

INVISIBLE CARE WORK

THE IDEAL IMAGE OF "SUBURBAN LIFE"

The ideal image of suburban life is closely linked to the idea of a heteronormative family (male breadwinner, a housewife and small children), but only reflects a very small proportion of households. Suburbs with large detached houses support traditional gender roles by restricting the movement of care workers and isolating them. They make care work more difficult due to long distances and few public services, making it a challenge to combine it with gainful employment.

THE CITY AS AN ALTERNATIVE?

The city reflects the expectations of a patriarchal capitalist society by catering to the needs of a supposedly „typical“ city dweller. However, this idea only encompasses the male, heterosexual, healthy, white breadwinner and father. Cities are not designed to support carers in coping with the double burden, although they offer many advantages due to their greater diversity, the density of services and a local transport network.

* Care-Arbeit beschreibt die unbezahlte Arbeit, die im Zusammenhang mit der Pflege, Betreuung und Versorgung von Menschen geleistet wird. Sie bleibt oft unsichtbar und wird nicht angemessen entlohnt oder respektiert. Im traditionellen Rollenbild übernehmen Frauen die Care-Arbeit.

- > Jane Jacobs, Tod und Leben großer amerikanischer Städte (2015).
- > Leslie Kern, Feminist City (2022).
- > Sherilyn MacGregor, Deconstructing the Man Made City (1995).
- > Aarian Marshall, The Pink Transit Tax (2018).

LOCAL TRANSPORT

Public transport is primarily geared towards the typical commute of an office worker. The more complex commuting routes of people doing care work are not taken into account. Additional charges are often levied for interrupted journeys, resulting in an unequal burden. In New York, for example, carers pay up to \$76 more per month.

GENDER MAINSTREAMING

Wuppertal has decided to implement gender mainstreaming through the city council. This means that every decision must be accompanied by the goal of gender equality. However, focussing on gender can have a restrictive effect and reinforce traditional role models. In order to consider the needs of all, marginalised groups should be given more influence in urban planning.

