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FEMINIST AND ANTIFEMINIST MOVEMENTS IN GERMANY

Can the conflict be reframed to support a more productive
intergroup engagement?

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ABSTRACT

Sarah Brandmeier: Can the conflict between the feminist and antifeminist movements in Germany be reframed to support more productive engagement between groups?

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This thesis focuses on the intergroup conflict between the feminist and antifeminist movements in Germany. After a historical overview of both movements and relevant current debates, the thesis focuses on theories regarding intergroup conflict and conflict de-escalation before analysing qualitative interviews with feminist activists to explore their perspectives of the conflict.

Through reflective thematic analysis, the interviews are analysed to answer the question of whether this intergroup conflict can be reframed to be a more productive engagement. To answer this question three hypotheses regarding feminist and antifeminist perception of the conflict from a feminist point of view as well as their thoughts on positive intergroup cooperation are analysed. The findings suggest that while a complete reframing of the conflict is unlikely at the moment, small theme-specific cooperation might be possible which could lead to larger-scale cooperation in the future.

Keywords: feminism, antifeminism, Germany, conflict reframing, intergroup contact, conflict de-escalation, backlash

The originality of this thesis has been checked using the Turnitin Originality Check service.

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1. Introduction

1.1. Background and Context

In recent years I have become more interested in the progress of the feminist movement in Germany. This interest started after there has been more publicity on a growing backlash by antifeminist movements against feminist progress globally as well as in Germany. While many people have a positive image of Germany with regard to gender equality, it only ranked 11th in the EU Gender Equality Index in 2023 (European Institute for Gender Equality., 2023, p. 21), which is only one place above the EU average. Many feminist issues that women have protested still exist today, like the gender pay gap, policies that reinforce traditional gender roles or the criminalisation of abortion under Paragraph 218 of the Criminal Law. Moreover, misogyny and sexism are still deeply rooted in German society and an unfortunate reality of the daily life of many women*¹ and queers.

While there are many different definitions of misogyny, in this thesis it is understood as the belief that women are inherently inferior to men (Decker et al., 2022). This is shown through the differentiation between 'good and bad women' and by threats of violence or actual violence attempting to subdue 'bad women' back into the patriarchal system (Höcker et al., 2020). However, while the term was used a lot in the past, nowadays the term sexism is more often used instead (Schmincke, 2018). While sexism is in its basic idea very similar to misogyny, it is basically the discrimination of women because they are women (Schmincke, 2018). This involves emphasizing male superiority and reducing women to fixed assigned roles, making it a very common form of discrimination (Heitmeyer, 2005). The term can be used to describe both an individual worldview or opinion as well as societal patterns and discourses. Within the German discourse the term sexism often also encompasses sexual harassment.

The topic of feminist gains has garnered more attention in recent years because parties like the *Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland [AfD])* have contributed to a

¹ The asterisk behind women* is used as a shorthand to acknowledge and include the diverse identities of those identifying as women, including cisgender women, transgender women, and nonbinary people that connect with womanhood. The term will be used throughout the thesis in cases where the term signals inclusivity outside the limited gender binary.

growing antifeminist sentiment globally and within German society. This includes a rise in misogyny and sexism or at the very least giving both a public stage once more. The party continues to gain supporters and has just recently won major elections in several German states, winning around 30% of the votes in some places. This is very concerning for liberal and feminist movements as the party opposes feminist values and progress for gender equality in favour of 'traditional' family structures and values. The party frames feminist efforts as a threat to the 'traditional' family and 'natural' gender roles, dividing society even further and making many queer people and women* look into the future with worry and uncertainty. In addition, their discourse continues to dominate media and public discussion, leading to openly antifeminist and racist attitudes and opinions being stated openly and supported by many. This leads to many women* and feminist activists being concerned that their rights are being taken away and that patriarchy, which is the current social system in which men hold primary power and control, will strengthen once more forcing them into subordination and limiting their resources (Jensen, 2016). Not only the support for the traditional patriarchal system is concerning parts of society, but so is the promotion of hegemonic masculinity. Hegemonic masculinity is the dominance of stereotypical heterosexual masculinity including traits like power, superiority, and authority (Lombard, 2018) joined by the normalization of aggression and violence. It is problematic as anything different from the ideal traits is rejected as feminine or weak often leading to hatred of any traits considered feminine in themselves or others (Decker et al., 2022). In connection with antifeminism, this leads to a rejection of feminism and progressive ideals as an attack on the natural order of both patriarchy and hegemonic masculinity. However, it has to be said that the support for hegemonic masculinity is not limited to only the political right or conservative parties.

The global and German shift to the right makes it obvious that antifeminism is not only supported by a small extreme group of people but has supporters in the middle of society. Some studies found that one in three men and one in five women have antifeminist views which correlate with their support of the AfD's and other conservative parties' broader nationalist, conservative, and anti-immigration agenda (Decker et al., 2022). This growing backlash is not only concerning but makes the challenges for the feminist movement and marginalized groups even bigger. Because this divide has reached the middle of society and is dividing it even further, it is essential to attempt to find causes and identify strategies to minimize the impact. Analyzing the current dynamics is crucial for understanding the rise in

antifeminism and its impact on feminist activism in Germany before it is too late. It is time to understand the root causes of concern and attempt to start a dialogue before any attempts to solve the growing divide are too late.

1.2. Problem Statement

Despite some advancements in gender equality, antifeminist attitudes are increasingly popular in Germany, posing a significant threat to ongoing feminist efforts. Problems like the existing gender pay gap, care gap, conservative family policies, or criminalization of abortion are only some of the many ongoing challenges. Misogyny and everyday sexism are still deeply engrained in all levels of society and an unfortunate reality of the daily life of many women*. Additionally, political and public discourses continue framed and dominated by conservative and antifeminist opinions, influencing public opinion of feminism and its goals and values negatively.

One of the major discussions in Germany at the moment centers around gender. While a very basic definition of gender encompasses biological differences, it also includes economic, social, and cultural attributes associated with being male or female. It also encompasses societal expectations and roles tied to gender which are reinforced through all layers of society like hegemonic masculinity or 'traditional' values (Lombard, 2018; UNFPA, 2005). However, in Germany, the term has become politically charged and is often used by antifeminist groups to oppose progressive gender policies as threats to traditional values or even the stability and safety of the country. It is also often used under the term 'gender regime' to make the feminist goals seem ridiculous or over the top and deflect from actual problems and discussion points.

The rise of the far-right AfD has intensified antifeminist sentiments. The party uses its political power to challenge feminist goals as well as gender equality policies. They openly promote 'traditional' gender norms and oppose progressive change, strengthening patriarchal structures and antifeminist and racist attitudes. However, while the AfD has been the party that made openly antifeminist, antidemocratic and racist attitudes part of the public discussion again, it would be too easy to only blame one party for this national and global shift. This is a long-standing and deep-rooted problem that is older than the roughly 10-year history of the AfD.

However, because antifeminism has once again gained traction and made it to the mainstream discourse of political parties and broader society, it is time to investigate the

roots of the underlying beliefs to develop counteractive strategies. This will only work with intersectional solutions as the problem is rather complex. Intersectionality will be understood in this thesis as a framework that provides an understanding of how multiple forms of oppression intersect. As intersectionality highlights how identities like race, class, and gender are interconnected it will be used as a lens to address how various forms of inequality overlap and impact all people differently (Hankivsky & Jordan-Zachery, 2019; Hill Collins & Bilge, 2016).

Because antifeminist support adds to the divide within German society, this thesis attempts to explore the roots of these beliefs and if any strategies could be developed to counteract said division. The thesis explores feminist activists' opinions regarding why antifeminism is gaining ground in Germany, their perspectives regarding antifeminist backlash, and what measures could support feminist activism to advance feminist goals of gender equality despite rising opposition.

1.3. Research Aims and Objectives

The main goal of this thesis is to explore whether the conflict between feminist and antifeminist movements can be reframed from complete opposition into a form of dialogue. The specific research question is: **Can the conflict between the feminist and antifeminist movements in Germany be reframed into a more productive intergroup engagement?** I am interested in exploring if a shift from complete division and standoff to something more productive like an exchange of perspectives or even dialogue is possible. To gain this potential insight I decided to use interviews with feminist activists to explore the feminist perspectives regarding the intergroup conflict.

In addition to the interviews, I decided to focus on various theories that look at dynamics in and between social groups, identity, and conflict. The idea is to see how concepts like social identity theory, contact hypothesis, or reframing in conflict resolution can help understand the underlying dynamics of the conflict. The hypotheses for this research question focus on the perspective of feminists and whether they see antifeminists as a threat to the progress of gender equality as well as the backlash as a reaction to feeling threatened by progressive feminist change. In addition, I want to explore whether emphasizing shared identities and common goals could help reduce some of the intergroup conflict. To answer the research question and hypotheses I decided to use reflexive thematic analysis on the interviews with feminist activists to uncover their view on antifeminism and

how to handle the backlash. This method will help uncover themes and patterns that their views have in common and provide insight into how dialogue might be established while at the same time recognizing my own personal bias and opinions on the topic.

1.4. Hypotheses

1. Feminists perceive the rise in antifeminism as a significant threat to gender equality, and human and women*'s rights in Germany.
2. Feminist activists believe the success of the feminist movement provokes backlash from antifeminists, who perceive it as a threat to traditional social structures and male privilege.
3. Emphasizing superordinate identities can help reduce intergroup conflict, however, forming these identities will be very challenging because of a lack of common ground.

1.5. Structure of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into seven chapters to provide an overview of the feminist and antifeminist movements in Germany and explore the intergroup conflict and potential ways to reframe the conflict based on different theories related to intergroup conflict and conflict deescalation.

This **first chapter** introduced the research problem, the key questions and hypotheses behind this thesis, and the significance of the topic. It provides a brief overview of the theoretical frameworks, and methodology used.

In the **second chapter**, *Feminisms in Germany*, the term feminism is defined. The definition is followed by a historical overview of the movement in Germany as well as the movement's international connections and current debates within the movement. Finally, a short overview of relevant literature is given.

The **third chapter**, *Antifeminism in Germany*, follows a similar structure. It begins with a definition of antifeminism followed by a historical overview of the movement in Germany. The chapter also highlights current debates and developments and relevant literature on antifeminism in Germany.

The **fourth chapter**, *Theories on Conflict and Deescalation*, explores the theoretical frameworks chosen for this thesis. It explains relevant concepts like social groups, intergroup conflict, integrated threat theory, and identity and social identity. Additionally, it

introduces ideas around conflict de-escalation, the contact hypothesis, the common ingroup identity model, and how conflicts can be reframed. Finally, the chapter presents the connection between the theories and hypotheses mentioned in the introductory chapter.

The **fifth chapter** focuses on *Methodology and Data Collection*. It describes the methodology used, reflexive thematic analysis, and steps regarding its application. It then details the formulation of the interview questions and how the data was collected. Moreover, this chapter explains the reasoning and insights behind the choice of interview questions as well as interview participants.

The **sixth chapter** presents the *Data Analysis and Discussion*, where the coded interview data is discussed and analysed in relation to the theoretical frameworks, hypotheses, and main research question. Some parts also include comparisons to second-hand antifeminist research data.

Finally, the **seventh chapter** concludes the thesis an overview of the findings, the implications for conflict resolution and potential areas of development in the intergroup conflict between feminists and antifeminists in Germany. In addition to an attempt to answer the research question, this chapter also includes suggestions for future development and research. Moreover, the limitations of this study will be revisited.

Supplementary materials such as interview questions and transcripts are included in the appendix.

2. Feminisms in Germany

2.1. Feminisms Definition

There is no universal definition for feminism as feminism is time-specific and cannot be seen as one coherent movement but is comprised of many different movements and ideas. Therefore, it would be more appropriate to speak of feminisms, as there is also a difference between academic and activist feminist ideas and discourses.

Schnabel et al. (2022) describe feminism as a social movement and worldview that involves all of humanity, offering a critique of patriarchy and cultural creations by men. Feminism analyses all societal relations, not only the ones between men and women. Its overall goal is to change societal institutions and remove all forms of oppression which includes questioning and changing the existing gender hierarchy. Importantly, these changes include not only the public sphere but also the private sphere.

In addition to feminism not being one homogenous idea or concept, Lena Wiesler (2020) contends feminism evolved throughout history regarding its thematic and spatial context. While she agrees with Schnabel et al, (2022) on the common goals of feminist movements like the structural change in power relations or the end of oppressive structures, she emphasizes diversity within the movement.

Due to the various movements and ideas within feminism, authors like Annette Henninger (2020) suggest broadening the focus beyond gender. She proposes a definition of feminism as a critique of the ruling structures and push for emancipation. "Feminist emancipation aims to critique and overcome social relations of domination. It is linked to movements critical of capitalism, racism, anti-Semitism, post-colonialism, and queer-feminism"(Henninger & Birsl, 2020, p. 15, [own translation]). However, she acknowledges that the diversity within the feminist movement can lead to gaps, contradictions, and discrimination within the movement.

Contemporary feminism is intersectional, meaning different perspectives and experiences of women are considered when analysing systems of domination. This includes considerations of racism, ableism, classism, or discrimination because of one's country of origin. Rahner et al. (2020) also highlight that current feminists reject the binary construct of gender, recognizing gender is a spectrum. As a result, feminist politics and activism now

include the support of trans and nonbinary identities. The current feminist focus is on fighting all forms of oppression within society, not just those affecting one group.

In sum, feminism includes a “kaleidoscope of perspectives” (Franke et al., 2014, p. 19) with no point of view claiming to be absolute. This plurality is essential as the drive behind debates, perspectives and internal critique that help the movement's continued relevance and evolution over time.

2.2. Feminism – Historical Overview

The Suffrage Movement

The German feminist movement started after the failed liberal revolution of 1848. The discussions around German nationhood at that time included talks about women and their participation in the workforce as well as their rights as citizens. However, when Germany was unified in 1871 it was not as the liberal united and democratic state the liberal revolutionaries and feminists fought for in 1848. After the unified German Empire was established in 1871 liberal ideas were repressed and the state emphasized militarism and a strong social hierarchy, which made the struggle for women’s equal rights more difficult (Ferree, 2012).

During the first wave of feminism in Germany, Louise Otto-Peters (1819-1895) was one of the most known figures in the struggle for women’s rights. Louise published the first feminist newspaper that advocated for a liberal and equal state with full citizenship rights for women. In addition, Louise demanded the right to education for all women, their economic independence as well as access to all professions and political self-expression. However, during this time women were not allowed to participate in political events or be members of political organisations, which made it difficult for feminists at the time to organise as a whole. In 1869 however, Louise founded the General German Women’s Association (*Allgemeiner Deutscher Frauenverein*).

In 1876 Hedwig Dohm (1831-1919) went against the general opinion and questioned whether men could accurately represent women in the state, arguing that they were not legitimised by women to represent them (Cress, 2018). She was also one of the first women in Germany to demand full social, economic, and judicial equality of men and women in 1873 (Kusch, 2019b).

During the same period, the German Social Democratic Party (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschland [SPD]*) also demanded universal suffrage. This idea of a universal and gender-neutral right to vote was based on the 1879 novel *Woman and Socialism* by August Bebel (Abels et al., 2018). In 1891 the SPD put the demand for a voting right for women into their manifesto. One of the major influences within the SPD to include women's right to vote in the manifesto was Clara Zetkin. Clara Zetkin (1857-1933) was the biggest voice within the proletarian women's movement for the right to vote (Abels et al., 2018).

Around the same time, the core conflict around self-determination began between the proletarian and bourgeois women's movements (Ferree, 2012). The working-class socialist women started seeing liberal middle-class feminists as rivals rather than allies that limited feminist problems. However, this exclusion worked both ways. When the Union of German Feminist Organizations (*Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine [BDF]*) was founded in 1894 under the leadership of Auguste Schmidt as the main women's umbrella organization, it excluded socialist women's organisations. This was due to fear of censorship for being a political organisation, which was still forbidden for women. Women were not allowed to engage politically or officially become members of political parties until 1908 (Kurzer, 2008; Kusch, 2019a).

1895 marked a significant milestone as August Bebel petitioned in the Reichstag for women's right to vote for the first time, but the petition was dismissed (Abels et al., 2018). In addition, some of what were considered more radical feminists at the time decided to host an international women's congress in 1896 in Berlin. This congress was very successful and saw around 17 thousand participants from 14 countries. Moreover, it led to the radical women's movement presenting their ideas and concepts, instead of the women from the BDF. Topics included improving the situation of female workers, allowing girls to attend high school (*Gymnasium*), the fight for women's right to vote and the fight against the social purity movement. Moreover, they presented the first girls' high school (*Mädchengymnasium*), which was established in Karlsruhe (Schraut, 2019).

The success of this international women's congress also had consequences for the BDF, as it led to two more progressive women, Marie Stritt (1855-1928) and Jeanette Schwerin (1852-1899), getting into the committee. In 1899 Marie Stritt became chairwoman of the BDF and started to work on unifying the women in the BDF with their more radical counterparts. The same year, the more radical feminists decided to form their own umbrella

organisation, the *Association of Progressive Women's Organizations (Verband Fortschrittlicher Frauenvereine [VFF])*. Contrary to the BDF, the VFF decided to include the demand for women's political rights and right to vote in their programme. This made it the first bourgeois women's organisation to join the opinion of proletarian women's organisation demands which they pursued through women's gatherings and demonstrations (Abels et al., 2018; Schraut, 2019).

Around the turn of the century, the differences between the BDF and the VFF began to lessen. At the general assembly of the BDF in 1902, the radical voices in the movement got the BDF to give up on their social purity movement. Moreover, the BDF decided on a positive resolution regarding their opinion on women's right to vote. This resolution led to the demand for women's right to vote in the BDF's programme in 1907 and is considered important significance for women's right to vote in Germany. Lida Gustava Heymann and Anita Augspurg created the *Association for Women's Suffrage (Verein für Frauenstimmrecht)* in 1902. The goal of this organisation was to gain support for women's right to vote through press campaigns, petitions, and lobbying while at the same time educating women on politics to get them ready for voting. The association copied some of the milder activities of the British Suffragettes like street demonstrations. All of these changes lead to the VFF deciding to join the BDF in 1907 (Abels et al., 2018; Schraut, 2019).

In 1904 the second women's conference took place in Berlin and the International Woman Suffrage Alliance, today known as the International Alliance of Women, was founded (Abels et al., 2018; 'What Is IAW', n.d.). In 1908 the law preventing women from joining political organisations and parties was abolished and more women than before joined the organisation demanding women's suffrage. In 1910 the SPD women decided to establish a yearly action day to lobby for women's suffrage. This led to the first International Women's Day being celebrated on March 19, 1911 (Abels et al., 2018; Wolff, 2018). After the first International Women's Day, there continued to be demonstrations and assemblies in the following years for women's suffrage. Moreover, there were attempts to reinterpret the current law regarding who was allowed to vote. Some supporters tried to argue the law text was meant in gender-neutral terms and not exclusively male, but they were unsuccessful in their attempts.

A new petition by women for women's suffrage was debated in the Reichstag in 1914. However, opposing parties argued that universal suffrage is not in the interest of the state

as it diminishes the weight of men's votes. Moreover, women are not educated enough to vote, and it would harm families as women would neglect their motherly duties. It could also lead to problems between couples as men and women could have different political opinions.

World War I and Aftermath

All debates surrounding women's suffrage died down with the onset of the First World War. During this time most men were fighting at the front and women were busy filling in for the missing men in the workforce. However, there was a small group of more radical women who managed to organise for peace and hold two women's conferences in 1915. The socialist pacifists met in Bern, one of the most prominent organisers was Clara Zetkin. Participants at this conference strongly opposed the war which led to them having problems with their own political parties and the state. The bourgeois pacifists met in Den Haag a month later and protested the war. They furthermore demanded a peaceful world order based on democracy and equality. Their conference resolutions were handed to all European leaders as well as the American President in person (Wilmers, 2008; Wolff, 2018).

The women's movement became more active again in 1917. During his easter speech, Kaiser Wilhelm II mentioned the possibility of a more democratic voting system in the future. However, he failed to include women's demands in this liberalisation which led to the momentary unification of the different women's organisations to reach women's suffrage. The different organisations came together and jointly publicised a declaration regarding the right to women's suffrage. Their growing protests and pressure, as well as general unrest in German society, led to the Constitutional Commission also debating women's right to vote in their overall revision of the German constitution and political system (Abels et al., 2018).

Finally, in 1918 the more conservative parties decided to approve another proposal by the SPD to include universal suffrage in the new constitution as the outcome of the November revolution in Germany, even if the main motivation was to calm the revolutionary situation. On November 12, 1918, the intermediate government officially declared a new voting system that made men and women over 20 years old eligible to vote. This meant the women's movement finally reached its main goal. November 30, 1918, marks the day the new voting law was in effect and marks the day women have active and passive voting rights in Germany (Abels et al., 2018; Altenmüller, 2021; Gallus, 2018).

A year later, on January 19, 1919, women got to vote for the first time in German history. Approximately 82 percent of women voted on that day, and around 300 female candidates wanted to get into the national assembly. 37 women were voted into the national assembly, which meant around 9 percent of the whole assembly. On February 19, 1919, social democrat Marie Juchecz was the first ever woman to speak in the German parliament. She said, "Gentlemen and Ladies. This is the first time that a woman can speak to the German people as free and equal in the German parliament. What the government did was a matter of course: it gave women what was unlawfully denied" (Altenmüller, 2021; Gallus, 2018, [own translation]).

Nazi Era and its Consequences

After 1930, the BDF, together with the Jewish Women's Council (JFB), actively worked against antisemitism by holding joint meetings and distributing flyers against the National Socialist German Workers' Party (*Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei [NSDAP]*). However, for the BDF the focus lay on securing women's rights and less on the dangers of antisemitism. In March of 1933, the BDF asked women to vote for parties that would acknowledge the rights of women and the rule of law in Germany. But after the win of the NSDAP in the election, the BDF decided to disband in June of 1933 to pre-empt the enforced conformity which disbanded most political or social organisations. The JFB had left the BDF before it disbanded and between 1933 and 1938 worked with other Jewish organisations on the survival of Jews in Germany. However, after The Night of Broken Glass, the JFB was forced to disband, and all its funds went to the regime. By 1942 many of the leading women of the JFB were deported if they were unable to flee the country. Other women's organisations were non-existent throughout the Third Reich. Many activists were part of the resistance against Hitler, but not with a focus on women's rights (Dargatz et al., 2020; Kaplan, 1984).

Reorganization after the War

After the end of the Second World War women's organisations were newly established and had to choose sides as Germany was divided into the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG) and two very different states were established. So instead of the polarized positions between the proletarian and bourgeois women's movement, there were now polarized positions between the two states that also leaked into the women's movement as a conflict between liberal and left groups. The socialist and pacifist groups merged into the German Democratic Women's Union (*Demokratischer*

Frauenbund Deutschland [DFD]). In the beginning, the organization was active in all 4 occupational zones. However, when the two states were established, it came under party domination by the Socialist Unity Party (SED) in the east and was banned in the west by 1957 as a group not respecting the constitution. The main organization in the West was the German Women's Council (*Deutscher Frauenrat [DFR]*) which was formed in 1969 after merging the German Women's Ring (*Deutscher Frauenring*) from the British occupational zone with the Information Service for Women (*Informationsdienst für die Frau*) from the US occupational zone (Ferree, 2012).

In the FRG 1948 and 1949, women actively fought for the right to equality to be written into the new German Constitution (GG). The "Four Mothers of the Constitution" - Elisabeth Selbert, Frieda Nadig, Helene Weber, and Helene Wessel - were the ones advocating for Article 3, Paragraph 2, to state: "Men and women have equal rights" (*Grundgesetz*, Art. 3, Abs. 2, Satz 1). This is considered the biggest success of the postwar women's movement. However, the difference between what is written down in the GG and reality is still big.

Second Wave Feminism

Since 1960 many women in West Germany also participated in the newly formed Easter March Movement (*Ostermarschbewegung*). This was and still is a political movement for peace, one of the main forms of protest was singing. One of the major forces behind the songs was peace activist Fasia Jansen (1929-1997). She was not only active in this movement but also part of the women's march starting in the summer of 1981. Jansen and her partner, Ellen Diederich, also drove through Europe with their peace bus and a 'peace tent' and organised 'reconciliation camps'. They were not only present at many international conferences but also took this chance to talk with women about their memories of the war and organised aid for traumatised women and children after the war in Yugoslavia (Schmidt, 2022).

In the FRG 1968 can be marked as the beginning of student mobilization and the second feminist movement in Germany. On September 13, 1968, Sigrid Damm-Rüger threw a tomato at a young man chairing the meeting of the Socialist German Student Society (*Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund [SDS]*). She was angry and accused the SDS leadership of silencing women and their issues and opinions even though the student council is supposed to be democratic and equal for men and women. Sigrid came to that conclusion because Helke Sander just held a critical feminist speech before the break which was then

not discussed further or responded to after the break. Helke Sander was part of an action group in West Berlin that discussed their problems as working mothers around the kitchen table. Sander's speech was about the claim for control over the power of reproduction and how the responsibility to take care of the children as mothers stopped many women of a bigger participation in the student movement. Additionally, she critiqued how men were unwilling to take care of the children and the ban of children being brought to SDS meetings and this consequent marginalization of women was not recognized by the SDS.

The group around Sander shared the opinion that the transformation of the lives of mothers was key to transforming society. They critiqued that the state helped keep women in the domestic sphere by supporting the housewife-breadwinner relationship because public childcare was only geared towards poor people and single mothers and was often overcrowded. In 1968, this critique led to women starting to use empty storefronts in West Berlin to establish childcare collectives to enable more women to go to work. Another idea was establishing more shared living (*Wohngemeinschaften [WGs]*). Hence, getting mothers out of the isolation of only caring for children and the house by themselves and having more people to look after the children. In addition to shared childcare, the shared living space between nonmarried adults made it possible to discuss the amount of domestic labour and division of gender roles and make the private political (Dargatz et al., 2020; Ferree, 2012).

The tomato throw did not only initiate discussions between students but it was also covered by the media and made the gender relations in the student movement a matter of public discussion while also giving the women's movement new visibility. The idea of Sander impressed many women attending the SDS meeting and led them to establish women's councils (*Weiberräte*) all over the country. In the beginning, the main critique of these councils was how the ability of women to have children was used to control and argue for the subordination of women by the state and men instead of a point of collective strength. However, soon topics like polarization by class in the movement, concerns about rising authoritarianism, state interventions supporting the patriarchal family and limitations of women's rights through laws like the abortion ban were topics discussed.

When the government fell in 1969 and a new coalition between SPD and Free Democratic Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei [FDP]*) built the new government, a window of opportunity opened for the women's movement. After the change in government women restarted discussion about abortion law and feminists began to mobilize regarding topics around

political independence, self-determination, gender solidarity, resistance to the state, and the way politics were organized (Ferree, 2012). In 1970, the women's council in Frankfurt began to organize women's forums to discuss topics women thought mattered and create a new public space for women only.

In 1971, the magazine *Stern* published an article initiated by Alice Schwarzer titled *I Have Had an Abortion* ("*Ich habe Abgetrieben*"), in which 374 women publicly confessed to having had an abortion in a self-incrimination campaign. This campaign led to the committee *Action 218* (*Aktion 218*) to collect more than 86,000 acknowledgements of solidarity from women all over the FRG six weeks later, and 973 publicly admitting to being accomplices to illegal abortions. The committee then forwarded these acknowledgements with four demands to the Minister of Justice. The four demands were: the elimination of Article 218, which criminalizes abortion; ensuring specialized doctors performing abortions; abortion and the pill getting covered by public health insurance; and introducing sex education that acknowledges the needs of women (Dargatz et al., 2020; Ferree, 2012).

This high visibility campaign created a lot of momentum, leading to the formation of anti-218-groups all over the country. It was the first time that not only female students but also women from all over society participated in feminist campaigns and organisations. Women's organisations also organised demonstrations that targeted churches, the government and medical organizations that opposed legalizing abortion. While feminists in the West left the church as a form of protest and empowerment, women in the East used church groups to organize women's groups independently from the state in the 70s. Women in the West also went to parliamentary committee meetings that would discuss abortion if there were no women present (Ferree, 2012).

In 1973, the SPD set up a commission of law professors regarding the legalization of abortion and a majority supported a legalization in the first trimester after counselling beforehand. Many women's groups were unhappy with this verdict and demanded a complete elimination of Paragraph 218, like the women's movement in the 1920s. On April 26, 1974, the Bundestag decided with a small majority to legalize abortion, following the suggestion of the commission a year earlier. However, the Christian parties CDU and CSU refused to accept this and brought the case before the Federal Constitutional Court. The court decided on February 25, 1975, that the change in the abortion law was unconstitutional and needed to be modified.

One form of protest used against the FRG abortion rule was organizing bus tours to the Netherlands where abortions were legal in the first trimester without exception. In July of 1975, the police in Frankfurt confiscated the records of a women's health centre and accused 15 women of conspiracy. Still, the women were able to use this publicity to educate the public regarding their strategy of civil disobedience. This got enough public support that they were never charged with conspiracy and the busses continued to run without police interference.

On May 6, 1976, the government decided on a modified version of the law on abortion as a compromise. Abortion is still illegal at any stage of pregnancy. However, four cases can lead to an allowed abortion. If there is a danger for the pregnant woman, if the foetus has a strong disability, if the woman cannot financially afford to care for a child, or if it was caused by rape or abuse. Feminists were furious about this decision as they argued that women and not the state were responsible for their moral decisions and decisions regarding their bodies. Contrary, in the DRG, the government legalized abortion in the first trimester as a procedure at the hospital, with no counselling or signature by a doctor needed, in 1972. In FRG women needed to look for a doctor who attested an abortion out of social necessity, which was hence the reason for most abortions between 1976 and 1990 (Dargatz et al., 2020; Ferree, 2012).

In general, the ten years between 1975 and 1985 can be considered the main decade for women's projects in the FRG as feminists organized many projects from women for women. In 1975 the first women's only bookstore called *Lillemors* opened in Munich, followed by at least five more that year alone. Most of these were funded and founded by independent local groups and initially run on a volunteer basis. In 1975, Alice Schwarzer also published her bestseller *The little Difference and its big Consequences*, where she argued, like many feminists at the time, that no gender difference can justify women's subordination and women being treated differently from men (Ferree, 2012). Equality was also a theme in the bestseller *Häutungen* by Verena Stefan published the same year. However, this book focused more on sexual equality and relatable stories for women about sex. It was the culmination of a feminist discussion that started in the 70s about sex being pleasurable for women and how to make sexual relationships more rewarding and equal for women. It led to women talking about empowerment and self-determination, the importance of health centres for women, and better sexual knowledge (Ferree, 2012).

Houses for Women (*Frauenhäuser*) was another project that started appearing first in West Berlin and Cologne in 1976. These houses are shelters for women and their children from abusive men. The idea started after feminists participated in the International Tribunal on Crimes against Women in Brussels that year. Even though these houses were supported by the state they were run by and for women. This project was a huge success as it led to 14 houses in 1979 and around 100 houses by 1985, even though consistent funding was not always guaranteed. In addition to these new shelter projects, feminists also started using the symbol of a witch and got together for Witches breakfast (*Hexenfrühstück*) to talk. In 1977, feminists then started to use Walpurgis Night to protest violence against women and to take back the night. During this night women would go out after dark dressed as witches or with white painted faces holding torches to protest against the dangers of getting raped, against catcalling, and against the treatment women endured when talking to the police about this matter (Elisabeth Zellmer, 2011). The same year around a dozen local feminist magazines were established and the number grew to around 50 by 1987. By 1987, existed over 50 women's centres, many women-only cafés, bars, and even vacation resorts (Ferree, 2012).

In addition to creating spaces for women only, feminists in the FRG started to focus on language and how it excluded women in many ways. The main critique at the time was that in mixed settings the male version of a word was used making women publicly invisible. Feminists decided to get active against these gendered language patterns as they were social conventions and hence could be changed. The campaigns to change language patterns were sometimes successful as Lower Saxony introduced the title *Professorin* (instead of male-only Professor) as the first state in 1981. Around the same time, the first female student was granted *Magistra Artium* (rather than Magister) in Hamburg for her thesis. Moreover, even non-feminist sources like magazines or newspaper articles began using the feminised inclusive plural, *MusikerInnen* (instead of Musiker), in 1989 (Ferree, 2012).

In the DRG women used language as a form of feminist protest in the 70s and 80s in the form of literature. The women in the East had childcare provided by the state through a year of paid maternity leave since 1976, kindergarten, full schooldays with school cafeterias and state support to go to work too. Hence, more women in the East were finishing university and entering male-dominated work fields. This was part of the state's focus in the GDR on reaching gender equality as a state goal. However, because the state declared gender

equality as reached, the government would not allow any opposing opinions or independent feminist activities. Because gender inequality was declared as solved, any opposing activities or opinions were declared an opposition to the state. Nonetheless, all the childcare and upkeep of the household still fell completely on the women, which effectively made them work a double day constantly. Hence, as a critique of the unbalanced division of labour women used literature to express their critique through works like *The Life and Experience of the Troubadour* by Irmtraud Morgner (1974), *Guten Morgen du Schöne* by Maxie Wander (1977), and *Kein Ort Nirgens* by Christa Wolf from (1979) (Ferree, 2012).

Another aspect of the women's movement that gained momentum in the 70s and especially the 80s was the peace movement in the West. In 1981 and 1982 there were big demonstrations in Bonn (by women mostly) against further militarization, and against the proposal of women to join the army. The protests in the FRG inspired women in the East to get active as well and women's groups started to discuss the image of women, society in general, and how to change both. The most important groups around that time in the GDR were Women for Peace, lesbian church groups and Christian women's groups. They started to openly protest military training for kids which led to many arrests and deportations. In addition to grass-roots peace groups, mothers formed the Women for Peace which focused on critique against military education in schools. Members of this group met in secret, as a woman-to-woman network, meeting up around kitchen tables and starting one of the resistance groups that helped bring down the state in 1989. 1989 was also the founding year of the feminist group *Independent Women's Association* (unabhängiger Frauenverband) in the East (Ferree, 2012). Another major organisation that was founded in the 80s was ADEFRA, an organisation by and for black women in Germany. Its main goal is to formulate a black feminist standpoint in Germany. The organisation was founded by feminists and activists like Katharina Oguntoye and Ika Hügel-Marshall (*Generation Adefra - Home*, n.d.; *Ika Hügel-Marshall Home Page*, n.d.).

Moreover, the feminist movement of the 80s in the FRG split into different groups that focused on different aspects like health, education, childcare, ecology or balance between childcare and work. There was also the discussion around the institutionalization of feminism through participation in political organizations, trade unions, science, state institutions and the church (Dargatz et al., 2020).

Post-Unification

After the unification, the feminist movement broke apart into even more groups with different focus points and topics. The number of opinions on what relevant topics to critique, and the unification, showed how different feminism in the East and West had developed. While feminists in the West fought hard for a language that recognized women, feminists in the East had embraced the male job titles. They did not understand why women in the West were now accusing them of undermining the progress of the feminist movement (Ferree, 2012). Some of the remaining topics of the protest in the 90s were demonstrations against sexual harassment, strikes for equal pay and ongoing demonstrations against Article 218. In 1994, there was a success as Article 3 paragraph 2 of the constitution was changed to now include a sentence that men and women are equal and the state is obligated to enforce this equality (*Grundgesetz*, Art. 3, Abs. 2, Satz 2).

Since the 2000s the movement is active on social media platforms, blogs, and podcasts. In 2015 there was a campaign against normalized everyday sexism under the hashtag *Aufschrei* (started by Anne Wizoreck) and debates regarding sexual harassment and rape culture since the *MeToo* campaign in 2017.

2.3. Current Debates and International Connections

From the historical overview, it becomes clear that feminism has always been an international movement. While the feminist movement is more diverse today, it is still connected internationally. Because feminism exists on a large spectrum nowadays, this chapter should not be viewed as a complete list of the international cooperation and connection of German feminists. It is only intended to give a rough overview concerning some of the bigger strands of feminist activism and topics connected on an international level. Due to the lack of scientific literature regarding most strands of current feminist activism in Germany, most of the recent debates and topics found in this chapter have been researched through feminist podcasts and blog posts.

