

POSSIBLE IMPACTS
OF FEMINIST INTERSECTIONAL PERSPECTIVES
ON CARE AND SPACE IN RURAL AREAS

Essayist presentation by a collective bottom-up group of teachers, student, and researchers
with a focus on architecture and spatial planning

GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON ENTANGLEMENT OF FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY, CARE, CLIMATE AND SPACE

"On the most general level we suggest that caring be viewed as a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our ,world‘ so that we can live as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web."¹

1: Joan C. Tronto and Berenice Fisher, "Toward a Feminist Theory of Caring" in *Circles of Care. Work and Identity in Women's Lives*, eds. Emily K. Abel and Margaret K. Nelson, NY 1990, p. 35, as cited in: Elke Krasny: "Architecture and Care" in Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny. *Critical Care : Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet*. Wien 2019, p. 33

GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON ENTANGLEMENT OF FOUNDATIONAL ECONOMY, CARE, CLIMATE AND SPACE

- If concept of foundational economy describes provision of everyday goods and services for social consumption¹, then it does not happen in vacuums
- Architecture is a form of care; care as the activity of preserving and regenerating world. thus providing shelter is care work²
- The concept of space can be used to link the different thematic areas, due to politically and socially constructed condition of space
- Care and climate crisis have a gender dimension: different contribution to causes, affectedness of impacts and mitigation solutions

1: Foundational Economy Collective et al., Die Ökonomie des Alltagslebens: für eine neue Infrastrukturpolitik. Berlin: 2019., p. 33

2: Elke Krasny: "Architecture and Care" in Angelika Fitz, Elke Krasny. Critical Care : Architecture and Urbanism for a Broken Planet. Wien 2019, p. 33

SPECIFIC CONTEXT OF RURAL AREAS IN AUSTRIA

- Rural areas play a crucial role in the climate crisis, as they are often heavily dependent on agriculture, forestry, and natural resources
- Climate crisis disrupts these sectors, leading to decreased agricultural productivity, increased natural disasters, and reduced access to natural resources
- Rural communities are particularly vulnerable due to limited resources and inadequate infrastructure, making it crucial to investigate the differential impacts of climate change on gender in these areas
- The effects on the care concept can be different in rural areas than in urban areas due to various phenomena, e.g. through *rural flight and population ageing*

GENDER PERSPECTIVES ON RURAL AREAS IN AUSTRIA

- The roles of gender in the rural context are still often very traditional, e.g. women often bear the disproportionate burden of climate impacts due to their roles in agriculture, and (un(der)paid) care work
- The access to education, healthcare and economic opportunities may be difficult, due to rural flight and other phenomena
- Resulting in longer distances and high mobility demand
- Longer distances and lack of adequate public transport for complex travel chains connected with care work
- Higher age poverty of women
- Areas near the border in Austria/Czech Republic could be dependent on care workers who commute across the border every day

QUESTIONS OF INTERSECTIONAL FEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

- Intersectional approach is often missing in research on rural areas (e.g. consideration of queer communities, migration, identity politics)
- What routines of care work take place in rural spaces and what do these require? How do they differ to urban routines?
- Who plays and plans spaces of foundational economy and who takes care of them?
- What gender dimension come into play in the use and presence within these spaces in relation to care work?
- Who decides about these spaces? (only 10,4% of Austrian municipalities have women mayors in office, not to mention queer community or people with a migration background)

TAKING ACTION

"We argue that feminist spatial practice envisions structural and systemic change through social, economic, and aesthetic alternatives on the micro level, and that they act as seeds of transformation. Feminist futures are therefore not restricted to women, but encompass alternative future forms of human and nonhuman relations that imply radical societal transformation of systems and structures that create and sustain gender hierarchy."¹

1: Schalk, Meike, Ulrika Gunnarsson-Östling, and Karin Bradley. "Feminist Futures and 'Other Worlds'." In *Routledge Handbook of Gender and Environment*, 1st ed., 447–63. Routledge, 2017, p. 448

SUMMERSCHOOL WHOSE CLIMATE?

- Interdisciplinary Summer School by Claiming*Spaces collective on climate and gender in rural areas
- 31 students of architecture and spatial planning, 6 teachers and researchers from 3 research units
- Dealing with gender dimensions of care and climate crisis
- Orientated towards process and making things visible



RESEARCH SETTING: LANDUNI DROSENDORF– TU WIEN, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE AND SPATIAL PLANNING

- Financed by TU Wien and Province of Lower Austria
- Located in an old castle in the small town Drosendorf, Weinviertel, Lower Austria; close to Czech border
- Place for students, teachers and researchers to share and increase knowledge, passion and action for rural areas



