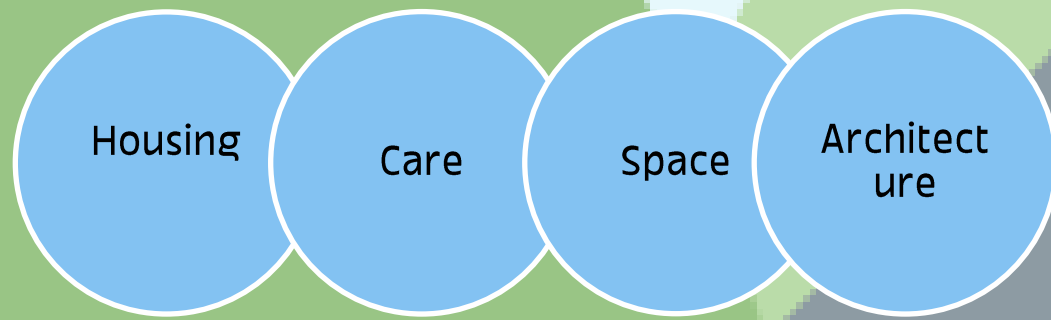
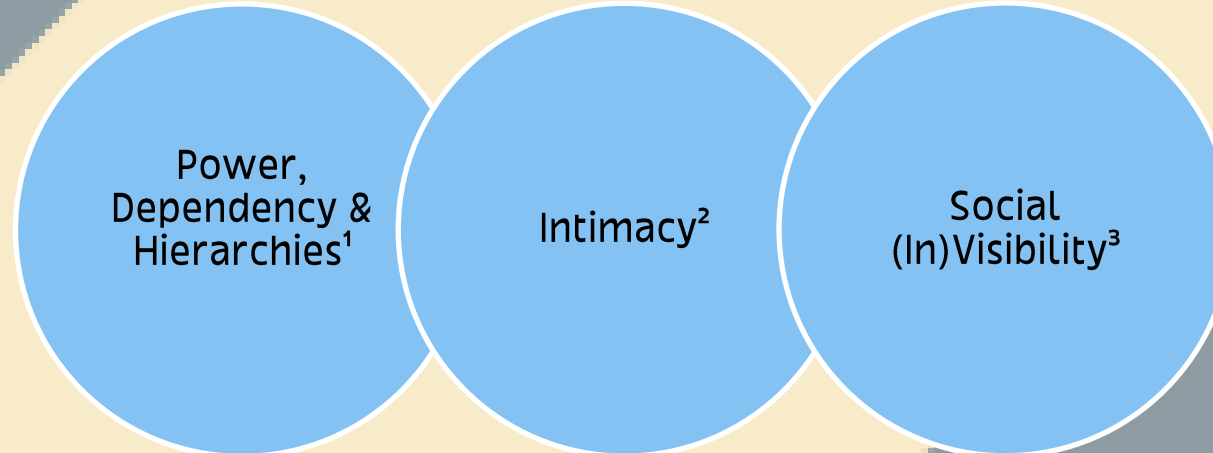


1. Introduction



5. Topics



2. Study Objectives

- What are issues of housing, cleaning and care work from an intersectional Perspective?
- How do cleaners and private employers of cleaning staff experience cleaning work, what dynamics and relationship do they engage in?

3. Methods

- Structured, guideline-based qualitative interview study with 15 participants: cleaners and employers of cleaners from private households in Germany.

4. Data Analysis

- Analysis of the interviews via qualitative content analysis.
- The cleaners (7 female/ 2 male) we interviewed were between 21 and 60 years old, the employers (4 female/ 2 male) had an age range of 31-82.
- **Education level:** Cleaners had mostly secondary school and Highschool diplomas, some trade or technical training. Employers (except for one) all had at least master's degrees.
- While 3 cleaners worked full-time and 6 part-time, almost all employers had a full-time job.
- The **net income per month** of cleaners was mostly in the lower ranges, while the income of the employers (except for one) was on the 2500-3000 Euro and above range.

One cleaner describes her work as a "**hidden profession**. It's kind of like backstage. You're happy when it's clean. But then that's it. It's assumed, but on the other hand the appreciation isn't there (...) you are invisible."

"I also take on other tasks, such as grocery shopping" describes one cleaner.

"You almost try to be a bit invisible, but that's actually impossible", tells us another cleaner.

"It's actually also extremely intimate. Above all, it's a big matter of trust. I'm letting a stranger in my home, who might also be dealing with my abysses. If a couple had an argument, then I heard it too," reports a cleaner.

"It's almost like family. We have our routine," describes one employer.

"Our cleaner is not officially employed" (i.e., she works illegally without an employment contract), reports another employer.

6. First Results

- Cleaning work was mostly carried out under **low pay** & the share of **part-time** workers was particularly high.
 - Cleaners engaged in **asymmetrical relationships** with their employers (mostly characterized by **gender** and **class**)¹.
 - Cleaning arrangements and their **relations and practices of care** created particular social spaces that often included **negotiating boundaries of privacy and intimacy** within housing?².
 - Cleaners often felt **invisible**. Not only with regard to their employers, but also with respect to society as a whole³.
- Like many other fields of care work, cleaning work is characterized by **power relations, intersectionally precarized and invisibilized**³.
- Cleaning is also a **part of care** that connects **different dimensions of work** within the context of social structures and practices⁴. By **caring for the environment**, i.e., the homes of their employers, cleaners promote physical health, emotional well-being and a sense of security and therefore **enable their employers to care for others** and being productive in their everyday lives and jobs.

About the Project

- **'Co-Care'** (project duration: 02/2023-01/2026) addresses the growing social awareness of the relevance of care for the functioning of our society during the covid-19 pandemic, in which a "crisis within the crisis" emerged: the existing crisis of care within the crisis of the pandemic.

References

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 [3] Abbasian, S., & Hellgren, C. (2012). Working Conditions for Female and Immigrant Cleaners in Stockholm County - An Intersectional Approach. *Nordic Journal of Working Life Studies*, 2(3), 161–181.
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