

Info-Sheet 8– Transformation – all inclusive?

Expertise for the fourth Gender Equality Report of the German Federal Government

In November 2023, the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) awarded the contract for the ‘Preparation of an expert report as part of the Fourth Gender Equality Report “Gender equality-relevant transformation potential and examples of co-housing: effects on land and energy sufficiency and distribution of care work”’.

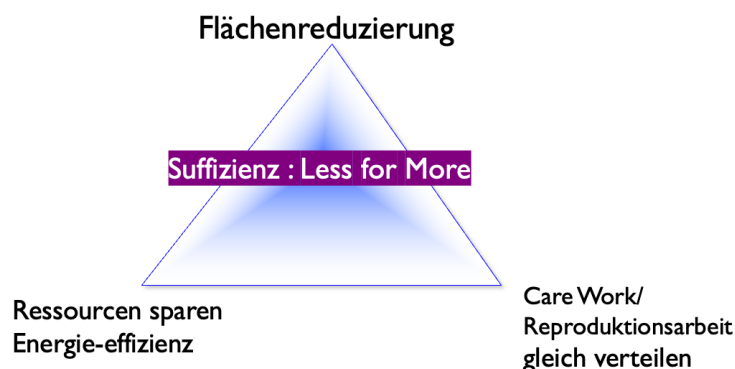
Gender Equality

Women are still heavily affected by the gender pay gap. One of the main reasons for this difference in income is the (lesser known) gender care gap, i.e. the higher burden of unpaid care work on women. Many years of feminist research have highlighted and mapped the interactions between the topics of climate, housing and care. In the search for Gender+ perspectives that do not portray women as victims, but rather offer concrete potential for action, we position gender equality strategies as potential for integration and transformation.

Research findings show gender perspectives as a catalyst and game changer for the targeted design and coordinated management of the three thematic areas of Reproductive labour (see e.g. Tronto, 2013), housing (see e.g. Haselsteiner and Reiß, 2019) and gender-equitable climate strategy and energy transition (see e.g. Clancy and Feenstra, 2019) must be considered and addressed in context.

A gendered approach to housing

In our understanding, co-housing projects are concretely realised examples of integrated and pioneering responses to the challenges of the aforementioned topics. Co-housing was originally particularly motivated by reasons of care. In 1994, the Scandinavian women's group ‘BIG’ developed the concept ‘Less for More’: (Sangregorio 1995; Horelli and Vepsä 1994) Less individual space and individualism, but more communal resources, opportunities and exchange. Less individual household time, but more free time for care-givers.



In order to overcome the care crisis and achieve a more gender-equitable everyday practice in care work, it is essential to see not only space and energy as a resource, but also personal time (life time, leisure time, time for care work, time for community work, time for gainful employment, time for leisure). Co-housing projects present concrete, resident-led solutions for household and care, affordable housing and energy efficiency. They show that when individual space is reduced, a simultaneous provision of (more) services and facilities in shared (collective) spaces and the neighbourhood is required.

Results & Publications

CORRINA submitted a final report on this in January 2024. The report brings together a focused research overview as well as the results from the practice of communal forms of housing with current framework conditions and derived potential for action. The report ends with an overview of the fields of action and signaling research gaps. Some highlights:

CoHo in its current form is not the collectivisation of care work or the reduction of space for communal kitchens: the central concept today is sharing instead of owning. We realise that this term has many parallels with the housing concept of 'BIG', the Scandinavian women's group that developed the concept of 'Less for More' in 1994. Less individual space and individualism, but more communal resources, opportunities and exchange. This involves an EXCHANGE of space in parallel with an EXCHANGE of roles: less individual living space in exchange for more influence by residents on the development, use and management of residential buildings and neighbourhoods. See: L. Tummers Co-housing: a double shift in roles? In: Buckingham S. & Le Masson V (eds): Understanding Climate Change through Gender Relations. Routledge: 2017.

Engineering the Commons

Zero-impact housing through cluster-infrastructure for mobility, waste, water and energy, Or: Providing Prosumers with Micro-grids as 'buffer' between individual household and smart-grid

Examples: purification plant also adding quality in semi-public space; Common Laundry on rainwater; Central LTS wood pellet heating; Heat recovery & cascading between co-working and residential; etc

Projet Foto: Tussen Ruimte 2016

Autonomes Frauenzentrum Potsdam (zj 2020) Eine Stadt für alle? Eine Genderanalyse des Potsdamer Wohnungswesens. Potsdam, download: https://frauenzentrum-potsdam.de/wp/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/genderanalyse_broschuere_web.pdf
 Wankiewicz H.: Gender Planning – Gender Mainstreaming in der räumlichen Planung. Dissertation im FB Geographie. Salzburg, 2016.

