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Abstract / Initial Proposal Form:

- 1. Paper / Proposal Title:** Housing in constitutional rights: a cross-cultural approach
- 2. Format:** Written paper and verbal presentation
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6. Abstract (300 words):

Can constitutional housing rights alleviate global housing inequality? The unsolved question surrounding the potential of constitutional housing rights to lead a decrease in global housing inequality was the main driver for the presented research. According to the United Nations there are over a 100 million homeless people in the world and over 1.1 billion inadequately housed. Yet only 64 countries around the globe have opted to anchor housing rights in their national constitutions as a fundamental principle of the state. Some may claim these principles are brazenly dishonoured while others argue they are not entirely fiction. The paper gives an overview of the existing legislation over space and time and looks at possible explaining variables to the differences. The contents of these laws are compared in order to map the existing categories of eligibility, responsibilities and entitlements. Are these categories surprising at all? or has the practice of borrowing foreign legislation resulted in similar approaches to a variety of realities? Could these cope with neoliberalism? Finally, the contents of the

legislation are compared with the seven components of adequate housing mentioned in the most widely accepted definition of Adequate housing, General comment number 4 to the ICESCR (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural rights). Questions arise concerning the gaps between existing knowledge on housing and the actual incorporation of this knowledge into National legislation. The paper claims there is not enough connection between housing theory and housing law and greater efforts be placed to narrow these gaps. Effective housing policies should derive from good laws but little attention has been paid to the upper levels of legislation out of which these laws emanate. Constitutional housing rights have been played down; their adaptation could potentially recapture their value as housing inequality alleviation tools.

7. Author(s) Biography (200 words maximum for all authors):

Michelle L. Oren is an urban planning practitioner at DMR Planning & Development, a PhD candidate at the Technion faculty of Architecture and town planning's lab on Comparative Planning Law and Land Policy supervised by Prof. Rachelle Alterman and a teaching assistant at the Interdisciplinary Center Hertzelia (IDC) School of Sustainability. She earned her Master's degree in Urban and Regional Planning at the Technion and her Bachelor in Political Sciences and Environmental Studies at the University of Haifa. Ms. Oren spent her childhood years in Bogota, Colombia. She has lived and studied in Belgium, France, Germany and Egypt. In 2012 she interned at UN-Habitat's policy analysis branch in Nairobi, Kenya. Her major interests are housing rights, urban development and comparative research methods. Her publications include a co-authored chapter in the book *Contemporary Housing Issues in a Globalized World* edited by Padraic Kenna (2014).