MULTIPLE APPROACHES AND DIVERSE FORMATS

- Discussion of selected papers
- Group work and plenum discussions
- Workshops with Open-weather – A feminist experiment on imaging and imagining the Earth¹
- Expert inputs on diversity and transgender rights, sustainable use of resources, and sustainable mobility
- Field trips to Czech Republic by different means of mobility
- Involvement of community in Drosendorf by questionnaires, interviews
- Public cinema
- Public exhibition and discussions in and around the castle and town centre

¹: See: <https://open-weather.community/>; Last accessed on 12.09.23

DIY SATELLITE IMAGES WORKSHOP WITH SOPH DYER FROM OPEN-WEATHER AND MARLENE WAGNER FROM C*S

- Daily DIY satellite images
- Experimental feminist practice, that offers perspectives on bodies, nature, environment
- „(...) open-weather challenges dominant representations of earth and environment while complicating ideas of the weather beyond the meteorological“¹



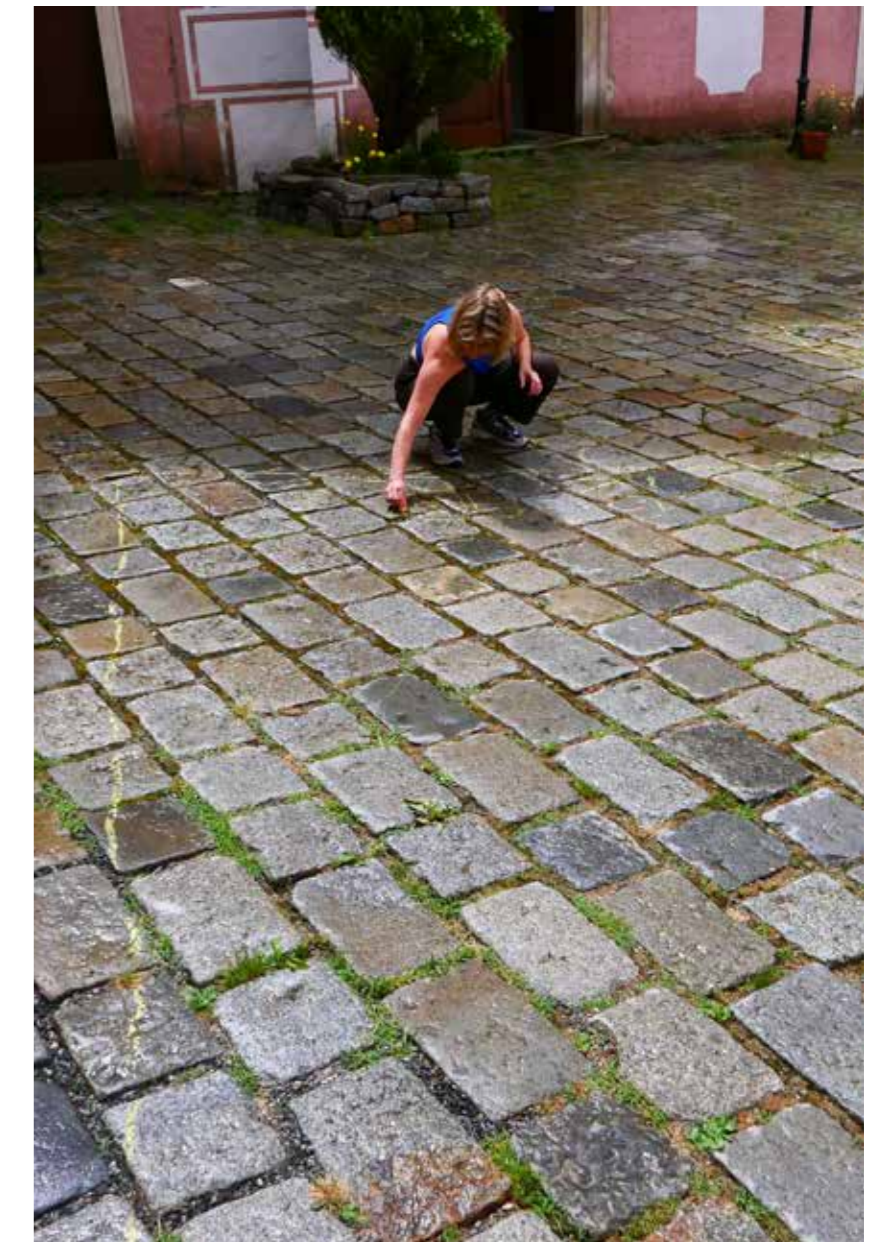
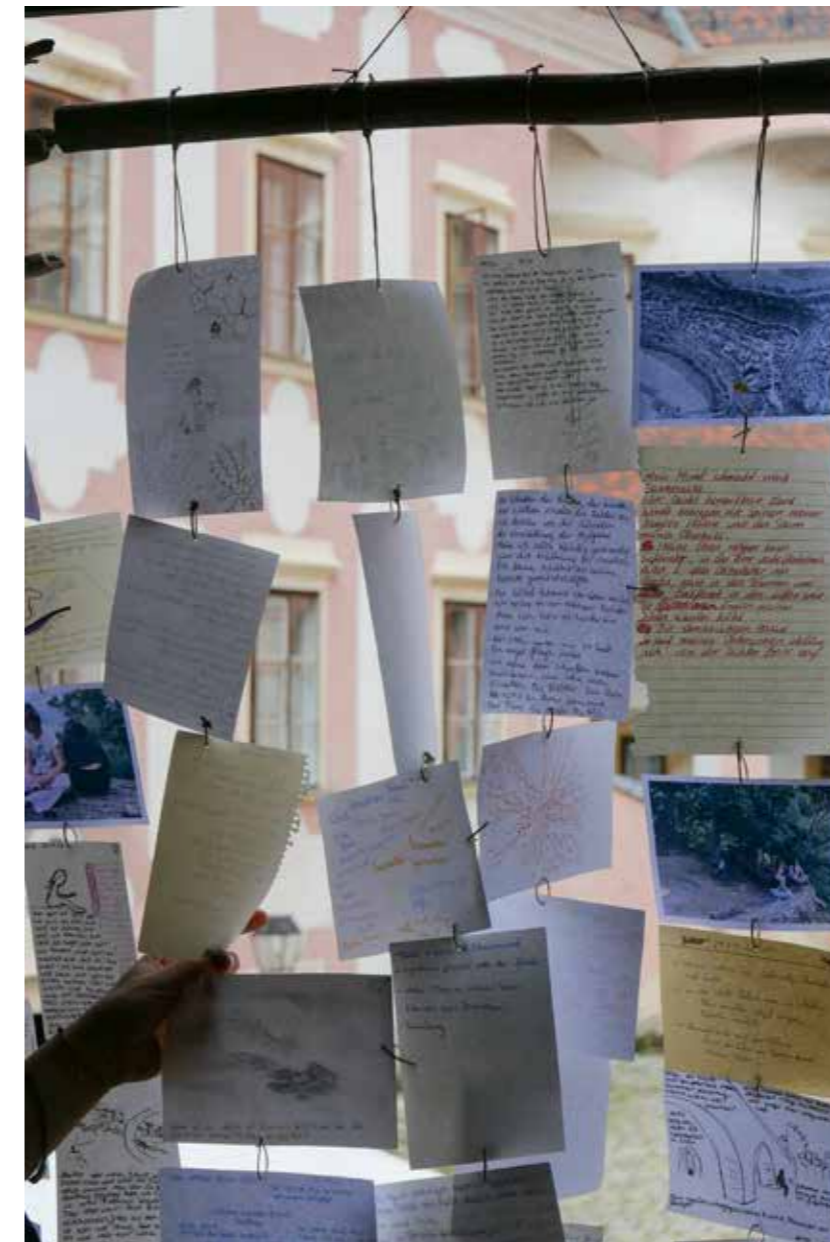
ARTISTIC PROCESSING OF PLANNING POLICY QUESTIONS, FEMINIST KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION AND TRANSFORMATION