Feminist activists in Germany are very much in tune with the global news and do not only try to advance their agenda but also react to international developments. They are active on all levels of society and use their international connections to give voice to others, inform about different movements and people, and join hands in demanding change from political leaders and organizations.

On this note, it must be mentioned that feminists do not only act as individuals or local groups but rather attempt to build international organizations or have already done so. The Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy for example was founded in 2016. It is a think tank focussing on human rights, advancing and educating on feminist foreign policy and does advocacy, research and consulting (*Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy*, 2023).

The Association for Women's Rights in Development (AWID) is a feminist organization based on membership support. The organization connects feminist groups, and shares ideas and resources. The association also does joint advocacy and campaigns and has initiatives that monitor anti-rights actors. The movement has around 6000 members in 180 countries (*Who We Are and What We Do*, n.d.).

There are also political organizations in Germany that support feminists, even though they are not exclusively feminist. One of the better-known examples is the Rosa-Luxemburg-Stiftung, associated with the Left Party (*Die Linke*) in Germany. The organisation was founded in 1990 under another name to advance political education, be a forum for discussion of critical thinking and for progressive societal development. Today, the organisation continues to organize political education, offers critical analysis regarding capitalism, and advocates for peace. More interestingly for the case on hand, they educate a lot on feminism and feminist activism (*Geschlechterverhältnisse*, n.d.).

After the above examples regarding global feminist organisations the first strand of feminism to look at, one of the few with actual scientific literature in the German context, is Black feminism. The black feminist movement became more organized in Germany in the 1980s, especially through Black lesbian activists (Maisha, 2014). These feminists founded the initiative Adefra after the stay of Audre Lorde in Berlin. The idea behind founding this initiative was to create a community for Black life in Germany where Black women could discuss and critique society and build a joined community. It also led to the participants visiting other Black women's groups in cities like London and Amsterdam. Black feminists also decided to educate themselves more on Black history and Black resistance through the Civil Rights Movement in the USA, the anti-apartheid movement and Black German history. This led to the initiative becoming more active regarding political education and cultural critique through educating on Black survivors of the Holocaust and other underrepresented topics in German history. The societal critique also shifted towards the sexuality and sexual agency of Black women in Germany.

The cooperation with Audre Lorde during her tenure in Berlin was important for the initiative. One of the results of this cooperation was the self-description of Afrogerman (*Afrodeutsch*) and later Black Germans (*Schwarze Deutsche*), serving as symbolic resources to highlight the joined community of Black people in Germany (Eggers & Mohamed, 2014). Like in many other countries, Black feminists used their community to critique the idea of white feminists as the universal representation of women and draw attention to racism in Germany. By fighting this universalist idea of female representation and starting an alternative discourse they fought against marginalisation and silencing within the German feminist movement. This joined voice of young Black feminists like Katharina Oguntoye, May Ayim, Daniela Tourkazi and many more can be found in academic texts and other literature from the Black feminist standpoint in Germany. While furthering the counter-discourse within German feminism was an important aspect of Adefra, so was looking back in history at Black feminist life in Germany. Historians like Katharina Oguntoye and Fatima El-Tayeb published articles regarding Black life in Germany throughout periods like Imperial Germany, the Third Reich, Postwar Germany, and Unified Germany. However, especially German colonialism was a big topic, since German society did not remember and talk about it (Eggers & Mohamed, 2014; Fink & Leinius, 2014).

Nowadays feminists within Adefra use social media, such as a joined Facebook group, to stay in touch and connect to Black feminists around the globe. The members of Adefra also cofounded the working group Critical Race Theory Europe, which was founded after Kimberlè Crenshaw's stay in Berlin in the late 2000s.

A different strand of feminism that became active around the same time as Black feminists was disability feminism. Throughout the 80s, disabled women started disabled women's groups. These women's groups are connected to the wider disability movement and in the 80s active as the *Independent-living-Movement* with connections to the disabled movement in the USA. The official start of the German disability movement was in 1981 which was the UN year of disability. German disabled people organized the *Krüppeltribunal* in Dortmund to garner attention for the concerns of disabled people in Germany. These concerns all centred around human rights violations by the German state regarding the treatment of disabled people in public, at work or in care facilities. In 1982, women organized the *Krüppelfrauentreffen* in Marburg, as the female version of the first tribunal. The main topics were the gender-specific experiences of discrimination and sexual assault. Following this tribunal began scientific and biographical literature concerning women with disability. Since

then, the movement has organized and founded several events like the Mad and Disability Pride in Berlin or Queers on Wheels in Austria. Disability also made it into the academic field with Disability Studies, which got its first official position at the University of Cologne in 2009. Discussions regarding Disability and Ableism are still ongoing in feminist debate and activism in Germany, especially regarding the denial of human rights and structural discrimination (Gersdorff & Sturm, 2024).

Structural and intersectional discrimination is not only discussed regarding Black women and disabled women in Germany, but also in many other areas which will be discussed in the following. There is no particular order in which the topics are mentioned. However, due to the number of focus points, I decided to choose topics that are mentioned in more than one of the podcasts, such as *Lila Podcast*, and feminist blogs like *Mädchenmannschaft*, *der Hase im Pfeffer*, *Alltagsfeminismus*, *feministische studien*, and *missy*.

Some of the topics to be mentioned here are related to online feminism on an international scale. In Germany, many international hashtags gained traction after 2013, which many feminists in Germany see as the start of feminist spring (Sindermann & Alexander, 2023). Most of these hashtags like, *#aufschrei* in 2013 and *#metoo* in 2017, focus on personal experiences with sexual violence and sexism. Even though these topics are not new to the feminist discourse, they have been discussed more openly and by a wider public in Germany and other countries. Another topic related to gender-based violence that gained more attention over the last years is femicide. Not only are femicides discussed by feminist blogs like *Mädchenmannschaft* (Hennig, 2020), but also by major news outlets like *Tagesschau* (Erl, 2023) or *Norddeutscher Rundfunk* (*Femizide in Deutschland: Wenn Männer Frauen Töten*, 2023).

History and memorialization of feminist struggles were mentioned above in connection with Black feminism. However, it is not only done regarding German colonialism but also regarding racially motivated murders or murders of queer people. Often these murders are not investigated to the fullest and many feminist activists keep the memory of the victims alive and demand justice for them over the years. Some examples are blog posts remembering and demanding justice for the racially motivated murders in Hanau in 2020 (Aziz, 2024) or remembering the queer victims of the Holocaust in Germany (Ewert, 2023).

This demand for justice and solidarity can also be seen in posts regarding feminist activists in other countries. There are also many interviews with feminist activists from Iran like Shirin

Ebadi (2022) and Gilda Sahebi (Karsten, 2023) or Palestine like Reem Hajajreh (2024). Another major topic regarding solidarity with other feminists is posts informing people in Germany about projects and struggles of feminists in Latin America (Maheswaran & Moreno Sánchez, 2024), Africa (Scharfenberg, 2023) or other places around the world to gain attention for their struggles or learn from their success and protests.

This leads up to another important interconnection which is feminism and migration. Not only has the topic of migration and refugees become more important again in society in general since the influx in migration after 2015, but also for feminist activists. They do not only criticize racism within Germany and the European Union but also the recent changes regarding the European refugee laws (Scharfenberg, 2024). Furthermore, many feminist discussions and campaigns criticize the big refugee camps in Greece and the repeated criminalization of ships that save refugees in the Mediterranean Ocean (Albrecht, 2020).

Another international connection is discussions around the legalisation of abortions and adding a fundamental right to abortion to European law. Not only is this discussion ongoing on the European Union level, but feminists in Germany have been demanding the legalization of abortions for decades. Recently, an expert commission has decided that abortion should be legalized for the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, but so far it is still criminalized under Paragraph 218 (Scharfenberg, 2024).

To mention a recent success of queer feminist activists in Germany regarding the right to self-determination, the transgender law (Transsexuellengesetz) was finally discontinued, and it will be a lot easier for transgender and queer people to change their name and gender in the future (Scharfenberg, 2024).

Like many other countries, women in Germany still struggle against unequal pay and unequal distribution of household chores and care work. These topics are discussed internationally by feminists, especially on Equal Pay Day (Fröhlich Zapata, 2024b) and Equal Care Day (Fröhlich Zapata, 2024a). These topics go hand in hand with criticizing capitalism and classism on a broader scale (Dirik, 2023; 'Work It! - Feministische Gedanken Zu Arbeit', 2017).

Like many of these strands of feminism, ecofeminism has been around for decades and has regained attention in recent years. Not only do feminists support other global movements, like Fridays for Future, or actively participate in them, but they have been more outspoken about the connection between feminism and fighting climate change. Especially regarding

the gendered influences of the climate crisis on women and children, and additionally the interconnection of climate change, patriarchy, classism and capitalism (Schönwetter, 2019).

Another feminist movement that has gained renewed importance in recent years is the peace or anti-war movement in Germany. The movement was originally started by women around the time of the First World War and has since led to international peace congresses, protests, and many women's groups. Today, the women's anti-war movement has many organisations that organise against the war in Ukraine by protesting in front of Russian embassies or supporting Ukrainian refugees in Europe. They also continue the demands against militarization and an end to the ongoing wars. It needs to be said that it is not only women and feminists who are protesting against these issues, however, the beginnings of the peace movement and ongoing efforts were made by women and therefore should be acknowledged as an ongoing feminist movement (Tagaeva, 2022).

While this list of feminist activists, topics and organizations is incomplete and potentially biased due to the selection of references, it nevertheless highlights the diversity of feminism in Germany as an activist movement. Many of the topics mentioned above intersect and cannot be seen as issues that are fought separately. However, the list also highlights that while opinions and concerns in the feminist movement are diverse, there is a lot of solidarity and cooperation. This cooperation starts at the local level and continues into global movements, both online and offline. While the feminist movement, especially the German one, has been marked by division from the start, many feminists nowadays call for better cooperation and joint advocacy. It will be interesting to see how the cooperation will change in the future and whether current issues and concerns are pressing enough to get most of the feminist movements to work together.

2.4. Literature on Feminism

While there is a lot of existing knowledge regarding the feminist movements from a historical perspective, there are not many relevant scientific works available regarding the feminist movements today. Most works are books that include collections by different authors like the ones presented below.

The book *Feminismen heute* is a collection of various contributions on feminist perspectives, themes and types, edited by Yvonne Franke, Kati Mozygamba, Kathleen Pöge, Bettina Ritter and Dagmar Venohr, and published in 2014. The idea of this book is to give an overview of the current intersectional discourse in feminism. In addition to introducing various topics in

current feminist discourse, another goal is to counteract simplifying the feminist movement and clichés in Germany.

The editors argue that they decided to include a variety of feminisms as the feminist movement cannot be simplified into one without excluding essential ideas, concepts and arguments. They argue that it is not one feminism but feminisms and call it a “kaleidoscopic perspective” of themes, forms of action and theories (Franke et al., 2014, p. 19). The goal of the book is to represent diversity without the claim to include all themes while not omitting contradictions. They argue “analysing the diversity of feminisms involves examining the various and often conflicting developments, content delimitations, and forms of movement and action within the feminist movement. Internal feminist criticism, confrontation, and contradiction are significant drivers of the debates and diversity of feminist positions and perspectives” (Franke et al., 2014, p. 19 [own translation]). The chapter also includes a short historical overview of the feminist movement in Germany which is mostly divided along the lines of class affiliation. It then points out how this book is more intersectional as it includes more aspects of social inequality such as age, gender, health, origin or sexuality.

The chapter by Karen Wagels is especially interesting for this thesis as it discusses a queer-feminist perspective and theory formation and praxis in connection with Foucault's notion of limits to the ability to think differently. She focuses on the research areas of heteronormativity, emotion, and knowledge regime. Frigga Haug looks at the connection of Marxism and feminism from a historical perspective as well as the potential for the future and points out how the organisation of work and societal division of labour are still of central importance within the feminist discourse.

Kübra Gümüşay and Nadia Shebadeh describe their personal development towards a feminist position and the linked importance of online feminism. The two authors of the blog ‘Mädchenmannschaft’ highlight the problems of exclusion by hegemonic feminism and the demand for solidarity as well as their search for alternative positions.

Bettina Haidinger and Käthe Knittler talk about gendered division of labour and criticise current economic theories and models. They argue that economic circumstances should not only be seen through the feminist economic perspective but also include utopian feminist ideas. The theme of economy is also talked about in the chapter by Sonja Eismann. She looks at the female body as a resource for the neoliberal craze for optimization and representation as the main discourse regarding societal power structures and explores how and to what this discourse can be changed.

This book is not only interesting regarding the internal discussions of the feminist movement, but also shows how the interconnection of feminism with other theories and ideas can create a unique standpoint and perspective. It was also useful to read chapters that highlighted the use of personal experiences in feminist theory and growth.

The book *Feminismus in historischer Perspektive: eine Reaktualisierung* is also a collection of works by different authors published after the end of the feminist seminar at the University of Cologne in 2014. This book focuses on tying historical feminist debates to current feminist discourses. Instead of looking at feminism in waves, the chapters are divided into four main themes: race and class, consumption and work, movement and identity, and media and representation. The goal of this collection of works is to go beyond the mainstream narrative of the feminist movement as this perspective often left out fights within the movement and disagreements. The authors argue that while there was and is no feminist movement but multiple feminist movements, what all of these have in common is “to fight against power and domination based on gender. This includes the appropriation and reorganization of spaces that were or are closed to women, or in which they were or are disadvantaged or marginalized. The core of feminist action is this resistant struggle. It is motivated by a desire for transformation and change of existing conditions.” [own translation] (Universität zu Köln, 2014, p. 40)

The section on race and class focuses on the intersectional nature of the feminist movement and points out that the feminist movement is and was neither white nor bourgeois, unlike the claim by the mainstream narrative. The chapter on the Weimarer Republic is interesting as it depicts how women organised their protests and activities against Paragraph 218 (the paragraph that criminalizes abortion) and why working-class women were the driving force behind these protests. This historical review of protests for the right to bodily autonomy and decision-making also portrays the intersectional nature of class and choice as rich women were always able to have a safe abortion by paying doctors. It shows how abortion was a central theme of the women's and workers' movement at the time due to its interconnectedness with discourses around birth rates, gender roles and workforce as well as societal structure. It also points out the relevance of this ongoing discussion to this day and why the fight against Paragraph 218 is still one of the main discourses in the feminist movements today.

Also interesting is the chapter by Till Kadritzkes discussing who can be a feminist, what role pro-feminist male groups played during the 70s and 80s and how they discussed masculinity

as both a privilege and a problem. This discourse is still relevant today as antifeminist groups often depict feminists as hating men. Furthermore, it shows that the feminist movement has been inclusive to men and other gender identities for a while and deals with more topics beyond solely women's issues.

This book gives a great overview of the history and diversity of the feminist movement in Germany while also connecting past discourses to the present. This was interesting for me as it highlighted once more how many feminist struggles have been ongoing for a long time and that it has always been a diverse struggle beyond the mainstream narrative.

The article *Feminismus im Netz* by Ricarda Drüeke from 2017 looks at digital networks and social media as new platforms for feminist activism. It focuses on the digital realm as a new space for political activism and feminist empowerment in the form of hashtags and blogs. Drüeke highlights how hashtags have been used to discuss violence against women and everyday sexism in Germany over the last few years. One of the most famous hashtag campaigns has been #Aufschrei, started by Anne Wizoreck in 2013, by sharing personal experiences as stories in tweets. The author points out that campaigns like these are a great way for feminist activists to discuss shared positions and solidarity through personal stories that are not shared in public discourse. Drüeke points out that "the political potential of individual experiences embedded in structural contexts is revealed because personal experiences, as demonstrated in #Aufschrei, are linked to structural inequalities and collective (unjust) experiences of certain groups" (Drüeke, 2017, p. 139 [own translation]). She also illustrates that feminist blogs are an important online sphere to discuss positionality and connect with other activists through shared opinions and topics. While these are not as noticeable to the public, they are an important tool regarding news as well as access to discussions since feminist standpoints are not usually found in mass media and discourse. This article also describes how antifeminist movements deliberately use hate speech and worse to work against feminists online. She describes how derailing is a commonly used tactic to disrupt feminist discussions online and make feminist standpoints look irrelevant like the discussion regarding gender topics in Germany.

While antifeminist attacks can be more violent online, Drüeke insists that online spaces are an important space for opportunities for feminist empowerment and intervention. However, she points out that the public needs to be included better in these discourses to make a change. This article is relevant to this thesis as nowadays a lot of feminist activism and connection is happening online and thus understanding where and how this is happening is

immensely useful to this thesis. On the other hand, reading about how antifeminists use the internet to disrupt and discredit feminists is also interesting as it helps to learn more about the ongoing conflict and conflict dynamics. Furthermore, the interviewees for this thesis are all feminists who are active online, thus learning about how their activism works and the difficulties they face was extremely useful.

The article *Kritische Stimmen im Netz* by Lena Wiesler from 2020 also explores feminist activism online. She explores feminist podcasts as collective and connected feminist praxis since feminist podcasts have been growing in numbers and influence over the last couple of years. The article includes interviews with feminist podcasters and their use of podcasting as a medium to create space for articulation for themselves and others. In addition, the article also points out that these podcasters are activists who helped organise and diversify different feminist protests online and in real life. It also explores how podcasts can help make diversity and marginalization more visible and be used to spread feminist information and feminist discourse. Online feminism, especially feminist podcasts are a specific form of online participation, according to the author, because they are an alternative to traditional radio stations and mainstream media. The author furthermore explains that online feminism (*Netzfeminismus*) has existed since the 90s to use new technologies like the web to produce and participate in feminist discourse. It is a form of online activism where feminists use different spaces online to inform and organise with civil society regarding campaigns and discourses. However, online feminism does not have to be oriented towards a specific goal but can simply be used to create spaces outside the mainstream to express oneself and debate. This also includes feminist podcasts as they are often used for exchange, debate and connection and are interactive spaces with great potential for temporary connection and coalitions. Wiesler concludes that podcasts are a good medium to spread feminist knowledge, and feminist podcasts can be used as connected counter-public spaces with a big potential for the future of feminist activism. This article was interesting for this thesis as the interviewees were also feminist activists and gave insight into how they view their activism and relevant topics at the moment. Furthermore, it shows how feminists always create alternative spaces for discourse outside the mainstream to keep their discussions going and organize the movement.

This chapter gave an overview of the definition of feminism and the history of feminisms in Germany. It has shown that the feminist movement has always been diverse, focused on

several different topics and internationally connected. There have always been internal debates and discussions, but the movements always unite for major demands and goals. While some progress has been made, there are still many unmet demands since the beginning of the movement. While many different strands of the movement were presented, they all fight for equality, self-determination, societal change, deconstruction of gender roles, and against patriarchal structures, discrimination and violence. This is also emphasized in the literature review, as many books and articles highlight the diversity and intersectionality of the feminist movement throughout history and current debates.

3. Antifeminism in Germany

3.1. Antifeminism Definition

There exist different definitions for what antifeminism entails. Hence this section starts with a basic definition and then goes into more details and variants to understand the variety and nuances of antifeminism.

The authors Decker et al. give the basic definition that antifeminism is “a politically oriented and organized community against feminist emancipation efforts” (2022, p. 247, [own translation]). The movement wants to upkeep patriarchal dominance and rejects diverse sexualities, gender, and families. Antifeminism also works against any femininity that is perceived ‘outside the norm’.

Rahner et al. (2020) add that the focus of antifeminism is on stopping societal changes, especially regarding gender relations. The goal is to reverse gender relations to their ‘ideal past’ and operate against all progressive changes and achievements by feminist movements. Moreover, the authors point out that antifeminism is connected to other ideologies like racism, homophobia or transphobia and can therefore be explained through the concept of group-focused enmity. This concept by Willhelm Heitmeyer includes the hostility towards a social group and interconnection of devaluating ideologies. Hence, the current rise in antifeminist sentiment is unsurprising as other connected ideologies are also gaining strength. However, the authors argue that a strong antifeminist movement can also be an indicator for a successful and strong feminist movement.

Annette Henninger explains the history behind the term antifeminism in Germany. The term was coined by activist Hedwig Dohm who published an essay collection under the title *The Antifeminists* to draw a parallel to the term antisemitism. However, during the Nazi Regime, the term was forgotten and has only been used again since the 90s. To differentiate the term antifeminism from misogyny and hostility towards women, Henninger points out that it is usually defined as an “opinion or behaviour against the women’s movement or feminism and its accomplishments” (2020, p. 14). Henninger adds: “Antifeminism reacts to historical processes of emancipation regarding legal and social equality and aims to prevent or reverse both emancipatory policies that have already been achieved and those still to be fought for to secure the social supremacy of hegemonic forms of gender relations, including the privilege structures contained therein. Antifeminism emerges in contemporary forms in

reaction to specific gender- and sexuality-related struggles and must be analysed from an intersectional perspective” (2020, p. 15). Furthermore, the author refers to a work by Frey et al. (2014) that identifies five main groups in German antifeminism: journalists and media that are problematizing gender and gender-mainstreaming, antifeminists that argue gender studies is not scientific, Christian fundamentalists that fight against reproductive freedom for women and sexual liberalisation, antifeminists organised in men’s rights groups or ‘masculinists’, and finally right-wing actors that have connections to the new right or extreme right in Germany. Henninger points out that most of these groups currently do not focus on feminism but on gender and gender mainstreaming. This genderism or gender ideology identifies the goal of gender studies and gender mainstreaming to systemically favour women and sexual minorities and threatens the ‘natural and god-given’ gender binary as well as the traditional family and hence the foundation of our society.

Rebecca Blum highlights the same history of antifeminism as Henninger and attributes the emergence of the concept to Hedwig Dohm in 1902. According to Blum “Antifeminism is to be understood as a countermovement to emancipatory social change, particularly regarding gender relations (→ feminism). Many antifeminists therefore pursue the goal of restoring the gender relations of an idealised past” (2021, p. 7, [own translation]). The author additionally explains that while there is a distinction between antifeminism and sexism, antifeminism builds upon sexism and adds an organised and collective appearance to sexism. This collective works mostly through victim ideology and the construction of an overpowering feminist enemy. Just like Rahner et al. (2022) have pointed out, antifeminism is intricately linked to other inequality ideologies and therefore rises with them. But in addition to the aforementioned authors, Blum emphasizes that the rise in these ideologies usually happens in circumstances of societal and ecological insecurity and change. Furthermore, according to Blum, antifeminism has the power to influence societal discourses and make antifeminist ideas and opinions more mainstream.

The authors Schnabel et al. argue that “antifeminism is explicitly directed against all forms of feminism and against the political and social achievements of gender equality” (2022, p. 179, [own translation]). However, they also point out that it is not the same as sexism or misogyny as both concepts have existed long before antifeminism, just like Henninger and Blum pointed out. The authors also highlight that, at least in the German-speaking regions, there is a difference between antifeminism and anti-genderism. Anti-genderism is the explicit

dismissal of questioning the gender binary and can also be part of antifeminist or TERF ideology (Trans-exclusionary radical feminists).

Imke Schmincke (2018) argues that anti-genderism can be seen as the current form of antifeminism. Anti-genderism first came up in the mid-2000s as a movement against gender mainstreaming and gender studies. The main goal is to discredit the idea of gender as a social construct and a clear rejection of feminism and its political and scientific success. “It propagates a seemingly clear, stable and unchangeable order, the cornerstones of which are supposed to be distinguishable gender identities and the heterosexual nuclear family” [own translation]. In addition, it does support some women’s rights, always contrasting these against migrant and marginalized groups as the new antifeminist movement is central to current right-wing movements in Europe, according to Schmincke.

Nadja Kutscher (2023) also connects antifeminism to the New Right movement in Europe. To Kutscher “anti-feminism is the result of the national sexism of the New Right: the woman who does not fulfil the gender role assigned to her harms male supremacy and the people. Accordingly, feminist endeavours are understood and rejected as an attack on several fronts” (p. 31). Contrary to other authors, Kutscher argues that it is not a separate idea as it is a newer phenomenon compared to sexism and misogyny.

3.2. Antifeminism – Historical Overview

Emergence of Antifeminism

Antifeminism started as a reaction to modernity especially regarding economic and social change as well as a counterreaction to the formation of the women’s movement during the time of the German Empire. When women started to organize all over Germany, especially after 1908, and demanded additional rights, space in society, and a change in gender order, newly formed antifeminist groups reacted negatively. The main critique at the time was that women do not deserve more societal and political participation outside the home because making decisions and leading the state is a male role and this is not up for discussion (Maurer, 2018). The network of antifeminists even at that time included very different levels of society. The sentiment was shared by upper class, middle class (mainly teachers and employees), the organisation for farmers, scientists, doctors, politicians, clerics and many more (Gottschalk, 2023; Maurer, 2018).

The Weimar Republic and Nazi Germany

In 1912, the organisation *German League to Combat Women's Emancipation* (*Deutscher Bund zur Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation*) was founded with the motto 'The state to the man, the family to the woman' [own translation], as the first antifeminist organisation that was connected to conservative and nationalist ideas and organisations (Gottschalk, 2023; Henninger & Birsl, 2020, p. 20; Maurer, 2018). These organizations also included women who saw their identity as mothers, wives, and housewives as endangered (Gottschalk, 2023). However, most participants in these antifeminist organisations were men. In the trade associations, men were worried about women being an additional competition for jobs and the bourgeoisie was also against the suffragette movement due to its demands for universal higher education (Henninger & Birsl, 2020). Even back then the agreement with these sentiments was not only shared within antifeminist organisations at the time. There were also connections to topics like the meaning of the German nation, the health of the German society and the German family (Maurer, 2018). One of the visions used to worry people was the feminizing of politics which was understood as the rejection of the German Empire as the correct form of government. Hence even at the time, there was a connection between antimodern, antidemocratic and antisemitic ideas through antifeminist sentiments and groups (Maurer, 2018). Another major topic of the antifeminist movement at the time was the declining birth rate which was framed as a 'birthing strike' for which the feminist movement was blamed (Gottschalk, 2023). The strategies used by the antifeminist movement were alleged education of the public through different petitions, and publications, founding of local groups to disrupt women's meetings and trying to exclude women's participation from political parties and organisations. They also argued that emancipated women are not 'real women' because they are neglecting their roles as birth givers (Gottschalk, 2023).

With the start of the First World War in 1914, some of the women who were active in the women's movement started to organize in the National Women's Service (*Nationaler Frauendienst [NFD]*) to help the war effort from inside the country and 'modern' antifeminist and antidemocratic movements start to become more popular. When women gained the right to vote in the Weimar Republic in 1919 and women were part of the parliament, the antifeminist focus shifted. The new antifeminist movement focused on family and population policy (Maurer, 2018).

A year after the founding of the NSDAP in 1921, the party decided that women were not allowed in the leadership or deciding body of the party. After the rise to power, the antifeminist stance reached the highest political level, and the party adopted several antifeminist laws. These included laws to push women out of better-paid jobs and reward their role as mothers and housewives. The number of women who could study in university was limited and women could not be voted into political positions anymore. With the coordination decree (*Gleichschaltungsanordnung*) the NSDAP demanded all women's organisations to exclude Jewish organisations and members or dissolved whole organisations in general. The women's organisation in the German Reich supported the idea of men making all the decisions and women only caring for the domestic sphere and decisions. While the main task of the women's organisation at the time was to teach women to take care of the house and bear and bring up children, tasks also included helping the war effort during the Second World War. The women's organisation was disbanded together with the NSDAP in October 1945 (Wagner, 2008).

Post-War Germany

In the 1950s and 1960s, the Federal Republic of Germany strongly supported the continuation of the traditional role model with men being the sole breadwinner and these ideas were institutionalized through antifeminist social and family politics. While women had equal rights on paper, especially the 50s were marked by antifeminist ideology and laws, like the husband being the legal head of the family with the final say in most things like the decision-making concerning how to bring up the children until 1959 or whether the wife is allowed to work (Blum, 2020a). In the German Democratic Republic, women had to work but were not represented in leading positions in the workplace or politics. Furthermore, they were expected to take care of the house and children by themselves (Streichhahn, 2020).

Evolution of Antifeminism

The movement remained unchanged during the following decades until the 1980s. During this period, new antifeminist groups known as 'men's rights groups' (*Männerrechtsgruppen*), emerged. These groups shared the belief that men were the victims of feminism and that the feminist movement is not about equality for women but instead disadvantage for men. These groups vehemently argued against existing equal opportunity measures and gender mainstreaming by the state as institutional re-education. Additionally, it was the starting point of organised groups campaigning against the term gender (Schmincke, 2018). One of the groups formed around this time is the *Väteraufbruch*, founded in 1989. Its goal was to keep

children safe from the alleged negative ideas of feminists. The group also had journalists as members who regularly published articles and books regarding their antifeminist opinions (Klaus, 2008).

In the 1990s, the Catholic Church also played a huge role in the antifeminist movement as it began pushing for the interpretation of a gender ideology as a counter-strategy to the recognition of sexual and reproductive rights on the UN level at the International Conference on Population and Development in Kairo and the World Conference on Women in Beijing (Henninger & Birsl, 2020). Many of the men's rights groups also changed the focus to father's rights which meant a change to family-focused antifeminism in the 1990s. The new focus was portraying children as victims of feminism and hence fear of re-education and premature sexualisation (*Frühsexualisierung*) of children (Scheele, 2014). The 1990s were also the start of an ongoing debate in the media about political correctness started by conservative and right-winged newspapers. These articles and their authors were making it acceptable again to openly share antifeminist opinions (Streichhahn, 2020).

In the 2000s, the focus of antifeminism went back to stressing male disadvantage, feminism being hostile against men, and men being the legitimate and natural rulers (Scheele, 2014). Around this time was the beginning of the antifeminist movement questioning the 'gender ideology' of gender studies, which were inspired by Judith Butler's writings. The main organization behind the framing of gender studies as 'gender-ideology' is the Vatican as the delegitimization of traditional and 'divinely ordained' gender roles is feared (Streichhahn, 2020).

Media Influence and Initial Backlash

The antifeminist movement picked up steam from 2006 onwards. The starting point was an article in the FAZ (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*) that discredited gender mainstreaming as political gender reassignment which led to many similar articles in mainly right-winged news outlets like the *Junge Freiheit* (Schmincke, 2018). After making it into mainstream discussion, the former news presenter Eva Herman published her book *The Eve Principle (Das Eva-Prinzip)* in 2006. In her book, she calls for a return to traditional gender roles and starts a media debate and backlash against the feminist movement, especially gender studies and gender mainstreaming (Streichhahn, 2020).

The movement by conservative journalists continued in 2012 when journalist Birgit Kelle started an appeal against a sex educational fundamental work and thereby started an

emotional discussion around the alleged premature sexualisation of preschool children (Lang & Peters, 2018). In the same year the organisation *Demonstration for Everyone* (*Demo für Alle*) organised demonstrations against the 'marriage for everyone' (*Ehe für alle*) or against equal recognition of gay marriage in Germany. This organisation is still active today but with a slightly different focus, mainly against sex education and equal acceptance of heterosexual and homosexual partnerships (Schmincke, 2018).

Political Integration

When the Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland [AfD]*) was founded in 2013, antifeminism made it into the agenda of a political party once more. From the start, the party had a clear position against gender mainstreaming and equality politics as well as against marriage for everyone. There is also a connection between antifeminism, racism, and antisemitism in the stance of the party since the beginning. They market themselves as 'the family party' but this only includes white heterosexual couples with children and hence a strong position against sexual and familial diversity (Blum, 2020b).

Most Recent Developments

The most recent wave of antifeminism started in 2014 with protests against the inclusion of sexual diversity as a topic in sex education. There was also massive outrage against the authors of the book *Handbook on Diversity in Sex Education* (*Handbuch Sexualpädagogik der Vielfalt*). This outrage showed in protests regarding the inclusion of sexual diversity in educational plans and new codes of practice regarding sexual education in several states. In 2013 and 2014 there were petitions against including sexual diversity in the updated educational plan in Baden-Württemberg. The initiatives behind this petition were the *Initiative of Worried Parents* (*Initiative besorgte Eltern*) with a focus on fighting premature sexualisation in schools and the organisation *Demonstrations for Everyone* (Schmincke, 2018). When in 2017 the 'marriage for everyone' (*Ehe für alle*) was legalised, protesters started pushing the narrative that this meant the end of families (Lang & Peters, 2018).

3.3. Literature on Antifeminism

Similar to many of the works regarding feminism in Germany, there are also books and articles written on antifeminism to give an overview of the current forms and topics in antifeminism in Germany. However, unlike current debates on feminism, there are a lot more scientific articles available regarding current antifeminism and antifeminist movements.

One of these works is the book *Antifeminismus in Bewegung: aktuelle Debatten um Geschlecht und sexuelle Vielfalt* edited by Juliane Lang and Ulrich Peters from 2018. The chapters are written by authors from different research fields and look at various forms and actors in the antifeminist movement in Germany and Austria. The articles investigate the history of antifeminism, important terms, and their meaning as well as the impact antifeminism has on various social spheres. Some of the main thematic areas included are pedagogy, sexuality, men's rights, and conspiracy theories. In connection with these thematic focuses the authors analyse right-wing media like the magazine *Compact* as a discourse and publication platform for the new right in Germany. The authors investigate the use of national (*völkisch*) and antisemitic stereotypes in connection with conspiracy theories, like the big exchange of German society, in right-wing magazines. The authors then use these examples to point out ideological interconnections between antifeminism, antisemitism, and conspiracy beliefs. Moreover, several authors conclude that antifeminist content and argumentation patterns in societal debates, especially regarding gender hierarchy, have been repeating regularly throughout the last century and are nothing new. It is pointed out that conservative actors criticise a 'gender-mania' and gender ideology to instrumentalise societal debates around gender and equality and use these debates for their antifeminist campaigns and political attacks. This book was very useful to get an overview of the different streams of antifeminism and its interconnection with the new right in Germany. Furthermore, it was interesting to see the patterns found by the authors and learn about repeating actions and stances by the antifeminist movement throughout the years. Moreover, getting an explanation for how some social debates are instrumentalized and the real motivation behind these actions was useful in understanding ongoing debates in German mainstream media.

Another book with a collection of chapters by different authors is *Antifeminismen: Krisen-Diskurse mit gesellschaftsspaltendem Potential?* edited by Annette Henninger and Ursula Birsl in 2020. This book also focuses on antifeminism and its influence on German society as well as the interconnection of antifeminism and racism and contradiction within antifeminist movements. Many of the chapters try to explain the current rise in the influence of antifeminism in German society by analysing the area with the highest antifeminist prevalence. The authors also look at the difference between anti-genderism, antifeminism and postfeminism as well as the political and societal context of antifeminism. While differentiating these terms, the authors also analyse the different historical, cultural, and

political backgrounds of antifeminism and the antifeminist fight for societal hegemony through attacks like the recent ones on gender and gender diversity. The chapters focus on media politics, academic debates, family politics and gender representation and how antifeminism is an ideological position in both societal and political discourse. This book helps gain a deeper understanding of the various antifeminist movements and their popularity. Several chapters also give explanations regarding the rising popularity of antifeminism in German society at the moment. Especially the focus on antifeminism fighting for hegemony is interesting as it gives a thought-provoking impulse for the antifeminist 'fear' of diversity and change.

The 2021 special issue *Mobilisierungen Gegen Feminismus und 'Gender'*, edited by the Women's and Gender Research Network NRW includes articles by different researchers as well. The overall focus of these articles is gender-theoretical and feminist analyses in connection with antifeminist mobilisation and discourse and its interconnection with populism, right-wing extremism and parliamentary strategies against gender studies or politics for liberal gender relations. In addition, some authors focus on the interconnection of anti-genderism with antisemitic discourses and conspiracy theories in relation to mainstream media, like the chapter by Loui Schlecht. The chapter by Mechthild Bereswill, Gudrun Ehlert and Anke Neuber analyses strategies by the AfD to discredit gender studies and gender mainstreaming through parliamentary requests. These attacks on gender studies and feminism are analysed and explained using different theories throughout the issue and several possible actions and ways to counter the rise in antifeminist mobilisation are explained in detail. While this issue is not only focused on German antifeminism it gives a nice overview and provides different perspectives regarding the movement and its connection to different levels of society and political representation. This book is not only useful to understand how antifeminism is used in strategies on the highest political level, but it is also useful to learn about strategies against organised antifeminism in mainstream media and the political discourse and decision-making processes.

The book *Aufstand der 'Wutbürger'* edited by Friedrich Burschel and published in 2015 is a collection of articles that focus on the right-wing to far-right movements in Germany. The authors take a closer look at ideologies that connect antifeminism, homophobia, folkish-conservative family populism, and Christian and evangelical fundamentalism. However, two chapters are especially relevant as they deal with antifeminism directly. The first one is *Feindbild 'Genderismus'* by Juliane Lang. Lang analyses the meaning of the relatively new

made-up term 'genderism' in antifeminist and far-right discourse as a major topic since the early 2000s. She uses the enemy image of genderism, which she identifies as the fear of the idea of a socially constructed gender, and its importance to anti-emancipatory ideology to show links between antifeminism and the far-right movement in Germany and its function as an entry point into these movements. Moreover, she points out how this enemy image and its connection to the idea of a superior German family are important topics within the far-right discourse that are regularly replicated in mainstream media and politics with the AfD. This chapter is useful to understand how specific discourses like the one around gender are used by right-wing groups and organisations to connect to supporters of antifeminism and reach mainstream society. It also explains how far-right actors manage to enter and influence mainstream discourse.

The second relevant chapter is *Das trojanische Zombie-Pferd* by Sebastian Scheele. In his article, Scheele criticises the rising popularity and influence of antifeminist discourse in society. He analyses how antifeminist ideas are integrated into political debates and how antifeminist language is used in political discourse. The author argues that especially right-wing actors frame feminist initiatives as a danger to 'traditional' values and culture. Furthermore, he points out that current strategies of disinformation campaigns and anti-science attitudes that are prevalent in the post-factual world act in favour of the political right and are getting more influential. The author warns that these alternative realities have the potential to become a real threat to the perspectives and necessities of feminist politics and movements. This chapter explains why having a fact-based discourse is getting increasingly more difficult, especially regarding antifeminist opinions in social discourses and language. Furthermore, these dynamics are crucial to understand as background information in order to properly answer the research question of this thesis.

Nadja Kutscher published the book *Das Narrativ vom 'großen Austausch'* in 2023. Kutscher analyses texts from far-right publicists between 2015 and 2018 to understand and point out far-right ideologies, especially the far-right narrative of a big ethnic exchange. Regarding this topic, the author looks at interconnections of racism, sexism, and antifeminism in the discourse of the far-right and how the idea of an ethnic exchange is framed and what pictures are used to spread this idea. Furthermore, the author uses critical discourse analysis to identify how the right-wing movement uses racist, sexist, and antifeminist discourse to reproduce their narrative in political and social debates in Germany. This publication gives

a good overview of the discourse in the far right and its interconnection with antifeminism as well as the interconnection with debates and actions within German society.

Carla Ostermeyer wrote the article *Eine gesellschaftstheoretische Perspektive auf den Anstieg von Antifeminismus in Deutschland* in 2021. Ostermeyer sees antifeminism as the countermovement to any emancipatory societal changes, especially feminist movements. She characterises antifeminism as the wish to hold onto traditional gender roles, two-gender hegemony as well as interconnectedness with other ideologies supporting inequality like racism and homophobia. The article analyses antifeminism in Germany through the lens of Postfordism and regulation theory. The main argument here is that antifeminism is closely linked with Postfordism as the current form of capitalism and antifeminism can hence be seen as a counterreaction to the insecurities created through crises in capitalism. Ostermeyer looks at the history of antifeminism and argues that the crisis of gender relations is a consequence of the change from Fordism to Postfordism is what started the current discourse in antifeminism. With women entering the labour market and an emphasis on individuality and self-sufficiency, the male identity that was established in Fordism as head of the family and person in power is in crisis. Hence, Ostermeyer's main argument here is that antifeminism is the answer to men being insecure about their male identity and internalised fear of the other and loss of power within society. Likewise, the fear of structural change, international insecurity and subjective crisis make antifeminist ideas more attractive to many people, hence their popularity in current times. This article explains very well the socioeconomic connections between antifeminism and change in Germany during the last few years.

The paper *Antifeminismus als Demokratiegefährdung?! Gleichstellung in Zeiten von Rechtspopulismus* was edited by Judith Rahner, Jan Riebe and Rachel Spicker and published in 2018. It is a paper by the Bureau of Equal Opportunity regarding antifeminism as a danger to democracy and how to work towards gender equality despite a rise in right-wing populism. The authors analyse the goals and strategies of right-wing movements and parties regarding gender studies and gender politics and illustrate possible strategies against antifeminism in the context of right-wing populism. The authors argue that antifeminism is often interlinked with antidemocratic, antiliberal, antimodern and racist ideas. They propose strategies for dealing with gender stereotypes and traditional role expectations that are spread by right-wing movements. Some proposed strategies are fact-based information campaigns regarding the meaning of gender and gender roles or

women's rights and family. Furthermore, the importance of correct information and fact-based discourses available to society in connection with action networks against antifeminism and racism are highlighted. This paper does not only explain in detail why antifeminism is a threat to democracy but at the same time offers possible solutions to the rise in popularity and counter strategies. The paper was insightful as it did not only analyse the problem itself but then went further to offer solutions and counterstrategies in chapters 7 to 10, which are not directly targeted at feminist activists but could be useful for them as well.

The book *Die Antifeministische Männerrechtsbewegung* by Hinrich Rosenbrock from 2012 focuses on the antifeminist men's rights movement. More specifically Rosenbrock analyses the movement's strategies, ideologies, and online activities, especially the mode of discussion and participants in online forums. Rosenbrock also looks at the connection between antifeminist men's rights groups and the new right-wing movement in Germany. The antifeminism of men's rights groups can be positioned against both men and women and focuses on criticising and delegitimizing the feminist understanding of gender, according to Rosenbrock. In addition, the author highlights that men's rights groups frame men as victims of feminism and gender equality. The author adds that not only do these groups delegitimize feminism as hating men, but they also use methods like hate speech, defamation, and threats to silence feminist activists. According to Rosenbrock, the end goal is to build a discourse hegemony online and in real life to spread their ideas into the public sphere and politics. This book explains why it is difficult to start a productive discourse with these groups as they blame others for their problems and see themselves as the victims. Furthermore, it shows that it is also getting to a point where discussion or opposition to these groups could become dangerous, as the hate speech online can escalate into real-life hostilities.

The book *Autoritäre Dynamiken* edited by Oliver Decker and Elmar Brähler published in 2020 is based on a representative population survey measuring anti-democratic, authoritarian, antifeminist and racist opinions in the German society. The book chapter *Antifeminismus – das Geschlecht im Autoritarismus?* by Charlotte Höcker, Gert Pickel and Oliver Decker analyses the opinions regarding antifeminism and sexism in German society and their connection to authoritarian beliefs. The authors find that antifeminist beliefs are still shared by a big part of German society, especially by people that vote for right-wing parties or are conservative Christians. Moreover, the authors observe a close connection

between antifeminism, antisemitism and authoritarianism. Women are usually less likely to be antifeminist than men and younger people are less likely to be antifeminist than older people. However, this also depends on their wider political opinions according to the authors. This study gives a great overview of antifeminism and its connection with authoritarian beliefs and analyses in detail what makes these beliefs more or less likely.

The same study was published in 2022 under the name *Autoritäre Dynamiken in unsicheren Zeiten* and edited by Oliver Decker, Johannes Kiess, Aylene Heller and Elmar Brähler. The study was repeated as a representative population survey regarding the spread of antifeminism, support of authoritarianism, and devaluation of migrants in German society. The chapter *Antifeminismus und Geschlechterdemokratie* by Fiona Kalkstein, Gert Pickel, Johanna Niendorf, Charlotte Höcker and Oliver Decker focuses on antifeminism and the opinion of people regarding gender and gender equality. The study repeats its findings from 2020 in that antifeminist opinions are still shared by a large part of German society and are often connected to transphobia, homophobia, and antisemitism. Moreover, the authors point out that antifeminism is connected to a traditional image of masculinity and fundamentalist religiosity. Lastly, this chapter finds that there are still necessary steps towards gender equality and further steps must be taken for an equal society. These studies are important for this thesis because they are so far only one of very few quantitative studies representative of German society. While all other books and papers are also relevant, these studies show in graphs and numbers how antifeminism is connected to other belief systems and why some social groups are more vulnerable to antifeminist beliefs. Moreover, the research provides necessary steps to advance gender equality based on their findings, which is immensely useful in thinking about fostering productive discourse between antifeminist and feminist groups.

Another article that analyses the antifeminist attitude in Germany through a quantitative survey is *Die wahrgenommene feministische Bedrohung: Empirische Befunde zum Antifeminismus in Deutschland* by Annette Schnabel, Heiko Beyer and Bettina Ülpenich from 2021. The authors analyse antifeminism in Germany and its prevalence as well as its connection to other world views and beliefs. The authors explain movement research and define antifeminism as a countermovement to social change and feminist success. They give a historical overview of the antifeminist movement and point out that the current main discourses in antifeminist groups are connected to family and therefore easy to relate to conservative and right-wing perspectives. Moreover, the concept of worldview is explained

as a belief system that cannot be easily changed as it includes all parts of a person's life and how antifeminism fits the explanation of a worldview. The authors then analyse their collected data regarding antifeminist opinions and their connection to traditionalist-conservative worldviews in Germany. They point out distinct sociodemographic characteristics that are more often found in antifeminist worldviews like being a man, from eastern Germany or divorced. According to their data voting for the AfD or NPD² as well as a stereotypical image of women, traditional views on the division of labour and gender or the belief that gender equality is already reached also correlate with antifeminist opinions. Finally, the authors argue that antifeminism can be interpreted as a reaction to the institutional success of the women's movement and a perceived negative change in society and institutions. Moreover, there is no single sociodemographic group identifiable as specifically antifeminist, therefore the authors conclude that it is not a separate worldview but part of the conservative-traditionalist worldview. Furthermore, in the author's eyes, antifeminism in Germany is a defence mechanism against a progressive-liberal worldview and the feeling of being disadvantaged by occurring changes. This study is interesting as it shows that antifeminism is not only a problem of one specific demographic but of society as a whole and therefore solutions need to include all of society. The emphasis on worldview also shows why changing people's opinions on this matter is especially difficult and should be kept in mind when looking for solutions and ways to lessen the division within society.

This chapter explains the history and different forms of antifeminism in Germany. It explains that antifeminism is as old as feminism and has always been a countermovement to any emancipatory or liberal change. While antifeminism at first focused on women's rights and their participation in the state and workforce it soon advanced and interconnected with other discriminatory beliefs such as antisemitism or racism. Nowadays it is still a popular worldview throughout German society and gained support through dominating mainstream media discourse on topics like gender and political parties like the AfD. This is also highlighted by the literature on antifeminism presented in this chapter. The authors point out the problematic interconnection of antifeminism and right-wing movements and opinions in Germany. While the literature focuses on analysing and explaining different facets of antifeminism and its roots, it also provides ideas for counteraction and opposition.

² This party is now officially forbidden.

4. Theories on Conflict and Deescalation

4.1. Social Groups and Intergroup Conflict

What is Conflict?

The definition of conflict varies depending on the specific conflict and type of conflict analysed.

In 2014 Coleman et al. argued that “Conflict is often a means of seeking or maintaining the balance or imbalance of power in relationships. It may also be waged as a symbolic expression of one’s identity and right to self-determination. Power is commonly used in conflict as leverage for achieving one’s goals” (Coleman et al., 2014, p. 137). The authors point out that groups usually compare themselves to other groups of similar social status to determine if what they have achieved is reasonable. However, if changes in the existing power structure led to a new order in group status, “[s]uch changes are likely to increase demands for change by those experiencing deprivation, and thus to the open expression of conflict” (Coleman et al., 2014, p. 151). In the case of the beginning of the feminist movement in Germany, it started after the failed liberal revolution of 1848. Even though it was a failed revolution the power structures had shifted, and women’s demands for more participation could no longer be repressed. While the men in power in the unified German State of 1871 tried to repress liberal ideas, women compared how little rights they had opposed to men and started to demand changes within society and full participation as citizens. Coleman et al. also argue that, according to research, situations with a more balanced power dynamic make open expression or conflict escalation more likely. This can be seen throughout history with the conflict between feminists and antifeminists, as the more successful the feminist movement got the conflict gained more publicity in mainstream media and society. Additionally, not only is sharing power seen as a threat but the group in power also develops justification for maintaining power, “such as the power holders’ belief in their superior competence and superior moral value” (Coleman et al., 2014, p. 154). In addition, groups in power also devalue other groups, stereotype them and become or are unaware of their privilege. In the beginning of the feminist movement, men argued that sharing power would mean their voices would be diminished and women were unfit to participate politically. Nowadays, antifeminists try to portray feminist demands as unreasonable, or gender equality as being reached. They also try to portray feminists as a small minority in society. The most recent example of this is conservative politicians in Germany arguing against the

legalisation of abortion because it would be a shock for society and against the majority interest, even though the majority of society supports this legalisation.

According to Ho-Won Jeong (2010) “[c]onflict is manifested through adversarial social action, involving two or more actors with the expression of differences often accompanied by intense hostilities” (p.3). The author adds that while every conflict is different, some commonalities in all definitions are the “competition for resources or other interests, value differences or dissatisfaction with basic needs. Incompatible economic interests and political interests develop an attempt to suppress other groups often with threats and actual use of force” (p.5). These incompatibilities and pursuit of different goals usually lead to one party taking action to prevent the other party from reaching their goals. In the case of the feminist struggle for equality, antifeminists have historically tried to prevent women and in later years women* and queers from gaining equality and economic, political or legal rights. This was and is done through violence or threats of violence like attacks at the CSD every year or femicides. All of this to prevent women* and queers from gaining the same rights, opportunities and freedoms as men. Jeong adds that if conflicts are protracted and there is no history of cooperation, not only does the possibility of violence become more likely, but the community gets more polarised into opposing parties. These effects of polarisation can then lead to mechanisms to justify the ongoing conflict internally and externally through mistrust, stereotypes or perception of continued victimisation. Instead of acknowledging their privilege, antifeminists frame themselves as the victims in the current society and blame feminism for many different problems like their lack of income, success, romantic relationships or low birth rates. They also stereotype all feminists as hating men and wanting to take men’s rights away. In addition, “[c]onflict over matters of values and identities is posed as a total concern with survival and furnishes new meaning in life” (Jeong, 2010, p. 8). Not only does conflict change the perception of the external world, but it also changes a person’s internal beliefs. In the case of the conflict between feminists and antifeminists, antifeminists believe that they will lose the option of living as a ‘traditional’ family or being the ‘breadwinner’ of the family. They are also afraid to lose their identity as ‘real’ men and think the whole social system will collapse. Thus, antifeminists believe they are fighting for their right to their own identity and survival of the German state.

However, the incorporation of beliefs into collective memory can also lead to the development of persistent and complex intractable conflicts. These conflicts persist over time, sometimes decades or generations. Due to their long-lasting nature, the conflicts

become part of the identities and social structure of the parties involved, which makes a resolution difficult. It can be argued that the conflict between feminists and antifeminists is an intractable conflict, as it has been ongoing for generations and related debates have also been part of the public discourse for decades. Because they are so ingrained in the identities of involved groups, the conflicting parties see the conflict as unsolvable through traditional peace processes. "Intractable conflicts often revolve around some of the more central dilemmas of human and social existence that are not resolvable in the traditional sense. These are polarities (structured contradictions) based on opposing human needs, tendencies, principles, or processes [...]" (Coleman, 2003, p. 14). They believe solving the conflict would lead to a zero-sum outcome reinforcing the sense of intractability. In the case of the conflict between feminists and antifeminists, this means that antifeminists believe that they will lose rights if women* and queers gain more rights. They are not open to even entertaining the idea that a more equal society would benefit everyone that is part of said society. The issues in intractable conflicts are fundamental and deep-rooted. Typically, they are less about material gains or losses and more about existential issues related to a group's identity, making the idea of compromise seem impossible. Hence, the issues in the conflict are seen as vital to the survival of a group's identity like political power, and resources of cultural autonomy. "Intractable conflicts are most likely to emerge from settings with a preponderance of hierarchy enhancing myths, where such beliefs legitimize the ongoing oppression of low-power groups but are identified as such and rebelled against by the oppressed" (Coleman, 2003, p. 11). For this specific conflict, antifeminists fear the loss of privilege and patriarchal structures and refuse to acknowledge their privileges. Instead, many of them believe that they do not have any advantages in society and thus earn all their success and privileges outright. In addition, there are myths like 'men are better leaders', 'women do not want to be in leading positions' or 'the glass ceiling is not real' that are told to justify why women* and queers seldom occupy positions of power in the state. Due to being emotionally charged, these types of conflicts foster negative emotions like hatred, mistrust, and fear of the other groups. "When substantial, the need for change triggers anxieties in people, which result in the need for increased stability and resistance to change; and the faster the rate of change, the more resistance is mobilized (Schein, 1993)" (Coleman, 2003, p. 15). In the case of the feminist movement, it becomes obvious that the antifeminist resistance always gets stronger the more successful the feminist movement is.

Many antifeminists are afraid of change and connected reflection and instead, choose to distance themselves even more instead of educating themselves on the feminist movement and its goals. As the conflict continues negative emotions become deeply entrenched which is part of the reason intractable conflicts are difficult to resolve. These negative emotions can lead to recurrent violence. “Typically, the powerful respond to [...] acts of protest with prosocial violence to quell the disturbance and maintain the status quo. This pattern of deprivation–insulation–violence–repression largely accounts for the long-term, cyclical nature of many intractable conflicts” (Coleman, 2003, p. 12). This can be seen in the rise in domestic violence against women and femicides in recent years, as women* and queers have been more active in demanding equality. Intractable conflicts are often made even more difficult to resolve as they are often internationalized with various external actors providing support to the parties involved. Because the involved actors see the outcome as zero-sum and mistrust each other, they also mistrust the peace process and insist on their point of view. “[W]hen the truth is at stake, continuation of the conflict is usually preferred to compromise, which is considered unbearable or immoral. Negotiation over truth is seen as a form of absurdity and betrayal, and suffering pain for one’s cause becomes good” (Coleman, 2003, p. 19). Hence conflicting parties often believe the process is biased or ineffective which makes them unwilling to participate and complicates efforts from the beginning. In the case of the conflict between feminists and antifeminists, both have opposing worldviews and especially antifeminists do not always believe in science or scientific facts but choose to rely on conspiracy theories or populist media publications. Furthermore, admitting that feminists are right on some points would mean that antifeminists’ worldviews are not the truth and they need to reflect on their worldview, values and past behaviour. Instead, they refuse to engage with feminists and discard any feminist demands or arguments as unreasonable or wrong. This makes a conversation or attempt at solving the conflict extremely difficult and is part of the reason this conflict has been ongoing for generations.

What are Conflict Groups?

The following subchapter will define what groups are in conflict and how they relate to one another. Afterwards, there will be an explanation of why feminists and antifeminists are treated as cohesive ingroups in this thesis.

Böhm et al. (2020) agree with Forsyth and define a group “as two or more individuals who are connected to one another by social relationships” (Forsyth, 20014, p.3)” (p.948). They also use the term in-group member for “individuals who share a given group membership” (p.948) and out-group member for “individuals who are members of other groups” (p.948). People generally seek to belong to bigger social groups with other similar people as these bigger social units provide “positive and stable relationships” (Böhm et al., 2020, p. 949).

Brewer (2001) adds to the idea of Böhm et al, (2020) that “identification with ingroups is motivated by the need to belong and to participate in bounded cooperative social units. The bounded nature of ingroup attachment means that trust and cooperation are limited to ingroup relations and withheld from outgroups” (p.35). Due to social competition between groups, the ingroup is concerned about its position within society compared to the outgroup. This implies that ingroup benefits come at the expense of outgroup benefits and this can lead to antagonism between the groups.

Simon (2020) agrees with Brewer that “people derive collective identity from ingroup–outgroup categorizations and the associated accentuation of intergroup differences and intragroup similarities” (p.148) and that the different groups struggle for respect, and it is more of a politicised struggle for “recognition as different equals” (p.159). In this politicised struggle the ingroup tries to gain the favour of larger parts of society or at least get the rest of society to pick a side. Hence the politization of a struggle between groups can widen to polarisation within society. But since the wider society can be seen as the next bigger ingroup, “membership in the same society entitles members of different societal subgroups to equality recognition” (Simon, 2020, p. 157). This means that struggles for equal recognition can be seen as struggles for emancipation by different groups within society. In a society without conflict between groups, this would mean that difference is tolerated between groups and difference is recognised.

Following these explanations, it becomes clear from Forsyth’s definition that social relationships are key to defining groups. Hence, in this thesis, the argument is that both the feminist movements and antifeminist movements can be seen as groups because they are made up of individuals who connect by shared beliefs, values and goals. Moreover, both groups stand for opposing sides of the spectrum with feminists advocating for gender equality and dismantling of the patriarchal system and antifeminists opposing these changes by defending ‘traditional’ gender roles and hierarchies.

Additionally, there is a clear in-group versus outgroup dynamic with feminists forming an ingroup which is united by a shared collective identity focused on fighting for the rights of women and other marginalized groups. On the contrary, antifeminists form the outgroup and oppose feminist goals, which creates a clear division between the groups and emphasizes intergroup differences.

Following the argument made by Böhm et al. (2020), individuals seek to belong to groups that provide them with positive and stable relationships. Thus, feminist groups provide a sense of community through shared advocacy and support for each other. Similarly, antifeminists seek the same support, hence forming a cooperative unit that provides a sense of belonging to individuals who feel alienated by or resistant to feminist advances and change. Adding to another point regarding group attachment, Brewer (2001) points out that not only do people seek support and belonging to groups, but they consequently also limit their attachment and cooperation to these ingroups. The feminist groups only limit their trust and cooperation to their group and antifeminist groups do the same. This is because the ingroups mistrust the outgroups due to conflicting goals and values.

This intergroup conflict and competition, according to Simon (2020), stems from politicized struggles for recognition. The feminist group tries to gain recognition of equality and differences within society by framing their struggle as one for emancipation and social justice. The antifeminist group on the other hand politicizes their position as defender of 'traditional' social structures and frames the feminist group as a threat to social stability and values. This struggle for recognition consequently leads to social competition and antagonism as the feminist ingroup perceives antifeminists as undermining the process towards gender equality. Antifeminists on the other hand view feminists as challenging their vision of societal norms and values. This competition for social recognition then makes the antagonism between the two ingroups grow.

The growing antagonism leads to politicization of the group struggle, as mentioned by Simon (2020), and this leads to societal polarization. In the case of the conflict between antifeminists and feminists, this is obvious as the debate over feminist goals has extended beyond the struggle between the two groups for a long time and continues to include and divide larger parts of society.

To end this argument on a more positive note, Simon also argues that both groups still belong to the same broader group (in this case German society) which means that this entitles both groups to equal recognition and suggests that the conflict could be reframed as a shared societal challenge.

In short, in this thesis, both feminists and antifeminists are seen as two opposing groups. Because despite the variety and differences within each group they share enough key points to be considered as two ingroups. Feminist groups in Germany advocate for gender equality, critique patriarchal structures, support intersectionality, focus on human and social rights, and collaborate to end every form of discrimination. Antifeminist groups in Germany defend 'traditional' gender roles, oppose any feminist ideologies, perceive themselves as victims of change and feminist policies, have nationalist and conservative alignments, and use polarizing rhetoric. Consequently, it can be said that there are opposing ingroups because they have contrasting core values, and identity-driven goals, compete over societal influence, have mutual distrust and mobilize their supporters in response to each other's actions which leads to further societal polarization. Thus, in this thesis both the feminist and antifeminist movements are seen as two opposing groups and consequently the conflict is seen as an intergroup conflict.

4.2. Identity and Social Identity Theory

"In general, identities are regarded as the collective phenomena of expressing group sameness" (Jeong, 2010, p. 62). Group identities are formed through communication in relationships. Once this formed identity moves from a divisive social setting to a competitive one, communication with other groups becomes ineffective and group cohesion is emphasized. This connects back to the idea of ingroup versus outgroup and intergroup conflict.

Hogg (2016) argues that "[s]ocial groups, whether large demographic categories or small task oriented teams, provide their members with a shared identity that prescribes and evaluates who they are, what they should believe and how they should behave. Social identities also, very critically, highlight how the in-group is distinct from relevant out-groups in a particular social context" (p.6). This is evident in the intergroup conflict between antifeminists and feminists. Both ingroups provide very clear and opposing worldviews and a strong sense of shared identity to ingroup members. Being part of the ingroup is also a big

part of the member's sense of self. Furthermore, both groups have very clear rules and boundaries when it comes to interacting with the opposing group.

According to Hogg (2016), “[s]ocial identity theory initially focused primarily on intergroup relations—exploring the issue of conflict and cooperation between large-scale social categories” (p.7). Ingroup members constantly strive for a better evaluation compared to the outgroup, which drives intergroup behaviour as both high-status groups try to maintain superiority, and lower-status groups attempt to overcome their negative evaluation. Social categorisation and stereotyping help predict behaviour, creating a predictable worldview and validating self-perception. “Social categorisation renders one’s own and others’ behaviour predictable and thus allows one to avoid harm and plan effective action” (Hogg, 2016, p. 10). People insecure about their own identity often gravitate toward groups with clear prototypes. These groups typically possess “closed ideologies and belief systems, and have hierarchical leadership and authority structures” (Hogg, 2016, p. 10), with norms expressed through “normative behaviour” (Hogg, 2016, p. 11). This explains the rise in popularity of antifeminist opinions as people that share antifeminist opinions often feel insecure in their identity and the world in general. Thus, many people who seek to be part of the antifeminist group gravitate towards the group as it provides them with a clear ideology and belief system as well as stability through clear authority structures. Furthermore, categorising and stereotyping the opposing group in the feminist versus antifeminist conflict makes predicting their behaviour and worldviews easier which also validates the ingroup worldview.

Norms, as key elements of group identity, are internalised by members and often polarized from the outgroup. These ideals, which tend to be more extreme than individual preferences, lead to ingroup and outgroup polarisation. Groups manage their identity depending on their perceived relationship with the outgroup. “Beliefs focus on status (what is my group’s social standing relative to the outgroup?), stability (how stable is this status relationship?), legitimacy (how legitimate is this status relationship?), permeability (how easy is it for people to change their social identity by “passing” into the out-group?), and cognitive alternatives (is a different intergroup relationship conceivable?)” (Hogg, 2016, p. 7). Those believing in permeability see social mobility as possible, often disconnecting from their social group to align with a higher-status outgroup. However, crossing boundaries is challenging, and this belief often results in rejection from both groups. “Dominant groups often promulgate an ideology of social mobility and tolerate limited passing because it undermines and prevents

collective action on the part of the minority” (Hogg, 2016, p. 7). This explains why some women and other minorities support antifeminist opinions, even though most of their beliefs and values are not in their favour. They think if they are part of the antifeminist ingroup they get to share their privileges. However, this is not the case as the opinions and decisions made by the antifeminist group will still affect them negatively regardless of if they try to be part of said ingroup or not. However, the antifeminist group still attempts to win over beneficiaries of the feminist group to undermine collective action by women*, queers and other minorities in Germany. A good example is the AfD, pretending to be for queer people because one of their leading figures is lesbian even though their policies clearly state that they are not in favour of queer people and their rights.

When groups perceive the social structure as impermeable, low-status groups often use social creativity to redefine “the social value of their group and its attributes” (Hogg, 2016, p. 7) in a way that supports social change. Instead of comparing with a dominant outgroup, they compare themselves to similar or lower-status groups. Dominant groups may encourage this strategy to divide lower-status groups and maintain control. If a group believes the social order is illegitimate, it may develop “cognitive alternatives” (Hogg, 2016, p. 7) and pursue social change through competition, activism, protest, and, in extreme cases, war. In the case of the intergroup conflict between feminists and antifeminists, feminists are very socially active and regularly organize protests or petitions to encourage social change. Antifeminists on the other hand try to encourage women* and queers to be content with the status quo by making comparisons to countries where inequality is bigger than in Germany. However, as this is usually unsuccessful, they resort to intimidation or violence or try to prevent or change emancipatory laws.

Spears (2011) expands on social identity theory, stating that it not only explains why groups discriminate but also how social competition can challenge the status quo and drive social change. He credits Henri Tajfel for establishing the theory through his work on social judgment and social perception (Spears, 2011, p. 202). Spears argues that: “the theory proposes that we derive value from our group memberships to the extent that we can compare our own group positively with others, and that we are therefore motivated to gain and maintain a sense of positive group distinctiveness” (Spears, 2011, p. 203). While group identity is not always central, in conflict situations, “group identity could become very salient, and may become the dominant way of perceiving the self and others” (Spears, 2011, p.

203). Social identity theory represents a normative theory that supports the quest for equality, particularly for disadvantaged groups, while also explaining the behaviour of high-status groups seeking to preserve their position. This explains why both groups make being feminist or antifeminist such a big part of their personal identity. Both groups derive a sense of pride from being part of their group. Feminists see themselves in a positive light as the drivers of social change towards more equality, and antifeminists see themselves as defenders of the 'traditional' family and social structure as well as the stability of the state itself.

Hogg (2016) suggests that building a superordinate group can integrate competing groups, though it often faces resistance as people are attached to their social categories and identities. "Attempts to recategorize social groups under a bigger identity are often seen as a threat to one's identity and the ingroup" (Hogg, 2016, p. 7). An alternative solution is crossed categorization, where groups maintain their distinct identities while cooperating with others, fostering a "more textured and less identity-threatening representation of the ingroup – out-group relations" (Hogg, 2016, p. 8). This allows groups to keep their separate identities while engaging in cooperation, which might be easier than integrating all groups under a single superordinate identity. Both solutions are relevant in intergroup conflict, but the focus in this thesis is on the Common Ingroup Identity Model, explained below.

4.3. Integrated Threat Theory

According to Stephan and White Stephan (1999) integrated threat theory considers four different types of threat: realistic threat, symbolic threat, anxiety, and negative stereotype. "Realistic threats encompass any perceived threat to the welfare of the group or its members" (W. G. Stephan & White Stephan, 1999, p. 619). These threats can also be perceived threats because the simple perception of a threat can lead to prejudice against the outgroup. These threats include threats to the existence of the ingroup, to the political or economic power of the ingroup or well-being of its members. In the case of this thesis, it could be a threat to the patriarchal system for antifeminists or plans by antifeminists to infringe on women's right to self-determination for feminists. "Symbolic threats primarily involve perceived group differences in morals, values, standards, beliefs, and attitudes" (W. G. Stephan & White Stephan, 1999, p. 619). This means anything that threatens the worldview of the ingroup as the members believe that their belief system is the correct one.

Intergroup anxiety arises when people feel threatened in intergroup interactions. Ingroup members fear “four types of negative consequences: negative consequences for our self-concepts, negative behavioral consequences, negative evaluations by others, and negative evaluations by members of our ingroups” (W. G. Stephan & White Stephan, 1999, p. 619). Negative outgroup stereotypes add to intergroup anxiety because they make ingroup members expect a negative interaction with outgroups. Hence there are constant prejudices and an anticipation of negative events when interacting with outgroup members. Thus, instead of trying to educate themselves on the opposing group, feminists and antifeminists avoid interactions as much as possible, because they expect a negative outcome from any form of interaction. In addition, power hierarchy can play a role in how salient the threats are perceived. While both high and low-hierarchy groups can experience the other as threatening, the threat can get more salient the larger the power difference between the groups is. Moreover, the stronger a person identifies with the ingroup, the stronger any kind of threat to the ingroup is perceived. As these threats lead to less interaction or fear of interaction with the outgroup, “ingroup members know very little about the outgroup” (W. G. Stephan & White Stephan, 1999, p. 621). This lack of knowledge leads to fear of the unknown and perceiving the outgroup as very different from the ingroup. However, contact can also be positive which lowers the fear of threats. Though if prior contact has mainly been negative, group interaction is seen as a potential threat as the outcome is expected to be negative. In the case of the intergroup conflict between feminists and antifeminists, many feminists try to avoid any interaction with antifeminists due to harassment and threats made on social media or in real life. Thus, while contact would be beneficial for mutual understanding, the groups avoid it out of fear or frustration due to a lack of constructive conversation.

According to Stephan et al. (2000) “[i]n the integrated threat theory, realistic and symbolic threats are viewed as antecedents to prejudice, which is conceptualized as a negative affective and evaluative response to outgroups” (p.64). While reiterating the four types of threats explained by Stephan and White Stephan (1999) they relate these threats to the relationship between men and women. Concerning the realistic threat between men and women, the authors argue that both groups often oppose each other in political and economic goals due to limited resources and violence committed by men against women. Moreover, there is a correlation between realistic threats women pose and men’s attitudes

towards women. "For instance, the economic threat women pose to men has been found to be significantly correlated with measure of attitudes toward women" (C. W. Stephan et al., 2000, p. 64). Symbolic threats include the "perceived value and belief differences between men and women" (C. W. Stephan et al., 2000, p. 64). Just like realistic threats, the perceived symbolic threats by women influence the behaviour men have towards women. Intergroup anxiety between men and women implies that both groups "are concerned about being rejected, ridiculed, taken advantage of, or embarrassed" (C. W. Stephan et al., 2000, p. 64). This anxiety is often created through negative attitudes connected to intergroup interactions, power disparities and the emphasis on heterosexual relationships in patriarchy. Negative stereotypes are linked to the expectation of negative behaviours of the outgroup and therefore lead to the ingroup feeling threatened by intergroup interactions. "For example, the traditional male type of aggressiveness, competitiveness, and lack of compassion might well engender feelings of threat regarding interaction with men" (C. W. Stephan et al., 2000, p. 64). After all the examples given by the authors, they conclude that neither realistic threats nor negative group stereotypes of the powerful group inevitably lead to the less powerful group disliking them. In the examples given this means that women do not necessarily dislike men for being men and that the issue is more complex. This finding goes against the antifeminist narrative that feminists unanimously hate men, just because they are feminists.

Curşeu et al. (2007) focus their explanation of integrated threat theory on prejudice against immigrant workers. The authors point out "that prejudice consists of a set of negative attitudes or cognitive beliefs associated with the expression of negative affect or the display of hostile discriminatory behavior toward members of a social group" (Curşeu et al., 2007, p. 126) and that integrated threat theory includes different theoretical perspectives regarding prejudice. The authors argue intergroup anxiety should be understood as negative feelings of the ingroup regarding intergroup contact. This anxiety leads to negative responses in intergroup contact due to negative feelings about the other group and often triggers hostility or discrimination. Realistic threats can also lead to prejudice according to Curşeu et al. Because different groups live in shared societies they often compete for resources and develop conflicting goals. These conflicts are interpreted as realistic threats to the economic, political or physical well-being of the ingroup which leads to prejudice against the outgroup. As mentioned before symbolic threats are perceived differences in moral values, beliefs, or worldviews. "In contemporary Europe, immigrants are different not only because of their nationality, but they are also perceived as being different because of their religious and

cultural values” (Curşeu et al., 2007, p. 127). All these differences are perceived as symbolic threats to the ingroup who thinks of their worldview and morals as the correct one. However, anxiety over resources that become politicized, and groups being made to compete for them can also add to the problem. Hence, it is important to differentiate if a group is simply blamed for a conflict or is producing it. In the case of the intergroup conflict between antifeminists and feminists, this explains one of the interconnections between antifeminism and racism. Instead of accepting blame for the conflict around sexual harassment in Germany, many antifeminists blame migrants for the issue instead of reflecting on their behaviour and confronting society about normalizing sexual harassment of women. This in turn can lead to prejudice and discrimination which can fuel intergroup conflict and hostilities. The authors explain that negative stereotypes include “[n]egative beliefs, expectations, and traits associated with the out-group members are important precursors of intergroup behavior” (Curşeu et al., 2007, p. 127). However, the weight of these stereotypes is more important than their actual content as integrated threat theory focuses on the intergroup interactions that arise from negative expectations. Several prerequisites lead to the perception of threat: “inter-group conflict, status inequalities between in- and out-group, in-group identification, knowledge of the out-group and intergroup contact” (Curşeu et al., 2007, p. 127). If there is prior intergroup conflict like intergroup confrontation or controversies regarding resources or worldviews, this increases the perception of threats and affects intergroup prejudice. The same goes for high power differences between the groups and stronger identification with the ingroup. A strong identification makes it easier for group members to perceive differences in intergroup interactions as a threat to the ingroup. Strong identification can also lead to less interest and knowledge regarding outgroups which in turn makes the perception of threats more likely. This in turn influences the amount of social contact, leading to less potential for positive interaction. Less positive interaction then leads to stronger identification with the ingroup and strengthening of prejudice.

