** What does *good* care and *good* housing mean in socioeconomic systems of the 21st century? How can a socioeconomic system beyond growth promote well-being? How can we ensure that care and care work become visible and socially recognised? How can we imagine *caring/care-ful* neighbourhoods or even societies in the future?
- **Hybrid Economic Models:** How can we imagine alternative mixed economies bridging the gap between centralised planning and free-market coordination? How can we better integrate hybrid forms of provisioning (market, reciprocity, redistribution, household)? How can socioeconomic systems be democratised to empower citizens and workers to shape the framework conditions for living and working, caring and dwelling in a just and sustainable way?
- **Balancing Productive and Reproductive Capacities:** How can we reorganise the economy to better secure its reproductive foundations? How can this contribute to creating a more equitable society?

Track B: Transformative strategies for good care and good housing: How can desirable alternatives become feasible futures?

- **Strategies for Caring Futures in Careless Times:** How can public policies prioritise foundational goods, services, and infrastructures? Which structures facilitate and which structures hinder the provision of *good* care and *good* housing while maintaining decent working conditions? Which actors promote, and which actors hinder its provisioning?
- **Multi-level Transformations:** How can diverse actors at multiple levels contribute to just and sustainable transformations? What is the potential of bottom-linked niche alternatives (e.g., caring communities, co-housing) and of top-linked changes of framework conditions (e.g., comprehensive decentralised care services, rent regulation)? How can we avoid becoming trapped in societal niches and what forms of multi-scalar economic reorganisation are necessary?
- **Finding Common Ground:** How can we build broad societal alliances and reconcile social and ecological politics? How can we bolster participation in decision-making processes? What are the limitations of consensus-based policy proposals? Which innovative policies exist? How can reproductive activities be fostered and reproductive workers empowered?

Track C: 'Wirtschaft Neu Denken [Re-thinking the Economy]': transdisciplinary dialogue on imaginaries and strategies to embed the market into society-nature relations that strengthen reproductive systems and foundational goods, services, and infrastructures to enable a good life for all within planetary boundaries.

- Transversal theory-practice dialogue during all decentral sessions
- Diversity of practitioners and activists
- Workshop design

We invite researchers and practitioners to submit an abstract (250-300 words and full affiliation of the author/s) by **17th February 2024** and will inform you about acceptance by **1st March 2024**. Please send your submissions to contestedcareandhousing@wu.ac.at. Conference Tracks A and B will be in English, Track C will be in German. Travel and accommodation costs will not be covered by the organisers; there are no conference fees.

Organisers and chairs:

Brigitte Aulenbacher
Valentin Fröhlich
Florian Pimminger

Andreas Novy
Benjamin Baumgartner
Hans Volmary

Administration:

Julia Fankhauser



Institute of Sociology
Department for the Theory
of Society and Social Analyses



Department of Socioeconomics
Institute for Multi-Level
Governance and Development



Project Funding DOC-team 114
The Contested Provisioning of
Care and Housing

A conference of DOC-team 114 "[The Contested Provisioning of Care and Housing](#)", funded by the *Austrian Academy of Sciences*, the *Johannes Kepler University Linz* and the *WU Vienna*, in cooperation with the *International Karl Polanyi Society*, the *Competence Centre for Infrastructure Economics, Public Services and Social Provisioning*, the *Center for Interdisciplinary Research on Aging and Care*, the *Sorgenetz, Association for the promotion of societal care culture. Life, old age, dementia and dying*, and the *Karl Polanyi Research Center for Global Social Studies*.

Cooperation Partners:

