

## **How women live. The one-kitchen-building in Vienna and Berlin and its meaning as a *female public* of the 1<sup>st</sup> women's movement**

How women lived in European cities at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century tells a lot about their status in industrial capitalist societies. Though, there were differences in class and in familial status, the housing situation of women gives insight to the women's position in society – placing women into the private sphere. Their main labour tasks were considered housework, care work and upbringing children. This means that women from the working class and also many women from the middle class by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century often did unpaid and paid labour work at the same time.

In my study I focus on the housing situation of single and employed women living in cities at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in Europe. Women's residential projects such as the one-kitchen building offered collective spaces for women in their everyday lives and liberated them – at least partly – from unwaged housework. In this concept of collective housing housework was rationalized and collectively organized. It allowed women to engage in manifold social and spatial relations other than doing housework.

In my research I argue that these housing projects create a *female public*, a concept discussed by feminist scholars of different fields describing the production of “women only spaces”. These spaces, created within the predominant capitalist and patriarchal structures intend to function as counter structures that enable a critical discussion of these very structures and the production of alternative conceptions of society. As such they create spaces of identification for women.

In my study I focus on the case study of *Heimhof Frauenwohnheim* in Vienna and I aim to demonstrate that unchallenged and common spaces by and for women critically reflect on gender inequalities in a capitalist society. Furthermore, I argue that from this form of housing alternative as well as emancipatory structures for women often emerged.

In Berlin I am researching three one-kitchen-buildings from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century that show similarities in the conception of the common living spaces with the case study in Vienna. I will explore the case studies social and architectural concepts and their realisation as well as the role the women's movement in Germany (focusing on Berlin) took in the development of these housing projects. I aim to show possible similarities but also differences between these ideas in the German speaking countries in Europe. And finally I ask what the political positions of the women's movements were and what kind of collaborations between the women's movements in Berlin and Vienna became possible.