Integrated threat theory applied to the intergroup conflict between feminism and antifeminism shows how different the perspectives are regarding the threats to each ingroup. From a feminist perspective, the realistic threats might be actions or rhetoric by antifeminists that threaten the progress regarding gender equality, access to abortion or protection against gender-based violence and equal opportunities at the workplace. Antifeminists might perceive feminist policies and activism towards cultural and social changes as threats to

traditional values regarding family, gender roles and male privilege. They may also fear loss of power, status and influence in society or economy. Antifeminist ideology is often seen as a symbolic threat by feminists as it threatens some of the feminist core values regarding gender equality, social justice and personal autonomy. The ideology is often perceived as a challenge to feminist beliefs regarding gender fluidity and equality as antifeminists emphasize traditional gender roles. From an antifeminist perspective, the feminist standpoint is a threat to the cultural and moral values of a traditional family, religious beliefs and their understanding of gender. Antifeminists see these symbolic threats as a feminist attempt to undermine society and a threat to the existing system of power upheld and reproduced by patriarchy. Connected to symbolic and realistic threats, intergroup anxiety leads to feminists and antifeminists avoiding intergroup contact. Feminists might feel anxious due to fear of being marginalized, anticipating hostility or even getting attacked due to their differing views. Antifeminists might want to avoid feminists due to a fear of getting judged or being accused of sexism. For both sides this anxiety, whether justified or not can hinder constructive dialogue and lead to excessive tensions. Moreover, avoiding interaction allows vilification of the opposition which could crumble due to interactions. This does not mean dialogue will settle who is right or wrong but to understand where the other group is coming from. On the other hand, if both groups avoid each other, negative stereotypes grow further. Feminists might see all antifeminists as ignorant, misogynistic and backwards thinking. Antifeminists might see feminists as overly aggressive, hating men and being unreasonable in their demands. They might also blame feminists for loss of power or privilege that they might not be responsible for. The stereotypes on both sides lead to a lack of empathy and dismissive attitudes which make conflict resolution, conflict transformation, or conflict management, and open discussions exceedingly difficult.

4.4. Backlash in Intergroup Relations

The concept of backlash can be traced back to Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab defining it as a group's reaction to a perceived decline in importance, power or influence (Cupać & Ebetürk, 2020, p. 705). However, it was popularized in 1991 by Susan Faludi in her book 'Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women'. Faludi sees backlash as an indicator of success as "one party makes claims, advances and another party feels left out, resentful threatened" (van Wormer, 2008, p. 324).

Jane Mansbridge and Shauna Shames (2008) also understand backlash as a “resistance of those in power to attempts to change the status quo” (p.625). They explain that three components must be fulfilled for an action to be considered a backlash. “First, the action must be a reaction. A backlash lashes back at something another has done. Second, the reaction must involve coercive power. Third, the reaction must involve trying to reinstate part or all of one’s former power in the most general meaning of capacity to turn preferences or interests into outcomes. On average, all individuals will want to increase their capacity to produce outcomes, their power as capacity” (p.627). Mansbridge and Shames add that people do not only want to reinstate but widen their capacity or power since “1) losses are experienced more painfully than gains [..]; 2) the loss of capacities is usually even more emotionally powerful than simple material loss; and 3) becoming accustomed to a capacity makes that capacity feel like a natural part of the self” (p.627). Forms of coercive power or direct violence are often used to regain the status quo in a backlash. The backlash against social movements can include threats of violence, trying to split up a coalition or softer forms like ridiculing and silencing a group.

Katherine van Wormer (2008) argues that there exist two main forms of backlash. “The first is institutional backlash which operates at the societal level, typically in laws that are written or enacted as a reaction against progress by a minority group. This type of backlash operates at the macro level and is cultural” (p.331). This form of backlash focuses on societal control of a minority group through laws and cultural norms. The second form of backlash is personal backlash in the form of displaced aggression in the form of an attack. Van Wormer argues that this displaced aggression, or interpersonal violence, often originates from external stressors like work or economic problems. She then relates this to feminism and anti-feminist backlash by stating that “[b]oth institutional (macro) and personal (micro) forms of backlash, whether at the macro or micro level, are cultural in origin and derive from basic prejudice against girls and women, and against women and minorities who are seen as competitive with white men and therefore threatening” (p.331). She adds that this displaced aggression stems from fast global changes and people losing their sense of belonging and feeling needed. “Every social movement breeds a counter reaction, and as some individuals are losing their place in the world, even from forces that have nothing to do with the women’s increasing equality, some men are lashing out at the most vulnerable people in their lives—women” (p.335).

Sylvia Walby goes even further than van Wormer and argues that the current antifeminist backlash is not only a resistance to the success of feminism but “a determination of patriarchal forces to reaffirm, maintain, and increase the subordination of women, a determination that is recurrent, historically contingent, and culturally contextualised” (Cupać & Ebetürk, 2020, p. 706). She adds that a current tactic used in the backlash is that struggles women face “are being falsely represented as the result of feminism. Feminism is blamed for the problems in women’s lives” (Walby, 2005, p. 77).

Ann Braithwaite (2004) argues that the most recent form of backlash does not work by rejecting ideas about equality and women’s rights but rather “by acknowledging those at the same time as identifying feminism as the cause of women’s current miseries” (p.22). She also adds that backlash is nowadays sometimes used interchangeably with the term postfeminism to identify perceived anti-feminist arguments and standpoints.

4.5. Contact Hypothesis

The Contact Hypothesis, also known as Intergroup Contact Theory, was coined by Gordon Allport in the early 1950s. “Allport (1979) proposed that contact with members of an outgroup under optimal conditions of common goals, cooperation, equal status, and institutional support can lead to more positive attitudes toward that group” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 843). Intergroup members must be of equal status or perceive themselves as such in the interaction. This is important because minority and majority groups “can experience the same contact situation quite differently” (Binder et al., 2009, p. 845). The majority members are often concerned about not discriminating openly against minority members due to it being “interpreted as a counternormative exploitation of status difference” (Binder et al., 2009, p. 845). Minority members, on the other hand, are always making sure they are not being discriminated against as this could affirm their groups lower status and them “being stereotyped negatively” (Binder et al., 2009, p. 845). They should also have common goals that they want to work towards cooperatively. This cooperation should be the basis for the interaction rather than competition for it to be successful. Lastly, the intergroup contact should be mediated or overseen by institutional authorities, laws and social norms that support the intergroup interaction. If these four conditions are met intergroup contact can lead to reduced prejudice, better understanding and attitudes towards the outgroups and fewer stereotypes.

More recent research found that there is no need to meet all conditions fully for intergroup contact to have a positive impact on intergroup relations and prejudice reduction. Moreover, according to the extended contact hypothesis, “the knowledge that ingroup members have friends in the outgroup” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 843) can be enough to have the same effects as direct contact or intergroup friendships. Extended contact can help in reducing intergroup anxiety as the knowledge of positive intergroup interaction can “reduce negative expectations about future interactions with the outgroup” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 844). Another benefit of extended contact is that prejudice gets reduced through a positive perception of ingroup norms towards the outgroup. The intergroup contact proves “that group members will not be punished for developing close relationships with or showing positive attitudes towards the outgroup” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 845). The positive behaviour of the outgroup that is experienced through extended contact can also provide the ingroup with information about the norms and behaviour of the outgroup and their interest “in positive intergroup relations” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 845). Due to the overlap between the perception of the self and the ingroup as being intertwined, extended contact can also lead to outgroup members being included in the self. In this case, ingroup members will show empathy towards outgroup members, “take pride in their successes, and generally see them in a positive light” (Turner et al., 2008, p. 845) because they include them in the perception of the self.

If the group contact is negative however, “such contact is particularly likely to heighten category salience, thereby leading participants to view others as exemplars of groups rather than unique individuals” (McKeown & Dixon, 2017, p. 3). Moreover, negative intergroup contact has a stronger impact than positive contact. Negative contact also reaffirms prejudice and negative stereotypes about the outgroup. This is important to remember as the optimal conditions of the contact hypothesis are rarely met in real-life interactions. Especially in drawn-out and polarising conflicts like the one between feminists and antifeminists, where all levels of society are affected, and power hierarchies are salient, ideal conditions will rarely be met.

To apply this theory to the conflict between antifeminists and feminists some conditions need to be met to have positive intergroup contact. As mentioned above both groups should perceive themselves as equal in the interaction. The groups should identify common goals to agree on for them to cooperate towards a common objective and build a sense of cooperation and unity. Intergroup cooperation can furthermore be fostered through joint

projects, panel discussions or other joint activities that require collaboration rather than competition. Support from authorities should come from institutions or well-known figures that are respected by both groups. The contact should also be well structured and facilitated by a mediator for both groups to share their perspectives and keep the focus on understanding rather than debating. The intergroup contact should be used to challenge stereotypes and prejudice by learning about the outgroup and seeing the individual rather than the group as a whole. This can also help in fostering empathy towards members of the outgroup. All these intergroup contacts have to happen over a prolonged period and not one interaction only. Ensuring that the intergroup contact is meeting everyone's expectations and constantly improving is another key element for a positively perceived contact.

4.6. Common Ingroup Identity Model

The Common Ingroup Identity Model (CIIM) is a theoretical framework to reduce intergroup bias and conflict. It was developed by Samuel L. Gaertner and John F. Dovidio in the 1980s and 1990s. "The key idea of the common ingroup identity model is that factors that induce members of different groups to recategorize themselves as members of the same more inclusive group can reduce intergroup bias through cognitive and motivational processes involving ingroup favoritism [...]. Consequently, recategorization dynamically changes the conceptual representations of the different groups from an 'us' versus 'them' orientation to a more inclusive, superordinate connection: 'we'" (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2011, p. 445). For this re-categorization to work the CIIM suggests that a superordinate identity should be formed. "[R]ecategorization is not designed to reduce or eliminate categorization but rather to structure a definition of group categorization in ways that reduce intergroup bias and conflict" (Gaertner et al., 1993, p. 3). This new larger group includes different smaller groups. Hence intergroup bias is reduced because individuals are encouraged to see themselves as members of this new bigger ingroup rather than ingroup versus outgroup, similar to crossed categorization suggested by Hogg (2016). The superordinate group helps with cognitive re-categorization to include more individuals in the ingroup. This improves attitudes towards the newly included ingroup members as "more positive beliefs, feelings, and behaviors, which are usually reserved for ingroup members, are extended or redirected to former outgroup members because of their recategorized ingroup status" (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2011, p. 445). The positive interactions in turn facilitate the development of a common ingroup identity for the superordinate group. However, for this to be successful the conditions mentioned in the

contact hypothesis should be met. Thus, individuals should be perceived of equal status, having a common goal, and being willing to cooperate. “In general, members of minority and majority groups have different perspectives regarding the fairness of the status quo and, consequently, regarding a need for a change in the social system” (Dovidio et al., 2007, p. 311). Like the extended contact hypothesis, the CIIM operates on the individual as well as the intergroup level. Thus, positive interpersonal interactions can have a positive influence on the wider group dynamic and perceptions of the outgroup. The overall aim of CIIM is to reduce ‘us’ versus ‘them’ to create a new ‘we’ to reduce stereotypes, prejudice and intergroup conflict.

However, because the best solution is always context-dependent, the CIIM considers four different solutions: “(a) dual identity (subgroup and superordinate group identities are high, like integration); (b) different groups (subgroup identity is high and superordinate identity is low, like separatism); (c) one-group (subgroup identity is low and superordinate group identity is high, like assimilation; and (d) separate individuals (subgroup and superordinate group identities are low, like marginalisation)” (Dovidio et al., 2007, p. 306). Hence depending on the challenges and limitations set by an intergroup conflict, the appropriate CIIM must be considered. If the group identities and prejudices are strong, it can be challenging to create a superordinate group identity. This resistance to change can also be amplified by situational variables like socio-political dynamics and the historical context of a conflict. A successfully formed superordinate identity can be problematic, as it can silence or suppress diversity and differences in favour of uniformity. In some contexts, it might also be harmful to abandon separate group identities. “Thus, in some intergroup contexts a ‘dual identity’ representation, in which both the subgroup and superordinate group identities are salient simultaneously, may maximize the opportunity for the benefits of intergroup contact to generalize beyond those immediately present during contact” (Gaertner et al., 2000, p. 131).

To apply the CIIM to the conflict between antifeminist and feminist groups, the shared identity should encompass both groups and emphasise common goals to facilitate a more positive interaction. The shared goals and values could include principles like fairness and the well-being of society. They could also emphasise human rights as both groups could agree on a society that respects everyone’s rights. Instead of only focusing on the two opposing groups of feminists versus antifeminists, the discussion frame could shift to group members being part of the same community or society.

This frame could then lead to a focus on mutual respect within their community and striving to better this community. This frame could also emphasise shared human experiences and struggles to foster intergroup understanding and empathy. Intergroup discussions could be organised in this new framework for group members of both sides to share their perspectives in a controlled and respectful environment. This could lead to collaborative projects to foster cooperation. These community projects or joined work could then build trust and reduce prejudice. However, to promote mutual respect, members of both sides should interact as equals without one group dominating the other. Different ideas, like sharing stories and struggles to highlight commonalities, exist that can help with promoting cognitive re-categorization. The use of inclusive and neutral language that avoids polarising symbols or terms can be an additional tool in facilitating the creation of a more neutral cooperation. This strategy could also be used in media campaigns and the wider social media to spread ideas of a shared identity and collaboration instead of fostering further division and negative interactions through hate speech and online harassment. However, none of the steps mentioned above will work if underlying issues are not addressed properly. Concerns and fears of both groups should be recognised and addressed to demonstrate empathy and a will to understand each other. This should include activities that let both sides understand each other's perspectives. Intergroup contact focussing on listening and understanding rather than debate and persuasion should be promoted. For the re-categorization steps to be successful, influential figures and leaders should act as role models of inclusive behaviour.

4.7. Reframing in Conflict Resolution

Reframing and shifting the perspective of conflict parties can help to reduce tensions and promote intergroup understanding. This can be done by changing the narrative regarding the conflict and highlighting mutual benefits for the involved parties instead of a zero-sum dispute. The focus should also be shifted to shared interests and goals for parties to realise common ground. This can shift how a conflict is perceived and hence change the emotions involved from mostly negative emotions to more positive emotions of empathy and cooperation. Next, the reframing can lead to different ways the conflict is perceived and thought of which can lead to creating new solutions that were not seen as feasible in the original dispute.

“We create frames to name situations in which we find ourselves, identify and interpret aspects that seem to us key in understanding the situation, and communicate that interpretation to others” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 208). Hence frames are used to reduce information and organise it into understandable categories. “Each party to a conflict has its own perception and understanding of their agenda, the relevance of various issues, their priorities, and the opportunities and risks involved with different choices. This assemblage of factors can be considered as a set of lenses, or filters, through which the various parties view the conflict, and is called the frame or conceptual frame” (Kaufman et al., 2003, p. 1). This different framing is used strategically to convince others of our point of view, gain an advantage in negotiations, and build groups with people of similar interests. Frames are therefore used to justify their interests and which interpretation of the situation will benefit our group the most. “We accept a group’s framing of a situation either because we recognize it as our own or because we benefit from membership in that group” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 209).

The different frames and consequently different interpretations of events lead parties to focus on specific outcomes for their conflict which makes the acceptance of alternative solutions and outcomes difficult. Hence, “[f]rame divergence often contributes to the intractability of conflicts” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 209). In intractable conflicts, frames often make intergroup communication more difficult and lead to polarization. The exacerbated polarization then reinforces the beliefs of opposing groups that their frames are justified, and compromise can and should not be reached. This means to understand conflicts and conflict parties, it is vital to understand frames and their construction as they are the key to understanding “information processing, message patterns, linguistic cues, and socially constructed meanings, framing and reframing are vital to the communications underlying negotiations” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 210). As it is important to understand frames and their construction, it is vital to understand the sources and categories frames are derived from. “Parties in conflict take on identities derived from the interplay between their self-conception and interests, and their group affiliations” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 211). These are known as identity frames. If the identity is challenged, it reinforces ingroup dynamics. Instead of looking for intergroup agreements, any information or perspective that threatens the identity is ignored. Instead of solving a conflict, the focus shifts to protecting one's identity. “Characterization frames are reductionist labels, associating positive or negative

characteristics with individuals or groups” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 211). They are shared among the ingroup and used to communicate with others who share the same worldview and therefore understand their meaning. In conflicts, they can be used to cast doubt on the motivation of the outgroup, and their legitimacy or exploit their weaknesses. Power, Social control, and conflict management frames are important to understanding a conflict and the parties involved. Conflict parties have different views on power and how social decisions should be made, social control and how they should be able to influence society in the future, and how a conflict should be managed. “These frames shape disputants’ assessment of which forms of power are legitimate and which are likely to advance their own position” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 212). The more intractable a conflict has become, the more polarising these frames are because all conflicts are seen as mutually exclusive struggles for power. Loss and gain frames also play a role in intergroup conflicts as people want to prevent loss more than they care about gaining. “This perceptual asymmetry is manipulable, as the expected consequences of risky choices can often be framed as either a potential loss or a potential gain” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 213). While frames are usually stable and depending on the conflict and history hard to change, reframing is not impossible. “Frame changes occur when new information or direct experience manages to overwhelm filters” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 214). This experience could be a positive interaction that leads to more empathy in intergroup interactions. While the research does not yet have specific input regarding which interventions trigger what change in frames, it is nevertheless useful to analyse frames in conflicts. This can be useful to understand the different issues parties have in a conflict and identify which issues are interpreted differently due to different frames. To reduce conflict, these deep differences need to be understood to find a solution “and design conflict reduction processes that do not violate these deep differences” (Shmueli et al., 2006, p. 215).

4.8. Theoretical Background of Hypothesis

1. **Feminists perceive the rise in antifeminism as a significant threat to gender equality and human and women’s rights in Germany.**

This hypothesis relates to several of the theories presented in this chapter. First of all, it relates to Integrated Threat Theory as the theory explains how realistic or symbolic threats lead to prejudice and intergroup conflict. Feminists could perceive antifeminism as a

symbolic threat to their identity and values. Additionally, feminists could perceive the rise in antifeminism as a realistic threat due to the social and political gains of the movement. Thus, according to Integrated Threat Theory, the antifeminist worldview and public discourse lead to feminists perceiving any action by antifeminists as either a realistic or symbolic threat.

In addition, Social Identity Theory points out that individuals build part of their identity on the social groups they belong to. Because feminists usually identify strongly with their group, they could perceive the rise in popularity and influence of antifeminism as a threat to their own identity and status. This could then lead to even stronger group cohesion, which would intensify the divide between the two opposing groups.

Moreover, feminists might view the rise in antifeminism as a backlash against the achievements of the feminist movement, which is a correct assumption from a historical viewpoint. According to backlash theory, this would mean that the dominant group, in this case antifeminists, react negatively to real or perceived progress by subordinate groups that attempt to gain a more equal status at the cost of status for the dominant group. Hence, while feminists could perceive antifeminism as a threat, this point of view would mean the backlash can be interpreted as a sign of success for the feminist movement.

2. Feminist activists believe the success of the feminist movement provokes backlash from antifeminists, who perceive it as a threat to traditional social structures and male privilege.

As mentioned before backlash occurs when dominant groups perceive their privilege and power being threatened by less powerful groups. Due to feminists achieving more success regarding gender equality, antifeminists interested in maintaining existing hierarchical and power structures increase their counterreaction because they interpret any success or change made by feminists as a loss for their group and group status. They see the whole conflict as a zero-sum game.

From the perspective of Social Identity Theory, the success of the feminist movement can threaten the positive social identity of people who identify with the antifeminist movement or related groups like more 'conservative or traditional' groups. This can then lead to the outgroup, in this case feminists, being perceived as a threat. Consequently, more effort is put into enforcing group cohesion and retaining group status in the overall social hierarchy which automatically leads to the distance between opposing groups getting bigger.

Moreover, from an Integrated Threat Theory perspective, the success of feminists is perceived as symbolic and realistic threats by anyone who benefits from the current patriarchal hierarchies and power structures. Hence, any perceived threat to worldview, values or status leads to backlash and resistance to change. This also means antifeminists have a wide reach here because many people are unwilling to give up their privileges (due to gender, class, religion etc.) for a more equal society.

3. Emphasizing superordinate identities can help reduce intergroup conflict, however, forming these identities will be very challenging because of a lack of common ground.

The Common Ingroup Identity Model argues that a superordinate identity can reduce intergroup conflict. This can be achieved through changing or at least softening group boundaries and emphasising common goals or opinions. If feminists and antifeminists can start seeing themselves as part of a common group, or at least find common goals to cooperate on, this could ideally lead to a superordinate identity. In the best-case scenario, this temporary cooperation would then lead to less tensions between the groups due to softer group cohesion and more interaction.

Following the Contact Hypothesis, increased interaction can under positive conditions reduce prejudice and conflict between opposing groups. Hence, if feminists and antifeminists engage in dialogue under positive conditions, they might be able to increase intergroup understanding, reduce prejudices and possibly move beyond some of their differences. However, this might be difficult to achieve because one major condition for the success of more contact is a positive environment from the start which might be difficult to achieve in a complex and long-lasting conflict such as the one between feminists and antifeminists in Germany.

Connected to a positive response to the Contact Hypothesis, reframing can influence how conflict parties perceive each other as well as the conflict itself. This could lead to the involved parties seeing the conflict in a new light and then lead to finding solutions or at least common ground. Thus, reframing the conflict between antifeminists and feminists through shared interests or goals might lead to a decreased conflict potential, better understanding or goal-specific cooperation. Ideally, this could also stop the growing support for antifeminist sentiments. However, this would have to include reframing public and media discourse, otherwise reframing the conflict will be difficult.

5. Limitations, Data Collection, and Methodology

5.1. Limitations

Due to the scope of my thesis, the research and focus are limited. The thesis will mainly look at feminist perspectives and opinions in the analysis, as my research has shown a lack of publications in this area. However, this means that it will not cover the full spectrum of antifeminist views and responses. Thus, the antifeminist opinions used for comparison in the analysis will be limited and based on secondary data, as the antifeminist perspectives are not the main focus of the thesis. Due to the collected data being qualitative interviews, the answers by the interviewees are all influenced by their specific lived experiences and opinions. In addition to the limited number of interviews, the highly subjective nature makes it impossible to universally apply the findings of this thesis to the feminist movement as a whole. Thus, the findings of this thesis cannot be generalized to give universal answers to any of the questions explored in this thesis. Additionally, the method of reflexive thematic analysis embraces the subjectivity of the researcher and interviewees, which influences the outcome and interpretation of the analysis. In summary, this thesis aims to offer some useful insights into framing and understanding the conflict from a highly subjective feminist standpoint. However, it will not cover every possible standpoint or every angle in the debate around this intergroup conflict. Most importantly, there is no aspiration or claim to find the universal truth or solution in this intergroup conflict.

Further insights regarding positionality or ethics are included in the following subchapters on data collection and thematic analysis.

5.2. Data Collection and Formulation of Interview Questions

There were several things to consider for my data collection. What kind of data do I want to collect? Where do I want to collect the data from? How do I want to collect the data? I decided that I wanted to collect qualitative data for my thesis as the topic is built on the individual worldview and norms of feminist activists. In addition, there is not much existing qualitative data in academic papers in Germany so far. I also believe that collecting quantitative data on feminist opinions would not get me the results I wanted and answer the questions I had as it would not be able to capture personal emotions or examples to the same extent. Due to the conflict in my thesis being emotionally charged for the individuals involved, a data collection method able to capture emotions seemed the better choice. Hence, I decided that interviews would be the best option.

I decided on written interviews instead of in-person interviews. I thought it would be easier to get interviewees to agree to the interview if they could think about the questions and answer them in their own time. This opinion might have been biased as well, as I struggled a lot to find interview partners for my Bachelor thesis who were willing to do in-person interviews, hence I was hesitant to try again. Moreover, I thought some of them might appreciate the possibility of pausing the questionnaire and taking a break to think about their answer. I believe online interviews build less pressure as a person can answer in their own time and think about their wording and how to formulate their thoughts. This view is of course very personal, but I wanted to make the task as easy and convenient for the interviewees as possible to maximise my chances of getting a positive reply to an interview request.

I decided to use an online tool called *Empirio* to collect my interview data. The platform has several benefits, one of the biggest being simplicity. It is very easy to create a questionnaire. However, the reason I chose this website over others is that it has strict data security guidelines as it is based in Germany. While there are always risks involved when using online tools, I wanted to choose a website that is as safe as possible for the interviewees who are participating in my data collection. As I wanted to keep my participants completely anonymous, I chose a website where they could not see other participants' answers. In terms of convenience for the researcher, the benefit of an online survey is that all the answers will be collected in one Excel spreadsheet instead of several Word documents. It is also possible to fill out this survey on the phone, which makes it convenient for the participants. Moreover, I decided to collect the interview data very early in my thesis writing process. While formulating the interview questions later might have changed some of the questions, I was concerned about finding enough participants first. Hence, I decided to collect the data early in the process of writing, before formulating the literature and theory chapters of this thesis. Thus, the questions might have influenced the choice of theories and hypotheses.

Regarding the formulation of the questions, I decided to formulate them in German. While this might exclude some foreign feminists living in Germany, since the focus is on the opinion of German feminists in Germany, I thought it would be more suitable. Another downside might be that some meaning can be lost in translation to English, but that is often the case when interviews are conducted in the national language of the focus group. Hence, I decided that the benefits of conducting the interviews in German would outweigh the negatives. For

the formulation and tone of the questions I also made some conscious decisions that might have influenced the answers. As there are two forms of the pronoun you in German, I decided to use the less formal version *du*. However, I decided to write it as *Du* which is the more polite form. I decided on this step as I know many NGOs in Germany with low hierarchical structures use this form in their communication with outside contacts. Hence, I assumed my target group would be more comfortable with this formulation. I also thought that this less formal structure would make them more willing to participate and share more personal feelings and experiences instead of only sharing data and facts. Another detail to be aware of is the inclusivity when formulating questions. By this, I do not only mean all societal groups but mainly gender-inclusive language. While this is a fiercely debated topic in German society, feminists do believe in inclusion and genderfluidity, hence I wanted my questions to reflect this belief and make all interviewees regardless of gender identity feel equally respected. Due to the interviewees being considered experts, none of the key terms such as “feminism” or “antifeminism” were defined before or in the questions. I decided against this as there are many definitions for these terms and everyone has a different understanding. I did not want to limit the answers to the interview questions by limiting the answers to my definition of the terms. Moreover, I decided to make it possible to skip questions in case they did not want to answer or did not understand the question. I also included an open question at the end where the participants could add anything they felt was missing after the questions or they wanted to share after the interview.

When choosing a focus group, I decided that I wanted to focus on feminists who are active on social media. Most of the existing interviews are with experts that are in the academic field or a limited pool of feminists that garnered mainstream attention in the media. I decided that I want to ask young feminists who use their media channels (Instagram, TikTok, Podcasts, Blogs etc.) to educate on feminism and politics, as there are not many existing interviews with them. Moreover, they receive a lot of hate for their online content and thus are at the forefront of the conflict I was interested in. While not being representative of a whole movement, I wanted to include the voices of people from different backgrounds outside academia. These feminists also belong to the newer generation of feminist activists who might have different opinions compared to those who have experienced early waves of feminism. At first, I focused on contacting feminists that are active on social media like *Instagram*, *Facebook*, and *TikTok*. However, most of them did not have the capacity to answer my questions. Afterwards, I decided to focus on feminist podcasts. While they get

less public attention they still focus on the same content in a different format. This was a good choice as many of them were more willing to participate in my interview. While I could not predict who would be willing to participate, I tried to include a diverse group of interviewees from different backgrounds and identities.

When contacting potential interviewees, I attempted to be as transparent as possible. This meant I informed them about myself, my university and my degree. Furthermore, I explained what my thesis would be about and how their answers would be used in the thesis. I informed them about my planned deadline for a reply and sent them the link to access the questionnaire. Moreover, I informed the interviewees that their answers would be completely anonymous. Not even I knew which questionnaire belonged to which participant. While I know who promised to participate, I do not know which answer belongs to whom. While details about a person can be interesting to be included in an analysis, I decided against including any personal details as my perception of these details might influence the way I analyse the interviews due to preconceived opinions about an identity or background.

After contacting 25 feminist activists, I got nine positive responses. Everyone else declined due to capacity limitations. However, I could have gotten more participants if I had changed my deadline to a later date, but I decided against this. I also thought having the existing number of participants would be enough for the scale of my thesis.

5.3. About the Interview Questions

The interview questions are designed to get an in-depth understanding of the perspectives of feminist activists regarding feminism and its challenges with antifeminism. In addition, they explore the relationship and conflict with the antifeminist movement in Germany.

With the first interview question, 'How do you define feminism for yourself?' (*Wie definierst du für dich Feminismus?*) the goal was to find out each interviewee's understanding of feminism. The goal was to explore how different the understanding of feminism is within the movement and gain first-hand insights into their values and worldviews. The answers could also reveal insights regarding their motivations and identity as feminist activists.

The idea for the next two questions was to find out more about feminist goals and compare them to antifeminist goals and ideas. The second question 'What are currently the most important feminist topics and discourses in your opinion?' (*Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen*

Themen und Diskurse?), was formulated to discover what the interviewees think are the most pressing feminist topics. This does not only explain current feminist priorities but also how they are connected to the sociopolitical discourse and how they compare to antifeminist topics and debates in Germany. This closely connects to the third question 'In your opinion, what are the feminist goals and demands that need to be achieved and implemented next?' (*Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?*) which is aimed at exploring the strategies behind reaching feminist goals. It offers insights into what changes feminists think should be implemented next and in what order. Both questions explore the diversity within the feminist movement as well as similarities and offer a starting point for comparison to the antifeminist discourse.

Questions four and five are both related to exploring how feminists plan to achieve these feminist goals. 'What is your idea of how these goals will be achieved?' (*Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?*) explores strategies and actions of activists on how to reach their goals. It can also answer what resources they see as necessary.

Question five, 'How do you think can the majority of society be motivated to support these goals?' (*Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?*) looks at how feminists think they can get public engagement and support. It also touches on their opinion of how feminism is perceived by society. advocacy. Question 11 is related to these questions. 'How can politics and civil society be involved in the realisation and achievement of goals?' (*Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?*) explores of interviewees plan on including the majority of society in reaching feminist goals and how they plan on building coalitions and collaborations with institutions in the future.

With questions six and seven, the goal was to understand the feminists' view on antifeminism and potentially compare it to antifeminist views from second-hand studies. 'Why do you think antifeminism is gaining popularity in German civil society?' (*Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)*) explores the feminist view on the rise in antifeminism in Germany. The aim is to explore the feminist understanding of antifeminism and the rise in antifeminist popularity.

Question seven 'What are the reasons you are concerned about today's antifeminism and

its support in Germany?' (*Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?*) was aimed at uncovering the fears and concerns of feminists about the antifeminist movement. It could also uncover specific threats that feminists are worried about and how they feel about the current public discourse and environment.

The next questions were formulated to explore if the feminists have any empathy or understanding for antifeminist concerns or arguments. 'Which of the concerns and arguments of antifeminists are justified or understandable in your opinion?' (*Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?*) looks at feminists' opinions regarding the validity of concerns and arguments brought up by antifeminists. The aim is to explore feminists' position towards antifeminists and whether or not they have any understanding of oppositional perspectives. The following question nine 'How do you think antifeminists view feminism and feminist demands and goals?' (*Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?*) is connected to the question before and explores how feminists think their movement is perceived by the opposition. A comparison to data about antifeminism will also show how well-informed they are about the perception of antifeminists about the feminist movement.

Question 10 and 12 explore the interviewee's opinion regarding backlash and potential contact with antifeminists. 'In your opinion, what is the best way to achieve and implement feminist goals without triggering an antifeminist backlash?' (*Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?*) looks into feminist strategies to minimize antifeminist backlash or if there even are any strategies. The answers could indicate the interviewee's thoughts on compromise, contact and concern about a stronger opposition in the future.

The question 12 'Do you think more contact is a way to avoid or mitigate backlash?' (*Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?*) explores whether feminists believe that increased dialogue and contact are a way to successfully reduce negative reactions to feminist changes. It can reveal if more contact between the groups is even something feminists would consider lowering the conflict potential in the future.

The last questions are all related to the possibility of future contact and inclusion of wider society in these interactions. Question 13 ‘What could more contact look like and what would be needed on both sides?’ (*Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?*) builds on question 12 and is aimed at exploring feminist ideas regarding how establishing contact could be started and look like. It could reveal basic ideas on how contact could be started and be a success. ‘Which topics do you think are suitable for dialogue?’ (*Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?*) is very straightforward and aimed at identifying topics that feminists think would be good conversation starters or a good beginning to foster intergroup understanding. Here, a comparison to topics that antifeminists see as relevant could be interesting to explore whether or not there is any common ground between the two opposing groups. Question 15 ‘Which roles do politics and civil society play in the possible beginning of dialogue?’ (*Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?*) explores how activists think politics and civil society can be involved in a successful dialogue. This question can reveal how feminists want to gain the support of the wider public and engage all levels of society in a productive discussion on how to reach feminist goals in the future.

The last question was an opportunity for interviewees to mention anything they thought was missing in the interview questions above.

5.4. Thematic Analysis

As a method to analyse the data collected, I chose thematic analysis. To be more precise, I chose the reflexive thematic analysis proposed by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2022). “At a very basic level, TA is a method for developing, analysing and interpreting patterns across a qualitative dataset, which involves systematic processes of data coding to develop themes – themes are your ultimate analytic purpose” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 33f.). The added adjective reflexive means that the subjectivity of the researcher is recognised and considered an asset to the analysis process. Some core assumptions in reflexive thematic analysis should be kept in mind. The first one is the already mentioned subjectivity of the researcher and it is used as a tool. Instead of ignoring or controlling subjectivity, it is used as a resource in the analysis of the data. The analysis of the data itself is thus not accurate or objective but judged as weaker or

unconvincing and stronger or compelling. The coding of data can be done alone or with others and the collaborative coding does not have to reach consensus. However, this assumption will play no role in this thesis as the coding and interpretation were only done by one person. The codes and themes are qualitatively good if the immersion in the data is deep and there were breaks taken in between the development of the analysis. Themes are shared patterns or ideas and not simply summaries of a certain topic. Themes are established from codes and not before them and are produced by the researcher through engagement with the dataset. The analysis of the data is always done with a theoretical background that needs to be kept in mind. To produce a good analysis, the researcher has to be reflective about their positioning and beliefs. The final assumption is that: "Data analysis is conceptualised as an art not a science; creativity is central to the process, situated within a framework of rigour" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 32f.).

I chose this method of analysis because it aligns well with the questions and responses of the dataset. The data from the interviews covers several complex themes like societal structures, political responsibilities, feminism, antifeminism and conflict. The method allows for flexibility when developing themes from qualitative data, especially because there might be a mix of expected and emergent themes. It also allows for adaptation to new insights during the analysis process which is important when politically and emotionally complex topics are analysed. Another reason for choosing this methodology was that the topic itself is tied to subjective experiences, emotions and interpretations for both the interviewee but also the researcher. This method allows the researcher to reflect and remain conscious of their perspectives and background and how this influences the interaction with the data. Because themes like privilege, intersectionality or forms of discrimination might be mentioned, continually monitoring the researcher's bias or societal context is key to ensuring the analysis remains grounded.

It is also a good method to handle contradictory or diverse perspectives within a dataset. As some of the questions explore themes that can include agreeing and disagreeing responses, this method works well to capture and analyse tensions or multiple contradicting perspectives. This works because the method focuses on meaning-making and the interviewee's worldviews. It is a good method to analyse how different groups interpret the same social issue or how interviewees construct meaning around complex topics.

Before looking into the steps of reflexive thematic analysis, it is important to narrow down what variation of the method is being used. The orientation to the data is more deductive as the theories explained above provide a lens through which the data is coded, and themes are developed. The meaning of the data is also explored more on the surface which implies the meaning is analysed on a semantic level. Due to feminism focussing on personal experiences, the qualitative framework is also more experiential as the analysis focuses on personal perspectives and understandings. This goes in hand with the theoretical framework being more on the relativist or constructionist side as a lot of the theories as well as the interview questions focus on personal worldviews and perceptions of reality rather than a universal truth.

In addition, because it is a reflexive thematic analysis, the researcher should reflect on how methodological choices and disciplinary location affect knowledge production. This means focusing on personal reflexivity which relates to the researchers' intersecting social positionings like "sex/gender, sexuality, social class/socioeconomics, race and ethnicity, ability, age, belief, immigration status" (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 42). Especially important here is considering where the researcher occupies positions of social privilege or marginality. In my case, living in a Western country I am socially privileged for being cisgender, middle class, White, non-disabled and young. I am also not a migrant or from a migrant family. However, in the same context, I do occupy some positions that are considered in the social marginality. These include being female and most likely queer. In addition, being an Atheist can be considered a social margin in some countries, but in the German context, I would not consider it a disadvantage. But maybe this belief is incorrect or biased as I am Christian on paper. All these social positionings shape how each person experiences the world and perceives or is perceived by others. Upbringing is also an important aspect that shapes the worldview of a person immensely. I grew up in the countryside of Germany, which is considered more conservative. However, my parents and family were always very liberal. While I am writing this thesis, I am a first-generation university graduate in my immediate family. I also come from a family with international marriages and grew up with queer friends and family. While being a woman makes it easy for me to understand some forms of discrimination and gender-based violence, first-hand experiences of racial discrimination or discrimination due to my sexual orientation are not something I can relate to. This means that I can support other people in fighting against ableism, or racial and sexual discrimination, I cannot relate to it through first-hand

experiences though. This is important to know and acknowledge as it influences the interpretation of the data. In addition to personal positionality, political and ideological commitments are also important parts of personal reflexivity. This includes positions or subjects that might be considered controversial within society. In my case, most of my opinions in this regard might be considered “left” or “liberal” in Germany. The biggest point here is being a believer in feminism which is linked to bodily autonomy, full support of queer rights, believing in free migration and upholding human rights for everyone (also refugees) and fighting for equality. I am also very critical of capitalism and patriarchy and see both as systems of oppression that should be changed. Moreover, I believe that climate change is a very pressing issue that should get more global attention and counteraction. Many more political and ideological commitments shape my worldview and hence how I interpret data, but these should give an idea of my positioning. These are especially relevant in the case of this dataset as it focuses on the worldviews and opinions of feminists on antifeminism. And while the goal of this thesis is not to decide who is right or wrong, it should be kept in mind by myself as the person analysing the data and the reader, that I am an insider researcher for this topic which will influence the interpretation of the data and answering the hypothesis.

The next steps for data analysis according to reflexive theoretical analysis are getting familiar with the dataset, several rounds of coding the data, generating themes from the codes, reviewing the developed themes, theme refining and naming, and writing the analysis. To familiarize myself with the themes I read through the interviews several times on different days and took notes. I focused on the tone of the interview, their opinions and worldviews and anything else I found of note or interesting while reading them.

After familiarising oneself with the dataset it is time to start the first round of coding. During the process of coding the researcher explores the patterns of meaning within the dataset and applies codes to segments of the data. A code label can be defined as “An output of the coding process; a succinct phrase attached to a segment of data, as a shorthand tag for a code; often refined during the coding process” (Braun & Clarke, 2022, p. 74). For this data set more semantic coding was used which implies that the explicitly expressed meaning on the surface of the data was captured. The coding took several rounds, just like the familiarization. At first, the codes were really short segments of the interview, but for the following rounds I tried to make the segments include more text and use a code label that captures the main idea or argument of the

segment instead of the literal translation. However, sometimes this was not possible as some of the interviewees only answered with very short bullet points, hence the length of the code is sometimes limited by the amount of data itself.

After developing codes, the next step is to develop themes from the codes. A theme includes codes around a shared idea or conceptual pattern. Each of the themes is organised in its distinct way and the connection between codes might not always be immediately obvious. For this step, I decided to organize and group the codes under each interview question into mind maps. To find a fitting theme, I searched for the common idea or concept of a group of codes while keeping the original interview question in mind. I found this important because the interview questions focus on specific topics such as feminism, antifeminism or backlash. This was also the reason I decided on separate mind maps organized for each interview question. While grouping some questions would have been possible, I decided it would be easier to compare answers to different questions if the codes and themes were organized separately. This process was also done over several days because looking at grouped codes with a fresh perspective can help find the common idea or even change the theme completely.

After working with the dataset through codes and themes, the next step is to start writing the report. This step includes descriptions regarding the analytical process, design choices and other procedural choices regarding the dataset.

6. Data Analysis and Discussion

For the discussion of the interview data, I decided to structure the analysis and discussion mainly around the hypothesis and thesis question instead of an open analysis. It is a combination of discussing the outcome of coding and analysing the themes with regard to the selected theories and comparing the data to antifeminist second-hand data in some cases.

6.1. Feminist Self-Perception, Future Goals, and Strategies

This first part will focus on the interview questions one to five to reveal more about the feminist side of the conflict. As the first five questions mainly focus on feminist self-perception, future goals and strategies, the analysis builds the foundation of assessing whether reframing the conflict and a more supportive engagement is possible. The answers will provide a first insight into whether any common ground for discussion can be found in order to reduce intergroup tensions.

6.1.1. Definitions of Feminism and Feminist Movements

The first question focused on the interviewees' definition of feminism. While the details of each definition were a bit different, all of them can basically be organised under three major themes. The biggest one was that feminism is an inclusive movement for gender equality and social justice. The interviewees all pointed out that it is an intersectional and inclusive movement for all genders and gender identities. "Feminism is a social movement with the goal of equality and freedom for everyone, regardless of gender, race, age, ability, class etc." (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]). I was expecting this because I also define feminism as a movement aimed at achieving equality for all genders and gender identities. As one interviewee points out it is an inclusive movement but "[e]ven though the commitment to women's rights is the main focus, feminism cannot be thought about for me, without pointing out any form of discrimination (like racism and classism too) and taking a stance against them" (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). The emphasis on intersectionality highlights that the interviewees do not only see feminism as a struggle for women's rights but as a broader social movement aimed at creating a more just society. This perspective aligns with debates in academic feminism about understanding the diversity of gender and recognizing diverse intersectional lived realities and identities. In addition to recognizing the fight for inclusivity and equality for all, the interviewees pointed

out that feminism is a movement that wants systemic change. This means the movement focuses on changing broader systemic structures like patriarchy and capitalism. Feminism strives for “[h]uman rights for everyone, intersectional, against patriarchy and capitalism, for a sustainable handling of our earth” (Interviewee 8, 2023, [own translation]). The interviewees argue that the movement is not only concerned with achieving gender equality but wants to change all societal structures that uphold oppression and inequality in some form while also taking steps to sustainably combat climate change, which emphasizes the intersectional nature of the movement. In addition, this highlights once again that many movements can be feminist even though their main goal might be of a different focus like climate movements like “Fridays for Future” or movements against armament. One interviewee pointed out that feminism is a “movement that strives for a utopia of a fairer and juster world (for example in comparison to the utopia of a rich world full of capital, that we strive for at the moment due to capitalism)” (Interviewee 2, 2023, [own translation]). Hence, feminism is not only about promoting gender equality for everyone but changing the whole system we are living in including patriarchal as well as capitalist structures. Moreover, the interviewees connect feminism to the broader human rights framework by defining feminism as advocacy for women’s and human rights. Interviewee 7 argues that feminism includes “[a]ll movements and efforts, that regard the dignity, equality and self-determination of all people as their as their value and goal” (2023, [own translation]). The focus on both women’s and human rights makes it clear that there is an indivisible connection between gender equality and human rights. This point of view highlights that feminism is a universal movement that seeks to advance justice for all individuals. The only topic that was a slightly different focus than the three big themes mentioned above was that feminism is about environmental protection. While all the definitions highlight the wide spectrum of feminist movements, they also make it clear that the goal of feminism goes beyond gender equality towards a complete change of the current system we live in. Furthermore, the answers of the interviewees show that feminist goals are directly linked to human rights, which means that any opposition to feminist goals could be interpreted as an attack on human rights. This is one of the first implications regarding why reframing or finding common ground in this conflict might be extremely difficult. While the movement is very diverse, group cohesion is also very strong when it comes to the topic of human rights and personal freedom of everyone.

6.1.2. The Most Important and Most Pressing Feminist Goals

The next two interview questions focused on feminist goals. The first question was about the currently most important feminist goals and the second one was about the goals that need to be reached next. Both questions have six major themes, but the themes are not completely the same. The interviewees identify intersectionality and social justice as the first theme regarding the most important feminist topics. Interviewee 2 argues that one of the most pressing feminist issues is “[p]overty and the interlinkage with race, especially with regards to climate justice because one can assume that questions regarding sustainability will primarily affect black people and poor people (among them especially single mothers) while their opinion is barely listened to in public discourse” (2023, [own translation]). This shows that feminism embraces diverse identities and experiences, acknowledging that various forms of oppression intersect and impact individuals differently. It also highlights that there is still a lack of equal participation for marginalized voices in public discourse. The next common focus area differed slightly, emphasizing the need for economic change for gender equality. With this theme, the interviewees emphasized the need to transform the economic structures to achieve gender equality by addressing wage gaps, changing the tax system and paying for care work. According to interviewee 8, the relevant discussion points here include “[t]ime justice, lowering full-time work to 30 hours per week, anchor parenthood as a discrimination criterion, how do we deal with the worsening care crisis (missing specialists in child and elderly care), payment for care work” (2023, [own translation]). This makes it obvious that according to feminists’ major economic reforms would be needed to stop structural discrimination based on gender. Additionally, the interviewees almost collectively pointed out that addressing gender inequality in combination with systemic discrimination and addressing gender-based violence is one of the most important current issues in Germany. This includes combatting gender stereotypes, bringing awareness to the sexualisation of female bodies and gender-based violence as well as femicides. Including “looking at violence against women and other minorities as a systematic problem and not isolated incidents” (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). The mention of violence makes it clear that many feminist themes are not about minor inconveniences for women or marginalized groups but that the movement still fights for the safety of marginalized groups in society in addition to gender equality issues and huge power disparities in the current patriarchal system.

Another major theme that relates to the idea that feminism is a political movement is the concern about the global shift to conservative ideologies. “Globally and nationally: the engagement with the diverse manifestations of antifeminist backlash tendencies (right-wing conservative sociopolitical re-emergence, which is accompanied by misogyny, a revival of traditional gender roles, and the rollback of fought for women’s rights)” (Interviewee 7, 2023, [own translation]). This highlights that the interviewees are concerned about the global political shift to the right as it is also connected to the revival of hegemonic and toxic masculinity and a potential rollback of women’s rights like the right to abortion in the United States. It also shows how feminists are aware of the interconnection between conservative politics, right-wing extremism and antifeminism and do not view antifeminism as an isolated movement. This interconnection is also confirmed by the studies by Höcker et al. who argue that antifeminism “together with the rejection of equality and anti-discrimination measures, [...] is part of a political agenda that is particularly – and successfully mobilising – driven by right-wing populist, right-wing radical, and far-right parties and their voters” (2020, p. 272, [own translation])

Linked to the fight against conservative regression is the topic of advancing feminist politics and representation. More female representation and feminist influence in all areas of politics and decision-making are essential to counteract the conservative shift and public narrative. The last important theme according to the interviewees is inclusive feminism and advocacy. Interviewee 3 points out that the most important issue at the moment is “the acknowledgement of marginalised people within the discourses, everything is discussed on a very white, non-precarious, non-disabled, heteronormative, binary level. This has to stop to actually include everyone, beginning with the discourses and especially regarding implementation” (2023, [own translation]). The interviewee points out that problems can only be solved if the affected and marginalized people are listened to and can advise on steps and solutions taken. While the feminist movement tries to be as inclusive and intersectional as possible, it cannot solve any problems if it talks about the affected people instead of with them. This is the same issue for the broader public and politics as marginalized voices are often silenced and denied agency. This also highlights the complexity of the feminist and antifeminist conflict as it includes many different groups. Thus, to come to any successful result many voices must be included and listened to.

While there are some overlapping ideas and topics, the question regarding what feminist goals should be achieved next shows some different answers than the question about goals

in general. The interviewees argued that funding and policies for diverse communities should be strengthened next. This includes suggestions like more feminist politics, better support for (diverse) families and creating more safe spaces for women* and queers (like women's shelters) and spending more money to fight racism and antifeminism. This shows that feminists expect the state to spend more money on topics relevant to feminism instead of the current focus on the economy and armament. This is also the complete opposite of the media discourse at the moment where these topics are not talked about at all. Thus, it is obvious that feminists do not control the public narrative at the moment. Another important theme is advancing human rights beyond gender-specific issues. This is highlighted by Interviewee 2 arguing that the next goals should be "decriminalization of abortion, unconditional access to food, water, housing etc, open borders (if we dream really big)" (2023, [own translation]). Thus, the feminist movement is not only concerned with advancing women's rights but is also fighting against growing poverty and opposing the current policies on criminalizing migration. While this shows the intersectionality of the movement, it also highlights why common ground with conservative and antifeminist movements will be extremely difficult to find. This is also confirmed by the studies on antifeminism by Decker et al. whose study found that antifeminism strongly correlates "with the devaluation of social groups like Muslims, Black people, or Sinti and Roma. The results can also be interpreted as indications of purity ideals connected to antifeminism and sexism within racial ideology [...]. The connection to antisemitic resentment is especially close" (2022, p. 255f, [own translation]). The next big theme is that the economy should also be transformed through care and equality. This includes prioritizing care work and gender equality to reform the economy. The interviewees argue that a system based on care would solve the ongoing care crisis, bring economic safety to those people who take care of dependants instead of full-time work and lead to more gender equality as it is mostly women taking care of others and working in the care field. The interviewees suggest that a start could be time justice through reduced work hours and eventually transforming the whole capitalist system. In Germany, the care crisis is also a big topic in the media as there is a lack of hospital and nursing home staff, as well as not enough teachers in kindergarten and schools. While paying people in the field more money might seem like an easy fix, this ignores the complexity of underlying gender inequality and systematic devaluation of mainly female-dominated work both in the home as well as the workplace. Due to women being the majority in caretaker roles, many people in power do not want to admit additional value as this would have implications for the whole

social system. Recognising the importance of caretakers would imply that especially women play a bigger role in the daily upkeep of our economic and social system and could potentially lead to them demanding more power, which would lead to a loss of privilege for the ones up in the hierarchy. Not only the economy but also education should be reformed and gender norms challenged according to the interviewees. To achieve lasting change, traditional gender norms have to be changed in education. “Feminist education has to be included in teaching plans to proactively work against the strengthening of ideas about hegemonic masculinity in times of TikTok and Andrew Tate” (Interviewee 1, 2023, [own translation]). The interviewees point out that to reach sustainable change, education on feminist topics has to start in school where ideas about gender roles and expectations can still be influenced. Höcker et al. confirm this correlation as they found “people with a less formal degree of education” (2020, p. 277, [own translation]) are more likely to hold antifeminist sentiments. Thus a good education is a relevant part of stopping antifeminist beliefs in young people. Additionally, patriarchy should be challenged by the general population to advance feminism. “First, it is important to deconstruct patriarchal thinking to think about gender equality of all genders as a whole” (Interviewee 9, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that feminists think everyone is responsible for reflecting on their morals and values to change society for the better and work against deep-rooted issues like the normalization of sexism, ableism or white feminism. This connects to the final theme of addressing perpetrators and victim blaming. As mentioned earlier, sexism is still deeply engrained in German society and often leads to sexual harassment or abuse. Unfortunately, these are still not talked about as systemic issues but as singular incidents. Some interviewees argue that instead of only looking at the victims and in the worst case blaming them, society should start focussing on the perpetrators and hold them accountable for their actions. However, findings by Decker et al. (2022) suggest that this change in perception will be difficult to achieve in the near future as the trend is going in the opposite direction at the moment. “Although these are not majority opinions in the population, up to a quarter of Germans agree with antifeminist and sexist statements. Interestingly, antifeminist statements have noticeably increased since 2020. The same applies, even though to a lesser extent, to sexist attitudes. Traditional sexism (or upkeeping to old gender roles) seems to have experienced a partial revival under pandemic conditions” (Decker et al., 2022, p. 252, [own translation]).

6.1.3. Strategic Direction of German Feminism

While the interviewees brought up a variety of topics and issues, some themes are considered the most pressing as well as most important general goals by the interviewees. This can provide some insight into the strategic direction of feminism in Germany. The first overarching topic is intersectionality and social justice as the foundation of feminist goals. The emphasis on intersectionality highlights the need for approaches and solutions that consider the interconnection of different forms of discrimination, not only the discrimination of women. It connects to the idea that more future funding and policies strengthen diverse communities and ensure human rights and economic equality are promoted for everyone, especially marginalized groups. Economic changes and a care economy reform are other themes in both overall and next goals. The interviewees link economic changes for more gender equality to the goal of transforming the economy with a focus on care and care work. The emphasis on economic equality highlights the idea of integrating care work into the economic framework and recognising its value. This interconnection would ensure that a more inclusive and supportive economy is built. Challenging gender norms and addressing systemic violence are interconnected themes that reflect the feminist effort to reshape societal attitudes and institutions. They are also linked to the goal of reforming education to prevent future violence and promote a culture of respect and equality in the future. Addressing perpetrators and victim blaming includes tackling systemic violence by confronting harmful norms and recognizing the systemic problems that enable these behaviours. The interviewees also recognize the global shift towards more conservative ideologies and that this makes it more difficult to advance feminist politics and representation. Because the conservative and antifeminist movements pose a direct challenge to feminist progress, feminist representation in the political and social sphere has become more important. By strengthening feminist voices and influence, the movement aims to combat regressive trends and politics to ensure that the feminist perspective is integral to political decisions and social change. This is especially important because antifeminism has a huge voice in politics with the recent political success of the AfD. The last overarching themes are inclusive feminism and advocacy. Inclusive feminism advocates for a broad representative approach by attempting to make all marginalized voices heard and addressed. By emphasizing inclusivity and advocacy the interviewees

highlight that feminism seeks to build a movement that is responsive to the needs of all individuals that are negatively affected by the current system and try to give space and voice to groups that are silenced by the social and political mainstream.

All of these themes clarify the interviewees' opinions about the feminists' position in the conflict with antifeminism by demonstrating that current feminist efforts seek to challenge systemic inequalities like patriarchy and capitalism, which are often defended as part of the traditional value system. The push for educational reforms and economic change to promote equality are also often opposed by antifeminists as these changes are seen as a threat to long-established norms and hierarchies. This highlights a big ideological divide between feminist advocacy for inclusive social justice and resistance to any change in patriarchal and conservative systems.

The feminists suggested that these goals should be reached through empowerment like talking more about feminism in society and giving more space and agency to marginalized groups. They also plan on better cooperation within the movement and more joint activism within the group and with wider civil society. They argue that a clear and joint action plan and opinion is needed for feminism to better advance in the future. Unsurprisingly they argued that economic empowerment and redistribution of wealth are a good way to advance feminist goals, including paying carework better and strengthening welfare politics. They also argue that education should focus more on the dangers of the interconnection of antifeminism with right-wing extremism and that more money should be spent on education campaigns against antifeminism. "And very importantly and that can be done by everyone in their everyday and personal environment: not standing by and being silent when others make remarks or when something unjust happens but taking sides and standing up for oneself and other people" (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]).

6.1.4. Ways to Gain German Majority Support

While Question 4 focuses on strategies how to reach goals, the following question focuses on how feminists want to motivate the majority of society for feminist goals. Unsurprisingly they point out that increasing public representation and activism on all levels can help with gaining majority support. This goes hand in hand with promoting education on feminism through various channels and ways in order to break down oppositional views. "A proactive debate on what triggers fear in men is needed. Male fragility exists in the context of a society where social injustices increase, the "middle class" is gradually disappearing and fears of

downward mobility are rising. It must be communicated that feminism addresses and problematizes exactly these fears of decline” (Interviewee 1, 2023, [own translation]). While understanding and addressing male fears was brought up by several interviewees, they also pointed out that the benefits of feminism for everyone should be highlighted more. One suggestion here was that decision-makers should start with making beneficial decisions again instead of listening too much to the people being opposed to policies that would foster more equality. This connects to the feeling that the current discourse and debate are dominated by conservative and antifeminist parties and opinions and politics are getting influenced by these arguments. Instead, more attention should be paid to fostering inclusion, giving voice to marginalized groups and fostering more empathy for others. Some interviewees were quite optimistic when it came to gaining the support of the majority of society “I have the maybe naïve idea that almost every person can be reached because what feminism wants is basically something that everyone can relate to because everyone has experienced a form of injustice in their own life before” (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). However, others pointed out that it will be difficult to navigate the gap between ideals and the reality of a polarized world. They pointed out that the conflict is so deep that a constructive discussion is nearly impossible and convincing people that change is needed is very difficult. The same interviewee who started off very optimistic, also pointed out that “[i]t is not our job to convince people or win them over if one wants to try anyways, the private talk under four eyes is the most effective” (Interviewee4,2023,[own translation]). This shows that while feminists have some ideas regarding how more acceptance of feminist values and actions could be built, they are also aware that the public discourse is not in their favour at the moment. They also seem disillusioned and unwilling to attempt the same discussions they have had for decades. Due to this intergroup conflict being drawn out for so long, there is little hope on the feminist side that they can easily influence antifeminist opinions.

6.2. Feminists’ Perspective Regarding the Rise in Antifeminism

After this overview of the values worldviews and priorities regarding the most pressuring issues by the feminist interviewees, I decided to focus the analysis on the hypothesis: *Feminists perceive the rise in antifeminism as a significant threat to gender equality, and human and women’s rights in Germany.*

6.2.1. Reasons for a Rise in Antifeminism

The interview responses reveal different perspectives regarding why antifeminism is gaining traction in question six. A major theme is that antifeminists are afraid of change and feel threatened in their privileges. While some interviewees point out that the fear can stem from a lack of education when it comes to knowledge on feminism and its aspirations, “[o]n the other hand it has reached Germany that feminism can lead to power loss, which people profiting from the patriarchal system want to avoid” (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that both groups perceive each other as threats because their demands and values clash on a fundamental level. “Overall, one in four men and one in ten women in Germany have a closed feminist worldview. This is not surprising because antifeminism is basically a male problem, stemming from a fear of losing power and control, insecurity about male identity and the projection of these fears onto the perceived threat of feminism” (Höcker et al., 2020, p. 264, [own translation]). While feminists want to redistribute power and make the social structures more equal, antifeminists want to keep current or even past social structures because they benefit from the privileges of the patriarchal system and do not want to lose those to change. For many of the interviewees, antifeminism is not a new or surprising phenomenon, and they point out that it is normal for movements to have countermovements, especially when they become as successful as the feminist movement. While this does not imply the interviewees are not concerned about the antifeminist movement and support, they pointed out that this movement will continue to exist until the majority of society supports feminist goals. However, the study by Höcker et al found that “[m]ore than a third of the population in Germany (47.3% of men and 28.7% of women) agree with at least one antifeminist statement. While the proportion of those with firmly antifeminist attitudes decreases to just over one-fifth of respondents when using the scale, antifeminism remains a significant societal issue at the attitudinal level” (2020, p. 262, [own translation]). Hence, interviewees see antifeminism as a reaction to societal and economic shifts. The interviewees argue that due to the societal structures changing, some people try to reestablish patriarchal structures by shifting towards misogynistic statements and therefore challenging the norms of what is accepted in society. This interconnects with the idea that ‘traditional’ social structures would benefit the economy and help with economic instability. However, the interviewees also make it clear that “equality, diversity and democracy – the foundations of feminist values – are not compatible with fascist aspirations” (Interviewee 7,

2023, [own translation]). This shows that while the interviewees acknowledge that insecurity is a natural reaction to change, so is unwillingness to give up privileges, this does not excuse the oppression of others. Furthermore, the interviewees see antifeminism not only as a threat to their movement and goals but as a threat to democracy itself. This was further emphasized by highlighting the interconnection between patriarchy and populism, with some participants emphasizing that populist political rhetoric has bolstered antifeminism and the current discriminatory discourse benefitting antifeminist worldviews. This perception is also emphasized by Höcker et al. (2020) who found in their studies that “[t]he main goal of antifeminism is to prevent the democratic process that currently aims at the pluralization and dissolution of the traditional gender order, as well as the emancipation of women from societal relations of inequality, power, and domination” (p. 276, [own translation]).

Additionally, the desire for simplicity and stability in response to complex issues also emerged as a theme. “The complexity and multilayered nature of many of today’s problems trigger the desire for ‘simple answers’ in many social milieus. These simple answers are often full of hatred and promote the maintenance of hierarchical power structures like patriarchy” (Interviewee 1, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that many antifeminists hold onto tradition and their conservative beliefs because they promise stability in insecure times and political parties like the AfD promise easy solutions to the complex problems in today's world. Thus, antifeminism can be seen as a threat to any feminist goals as it is a movement partly supported by people who fear complex problems and uncomfortable truths. It is also dangerous as the reaction by many antifeminist supporters is more driven by emotions than facts, which makes them an easy target for populist parties. This relates to a broader misconception and misinformation that is further contributing to antifeminist support. The interviewees pointed out that feminism is often blamed as a scapegoat for bigger social problems with antifeminists blaming feminism for broader negative economic or political challenges. Additionally, antifeminists have a lot of media support in addition to political parties and more financial resources than feminists to spread their misinformation campaigns and blame feminists for existential fears. Interviewee 4 summarizes very fittingly that feminist concerns do not exist in an isolated sphere but “additionally there are all the other existential problems of our time, that almost no one can mentally escape from. Wars, resource scarcity, terror, fear about the future. If in such a climate, when a group of people seeks to discuss an asterisk in written language, it can quickly and easily be dismissed as inappropriate and unimportant” (Interviewee 4, 2023,

[own translation]). While this depicts that there need to be intersectional solutions that tackle many problems at the same time, the portrayal of the feminist movement as being concerned about 'ridiculous' small issues is a threat to the success of the movement in the future. The rise in antifeminism is hence not surprising as the patterns can be seen in other social conflicts, where movements for equality are met with resistance by those who feel their identities or way of life are threatened.

6.2.2. Why the Rise in Antifeminism is Concerning

When asked about their concerns regarding the rise of antifeminism, the interviewees expressed fears about the escalation from antifeminism to broader anti-democratic extremism. The interviewees pointed out that many people are not informed about the whole scale of antifeminism and how its interconnection with right extremism can lead to a slipping slope for many supporters of the antifeminist movement. "This tendency toward violence among respondents with antifeminist (and partly sexist) attitudes is particularly concerning with regard to organized antifeminism and its potential for violence and threats. Antifeminist attitudes are by no means trivial but rather a key element of right-wing radical and extremist thinking, as well as part of their tactic and strategy. The connection works both ways: Those who are right-wing extremists tend to be antifeminist and those who are antifeminist tend to be right-wing extremists" (Höcker et al., 2020, p. 276, [own translation]).

These concerns connect to the role of politics in amplifying the antifeminist sentiments often mentioned by the interviewees. "The AfD, but also other parties often use the scepticism and rejection of feminism, for their own gain and to gain supporters through populism and easy answers. This leads to an even deeper divide" (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). This divide was also found by Höcker et al., who point out that „[i]t becomes clear that voters of the Green Party are particularly unlikely to hold antifeminist (5.4%) and sexist (14.6%) views. Sexism is equally prevalent among those who report voting for the CDU/CSU or AfD, at 31.7% each, while those who do not vote reach the highest level at 33.3%. Antifeminism, on the other hand, is only pronounced among AfD voters (46.2%)“ (2020, p. 272, [own translation]).

The concerns about politics amplifying antifeminist beliefs connect to a concern regarding the resurgence of patriarchy and antifeminism in mainstream society. The interviewees expressed concerns that the gains by the feminist movements could be rolled back as the antifeminist attitudes reinforce outdated gender norms as well as hegemonic masculinity.

This is especially problematic as “an ideal of masculinity that is oriented toward violence and strength promotes sexist and even more antifeminist attitudes” (Decker et al., 2022, p. 258, [own translation]). This resurgence coupled with fears of radicalisation is seen as a direct threat to the individual freedoms of women* and queer people. Some of the interviewees noted concerns about safety and increased violence. “How safe will we be able to live in the next years, what attacks (psychological and physical) do we have to fear, how can we protect ourselves? A society that tolerates hate speech, also as a high tolerance for acts of violence” (Interviewee 3, 2023, [own translation]). This response touched upon the fear of violence becoming normalised, especially in light of populist rhetoric that encourages confrontational behaviour towards progressive movements. This concern is validated by the studies by Decker et al. who also point out that “Antifeminism is not harmless because it includes attempts to intimidate people seeking abortions, protests against sexual education in school or hostility towards feminists in the streets, even escalating to right-wing terrorism” (2022, p. 266, [own translation]). One participant also pointed out concerns about the impact of climate change and its intersection with antifeminism. This respondent saw the inability to cope with future crises as a reason for the rise in antifeminism. Hence, feminist concerns about antifeminism revolve around the potential for it to lead to a more restrictive and violent societal landscape where the hard-won progress on gender equality is at risk of being reversed, and broader democratic freedoms are under threat. Hence, feminists do not only see the antifeminist movement as a threat to their rights but also as a threat to their overall well-being and are very concerned about the rise in antifeminist popularity.

When questioned regarding the arguments and concerns of antifeminists and whether any of them are justifiable or understandable, the answers were mixed. While almost all interviewees agreed that none of the arguments by antifeminists are justifiable or understandable, the answers regarding the concerns are more varied. They can basically be divided into yes and no categories as in yes some of the concerns are understandable and no none of the concerns are understandable. The interviewees who could understand some of the concerns recognized that there is an emotional base to the antifeminist concerns which should be addressed. Interviewee 5 pointed out that “[a]ll concerns are always justified – everyone has a right to feel concerned” (2023, [own translation]). They pointed out that navigating insecurity in changing social

norms can be difficult for people, especially those whose identities and roles feel threatened by feminist ideas and gains or who will lose their privileges in the process of change. Interviewees also noted the difficulty of personal reflection, noting that it can be challenging for individuals to question their own privileges or to adjust to societal changes, which can make populist or antifeminist rhetoric appealing. “Recognizing the themes and movement would also mean relearning several things and maybe getting ‘lectured’ or maybe apologizing here and there or taking back words and actions” (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). One interviewee also pointed out that they themselves as a marginalised person can relate to the difficulty of critical and difficult self-reflection and relearning. This connects to the argument that it might be hard for people to relate to the feminist perspective and worldview if they do not know any feminists or people who can point out the benefit of feminism to their personal lives. The study by Höcker et al. found an additional perspective, pointing out that “[e]ngaging with feminist developments requires trust in one's environment and in other people. In contrast, those who suffer from fears of threats and fear losing their status and dominance appear to be more susceptible to antifeminist resentments“ (2020, p. 269, [own translation]). However, two specific concerns were pointed out as being valid by interviewees. The first one was the argument that the women's quota in some companies and parts of the government might not only have benefits. But the interviewee also pointed out that at the moment there is no better solution or possibility for women to break through the glass ceiling. The second valid argument that was mentioned by one interviewee is the concern about the loss of the nuclear family. The interviewee was sure this would happen eventually, but there was no deeper discussion on whether this is an actual loss for society in general or just for antifeminist and conservative worldviews. On the ‘no’ side the interviewees dismissed antifeminist arguments as being based on misconception and lack of evidence. They pointed out that antifeminists argue based on assumptions as they do not have any real knowledge of the feminist movement and its goals. Moreover, the interviewees pointed out that the antifeminist arguments often lack any scientific base. This point was also emphasized in the study by Höcker et al. pointing out that “authoritarian attitudes and a conspiracy mentality prove to be central driving forces behind antifeminist opinions” (2020, p. 270, [own translation]). Several feminists also expressed no understanding for the antifeminist movement or ideology, because they are sure that feminism benefits everyone. Some interviewees went even further and argued that “[t]heir arguments are neither

justifiable nor understandable because they are clearly aimed against basic human rights and the right to physical and psychological integrity” (Interviewee 1, 2023, [own translation]). Overall, the responses show that while some feminists are willing to recognize some emotional and social dimensions of antifeminist concerns as understandable, they view the movement’s ideological and political goals as incompatible with the advancement of equality and fundamental feminist change. Thus, the antifeminist movement is perceived as a threat to both the feminist movement as well as the values they stand for.

6.2.3. How Antifeminists View Feminism – According to Feminists

When asked about how they think antifeminists perceive feminist demands and goals, the responses painted a picture of antifeminists’ perceptions being shaped by fear, insecurity, and a reactionary response to perceived loss of privileges. The interviewees pointed out that antifeminism is often driven by a fear of societal change and a feeling of being threatened by the change in norms and societal dynamics. This fear and the lack of knowledge lead to misunderstandings about feminist goals, with many antifeminists perceiving feminism as an extreme movement that should not be taken seriously and focuses on irrelevant problems. “They get the feeling that the demanded changes everything they know is being questioned and they might have to change parts of their life, that they do not want to change, or they might have to reflect on the question if they like everything the way it is, or if they simply have not learned it differently” (Interviewee 3, 2023, [own translation]). One interviewee also pointed out that antifeminists often agree with feminist arguments as long as they do not know they are feminist arguments, which shows that some people disagree on principle and not because they have deeper knowledge regarding the feminist movement. Some interviewees also pointed out that there is a correlation between antifeminism and conspirational and extremist rhetoric. Not only is antifeminism interconnected with antisemitism, “[a]ntisemitic elements (Jewish world conspiracy) are often also present when feminism is seen as a conspiracy” (Interviewee 1, 2023, [own translation]). This relates back to the idea that supporting antifeminist ideas is not always about believing in different facts but finding someone to blame for problems that seem difficult or uncomfortable to resolve. Several feminists argued that antifeminists’ opposition stems from their reaction to or fear of privilege loss and their resistance to personal reflection. “They only see things from their perspective and refuse to look outward or to imagine - honestly engage with - what it might feel like to live and grow up as a woman or someone perceived as female, or as a person constantly subjected to racist hostility. Their own well-being and privilege are immediately

defended. Not a centimetre is given to the other group - why should it be? No one gives them anything either" (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). This clarifies that the rise of feminism is seen as threatening long-standing power dynamics that benefit men, making antifeminism a defensive response. This reaction is often characterized by the misunderstanding that antifeminists believe feminists seek to impose unfair disadvantages on privileged groups instead of striving for gender equality. The responses from the interviewees to the four questions (question 6 to question 9) provide insight into how feminists perceive the rise of antifeminism in Germany as a threat to gender equality and human rights. While the understandings of antifeminist perspectives differ in detail, the dominant perspective among interviewees aligns strongly with the hypothesis that antifeminism is a reactionary movement that poses a serious challenge to the progress of feminist movements and goals. The reactionary nature of the movement relates back to Backlash Theory as the backlash intensifies the more feminists push for greater gender equality. This backlash is perceived as an obstacle to achieving feminist goals, especially because antifeminist rhetoric is joined by populist, nationalist and patriarchal forces. The answers by the interviewees make it obvious that they do not see antifeminism as a critique of specific feminist goals but rather as a broader ideological movement that is hostile to fundamental rights and freedoms. Interviewees point to social, political, and economic shifts and international insecurity as key drivers of antifeminism. "The spread of antifeminist attitudes does not go without consequences, as this dimension of attitudes - following the rejection of migration, the devaluation of refugees, and anti-Muslim racism- becomes the most frequently used mobilization argument by right-wing populist and far-right movements" (Höcker et al., 2020, p. 272, [own translation]).