- Public tour of the exhibition of projects and reflections as counter-hegemony to the hierarchical space of a castle
- Claiming spaces, also in and around the castle
- All projects are in the context of visibilizing (making the invisible visible)
- Facilitate exchange and discussion



APPROACHES, FORMATS AND TOPICS

- Embodied mapping and measuring processes of human-nature relations
- Spatial linkage of energy transition, body politics
- Connection of weather and body
- Relation of different scales
- Self-care practices, coping mechanisms
- Using/creating accessible languages



APPROACHES, FORMATS AND TOPICS

- Historical and media analysis of witch hunts and climate activism
- The NIMBY or „not in my backyard“ syndrome
- Addressing political backgrounds
- Criticism of terms and concepts such as nature and environment



WHAT WE LEARNED AND POSSIBLE IMPACTS

- Importance of recognizing local context involving marginalized communities and identifying vulnerabilities
- Engaging with community, respecting local knowledge, traditions, values, while being able to imagining otherwise
- Working sensitively towards inclusive and participatory approaches

- Potential partnerships and projects with local community
- Participants and attendees become advocates and potentially influence local decision-makers to prioritize gender equality and climate action in their policies and projects

The climate crisis is a complex issue with multifaceted impacts on rural areas and gender dynamics. Further research in this area is not only essential but also an ethical imperative. It can uncover vulnerabilities, inform policies, promote gender equality, enhance community resilience, and engage rural communities in climate action.

By addressing the intersection of the climate crisis, gender, and rural areas, we can work towards a more sustainable and equitable future for all.

CLAIMING*
SPACES