Many feminists also link the rise in antifeminism to broader patriarchal and populist forces that want to maintain the traditional power structures and promise simple answers to complex problems. The interviewees pointed out that antifeminism thrives in an environment where fear of change and perceived threats to privilege are heightened, especially regarding current debates around gender, migratory background, and economic inequality. This framing aligns with the hypothesis as feminists see antifeminism as a larger backlash against social progress and growing inequality and not only as a localized reaction to specific feminist issues. Additionally, the feminists pointed out that misconceptions are a big help with antifeminist support. Many of the answers seemed frustrated that a lot of the antifeminist arguments and

opinions are rooted in misunderstanding, lack of information or even distortion of feminist goals and positions. This became especially obvious when the interviewees were questioned about how antifeminists view feminism and feminist demands. “They believe they [feminist demands] are over the top. Moreover, they often see the beneficiaries of patriarchy as the true disadvantaged and place blame on the marginalized” (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]). The interviewees view this misrepresentation with concern as it fuels further backlash which could potentially turn more violent in the future. From a feminist perspective antifeminism is at its core about resisting change – specifically change brought about by feminist advocacy for gender equality. This is reflected in the view that interviewees interpret antifeminism as being driven by fear and insecurity, especially among men regarding their loss of power and privilege and societal questioning of hegemonic masculinity. Identified perceived threats as central to the emotional base of antifeminism, pointing out that many antifeminists fear the loss of privilege or traditional social roles due to feminist success and broader societal change. Antifeminism is hence seen as an attempt to reclaim or defend privileges under the cover of defending traditional values or the natural order. While there was strong antagonism, some interviewees also demonstrated empathy for individual antifeminist supporters by acknowledging the emotional reasons behind antifeminist concerns. While all interviewees rejected the legitimacy of antifeminism as a movement, some of them recognized that people turn to antifeminism due to a feeling of being left behind or fear of societal change. These interviewees showed understanding for the difficulty some people may face in navigating changing social norms, especially rethinking personal privilege. Thus, they argued that antifeminist concerns are understandable on an emotional level, but the conclusions drawn from these emotions are not understandable. These perspectives do not go against the overall perception of antifeminism as a threat, but they do point out the complexity of the intergroup conflict between feminists and antifeminists. As individuals derive part of their identity from membership in a social group, antifeminists identify with a group that resists liberal and feminist changes and even sees them as a threat to their status and identity. This dynamic leads to an environment where both groups perceive each other as competition in a zero-sum game regarding societal values and power structures. The recognition of the emotional and psychological background of antifeminist support shows that feminists are aware of the power dynamics or shifts in power dynamics that fuel the backlash. But the responses also made it clear that this awareness does not soften the

stance regarding antifeminism as a threat to the advancement of gender equality. The interviewees made it clear that antifeminism is seen as a fundamental challenge to the idea of gender equality. Antifeminism represents a reaction to maintain existing power structures and patriarchal values. In summary, the answers by the interviewees confirm the hypothesis that *feminists perceive the rise in antifeminism as a significant threat to gender equality, and human and women's rights in Germany*. Their answers show that antifeminism is not only a critique of specific feminist demands but rather a broad resistance to the progressive restructuring and change of society advocated for by feminist movements.

6.3. Feminist Perspective Regarding Antifeminist Backlash

After analysing the interviewees' answers for hypothesis 1, it comes as no surprise that the answers by the interviewees also strongly support the hypothesis that *feminist activists believe the success of the feminist movement provokes backlash from antifeminists, who perceive it as a threat to traditional social structures and male privilege*. To answer this hypothesis, I decided to use the answers by the interviewees to questions 9 and 10 to analyse the feminists' view on the relationship between feminist progress and antifeminist resistance.

6.3.1. Reasons for Negative Antifeminist Reaction

Regarding how antifeminists see feminism, according to the interviewees' perspective, one of the reappearing themes was that fear and insecurity drive the perception of antifeminists. The interviewees frequently highlighted how antifeminists perceive feminist progress as a threat to their privileged status within the existing social hierarchy. Feminists argue that as their movement becomes more successful, antifeminists look at it “[w]ith a lot of fear and insecurity” (Interviewee 8, 2023, [own translation]). Said insecurity stems from a fear of losing power, particularly male privilege, which has historically dominated social and institutional structures. Because individuals get part of their sense of self from their membership in dominant social groups, many antifeminists perceive the feminist demands as a challenge to existing power structures that define their social identity. Hence, the success of feminism is seen as a direct threat to their sense of belonging and control within society. Another theme was the misrepresentation of feminism and the consequent misunderstanding of the movement. Interviewees mentioned that antifeminists often view

feminist demands and goals as extreme or unreasonable. Interviewee 2 points out that in their experience they view feminism “as misanthropic or ridiculous, which often can be traced back to a lack of education” (2023, [own translation]). Thus, the feminists pointed out that they feel antifeminists tend to distort the goals of their movement in a way that portrays them as a threat or alienating instead of a push for equality. Moreover, they are unwilling to engage in discussions around the subject as they often think feminist goals have already been met or are a problem for the younger generations. This theme of misconception feeds into the conspirational and extremist views held by some antifeminists. Some of the interviewed feminists pointed out that antifeminists connect feminism to broader conspiracy theories or connect feminism to their antisemitic beliefs. By framing feminism as a radical movement, antifeminists solidify their reasons for backlash, reinforcing the idea that any feminist success is part of a plan to destroy societal values, especially those that protect their privileges. Thus, any feminist success leads to heightened opposition from those who feel that their privileges or way of life are changed. As feminists push for more rights and representation, antifeminists interpret these gains as threats instead of progress that will destabilize traditional family structures, gender roles, and societal hierarchies and power dynamics. This connection to conspiracies is problematic as discussion cannot be held around facts, due to them believing many institutions are part of the conspiracy and spreading ‘fake news’. While not all antifeminists strongly believe in conspiracies, there is a tendency to pick and choose which facts and media outlets to believe.

A key theme in the responses was the idea that antifeminism is a reaction to privilege loss. The interviewees argue that the advances of feminist movements lead to some people experiencing a sense of loss and discomfort because they benefit from the current patriarchal system. This is the case if people are forced to reflect on their own roles in perpetuating inequality or have to relearn internalized norms and beliefs. Because feminists push for a restructuring of the social system, those in privileged positions feel as though their power and privileges are taken away and perceive themselves as victims. “Because a recognition would inevitably require a change in thinking and acting differently” (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]).

All these themes point to the interpretation that feminists see their success as inherently threatening to those who are used to maintaining power. The backlash by antifeminists is thus not seen as a simple disagreement with feminists because of insecurity or fear but rather as a defensive reaction to the threat of losing status, influence and privileges in

society. A sentiment portrayed by all interviewees is that feminism is seen “[a]s zero-sum game. That something has to be taken away from someone in order to give others more freedom.” (Interviewee 5, 2023, [own translation]).

6.3.2. Reaching Goals without triggering Backlash

When asked about strategies to achieve feminist goals without triggering backlash, several interviewees highlighted the importance of managing conflict through empathy and dialogue. This theme reflects the feminist sentiment that while all concerns and fears are valid, backlash is an inevitable part of feminist success and avoiding it is impossible. “Already considered safe goals and people have to be won back. This can only [be achieved] through the path of empathy. The worries and fears underlying the reservations of people that are critical of feminism have to be taken seriously – and uncoupled from the supposed feminist blame” (Interviewee 7, 2023, [own translation]). However, some feminists stressed the need to navigate public and private discourse carefully to mitigate backlash as much as possible. They point out that private dialogue is a great way to educate one's circle or family on feminism. “What is dangerous in my opinion: Starting a public dialogue and giving voice to the well-schooled speakers of the AfD for example. This space could be used better for marginalized groups” (Interviewee 2, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that the interviewees are willing to have an open discussion, but are concerned that the media and public discourse could be twisted against them. Moreover, interviewees mentioned that framing feminist goals in a way that highlights their shared benefits for all can reduce the perception of feminism being a zero-sum game. They argue that emphasizing issues that hurt everyone would be a great way to lower the resistance to feminist arguments. This theme also emphasizes the importance of education and communication in countering the misinformation and fear driving antifeminist responses. By fostering understanding and focusing on common ground, feminists believe they can reduce the intensity of backlash. Additionally, they argued that supporting political parties that are in favour of feminist goals would help. These parties would push for a change in social politics for a more equal society which would make it easier for feminists to showcase the positive aspects of change while escaping the scapegoat image. While many answers made it obvious that the interviewees are struggling to stay patient and empathetic regarding the antifeminist backlash, they all emphasized empathy, patience and willingness for open dialogue.

Connected is the theme that there should be a focus on systemic change and the idea that

managing backlash is a big part of feminist advocacy. The interviewees noted that backlash is an expected part of the social change process, and instead of trying to avoid it at all costs, the focus should be on strategically advancing feminist goals through joint and political actions. “To start where patriarchy also harms its beneficiaries: reducing stress in wage labour (unconditional basic income, a maximum 4-day workweek), educating on diverse masculinities, valuing care work” (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that feminists are aware that it is inevitable that their movement is getting backlash as it tries to change the whole system we live in. However, they believe that they can gain more supporters by advancing strategically from points that benefit everyone, even those in privileged positions.

To sum things up, the themes that emerged from the interviews strongly support the hypothesis that *any success of the feminist movement is perceived as a threat to the traditional social structure and male privilege leading to antifeminist backlash*. The fear of privilege loss together with misinformation about feminism and feminist goals are big drivers of antifeminist opposition. The interviewees view backlash both as a natural reaction to the success of the movement as well as a challenge for the future, particularly because it is fueled by deep-rooted fears, and misconceptions and could lead to violence. Through the feminist answers and also from a historical perspective, it becomes evident that feminist success disrupts the status quo, forcing those who benefit from the patriarchal system to confront their privilege, insecurity and loss of dominance. In response, many of the interviewees recognized the importance of empathy, education, patience and strategic actions to mitigate backlash. However, they understand that even intersectional solutions make resistance an inevitable aspect of their push for equality.

6.4. Superordinate Identities and Lack of Common Ground

The third hypothesis argues that *emphasizing superordinate identities can help reduce intergroup conflict, however, forming these identities will be very challenging because of a lack of common ground*. By fostering dialogue and increased contact, the goal is to determine whether shared identities can bridge deep divides, or if the polarized nature of the conflict makes it impossible to establish a positive exchange. The responses to interview questions 11 to 15 reflect the complexity of fostering superordinate identities between feminists and antifeminists. The hypothesis suggests that emphasizing common, overarching identities could help reduce conflict, but this process is

likely to face significant challenges due to a lack of common ground as well as the complex and drawn-out nature of the conflict itself. The themes that emerged from the interviews support the idea that, while dialogue and contact are essential, deep divisions remain, and bridging these divides might be more difficult than expected.

6.4.1. Support from Politics and Civil Society

The responses to Question 11, concerned with how politics and civil society can contribute to realizing feminist goals, make it clear that broader societal actors need to be involved to successfully reach feminist goals. Many interviewees framed activism and civic engagement as central to driving political change, underlining the importance of building trust between feminist movements and political institutions. This aligns with the idea that movements often operate as distinct social groups, with their members sharing collective goals. The interviewees suggested that people should be more demanding towards politics instead of just being frustrated by political decision-makers and that activists could be a sort of ‘middleman’ between politics and civil society. Political engagement, then, becomes a means to influence dominant societal structures, integrating feminist goals into a superordinate identity that might include wider social concerns, such as social care and equality. “As mentioned, political decisions should be made according to the well-being of the most vulnerable and the environment – then everyone will be better off. And civic society has to be taken seriously in its concerns – unconditional basic income is important, but so are accessible spaces for diverse citizen participation” (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]).

However, while interviewees recognized the necessity of aligning political agendas with feminist demands, they also pointed out the challenges in building trust and cooperation between politics and civil society. The interviewees are aware that media and public representation play a role in how their movement is perceived, and many see media platforms as tools for advancing feminist goals. By shaping the narrative of progress, feminists hope to avoid threat perceptions that lead to antifeminist backlash. This could include country-wide education campaigns on sexism, sharing the female reality over social media and having more women and marginalised people in high positions of power to normalize their presence in the public sphere. “Last but not least, the visible embodiment of living feminist values is a way to create acceptance – though this is increasingly risky as hatred is growing in the social climate” (Interviewee 7, 2023, [own translation]). Thus, the

interviewees remained sceptical about whether civil society and politics are truly capable of fostering the level of cooperation required for substantive change.

6.4.2. More Intergroup Contact to Lower Backlash

When asked in Question 12 whether more contact between feminists and antifeminists might help lowering backlash, responses revealed various views. Some interviewees believed that empathy and open dialogue could reduce negative perceptions and soften resistance to feminist goals and change. This idea stems from the belief that increasing interactions between opposing groups reduces prejudice. “The perception and getting to know individuals reduces fears and prejudice toward an anonymous and unknown group. A comparable example is that a high level of xenophobia exists in the regions of Germany where the fewest foreigners live” (Interviewee 7, 2023, [own translation]). However, there were also interviewees who raised concerns about the feasibility of meaningful contact, especially due to the power imbalances and deep divisions between the ideologies that define big parts of this conflict. For contact to successfully deescalate tensions, certain conditions should be met like equal status, cooperative interactions and the support of societal institutions. “Antifeminism cannot be reflected upon through a lecturing tone, but through proactive engagement. By asking questions, pointing out contradictions and attempting to give antifeminists impulses for reflection” (Interviewee 1, 2023. [own translation]). The majority of the respondents expressed doubt that these conditions could be realized given the non-negotiable nature of feminist demands and the clear and long history of antifeminist resistance. This points to deeper limitations as successful interactions would require a level of shared understanding that may be difficult to achieve for this conflict. However, while a minority was strongly against engaging in conflict the majority pointed out that not only is empathy part of their feminist values, but a further division in the conflict could have a dangerous outcome.

6.4.3. Ways and Topics for Intergroup Contact

The responses to question 13, which asked what more contact could look like and what would be necessary for its success, further illustrate the difficulty. Many interviewees highlighted that education and engagement are key to fostering understanding and tolerance. This should include education for children to build lasting tolerance in the future. Additionally, the interviewees stressed the importance of creating opportunities for constructive dialogue across different societal levels, from grassroots activism to political

engagement. “Contact can take different forms: in spaces of citizen participation, in jobs or training programs that are not segregated by age etc., in art and culture, that can be co-created in an accessible way” (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]). However, while the majority of the responses seemed optimistic and had constructive suggestions, they also indicated significant barriers to establishing meaningful contact. Feminists pointed out that while efforts to promote contact might be well-intended, they often fail to address the underlying power dynamics and privilege that shape the conflict. Moreover, establishing contact requires interest and tolerance on both sides, otherwise, the situation might be too difficult to establish positive discourse. The polarized and long-lasting nature of the feminist-antifeminist divide makes it difficult to establish common ground in areas where worldviews and values seem fundamentally opposed. “The trend has been going in the opposite direction for years. Contact has been reduced to the bare minimum. People are hiding in their bubbles and the algorithms ensure that they don’t burst by providing continuous replenishment” (Interviewee 4, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that not only the avoidance of discussions is problematic, but so is the media portrayal of the feminist movement, which some interviewees expressed clearly by naming specific media outlets as instigators. This shows that, the feminists are aware that feminist goals, especially those related to gender equality, are seen as a threat by antifeminists, for reasons like the idea that they undermine traditional social structures. This perception of threat fuels backlash and makes contact less effective in resolving the conflict. One interviewee’s outright rejection of even attempting to establish contact as a solution highlights the depth of the divide, reflecting the frustration and belief that engagement with antifeminists is not productive because the underlying conflict is based on fundamental disagreements over human rights and freedoms.

Nevertheless, in Question 14 interviewees were asked to consider which topics might be suitable for dialogue, offering additional insight into the perceived potential for constructive contact. Some suggested starting with common interests that are part of everyday life. This could include intergenerational meetings and care, topics to support families better or discussions around health. “People open up if they get to talk about something that is dear to them: the family, the pet, a hobby, music. Political bridges can also be built through joint interests” (Interviewee 6, 2023, [own translation]). Some interviewees pointed out that key social issues could facilitate meaningful

conversations, like women's poverty risk, the gender pay gap or the future of care. While these are important topics, they all mainly affect women, thus people in positions of power might not find these themes important to discuss. Others were more cautious, pointing out that polarizing topics or discussions that imply blame could worsen the conflict. The suggestion to focus on intersectional perspectives highlights the potential for using shared experiences to bridge the gap between the two opposing groups. Interviewees argued that instead of looking for common topics, exchanging perspectives and listening to the other group might be the best starting point. But the hesitancy expressed earlier by some respondents reflects the broader difficulty of finding neutral ground in a conflict mostly driven by deep-rooted ideologies and emotional responses to societal change. This tension illustrates the challenge of forming superordinate identities in contexts where the opposing groups see their values and worldviews as incompatible. Some of the interviewees who oppose intergroup discourse argue that the political discourse should be reframed first in order to stop the rise in antifeminist support. "It is therefore important to shift the focus to more progressive topics and to link these topics meaningfully in order to discuss them in public. It is less helpful to give false facts a platform thus making them seem more important than they are" (Interviewee 2, 2023, [own translation]). This shows that while most interviewees were willing to at least attempt to find common ground, they also believe that politics and the wider public have to be included and actively take part in order for the discussions to be beneficial to the feminist movement. This highlights the problem that the discussion cannot be seen as an isolated part of the conflict solution but has to be thought about in the wider intergroup context and conflict.

6.4.4. Role of Politics and Civil Society in Intergroup Contact

This leads to Question 15, where the interviewees reflected on the role of broader politics and civil society in fostering dialogue. Responses emphasized the importance of role models and visibility in promoting feminist goals and that feminism has to be present in civil society to build acceptance. Some feminists suggested that social spaces should be created to facilitate dialogue and reflection. "Politics and civil society must establish a culture that gives people the feeling that they themselves can and must reflect on certain topics. Projects like those organized by the ZEIT, connecting people with opposing views, should be promoted to encourage exchange. There have to be social spaces for discussion – both online and on the streets" (Interviewee 1, 2023, [own translation]). While the interviewees were cautious when it came to public discussions, they highlighted the importance of discussing feminism

in private and also pointed out that there are already existing projects on all levels of society that could be copied or promoted. The role of education was also highlighted once again with interviewees advocating for increased funding and efforts to promote engagement and understanding. The interviewees pointed out that educational institutions are the easiest way to reach the sociopolitical level. These responses add to the emphasis on the role of institutions in reducing conflict and fostering cooperation. However, there was a recurring awareness of the limitations of political and civil society actors in bridging the divide between feminists and antifeminists. While institutions can create spaces for dialogue, there is still no guarantee that this is enough to overcome the deep ideological divide fuelling this conflict.

In conclusion, the responses to the final set of questions really highlight just how challenging it is to bridge the gap between feminists and antifeminists in Germany. The idea of fostering more contact or dialogue sounds great in theory, but when you dig into the actual perspectives of those interviewed, it's clear that the divide runs deep, especially when antifeminists perceive any feminist success as a direct threat to their way of life. While some participants see potential in education, empathy, and shared experiences to reduce backlash, there's a lot of scepticism about whether meaningful contact is even possible given how entrenched these positions are. Theories like the contact hypothesis or common ingroup identity model suggest ways to reduce conflict, but in practice, it's hard to see these playing out because feminist goals are non-negotiable and fundamentally at odds with traditional values. And as long as feminist goals are seen as something being taken away instead of simply adding to the freedom of choice, even starting a discussion will be difficult. The idea of forming superordinate identities seems almost out of reach – there is just not enough common ground. Plus, the involvement of politics and civil society is important, but this can also either have a positive or negative impact. These institutions have the power to foster dialogue and representation, but they're also embedded in the very structures that feminists are trying to challenge. Additionally, some interviewees correctly pointed out that the current public and institutional discourse is not beneficial for the feminist movement as conservative and populist parties are successfully framing the discourse at the moment. So, while there's a lot of hope in theory, the reality is much more complex. It's clear from the interviews that while some pathways to dialogue exist, through exchanging perspectives or topics like the economy and care crisis, the interviewees are aware of just how difficult it will

be to create a space for discussions let alone common ground. Nevertheless, if the growing support for antifeminism is to be stopped, reframing public discourse and discussions on all societal levels is the best way.

7. Conclusion and Outlook

After looking at the conflict through the lens of the hypotheses, the overarching question remains: *Can the conflict between feminist and antifeminist movements in Germany be reframed into a more productive intergroup engagement?* Before attempting to answer this question, I want to summarize the key findings of the analysis once more. Feminists interviewed for this thesis see their movement as an inclusive and intersectional movement that works for gender equality and against any form of oppression or discrimination. The movement also aims to abolish the current patriarchal and capitalist system.

The current goals are very varied. According to the interviewees, the movement aims to give more space and voice to marginalised groups and wants to stop any form of violence against oppressed groups. They want to change the economy for more gender equality and less class difference, a particularly big topic here is recognizing care work and the care crisis. Furthermore, the feminists interviewed want to stop the rise in conservative and right-wing ideologies in connection with antifeminism, as well as the rise in hegemonic masculinity. To do so successfully they want more funding and support from politics and political parties and a better education from a young age on feminism and the dangers of antifeminism. Finally, the feminists interviewed for this thesis want to address the problem of systemic sexual harassment and silence towards perpetrators as well as the problem of victim blaming. In order to reach these goals the interviewed feminists suggested more empowerment and publicity and better ingroup cooperation. They also highlighted the importance of standing up against antifeminism in daily life. Furthermore, the interviewees suggested that change in the economic system and more political support are key to reaching these goals. In order to motivate the majority of society they aim for more representation and education on feminism. According to the interviewees the movement aims for more inclusion and giving a voice to marginalized groups while demanding the same from politics. The interviewees also highlight that in order to reach the majority of society a lot of empathy, patience and understanding are needed. Unfortunately, they also made it clear that a constructive discussion will be extremely difficult under current circumstances.

Regarding the first hypothesis, it has to be said that yes, the interviewed feminists perceive the rise of antifeminism as a threat to human rights and women's rights in Germany. They highlight the deep intergroup divide due to fundamental ideological differences. In the

interviewee's view, and according to studies on antifeminism, antifeminists do not want to lose any power and therefore actively prevent any feminist change. Antifeminism is mainly a male problem as they are insecure about possible change and loss of values and hierarchies. Thus, antifeminism is a movement about resisting change and fear as antifeminists feel threatened by the change towards more diversity and inclusion. While the interviewees show an understanding of fear and worries, they also emphasize that they have no understanding of any form of oppression stemming from these emotions. Moreover, many of the interviewees point out that it is natural for movements to have countermovements. Thus, what concerns the interviewees regarding the antifeminist movement is not the opposition in itself but the interconnection of the movement with right-wing extremists and support of authoritative ideations that threaten democracy. Additionally, antifeminism is highly political and has found major support with the AfD as a popular political party. The current political discourse leads to an even further divide between the two groups and feminism is an easy scapegoat for current complex problems. Unfortunately, the interviewed feminists are not only concerned that antifeminism is a threat to their goals and achieved steps towards gender equality. Due to the correlation between antifeminism and a willingness to use violence in order to uphold the current system, the interviewees are also concerned about their personal safety in the future. Consequently, it is obvious that the interviewed feminists perceive antifeminism as a perceived and realistic threat to their movement as well as safety.

Therefore, any success of the feminist movement is perceived as a threat to traditional social structure and male privilege, which leads to backlash. Feminism is seen as a threat to patriarchal status and social hierarchy. In addition to a lot of misinformation triggering backlash, research shows that there is a huge fear of losing power and male privilege. Thus, according to the interviewed feminists, the backlash is unavoidable and a natural reaction to change that does not favour patriarchy. They argue that while education, empathy and patience might mitigate the backlash, even intersectional solutions make a conflict and counterreaction unavoidable.

It comes as no surprise that the interviewees pointed out that while superordinate identities can help reduce conflict forming these identities in the feminist – antifeminist intergroup conflict will be extremely challenging. As mentioned in the earlier hypotheses both groups regard each other as a threat and antifeminists object any suggestions or advances made by feminism out of principle. The feminists interviewed for this thesis see their goals and

values as non-negotiable and are extremely careful about any interaction with antifeminists due to the movements interconnection with right-wing extremism. The interviewed feminists want politics and political parties to get involved in a positive way but the current political discourse is more in favour of antifeminist ideations. Consequently, the civic majority is mostly unwilling to listen to feminist concerns and arguments, even though their solutions would be beneficial for more economic equality and political stability. However, the interviewees were open to at least exchanging perspectives and saw potential in topics like the care crisis, support for families and the growing economic inequality as potential topics for common ground. In summary it can be said that while establishing an overarching superordinate identity is unlikely at the moment due to the deep divide and external circumstances, cooperation on specific issues and more contact are a possibility, at least from a feminist perspective. This could then lead to less fear and prejudice due to more contact and better education on the feminist movement and establishing positive debates in the future. While this will not completely mitigate the backlash by antifeminists, it will lessen intergroup tensions and make it harder for antifeminists to use feminism as a scapegoat.

However, finding a solution to the conflict will be extremely difficult and take a long time due to the conflict being an intractable conflict. The interviewed feminists view the rise in antifeminism as an existential threat to the advances in gender equality, human rights and any other social progress. Any antifeminist backlash is seen as an attack on basic freedoms and human rights which reinforces the strong ingroup cohesion and distance towards antifeminism.

Antifeminists also perceive feminism and feminist progress as a threat to traditional social structures, male privilege and 'traditional' social norms, according to the interviewees. They believe that feminism is undermining the 'natural order' and this perceives it as an existential threat to their values and way of life. Thus, the conflict becomes intractable because both groups believe their identity and values are in danger which leads to a defensive reaction to the opposite group and reduces the willingness to cooperate, let alone compromise. Moreover, like any intractable conflict, this one is also tied to strong group identities. While the feminist identity is tied to values about gender equality, social justice and human rights; for antifeminists their identity is deeply tied to preserving 'traditional' gender roles, family structures and patriarchy. Due to these polarized identities, both groups view the conflict as a zero-sum game and any shift in position becomes very difficult. The close tie of these ideations to a person's identity also makes mutual recognition and understanding extremely

difficult.

In addition, the conflict has been ongoing for over 100 years with feminists pushing for progressive social change and antifeminists resisting and reacting negatively. Like many intractable conclusions, this one also follows cyclical patterns where feminisms advance in progressive change and as a reaction antifeminism gains strength. Thus, both movements reinforce each other in a way, constantly deepening the divide and also discussing the same topics.

The interviewees' answers also make it clear that both movements have opposite worldviews. Additionally, both sides also see the other as morally wrong. According to the interviewees, antifeminists see feminism as destabilizing and against the natural order, whereas the interviewed feminists see antifeminists as regressive and unjust and against basic human rights. Furthermore, both sides see themselves as victims and marginalized by the other. While especially antifeminists also frame themselves as victims and defenders of traditional values and the stability of the social system, according to the interviewed feminists. Here the media and politics play a major role in influencing the opposing groups and amplifying the rhetoric. These discourses then add to the difficulty of establishing meaningful contact.

The overall lack of meaningful interaction between both groups worsens the distrust and misunderstandings. The most often given example by the interviewees is that many antifeminists have little to no direct interaction or knowledge of feminist groups which leads to misconceptions about feminist goals and aims. Even when interactions are attempted, most often the positions are so entrenched that a productive conversation is impossible. Before even starting the conversation, both groups assume the worst and thus the entry situation makes any positive interaction impossible. Currently, feminist gains and successes are more visible and discussed internationally which intensifies the defensive reaction by antifeminists. Because feminist progress is met with fear and seen as an invasion of the antifeminists' social space the backlash becomes more intense which makes the conflict more intractable. Because antifeminist backlash is a counter-reaction, this can escalate into more extreme forms like political mobilization through parties like the AfD or even violence. The interconnection with politics is an important factor because populist political forces in Germany and other parts of Europe have capitalized on antifeminist opinions and made it a connector to right-wing extremist beliefs. The connection with political campaigns further polarizes the conflict as feminism is framed as a threat to ordinary people and their way of

life. This does not only affect any attempts by feminists to engage in dialogue with the opposition but widens the problem to the general civil society. While the Common Ingroup Identity Model suggests that reframing the conflict around shared goals could reduce tensions, the deeply rooted nature of this conflict makes reframing extremely difficult. While many of the interviewees emphasized understanding for fears and empathy, the big ideological divide still makes reframing the whole conflict difficult. Because the conflict is emotional and identity-driven engaging in constructive dialogue or exchange is difficult. Both groups are unwilling to truly listen to the other at the moment and understand underlying fears, which makes a positive exchange impossible. Nevertheless, I believe that the interviews give hope that incremental progress towards reframing the intergroup conflict in Germany towards a more productive engagement is possible. As the interviewees mentioned, education, political support and creating safe spaces for discussion are realistic steps that can be taken in the near future to advance a productive exchange between the groups. In fact, I believe that in order to avoid further escalation, a form of dialogue needs to be established to avoid further escalation of the conflict. At the moment the polarization is deepening, antifeminist sentiments are on the rise and violence against women* is also growing each year. If this backlash is not taken seriously and attempts are made to engage antifeminists while advancing feminist goals, the conflict could turn more violent soon. I think the interviewees pointed out good starting points with more education on feminism to shape the future and better cooperation with political parties, however, due to the political nature of antifeminism and the growing support of the AfD in Germany, also by young men, time is of the essence to start small scale cooperation and engagement against feminist sentiments.

While the interviews provided detailed insight into the opinions of feminists on the matter of antifeminist backlash, the small scale and qualitative nature, as well as the diversity of the feminist movement make it impossible to generalize these answers for the whole movement and conflict. Furthermore, the chosen hypothesis and theories limit the analysis, and other perspectives might offer additional insights. Moreover, the use of reflexive thematic analysis means that my personal opinion and subjectivity played a huge role in the analysis, leaving potential blindspots due to my bias in the whole matter. Apart from my subjectivity, this case focuses on Germany. While the antifeminist and feminist movements are international phenomena, there are country-specific factors like the political party AfD and Germany's history that do not apply anywhere else in the world. Moreover, this intergroup conflict is very

dynamic, and details and the focus can shift quickly, thus the context and outcome of this analysis are time-specific. Moreover, this thesis solely focused on the perspective of feminist activists, thus the first-hand data only includes a one-sided perspective on the conflict.

In summary, I would say that it is unlikely that the conflict can completely be reframed into a more productive engagement. However, I think that the interviews show a willingness to cooperate on specific social issues. While the conflict cannot be reframed at the moment, the interviewees point out steps that can be taken to increase contact, it shows a positive outlook on small-scale interactions with the potential to widen the scope of cooperation.

I think it is important that future research focuses more on the possibility of cooperation towards feminist goals instead of analysing both movements separately. Only if there is more information on the underlying conflict dynamics in the current intergroup conflict can politics make informed decisions about advancing the feminist agenda successfully. Moreover, more research should be published regarding current feminist goals and strategies instead of only focusing on antifeminism. If the public narrative and discourse should be changed to a more pro-feminist attitude, there has to be more information about the current trends in feminism. I think this topic has a lot of potential and is very important for the future and I hope to see more academic research focus on this conflict as I believe it is one of the most core conflicts of our time.

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Appendix

Interview Questions

1. How do you define feminism for yourself?
2. What are currently the most important feminist topics and discourses in your opinion?
3. In your opinion, what are the feminist goals and demands that need to be achieved and implemented next?
4. What is your idea of how these goals will be achieved?
5. How do you think can the majority of society be motivated to support these goals?
6. Why do you think antifeminism is gaining popularity in German civil society? (see Leipzig Authoritarianism Study 2022)
7. What are the reasons you are concerned about today's antifeminism and its support in Germany?
8. Which of the concerns and arguments of antifeminists are justified or understandable in your opinion?
9. How do you think antifeminists view feminism and feminist demands and goals?
10. In your opinion, what is the best way to achieve and implement feminist goals without triggering an antifeminist backlash?
11. How can politics and civil society be involved in the realisation and achievement of goals?
12. Do you think more contact is a way to avoid or mitigate backlash?
13. What could more contact look like and what would be needed on both sides?
14. Which topics do you think are suitable for dialogue?
15. Which roles do politics and civil society play in the possible beginning of dialogue?
16. Would you like to mention anything else, that has not been talked about in your opinion?

Interviews

Name:	Interviewee 1
Startzeit:	15.10.2023 13:05:57
Endzeit:	15.10.2023 13:43:39
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Feminismus ist die Bewegung, die sich für die Gleichstellung und Gleichberechtigung aller Geschlechter und Geschlechtsidentitäten einsetzt. Primat dieser Bewegung ist die Kritik an der cis-heterosexuell-männlich geordneten Gesellschaft, auch als Patriarchat bezeichnet.
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Der Zusammenhang zwischen Antifeminismus und dem Erstarken rechtspopulistischer bis -extremistischer Parteien wie die AfD. Das Erstarken eines hegemonialen Männlichkeitsbildes unter vielen Männern.

	<p>Die Inklusion von BIPOC, queerer Perspektiven sowie jene von Menschen mit Behinderung. Lohnungerechtigkeit Sexualisierte Gewalt und #MeToo</p>
<p>3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?</p>	<p>Feministische Bildungsarbeit muss in die Lehrpläne aufgenommen werden, um proaktiv dem Erstarren hegemonialer Männlichkeitsbilder im Zeitalter von TikTok und Andrew Tate entgegen zu wirken. Lohnungerechtigkeit und Aufhebung des Gender Pay Gaps. Aufhebung des Ehegattensplittings, dessen Sinn und Zweck das Fördern eines konservativen Familienbildes ist. Zivilgesellschaft muss erstarren gegen sexualisierte Gewalt und muss gesamtgesellschaftlich die Normalisierung der "Rape-Culture" bekämpfen.</p>
<p>4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?</p>	<p>Durch ganzheitliche Ansätze wie Aufklärungsarbeit auf Social Media aber auch Empowerment, durch feministische Wirtschaftspolitik die gezielt die strukturellen, patriarchal bedingten Ungerechtigkeiten zwischen Männer und FLINTA* aufhebt. Die Politik sollte feministische Anliegen innerhalb des Sozialministeriums/BMFSFJ in Deutschland stärker gewichten und mehr Ressourcen zur Verfügung stellen. Feminismus umzusetzen ist nach Art. 3 II GG ein in der Verfassung verbrieftes Staatsziel und damit Wesensbestandteil einer funktionierenden und inklusiven Demokratie.</p>
<p>5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?</p>	<p>Es braucht ein proaktives Erörtern dessen, was Ängste bei Männer auslöst. Die männliche Fragilität steht im Kontext einer Gesellschaft in der soziale Ungerechtigkeiten zunehmen, die "Mittelschicht" zunehmend verschwindet und Abstiegsängste breit werden. Es muss kommuniziert werden, dass Feminismus genau diese Abstiegsängste anspricht und problematisiert. Die Abstiegsangst und die damit einhergehende Krise der Männlichkeit - die den antifeministischen Backlash befeuert - muss anerkannt werden. Gleichzeitig müssen feministische Bewegungen erstens zeigen, dass sexistisches Verhalten von der Zivilgesellschaft nicht geduldet werden darf. Und zweitens muss gezeigt werden, dass diese Abstiegsangst nicht im Widerspruch steht mit dem Empowerment von FLINTA*.</p>
<p>6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)</p>	<p>Wie vorhin erwähnt: Die transformierende gesellschaftliche Struktur. Eine Wirtschaftspolitik die durch Sozialstaatsabbau, Privatisierung und Deregulierung Rahmenbedingungen für eine zunehmende soziale Ungleichheit und Prekarisierung der Arbeitsverhältnisse gesorgt hat. Existenzängste, welche zu Panikreaktionen führen die "Feminismus" als Auslöser des Problems sehen. Antifeminismus geht mit einem Weltbild aus der Zeit der Wirtschaftswunderjahre der 1950er Jahre einher. Dieses angebliche Aufstiegsversprechen ist nicht nur illusorisch,</p>

	sondern erstarkt jene Kräfte welche FLINTA* unterdrücken wollen. Die Komplexität und Vielschichtigkeit vieler Probleme der heutigen Zeit lösen in vielen gesellschaftlichen Milieus den Wunsch nach "einfachen Antworten" aus. Diese einfachen Antworten sind oft Hass erfüllt und befördern das Aufrechterhalten hierarchisierender Machtstrukturen wie das Patriarchat.
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Antifeminismus ist die Einstiegsdroge in den Rechtsextremismus. Und das Erstarren der AfD zeigt dies sehr eindrücklich. Viele junge Menschen wählen AfD, besonders junge Männer und Politikwissenschaftler*innen verorten dies im Kontext der Renaissance "hegemonialer Männlichkeit". Was mit Kritik am Gendern anfangen kann, wird schnell zum antidemokratischen Flächenbrand, alleine dadurch weil Kritik an gendergerechte Sprache keine konstruktive Kritik ist, sondern mit einer Ablehnung gegenüber der Inklusion von FLINTA* in der Sprache verbunden ist.
8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?	Ihre Argumente sind weder berechtigt noch nachvollziehbar, da sich diese eindeutig gegen grundständige Menschenrechte sowie das Recht auf körperliche und psychische Unversehrtheit richten. Die Gründe wie antifeministisches Gedankengut salonfähig wird, wie bspw. Existenzängste, müssen allerdings ernst genommen werden. Antifeministische Ideologie an sich ist weder berechtigt, noch nachvollziehbar.
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Antifeminist*innen haben ein ganz heterogenes Bild von Feminismus. Die einen verstecken in ihrer Differenzierung aus einem angeblichen "normalen Feminismus" von einem "modernen Feminismus" die Verachtung gegenüber der kulturellen, ideologischen Kritik an normalisierte und internalisierte patriarchale Normen und gehen davon aus, dass mit dem Frauenwahlrecht und der Möglichkeit zur Berufstätigkeit Feminismus schon umgesetzt sei - diese Aussage geht mit dem Wunsch einher, FLINTA* zum Schweigen zu bringen für die Kritik an die Persistenz patriarchaler Machtstrukturen. Andere hingegen sehen im Feminismus eine Verschwörung der Rockefeller-Familie, damit Frauen auch erwerbstätig werden müssten. Oft schwingen da auch antisemitische Elemente (jüdische Weltverschwörung) mit, wenn Feminismus als Verschwörung gesehen wird. Letztlich halten Antifeminist*innen Feminismus für überzogen - auch im Kontext von Biologismen. Sozial konstruierte Realitäten werden von Antifeministen auf eine vermeintliche Biologie / Natur von Frauen geschoben.
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu	Das Problem am Backlash ist, dass dieser - wenn das Fundament schon besteht - anhält.

<p>erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?</p>	<p>Am Liebsten würde ich argumentieren, dass die Wirtschaftspolitik sich wieder auf das Mitnehmen der ganzen Gesellschaft orientiert und Sozialpolitik ausgebaut wird.</p> <p>In den USA unter Joe Biden sehen wir jedoch, dass trotz umfassenden Reformen in Infrastruktur- und Sozialpolitik welche die progressivsten Reformen seit dem New Deal unter Roosevelt sind, der Backlash gegenüber emanzipatorischen Bewegungen weiter stattfindet.</p> <p>Insofern geht es hier vor allem darum, jene Menschen zu erreichen die noch nicht im "Rabbit hole" rechter Desinformationskampagne gefangen sind - und um konsequentes Fakten- und Quellen-checken.</p>
<p>11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?</p>	<p>Bürger*innenräte aus zufällig ausgelosten Bürger*innen auf Landes-, Bundes- und europäischer Ebene wären von zentralem Bestandteil für die Einbettung der Zivilgesellschaft in politische Bemühungen - konkret was das Ausarbeiten feministischer Aktionspläne angeht. Ebenso braucht es eine stärkere Kultur der digitalen Zivilcourage. Die Unsichtbarkeit einer lauten Gegenstimme in von Antifeministen gefluteten Kommentarspalten vermittelt eine Deutungshoheit antifeministischer Diskurse. Erst durch Empowerment können Menschen bewegt werden, sich zu engagieren. Sexismus ist ein Alltagsphänomen. Es braucht Werbekampagnen die nicht nur in Stadt sondern auch an Land das Problem von Catcalling und sexualisierter Gewalt benennt und Hilfsangebote benennt. Es braucht große Sichtbarkeit und Sensibilisierung und vor allem: Maßnahmen die Catcalling als etwas unnormales anerkennen statt dies zu normalisieren.</p>
<p>12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?</p>	<p>Mehr Kontakt, ja. Kompromisse, nein.</p> <p>In Bezug auf grundständige Menschenrechte für die sich Feminismus einsetzt, können keine Kompromisse verhandelt werden. Dies würde den Charakter von Menschenrechten widersprechen.</p> <p>Es braucht aber eine dialogische Kultur. Antifeminismus kann nicht durch einen belehrenden Ton reflektiert werden, sondern durch proaktives Zugehen. Durch Fragen stellen, auf Widersprüche hinweisen und Versuchen, antifeministisch denkenden Menschen Impulse zur Reflexion zu geben.</p>
<p>13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?</p>	<p>Im Falle von geäußerten, antifeministischen Aussagen freundlich nachzufragen und auf Widersprüche hinweisen.</p> <p>Die aufklärende Seite sollte sich an das Impulse geben orientieren, die aufzuklärende Seite sollte eine gewisse Offenheit haben dafür, sich zu reflektieren.</p>
<p>14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?</p>	<p>Gender Pay Gap Alltagssexismus Feminismus und Demokratie</p>
<p>15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft</p>	<p>Politik und Zivilgesellschaft müssen eine Kultur etablieren, die Menschen das Gefühl gibt dass sie selber</p>

bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	über bestimmte Themen reflektieren können und müssen. Projekte wie die ZEIT dies veranstalten, Menschen mit Gegensätzlichkeiten zu verbinden und zu vernetzen, sollten für den Austausch gefördert werden. Es braucht soziale Diskussionsräume - im Netz und auf der Straße.
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	Nein

Name:	Interviewee 2
Startzeit:	16.10.2023 10:44:48
Endzeit:	16.10.2023 15:22:26
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Als Bewegung, die der Utopie einer fairen und gerechten Welt nachstrebt (zB im Unterschied zu der Utopie einer reichen Welt voller Kapital, nach der wir momentan durch den Kapitalismus streben)
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Armut und die Verschränkung davon mit race, vor allem auch im Hinblick auf Klimagerechtigkeit, da man davon ausgehen kann, dass Nachhaltigkeitsfragen vorrangig Schwarze Menschen und arme Menschen (darunter vor allem alleinerziehende Frauen) betreffen werden, während sie im öffentlichen Diskurs kaum Gehör bekommen.
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Abschaffung des Ehegattensplittings, Abschaffung der Kriminalisierung von Abtreibungen, bedingungsloser Zugang zu Lebensmitteln, Wasser, Wohnraum etc, offene Ländergrenzen (wenn wir ganz groß Träumen), Abschaffung des Kapitalismus bei Einführung eines auf Care aufbauenden Wirtschaftsverständnis (wenn wir noch größer träumen).
4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	Ganz knapp gesagt: Umverteilung. Etwa durch die Einführung einer Erbschaftssteuer oder durch eine Obergrenze an Kapital, das besitzt werden darf. Eine Einführung des bedingungslosen Grundeinkommens, rechtliche Absicherung für von Armut betroffene Menschen statt einer Kriminalisierung (und somit ein Unsichtbarmachen dieser Menschen). Individualversteuerungen und Steuerminderung für alleinerziehende Personen (mehrfach: Frauen), faire Vergabe von Rentenpunkten bei Carearbeit, Bezahlung von Carearbeit (durch diese Umverteilung). Aufbau einer bedingungslosen Sozialpolitik. Und dazu: Flächendeckende Aufklärung.
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft	Es würde genügen, wenn wir Menschen über sich selbst reden lassen, statt über sie zu reden. Aufklärung ist ein

zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	Schlüssel, ansonsten zwingt uns die Klimakatastrophe früher oder später ohnehin zum Handeln.
6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)	Weil es Sicherheit schenkt und viel einfacher ist als sich mit der Schuld zu konfrontieren, dass andere Menschen durch einen selbst ausgebeutet werden, bis hin zum Tod. Es ist auch weniger komplex und es gibt ein klares Feindbild, gegen das sich gerichtet werden kann und kein total abstraktes System, das "Patriarchat" heißt, nicht unbedingt individuelle Männer meint, aber alle Männer (und Frauen etc) in Verantwortung zieht, das als "männliche Herrschaft" übersetzt wird, aber eigentlich "Männliche Wirtschaftsmacht von fast ausschließlich weißen Männern, aber auch ein paar weißen Frauen, auch Schwarzen Personen und das sich auch dann am Leben hält, wenn es gar keine Patriarchen mehr gibt, weil es sich so sehr in unserer Welt manifestiert hat, dass man es fast überall wiederfinden kann", bedeutet.
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Hauptsächlich Fragen der Nachhaltigkeit. Letztendlich hat uns die männlich geprägte und antifeministische Welt hierhin gebracht und sie weiterzuführen würde bedeuten, uns selbst auszulöschen. Wenn wir das nicht früh genug realisieren, wird sich die Erde auf eine Weise ändern, die wir leider zu gut einschätzen können und die bedeutet für die aller meisten Lebewesen "Tod".
8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?	Keine, Antifeminismus arbeitet nicht mit wissenschaftlich fundierten Argumenten. Allgemein werfen sie Feminist*innen eigentlich nur Dinge vor, von denen sie selbst denken, sie seien feministisch, ohne es zu sein. Beispiel: Feminismus ist Männerhass.
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Meiner Erfahrung nach als Menschenfeindlich und lächerlich, was oft auf fehlende Bildung zurückführt. Vielen Argumenten wird plötzlich zugestimmt, wenn das Gegenüber nicht weiß, dass es sich um ein Feminismus-positives Argument handelt.
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?	Es hilft meiner Erfahrung nach viel, in den privaten Dialog zu gehen und in diesem Dialog alle Gefühle des Gegenübers anzuerkennen. "Es muss dich ganz schön frustrieren, dass..." "Stimmt du hast Recht, Männer müssen tatsächlich viel Druck aushalten, guck mal der Feminismus kämpft dafür auch schon seit Jahren" usw. Was meiner Meinung nach gefährlich ist: In den öffentlichen Dialog zu gehen und gut gebildete Redner*innen, etwa von der AfD, eine Stimme für ihre Ideologien zu geben. Dieser Raum könnte viel besser für Minderheitengruppen genutzt werden.
11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das	Ich verstehe die Frage nicht, die Politik entscheidet am Ende, sie muss nicht einbezogen werden und die Zivilgesellschaft stellt Forderungen, die die Politik

Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?	umsetzen soll. Feministinnen sind Teil der Zivilgesellschaft und keine davon zu trennende Gruppe.
12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?	Nein, Feminismus ist kein Kompromiss, Feminismus ist der Glaube daran, dass jede*r Mensch und jedes Tier ein gerechtes Leben führen darf, mir fällt beim besten Willen kein Kompromiss dafür ein, das es legitimieren würde, dieses Endziel abzumildern. Mehr Kontakt sehe ich auch problematisch, letztendlich haben wir in den letzten Monaten den Kontakt erhöht und sehen in den Zahlen ganz klar, dass rechtsradikale Parteien immer mehr Zuspruch bekommen.
13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	As I said: Feminismus ist kein Kompromiss.
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Unter der Prämisse, dass ich diesen Kontakt ablehne ist eine andere Sache wichtiger: Framing und Priming - heißt, dass das, was in der Öffentlichkeit wieder und wieder erwähnt wird, auch als wichtiges Thema erachtet wird. Momentan bestimmt die AfD und die CDU mit ganz gezielten Aktionen und Skandalen gehäuft die Titel der Schlagzeilen und somit auch die Themen. Wir hören also immer wieder "Flüchtlinge und Arbeitsmarkt" und denken, dass das ein wichtiges Thema ist, gucken also welche Parteien genau das auf ihrem Parteiprogramm hervorheben und wählen dann die. Dasselbe gilt für "Wokeness und Cancelculture" oder für "Abtreibungen und zu wenige Arbeitskräfte". Wir verknüpfen dadurch die Themen unabhängig von deren Wahrheitsgehalt oder der Frage, ob nicht etwa "Flüchtlinge und eine bessere Wirtschaft", "wokeness und Gerechtigkeitsinn", "Abtreibungen und Frauengesundheit" bessere Verknüpfungen oder Parteiprogramme wären. Es ist also wichtig, den Fokus hin zu progressiven Themen zu verschieben und diese Themen sinnvoll zu verknüpfen, um sie in der Öffentlichkeit zu besprechen. Weniger sinnvoll ist, Falschen Fakten eine Bühne zu geben und sie dadurch als wichtiger wirken zu lassen.
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Ich verstehe die Frage nicht, mir ist nicht ganz klar aus welcher Rolle heraus ich antworten soll (mich verwirrt ehrlich gesagt, dass Feminismus weder als Teil der Politik noch als Teil der Zivilgesellschaft beschrieben wird).
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	

Name:	Interviewee 3
Startzeit:	18.11.2023 18:29:56

Endzeit:	18.11.2023 18:53:41
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Ich definiere Feminismus als das Bestreben eine Gleichstellung aller Menschen zu erreichen, unabhängig von Körper, Gender, Religion, Herkunft, Klasse etc. Dabei ist wichtig, die Unterschiede zu sehen, anzuerkennen und auf sie einzugehen, es kann nie um die Gleichmachung einer heterogenen Menge gehen, viel mehr um Intersektionalität und Inklusion.
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	die Wahrnehmung marginalisierter Personen innerhalb der Diskurse, alles wird auf einer sehr weißen, nicht-prekären, nicht-behinderten, heteronormativen, binären Ebene diskutiert. Das muss aufhören, um tatsächlich alle Menschen inkludieren zu können, auch schon alleine in die Diskurse, erst Recht in die Umsetzungen.
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Barrierefreiheit und Förderung, mehr und bessere Bildungsarbeit, die Entlastung von Familien und die Selbstbestimmung von und für Individuen.
4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	keines dieser Ziele kann durch den Aktivismus von Einzelnen erreicht werden, es braucht klare politische Haltungen und Entscheidungen. Ausgrenzung und Missstände dürfen schlicht nicht weiter ignoriert werden.
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	weniger Diskurse, mehr Handlungen. Die Entscheidungsträger*innen müssen weniger Angst vor Ablehnung haben. Die Gleichstellung queerer Familien, Sanktionen auf ungleiche Bezahlung/Benachteiligung von nicht-männlichen Personen, Selbstbestimmung etc. nehmen niemandem etwas weg, im Gegenteil. Mehr Repräsentanz und Sichtbarmachung davon könnte helfen.
6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)	Jede aufstrebende Bewegung erzeugt eine entsprechende Gegenbewegung, das war schon immer so, auch bei anderen Themen. Generell sehe ich momentan eine zu hohe Akzeptanz für extreme und menschenverachtende Haltungen in der Gesellschaft, antisemitische und rassistische Aussagen, offene Lügen in der Presse/Politik, misogynie und queerfeindliche Äußerungen werden einfach toleriert und sind salonfähig, in so einem Umfeld fühlt sich auch Antifeminismus wohl.
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Ich mache mir konkret Sorgen um mich und mein Umfeld. Wie sicher werden wir in den nächsten Jahren leben können, welche Angriffe (psychisch und physisch) müssen wir fürchten, wie können wir uns schützen? Eine Gesellschaft, die Hassaussagen toleriert, hat auch eine zu hohe Akzeptanz auf Gewalttaten.

<p>8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?</p>	<p>Ich verstehe die Sorge oder generell die Angst vergessen zu werden und nicht mehr eine vertraute Norm zu haben, an der man sich orientieren kann. Das zwingt einen viel mehr dazu, sich auch kritisch mit sich selbst zu befassen und das ist ein mühsamer Prozess, das weiß ich als marginalisierte Person aus eigener Erfahrung.</p> <p>Die Argumente kann ich nicht nachvollziehen - am ehesten noch das, dass Frauenquoten nicht zielführend sind, weil keine Frau rein als Quote eingestellt werden will. Das sehe ich grundsätzlich schon auch so, allerdings halte ich Frauenquoten trotz alledem für ein notwendiges Mittel.</p>
<p>9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?</p>	<p>Ich denke sie sehen die Forderungen und Ziele als Bedrohung ihrer eigenen Weltansicht, die sie aus einem (in Teilen nachvollziehbaren) Sicherheitsbedürfnis nicht aufgeben wollen. Sie kriegen das Gefühl, dass durch die geforderten Veränderungen alles in Frage stehen würde, das sie kennen, sie selbst vielleicht Teile ihres Lebens verändern müssten, die sie nicht verändern wollen oder sie sich vielleicht tatsächlich mit der Frage auseinandersetzen müssten, ob sie alles gut finden wie es ist oder es nur nie anders gelernt haben.</p>
<p>10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?</p>	<p>Ich denke wir werden nicht vollends um einen Backlash herum kommen. In erster Linie denke ich, dass Sanftheit und Beharrlichkeit hilft und immer wieder auch der Versuch Brücken zu bauen und einander entgegen zu kommen. Wenn beide Seiten als Reaktion auf die andere nur immer extremer werden, nutzt das am Ende niemandem was.</p>
<p>11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?</p>	<p>Politik muss klar handeln, das ist ihre Aufgabe, darauf muss die Zivilgesellschaft vertrauen können. Genauso muss die Zivilgesellschaft aber auch klar merken, dass sie von der Politik gehört und ernst genommen wird und das in ihrem Interesse gehandelt wird. Das passiert gerade für alle zu wenig.</p>
<p>12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?</p>	<p>Ja, mehr Begegnung in alltäglichen Kontexten macht da viel aus, denke ich.</p> <p>Je mehr Dinge selbstverständlich und alltäglich werden, desto weniger Angst haben die Menschen davor. Gegner*innen wird es trotzdem immer geben, aber eben im viel kleineren Rahmen. Ein gutes Beispiel meiner Meinung nach: Masken tragen während der Pandemie. Haben anfangs nur wenige aus Überzeugung gemacht, dann mussten alle, viele fanden es ungewohnt und dann war es ganz schnell Routine. Und ja, einige Leute haben montags auf der Straße gemault deswegen. Aber im großen und ganzen haben einfach alle Maske getragen. Das zeigt mir: geht doch. Wenn man es einfach mal beschließt.</p>

13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	Sichtbarkeit auf der Arbeit, in den Medien, in den Schulen. Gerade bei Kindern ist es so, dass je mehr sie von klein auf alles als selbstverständlich kennenlernen, desto weniger ist das alles ein Problem für sie.
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	diverse Familien, ungleiche Löhne, das Armutrisiko von Frauen - eigentlich alles was aus dem privaten und alltäglichen stammt
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	

Name:	Interviewee 4
Startzeit:	19.11.2023 12:36:32
Endzeit:	19.11.2023 15:08:12
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Um es mit Christina Lunn zu sagen: Feminismus verstehe ich als Sammelbegriff von Bewegungen und Theorien. Es geht darum, bestehende Hierarchien zu hinterfragen und Utopien und Visionen für eine gleichberechtigte und gerechte Gesellschaft zu formulieren, in der alle Menschen ohne Ausgrenzung, Marginalisierung und Unterdrückung leben können. Zwar ist der Einsatz für Frauenrechte Schwerpunkt dieser Bestrebungen, Feminismus kann für mich aber nicht gedacht werden, ohne jede Art der Diskriminierung (zb. auch Rassismus, Klassismus) aufzuzeigen und sich ihnen entgegen zu stellen.
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Repräsentanz und weibliche Vorbilder in allen Bereichen fördern, (Geschlechter)gerechte Sprache, Gender-Medizin, feministische Außen- und Innenpolitik, die Lücken schließen (Care-Gap, Pay-Gap, Data Gap etc), Gewalt gegen Frauen und andere Minderheiten als systematisches Problem und nicht als Einzelfälle betrachten, Rollenklischees aufbrechen, permanente Sexualisierung von Frauenkörpern problematisieren, Gender-Marketing reduzieren. Und so vieles mehr...
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Es fällt mir schwer, hier zu priorisieren, weil es keine Einzelmaßnahme gibt, die alle oder auch nur viele Probleme auf einmal löst. Es sind so viele kleine Mosaiksteine, die dazu beitragen können, dass wir in einer gerechten Gesellschaft leben. Da ich zwei kleine Töchter habe, sind mir aktuell die Themen sehr wichtig, die Mädchen, aber auch Jungen, beim Aufwachsen schon im frühesten Kindesalter begegnen. Wie unsere Gesellschaft Mädchen und

	<p>Jungen noch immer "einimpft", was sich für wen gehört und wie sie zu sein oder nicht zu sein haben. Der Schönheitsdruck, der viele Frauen, aber eben auch Kinder/Mädchen, enorm unter Druck setzt und sich durch Social Media ganz anders und allumfänglicher verbreiten kann als noch in meiner Kindheit. Das noch immer verbreitete Victim-Blaming bei Übergriffen und die reflexartige Solidarisierung mit den Tätern (Argument der Unschuldsvermutung, das immer nur für den Täter zu gelten scheint).</p>
<p>4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?</p>	<p>Durch Aufklärung, durch Aufdecken, durch Thematisierung in breiter Öffentlichkeit. Und mit Geduld, auch wenn es schwer fällt, weil man immer wieder gegen dieselben Mauern läuft und stets dieselben (Pseudo) Argumente entkräften muss. Und ganz wichtig, und das kann jede und jeder in seinem Alltag und persönlichen Umfeld tun: nicht daneben stehen und schweigen, wenn Sprüche geklopft werden oder Ungerechtigkeit geschehen, sondern Partei ergreifen und für sich und andere Menschen eintreten.</p>
<p>5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?</p>	<p>Ich habe die vielleicht naive Vorstellung, dass fast jeder Mensch erreichbar ist, denn das, was der Feminismus fordert, ist doch im Grunde etwas, das jede(r) nachvollziehen kann, denn jede(r) erlebt Ungerechtigkeit in verschiedenster Form am eigenen Leib. Eine gewisse Empathiefähigkeit und Offenheit für die Belange anderer Menschen vorausgesetzt, sollte also jede(r) mit den Zielen konform gehen können.</p> <p>Die Realität sieht natürlich anders aus. Die Gräben sind leider sehr tief, die Diskussion ohne Beleidigungen und Drohungen oft gar nicht mehr möglich, zumindest nicht online. Es ist nicht unsere Aufgabe, Menschen zu überzeugen oder zu gewinnen, aber ich glaube, wenn man es denn versuchen möchte, ist das persönliche vier Augen Gespräch am Wirkungsvollsten. Oft schrecken Menschen vor Themen und Gedanken zurück, die nicht in ihre eigene Lebensrealität passen und reagieren automatisch mit Abwehr. Oder sie fürchten, selbst Ziel der "Maßnahmen" des Feminismus zu werden und sich einschränken oder ändern zu müssen, um weiterhin akzeptiert zu werden. Oder die ganze Debatte wirkt "elitär" und wird als irrelevant weggelächelt. Auch hier hilft wieder nur reden, sich nicht mit der eigenen Meinung zurückhalten, auch wenn es unangenehm wird. Und erkennen, wann es eben keinen Sinn hat, denn wer glaubt, es gebe tatsächlich eine Hierarchie unter Menschen (zb. der Mann als "Haupt" der Frau), der wird vermutlich nicht erreichbar sein.</p>
<p>6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch?</p>	<p>Das liegt in meinen Augen zum einen an der Stimmungsmache bestimmter Medien und/oder Einzelpersonen (u.a. in der Politik) gegen den Feminismus und dass hier auch mit Mitteln gearbeitet</p>

<p>(siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)</p>	<p>wird, die die ganze Bewegung in Verruf bringen sollen oder ihre Bestrebungen abgehoben und lebensfremd erscheinen lassen sollen. Als seien wir nur eine laute, unrasierte Minderheit und die Masse aller "normalen Frauen" will mit uns gar nichts zu tun haben. Sagt eine Frau, sie weigere sich zu gendern, scheint das auch gleich der Beweis dafür zu sein, dass der "Gender-Wahnsinn" genau das ist: Wahnsinn.</p> <p>Zum anderen fühlen sich diejenigen, die sich nicht verändern und reflektieren wollen, in ihren Rechten und ihrer Person bedroht. So wie es Menschen gibt, die sich niemals freiwillig ein Tempolimit auferlegen würden, gibt es Menschen, die es sich nicht nehmen lassen wollen, Frauen in Discos anzutanzten und anzusprechen, wie es ihnen gefällt. Und es gibt Frauen, die sich in die Rolle, die die Gesellschaft ihnen zuschreibt, gut einfügen und dadurch Sicherheit spüren - auch für diese Frauen wäre ein Umdenken belastend und beängstigend.</p> <p>Dazu kommen die ganzen anderen existenziellen Probleme unserer Zeit, denen kaum jemand gedanklich entfliehen kann. Kriege, Rohstoffknappheit, Terror, steigende Kosten, Ängste um die Zukunft . Wenn in einem solchen Klima eine Personengruppe die Diskussion um ein Sternchen in der Schriftsprache sucht, kann das schnell und einfach als unpassend und unwichtig abgetan werden.</p>
<p>7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?</p>	<p>Für mich hängt damit auch eng die Erstarkung der AfD zusammen, denn Antifeminismus und rechte Gesinnung liegen oft genug nah beieinander. Die AfD, aber auch andere Parteien benutzen oft genug bewusst die Skepsis und Ablehnung gegenüber dem Feminismus, um für sich zu punkten und mit Populismus und einfachen Antworten Stimmen und Stimmung zu machen. Was sie damit erreichen, ist eine noch tiefere Spaltung.</p>
<p>8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?</p>	<p>Nachvollziehbar finde ich die Angst davor, nicht mehr zu wissen, was "man darf und was nicht". Die Themen und die Bewegung anzuerkennen hieße auch, einiges neu zu lernen und sich vielleicht hier und da "belehren" zu lassen oder sich hier und da zu entschuldigen oder Worte und Taten zurückzunehmen. Viele Menschen haben vielleicht nicht die Kapazitäten dafür, vor allem, da es inzwischen so viele verschiedene Diskurse gibt, die man unmöglich alle kennen kann.</p> <p>Ich kann auch nachvollziehen, dass Menschen, deren persönliche Bubble ausschließlich aus Frauen besteht, die selbst keinen Zugang zum Feminismus haben, zu dem Schluss kommen, die Bewegung repräsentiere gar nicht Frauen, sondern nur eine kleine Gruppe von Menschen, die unzufrieden sind und "mehr" wollen wie kostenlose Hygiene-Artikel.</p> <p>Berechtigt finde ich eigentlich kein Argument. Höchstens wenn es sich gegen extreme Ansichten einzelner Strömungen des Feminismus richtet, die aber auch nicht</p>

	repräsentativ für die Bewegung an sich sind wie zb. Terfs.
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Sie sehen sie nur aus ihrer Perspektive und weigern sich, den Blick nach außen zu richten oder sich vorzustellen - sich ehrlich darauf einzulassen - wie es sich wohl anfühlt, als Frau oder weiblich gelesene Person oder als Person, die permanent rassistischen Anfeindungen ausgesetzt ist, zu leben und aufzuwachsen. Es wird sofort der eigene Wohlstand und das eigene Privileg verteidigt. Es wird der anderen Gruppe kein Zentimeter gegönnt - warum auch? Ihnen schenkt ja auch niemand etwas. Und selbst wenn sie selbst nichts von dem antreten müssten, was sie haben, werden die feministischen Forderungen als unbegründet und anmaßend wahrgenommen. Weil eine Anerkennung zwangsläufig auch ein Umdenken und anders Handeln zur Folge haben müsste.
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?	Parteien wählen, die die politischen und rechtlichen Rahmenbedingungen für echte Veränderungen schaffen können. Sich solidarisieren und vernetzen. Mit Menschen ins Gespräch gehen, angefangen bei Familie und Freunden. Ich glaube, ein gewisser Backlash ist nicht zu vermeiden, weil gesellschaftliche Wandel nicht ohne Widerstand ablaufen kann. Dafür ist das, was passieren soll, zu tiefgreifend. Aber so wie Rollenbilder etc. gelernt werden können, können sie auch wieder verlernt werden. Durch Wiederholung und genug Zeit und indem sich manche Probleme einfach herauswachsen.
11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?	Indem der Diskurs lebendig bleibt. Feministische Ziele legitimiert werden, wie zb. durch den Vorstoß der feministischen Außenpolitik. Damit klar wird, was das im Detail bedeutet und kein hochtrabender, inhaltsleerer Begriff bleibt. Die Zivilgesellschaft wird erreicht durch Repräsentanz der Themen in den Medien, U.a. durch neue Erzählweisen und Formate in Film und Serie. Indem weibliche Erlebenswelten mehr Raum bekommen und vom Mann als Standard abgerückt wird.
12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?	Ich glaube schon. Ich habe kürzlich ein Gespräch bei meiner Autowerkstatt mitgehört. Die Kundinnen verständigten sich mit dem Mechaniker darauf, wie unsinnig sie das Gendern fänden und dass man Negerkuss nicht mehr sagen dürfe und dieser ganze Unsinn mit den Trans-Personen.... Und da frage ich mich dann: wenn der Sohn oder die Tochter des Mechanikers oder einer der Kundinnen trans wäre und vorausgesetzt, das Verhältnis war bis zu diesem Moment ein gutes - würden sie dann noch immer so über die Gefühle ihrer Kinder reden und ihnen die Daseinsberechtigung absprechen? Wenn einer ihrer teuersten Freunde

	schwarz wäre und sagen würde: ich finde es verletzend, wenn du das N-Wort sagst - würden sie trotzdem darauf bestehen, sich nicht den Mund verbieten zu lassen? Und wenn Männer sich sprachlich nirgendwo mehr repräsentiert fänden - würden sie immer noch darüber lachen oder langsam verstehen, worum es geht?
13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	Der Trend geht ja seit Jahren eher in die entgegengesetzte Richtung. Kontakt findet nur noch auf das nötige reduziert statt. Die Menschen verkriechen sich in ihren Blasen und die Algorithmen sorgen dafür, dass sie nicht platzen, indem immer schön für Nachschub gesorgt wird. Es müsste wieder mehr Anreiz für echte Begegnungen geben. Wie das genau aussehen kann, das finde ich jedoch schwer zu beantworten.
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Gesundheitsthemen, also dass die Data Gap dafür sorgt, dass Frauen in der Medizin(Forschung) schlechter vertreten und in der Praxis unpassend behandelt werden. Denn da liegt die "Schuld" nicht bei irgendeinem Peter, der unangemessene Dinge sagt. Also über Themen, die nicht so emotional aufgeladen sind. Was sich in der Regel nicht eignen sind Themen der Kindererziehung und vielen in diesem Bereich wie Geburt (oder Abtreibung), also Themen, die stark polarisieren oder Menschen/Eltern "Fehler" unterstellen.
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Der Wille müsste grundsätzlich in beiden Gruppen da sein, zumindest bei einer größeren Prozentzahl an Menschen. Vorbilder sorgen ja auch dafür, dass andere Menschen ihre Haltung anpassen.
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	

Name:	Interviewee 5
Startzeit:	21.11.2023 12:49:36
Endzeit:	21.11.2023 13:11:51
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Die gesellschaftliche Bestrebung nach Gleichberechtigung und Gerechtigkeit
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Parität Transfrauen Klima Feministische Innenpolitik Feministische Außenpolitik Power Feminismus Gerechtigkeit (Zeit, Geld etc) Weißer Feminismus Antifeminismus und Rechtsradikalismus

3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	In Deutschland Parität und Gesamtgesellschaftliche Aufwertung von Care und damit armutsbekämpfung
4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	Politische Teilhabe
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	Durch Bildung, Aktivismus bis in kleinste Ebenen wie Elternabende. Naja, durch mut für Veränderung-schwierig
6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)	Konservatismus und retraditionalisierung versprechen Verlässlichkeit und Stabilität in Zeiten der Veränderung und Angst und Sorge
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Die Tragweite verstehen die Menschen nicht. Und mir macht Angst, dass mutmaßlich kleine konservative Themen wie Familie dann eben die Tür öffnen zu radikal rechten Meinungen
8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?	Alle Sorgen sind immer berechtigt- wer sich sorgt hat ja das Recht darauf. Die Frage ist nur, warum Freiheit beschnitten werden soll und Leute Vielfalt nicht ertragen.
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Als nullsummenspiel. Dass jemandem was genommen werden soll für mehr Freiheit für andere. Dabei gewinnen bei Feminismus alle mehr Freiheit.
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?	Schwierig...weil Veränderung den backlash provoziert. Revolution? Scherz. Ich denke Männerbildung und Psychologische Arbeit mit Jungs wäre ein Weg. Je starrer Männlichkeit definiert ist, desto schwieriger
11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?	Aufwertung von Care. Fokussierung der Gesellschaft auf einen sozialen Kern. Das wäre der Weg. Krankenhäuser und Pflege zurück in die Hand des Staates und ganz neue Rahmenbedingungen schaffen. Die Pflegekrise und fehlende Plätze auffangen durch neue Programme wie in Österreich im Versuch getestet (Mini Job beim Staat inkl Versicherung)
12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative	Kontakt mit wem? Antifeminismus? Es gibt Diskussionen, die man nicht führen muss. Aber den Kontakt verlieren

Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?	finde ich schwieriger. Beharrlich das ‚wir Und ihr‘ vermeiden wäre sinnvoller.
13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	Gemeinsame Themen suchen.
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Politische Visionen für ein Zusammenleben entwickeln und diskutieren. Jeder wird mal pflegen oder gepflegt werden. Aber wir eiern um das Thema rum. Wir müssen darüber in Kommunen und in Berlin reden. Wie viele Menschen brauchen pflege - alt und junge und dazwischen? Wie entwickelt sich das in den nächsten Jahren? Wie gehen wir damit um. Das könnte ein Hebel sein. Und ein gemeinsames Thema für alle. Damit auch Frauen sich nicht gegenseitig ausspielen bzw teildiskussionen Energie rauben.
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Elementar - alles im Großen und kleinen besprechen
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	

Name:	Interviewee 6
Startzeit:	24.11.2023 19:31:38
Endzeit:	24.11.2023 20:20:12
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Feminismus ist eine soziale Bewegung, die Gleichberechtigung und Freiheit für alle, unabhängig von Gender, Race, Alter, Ability, Klasse usw. zum Ziel hat.
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Feminizide, Ausbeutung und Abwertung von Personen in Care-Arbeit, toxische Männlichkeit, Rechtsruck
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Täter*innen-Arbeit, feministische Aufklärung für Jungs, mehr Geld für sichere Räume für FLINTA*, Aufwertung von Carearbeit, bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen, mehr Geld im Kampf gegen Antifeminismus und Rassismus
4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	Politik, die das Wohl marginalisierter Menschen und der Umwelt in den Mittelpunkt ihrer Entscheidungen stellt Geld für Aufklärungskampagnen rund um Antidiskriminierung und Umweltschutz
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	Bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen und maximal-4-Tage-Woche für weniger Stress im Alltag und mehr Offenheit für die Balange anderer.

<p>6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)</p>	<p>Die antifeministische Lobby findet international viele Anhänger*innen, die sich Sicherheit von einem traditionellen Rollenverständnis versprechen. Sie erfreut sich mehr finanzieller Ressourcen als feministische Bewegungen und sorgt für eine schnelle Verbreitung von Inhalten, die das Patriarchat aufrecht erhalten sollen. Andererseits ist auch in Deutschland angekommen, dass Feminismen zu Machtverlust führen kann, worauf Profiteure des patriarchalen Systems gern verzichten.</p>
<p>7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?</p>	<p>Antifeminismus kämpft gegen die Gleichberechtigung und Freiheit aller Menschen und favorisiert ein traditionelles Rollenbild in einem fest verankerten patriarchalen System. In einem Land, das mir aufgrund meines Geschlechts vorschreibt, wie ich mich zu verhalten habe, möchte ich auf keinen Fall leben.</p>
<p>8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?</p>	<p>Der Zerfall der Kernfamilie - richtig, der wird über kurz oder lang eintreten.</p>
<p>9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?</p>	<p>Sie glauben sie sind überzogen. Außerdem sehen sie oft die Profiteure des Patriarchats als die eigentlichen Benachteiligten an und sehen die Schuld bei den Marginalisierten.</p>
<p>10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?</p>	<p>Dort anzusetzen, wo das Patriarchat auch den Profiteuren wehtut: Verminderung von Stress bei der Lohnarbeit (bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen, maximal 4-Tage-Woche), Aufklärung über diverse Männlichkeitsbilder, Aufwertung von Carearbeit</p>
<p>11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?</p>	<p>Wie gesagt, Politik muss sich am Wohle der Schwächsten und der Umwelt orientieren - dann geht es allen besser. Und die Zivilgesellschaft muss in ihren Anliegen ernst genommen werden - bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen ist wichtig, aber auch niedrigschwellige Räume für diverse Bürger*innenbeteiligung.</p>
<p>12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?</p>	<p>Auf jeden Fall. Dafür braucht es aber auch Zeit und Offenheit. Solange selbst in Deutschland Menschen um ihre Existenz bangen müssen, bleibt keine Zeit und Offenheit für Kontakt zu Leuten, denen die Schuld an die eigene Misere gegeben wird.</p>
<p>13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?</p>	<p>Wie gesagt, auf beiden Seiten wäre Zeit und Offenheit notwendig, die durch den Stress des Kapitalismus aber schwierig gemacht wird. Kontakt kann vielfältig sein: In Räumen der Bürger*innenbeteiligung, in Jobs und Weiterbildungen die nicht nach Alter oä. segregiert</p>

	werden, in Kunst und Kultur, die niedrigschwellig (mit)gestaltet werden können
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Menschen öffnen sich, wenn sie über etwas sprechen können, was ihnen lieb und teuer ist: Die Familie, das Haustier, ein Hobby, Musik. Über gemeinsame Interessen lassen sich auch politische Brücken bauen.
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Eine große! Vor allem müssen Gelder in Bildung, ein bedingungsloses Grundeinkommen und in die Kultur gesteckt werden.
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	

Name:	Interviewee 7
Startzeit:	25.11.2023 21:45:58
Endzeit:	25.11.2023 22:56:16
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Alle Bewegungen und Bestrebungen, welche die Würde, Gleichberechtigung und Selbstbestimmung aller (!) Menschen und Geschlechtsidentitäten als Wert ansehen und zum Ziel haben.
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Global und national: Die Beschäftigung mit den vielfältigen Ausprägungen antifeministischer Backlash-Tendenzen (rechtskonservatives soziopolitisches Erstarken, das mit Misogynie, einem Revival konservativer Rollenverständnisse und Rücknahme erkämpfter Frauenrechte einhergeht).
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Innerhalb des feministischen Diskurses: Intersektionalität/Abkehr vom "White Feminism"; feministische Außen- und Entwicklungspolitik, Fokus der Familienpolitik auf Partnerschaftlichkeit und Diversität von Familienformen
4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	Stärkere Sensibilisierung für die antifeministischen Strukturen des erstarkenden Rechtspopulismus (u. a. durch höhere Investitionen in politische Bildung), Aktivismus und Engagement der Zivilgesellschaft
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	Aufklärung und "Grundlagenarbeit" dazu, was Feminismus ist (kein Männerhass), konkrete Artikulation des sozialen und ökonomischen (!) Mehrwerts von Feminismus für alle, Entzauberung der rechtspopulistischen, antifeministischen Parolen, Panikmache und Wohlstandsversprechen
6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft	Rechtspopulismus, der immer mehr Fuß fasst, geht immer Hand in Hand mit Misogynie und patriarchalen Herrschaftsstrukturen. Gleichberechtigung, Diversität und

immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)	Demokratie - die Grundfesten eines feministischen Wertkodex - sind nicht vereinbar mit faschistoiden Bestrebungen.
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Faktische Gründe: Wahlergebnisse, wie beispielsweise die der kürzlichen Landtagswahlen in den großen Bundesländern Hessen und Bayern, welche belegen, dass der Rechtspopulismus kein auf ostdeutsche Bundesländer und "alte weiße Männer" abzuschiebendes Problem ist, sondern in der sogenannten Mitte der Gesellschaft angekommen ist.
8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?	Argumente: keine. Diversität und Selbstbestimmung sind ein logisch nachvollziehbarer Zugewinn an Chancen für Individuum und Gesellschaft. Sorgen: Ich kann nachvollziehen, dass - durch Unwissenheit, Verunsicherung und ein gezieltes Framing von Antifeminist*innen und Rechtspopulist*innen - die bestimmenden Ängste in Zeiten einer globalen Transformation auf einen Sündenbock, das Fremde/Unbekannte, aus Mangel an Erklärungen abgewälzt werden.
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Als Bedrohung.
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?	Der antifeministische Backlash ist bereits Realität, hierzulande und anderswo. Es gilt, bereits als sicher gewählte Ziele und Menschen zurückzugewinnen. Dies kann nur über den Weg der Empathie. Die hinter den Vorbehalten liegenden Sorgen und Ängste feminismuskritischer Personen sind ernstzunehmen - und von der angeblichen feministischen Schuld zu entkoppeln. Das chancengebende Profil feministischer Ziele für die Vielen (nicht einer "woken" Minderheit) muss zum Ausdruck kommen, die zerstörerische Kraft von Patriarchat und Populismus zu enttarnen.
11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?	Im politischen Diskurs müssen diejenigen Parteien, welche sich nach wie vor einer demokratischen Grundordnung verschreiben, viel stärker übergreifend handeln und sich wertebasiert verbünden. Die sogenannte "Brandmauer" gegen Rechts darf nicht zur leeren Floskel verkommen. Die Zivilgesellschaft kann hierauf ebenfalls stärker einwirken, zum Beispiel durch Petitionen und weitere Formen der Bürger*innenbeteiligung. Der Aktivismus, der auch mittels sozialer Medien Reichweite für feministische Ziele und Interessen schafft, bildet hier das Bindeglied zwischen gesellschaftlichem und politischem Raum. Nicht zuletzt ist das sichtbare Vorleben feministischer Werte und Ziele ein Weg, Akzeptanz zu schaffen - was in

	einem immer hassereichereren gesellschaftlichen Klima jedoch mit Risiken verbunden ist.
12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?	Ja. Die Wahrnehmung und das Kennenlernen von Individuen baut Ängste und Vorurteile gegenüber einer anonymen, unbekanntem Gruppe ab. Ein analoges Beispiel ist, das die ausgeprägteste Ausländer*innenfeindlichkeit in denjenigen Regionen Deutschlands herrscht, in denen die wenigsten Ausländer*innen leben.
13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	Insbesondere im schulischen Bereich in Form Sprecher*innen, Workshops etc., und damit als Teil der politischen Bildung
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Themen der eigenen Lebenswelt. Nahbare, viele betreffende Thematiken, entgegen abstrakter Begriffe (wie viel Sorgearbeit leisten Frauen, warum droht ihnen die Altersarmut etc.), ebenso wie persönliche Berichte über Diskriminierungserfahrungen
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Wie bereits erwähnt, sind schulische Einrichtungen am einfachsten auf einer soziopolitischen Ebene zu erreichen. Aber auch aus Reihen der Zivilgesellschaft gibt es einige, auch kreative Wege und zahlreiche "Bühnen". Von Kunst und Kultur bis hin zum Alltagsgespräch in der Mittagspause oder auf dem heimischen Sofa.
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	In der Ausgestaltung des Kontakt kann das einzige Mittel nur Empathie sein. Mit der Ausbreitung des Rechtspopulismus verhärten sich Fronten des Hasses in unserer und anderen Gesellschaften. Es lässt sich nur durch Mitmenschlichkeit entgegenwirken, die zudem den Kern feministischer Werte bildet.

Name:	Interviewee 8
Startzeit:	04.12.2023 17:29:33
Endzeit:	04.12.2023 17:53:26
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Menschenrechte für alle, intersektional, gegen das Patriarchat und den Kapitalismus, für einen nachhaltigen Umgang mit unserer Erde.
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Zeitgerechtigkeit, Vollzeitarbeit auf 30 Stunden senken, Elternschaft als Diskriminierungsmerkmal verankern, wie gehen wir mit der sich zuspitzenden Care-Krise um (fehlende Fachkräfte in der Kinder- und Altenbetreuung), Bezahlung der Care Arbeit.
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Zeitgerechtigkeit durch senken der Regelarbeitszeit auf 30 Stunden, entschärfen der Care-Krise durch Anhebung der Bezahlung in den Care Berufen.

4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	Aufnahme ins nächste Parteiprogramm/nächsten Koalitionsvertrag, oder Petitionen oder Streiks
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	Wir Frauen müssen uns vernetzen und über alle Kommunikationskanäle Aufklärung betreiben. Zeitungen, Social Media, Fernsehen...
6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)	Misogynie ist die Antwort darauf, dass wir die Rollenverteilung des Patriarchats angreifen. Je lauter wir werden, desto größer wird der Widerstand werden. Aber da müssen wir (gemeinsam) durch! Es kommt auf die kritische Masse an!
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Die Gewaltbereitschaft rechter und religiöser Gruppen und die AFD.
8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?	Bisher privilegierte Schichten werden diese abtreten müssen. Das macht Angst und Wut. Wir müssen mit Aufklärung dagegen arbeiten.
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Mit großer Angst und Verunsicherung.
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?	Aufklärung und Empathie.
11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?	Parität in der Politik und in politischen Prozessen. Wir brauchen mehr Frauen und marginalisierte Menschen an der Spitze.
12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?	Auf jedenfall. Auch wenn es sehr schwer fällt.
13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	Kontakt auf kommunaler Ebene über Vereine, Einrichtungen oder Ähnliches. Die Politik müsste diese öffentlich fördern und pushen. Und die BILD Zeitung muss wegen Volksverhetzung verboten werden.
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach,	Familienhilfe, Weiterbildung, politische Schulungen und Netzwerke für Frauen, Begegnungsstätten für

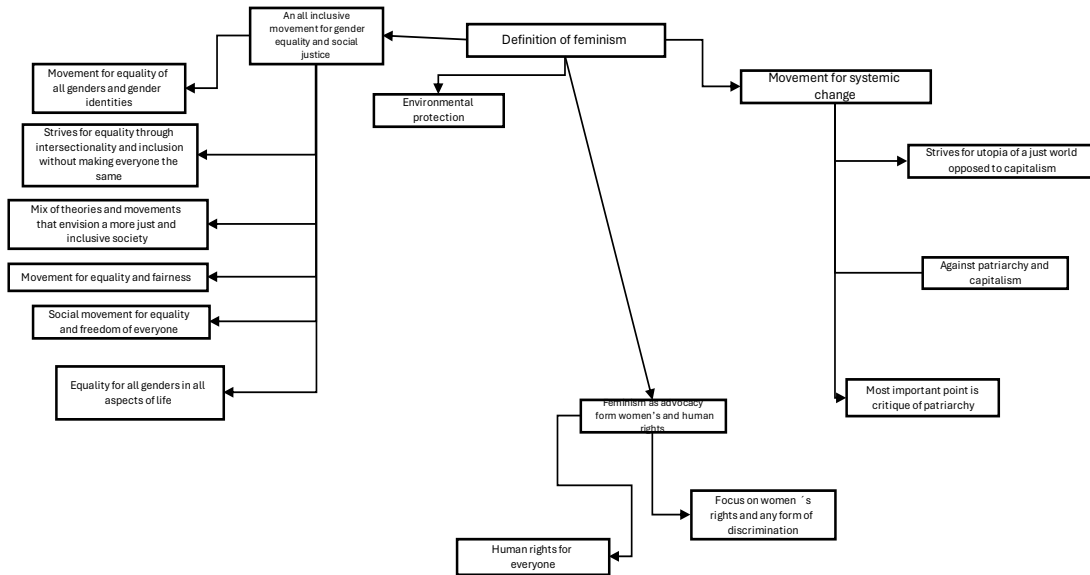
um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Jugendliche und Ältere. Themen wären: warum profitieren wir alle von einer gerechteren Welt? Warum macht intersektionaler Feminismus weniger einsam und bietet eine sicherere Zukunft.
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Politik sollte nicht mehr den Ängsten der Menschen nach dem Mund reden sondern eine positive gerechte Zukunft für uns alle vorstellen! Wir brauchen Utopien, dann sind die unvermeidbaren Einschnitte die auf uns zukommen leichter zu tragen.
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	Spannende Fragen :)

Name:	Interviewee 9
Startzeit:	11.12.2023 22:11:30
Endzeit:	11.12.2023 22:29:21
1. Wie definierst Du für Dich Feminismus?	Die Gleichstellung aller Geschlechter ohne Ausnahme irgendwelcher Lebensbereiche
2. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach aktuell die wichtigsten feministischen Themen und Diskurse?	Equal Pay
3. Was sind Deiner Meinung nach die feministischen Ziele und Forderungen, die als nächstes erreicht und umgesetzt werden müssen?	Zunächst ist es wichtig, das patriarchales Denken zu dekonstruieren um die Gleichberechtigung aller Geschlechter ganzheitlich zu denken.
4. Was ist Deine Vorstellung davon, wie diese Ziele erreicht werden?	Durch die Thematisierung von Feminismus in der breiten Gesellschaft und dem Aufräumen von Vorurteilen wird sich vermutlich schon einiges ändern
5. Wie denkst Du, kann die Mehrheit der Gesellschaft zur Unterstützung dieser Ziele motiviert werden?	Durch Aufklärung und liberalem Diskurs, ohne irgendwelche Hürden zum Thema aufzubauen
6. Warum denkst Du findet Antifeminismus in der deutschen Zivilgesellschaft immer mehr Zuspruch? (siehe Leipziger Autoritarismus Studie 2022)	Jede Bewegung hat eine Gegenbewegung und ich denke einige (offensichtlich sich nicht mit dem Thema beschäftigten) Personen haben große Vorurteile und (meist) Männer haben ANgst vor der Umkehr der Geschlechterrollen bzw. der "Vorherrschaft der Frau"
7. Welche Gründe gibt es, wegen denen Du Dir Sorgen um den heutigen Antifeminismus und dessen Zustimmung in Deutschland machst?	Ich mache mir Sorgen, dass dieser Antifeminismus noch radikaler wird, als er schon ist und dadurch eine (noch größere) Gefahr für Frauen entsteht, die für ihre Rechte eintreten wollen
8. Welche der Sorgen und Argumente von	übersprungen

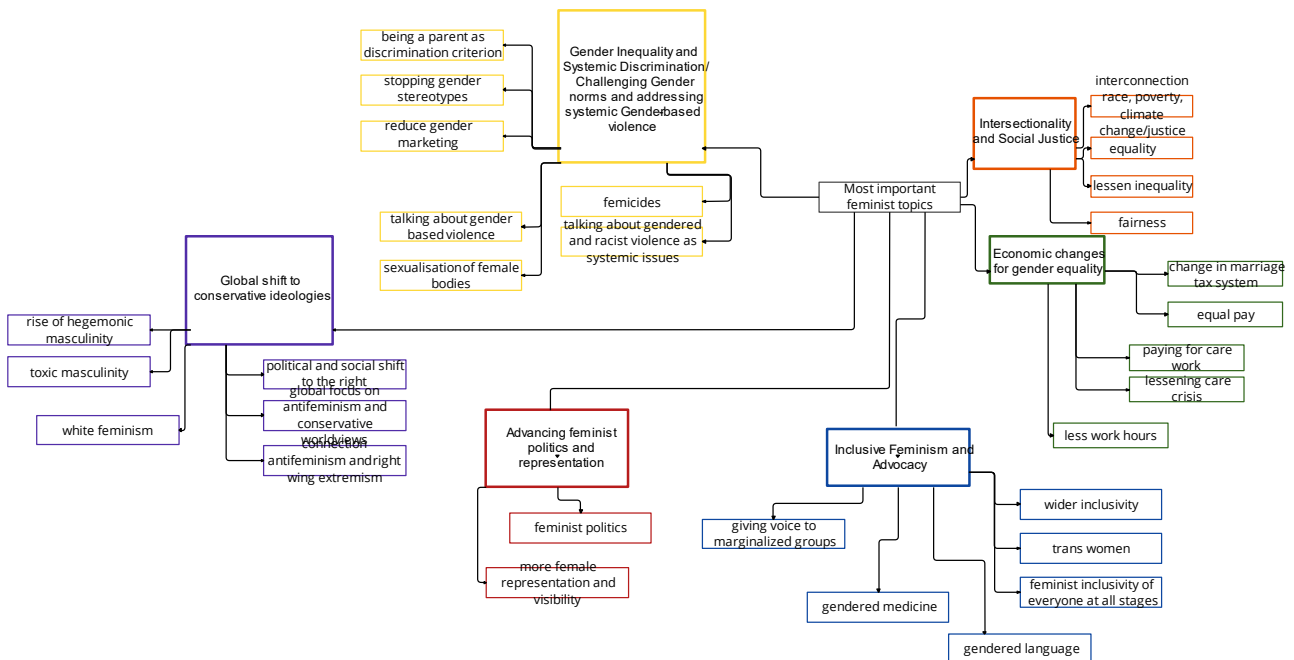
Antifeminist*innen sind Deiner Meinung nach berechtigt oder nachvollziehbar?	
9. Wie denkst Du sehen Antifeminist*innen Feminismus und feministische Forderungen und Ziele?	Als Problem der neuen Generation, was keine Relevanz für sie hat
10. Welchen Weg gibt es, Deiner Meinung nach, feministische Ziele zu erreichen und umzusetzen, ohne einen Antifeministischen Backlash auszulösen?	Durch Feministische Initiativen, die Falschinformationen über die Bewegung aufdecken und dadurch eine Liberalisierung der Bewegung erwirken (ohne die Ziele zu vernachlässigen)
11. Wie können Politik und Zivilgesellschaft in die Umsetzung und das Erreichen von Zielen mit einbezogen werden?	Feministische Ziele gehören auch auf die politische Agenda, wodurch sich die Politik ebenfalls einbringen kann
12. Denkst Du mehr Kontakt ist eine Möglichkeit negative Gegenreaktionen zu vermeiden oder abzuschwächen?	Ja, ich denke umso stärker Feminismus thematisiert wird, desto weniger wird es zum Tabu Thema und desto weniger Gegenreaktionen sind zu erwarten
13. Wie könnte mehr Kontakt aussehen und was wäre auf beiden Seiten nötig?	Ich denke, um Kontakt zu ermöglichen muss eine gewisse Ausgangssituation geschaffen werden, in der die Toleranz für das Thema zumindest partiell vorhanden ist. Ohne ein gewisses Grundinteresse ist es sehr schwer, in einen sinnvollen Diskurs zu gehen
14. Welche Themen eignen sich Deiner Meinung nach, um in den Dialog zu gehen?	Die Perspektive beider Seiten der Bewegung (sowohl Feminismus als auch Antifeminismus) auszutauschen wäre vermutlich ein Anfang. Die Ziele des Feminismus zu beschreiben wäre ebenfalls eine recht allgemeine Möglichkeit, einen Diskurs zu ermöglichen
15. Welche Rolle spielen Politik und Zivilgesellschaft bei der möglichen Kontaktaufnahme?	Eine entscheidende. Das Thema muss in der Zivilgesellschaft verankert werden um eine grundelegende Akzeptanz zu schaffen
16. Möchtest Du sonst noch etwas anmerken, dass in den Fragen Deiner Meinung nach nicht zur Sprache kam?	übersprungen

Mindmaps for Coded Themes

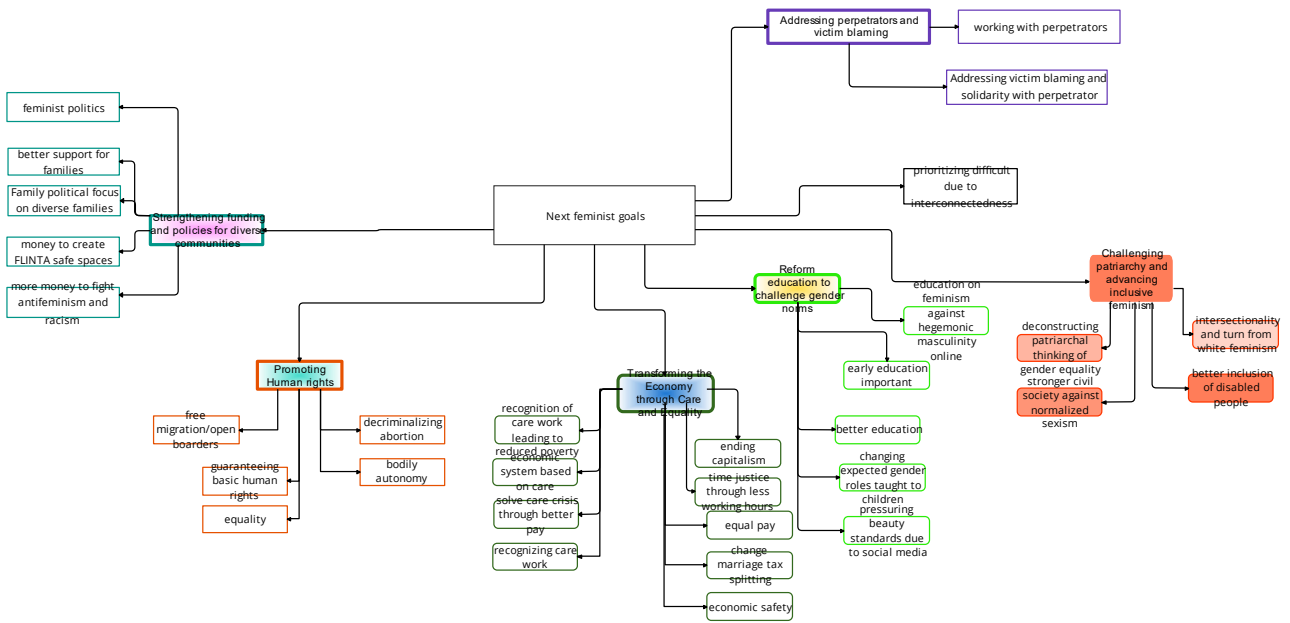
Interview Question 1



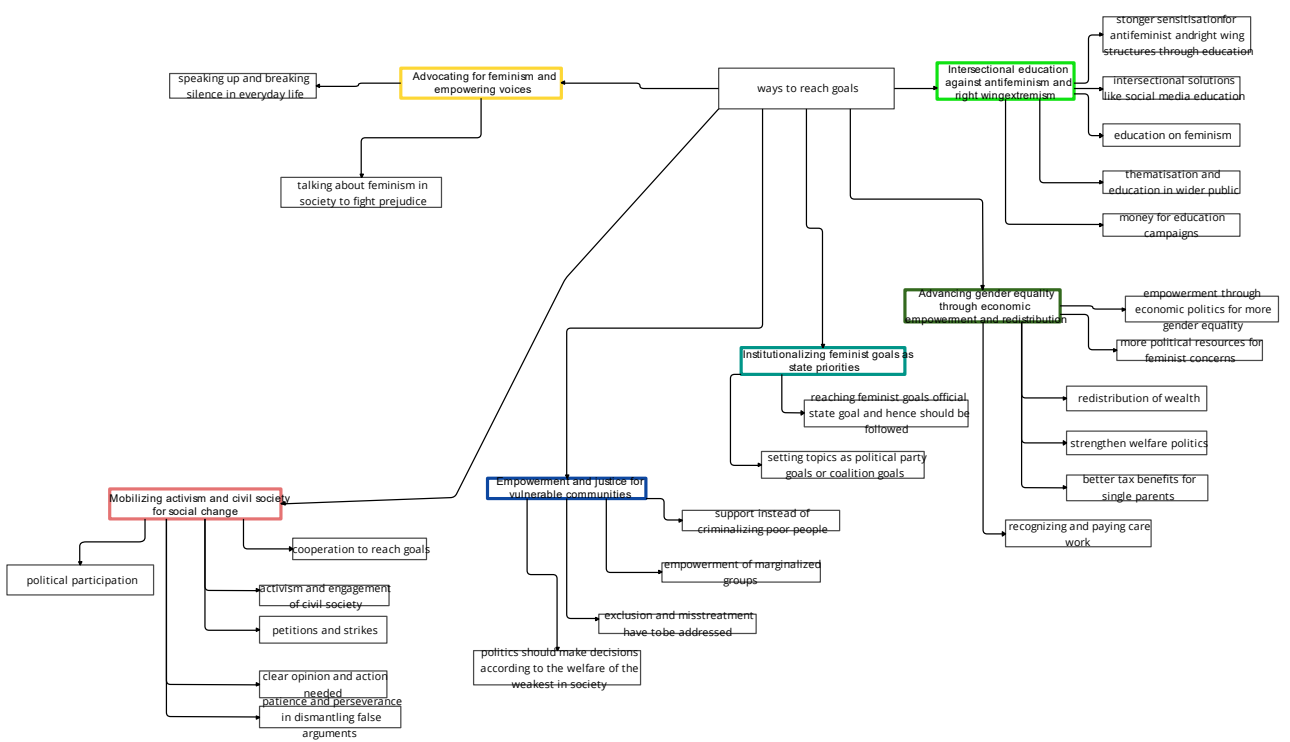
Interview Question 2



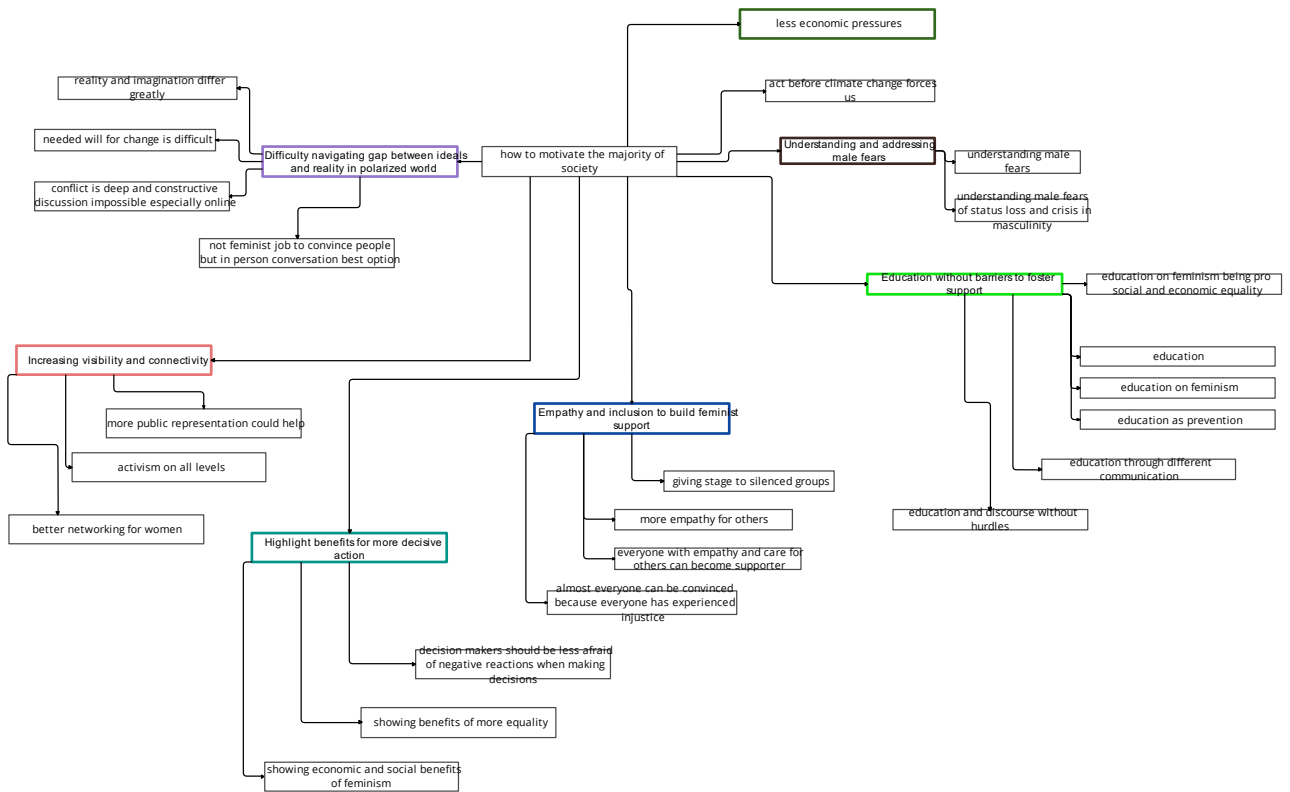
Interview Question 3



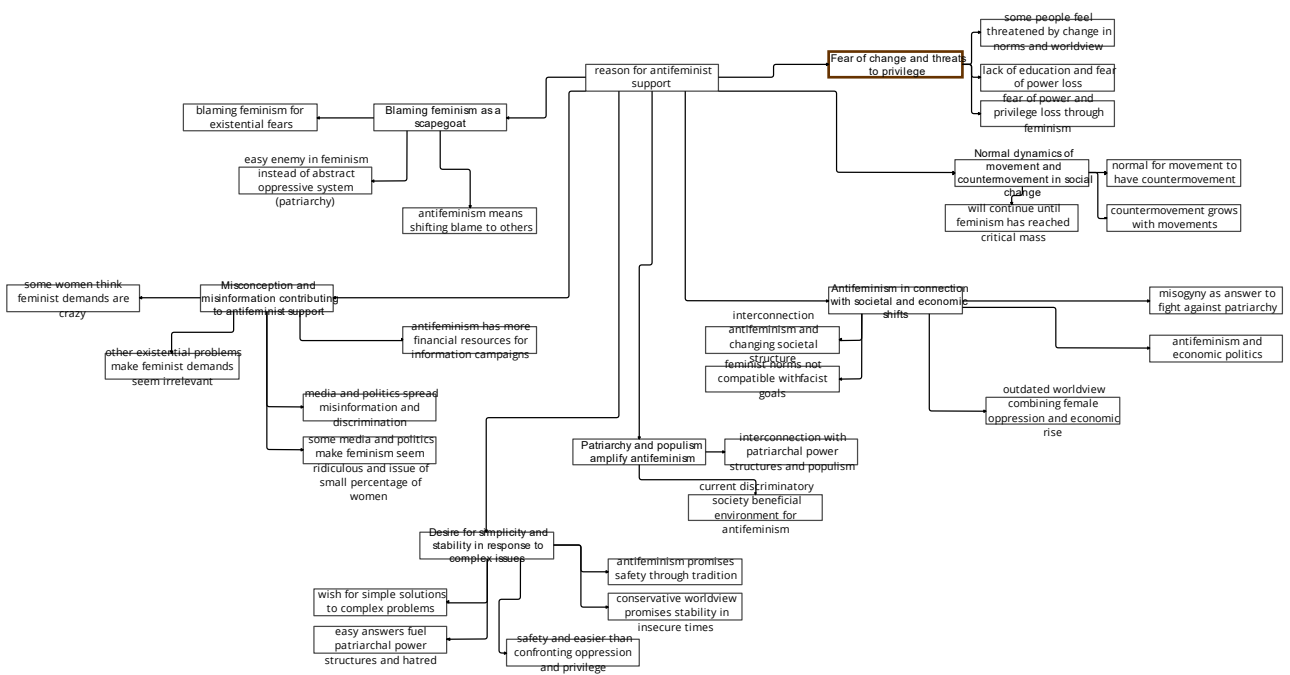
Interview Question 4



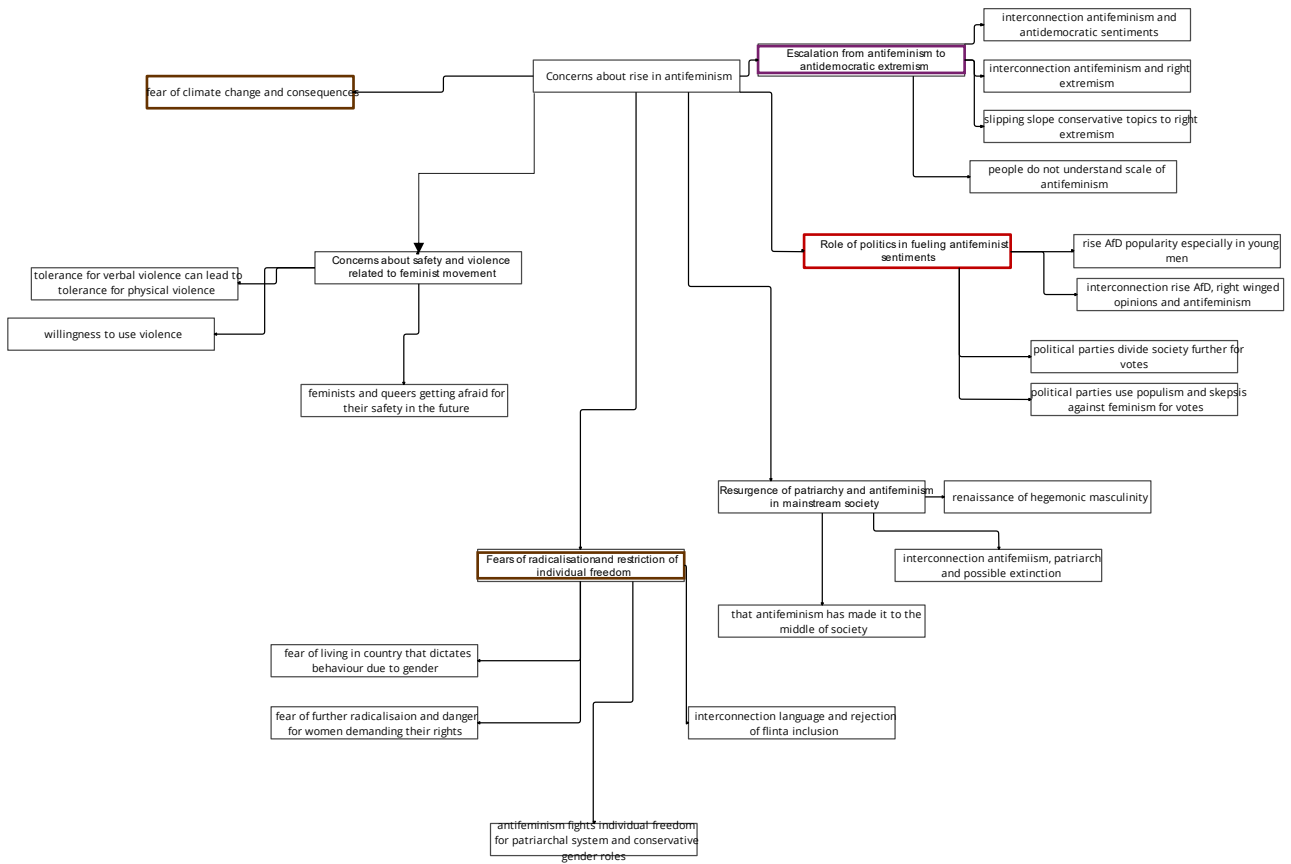
Interview Question 5



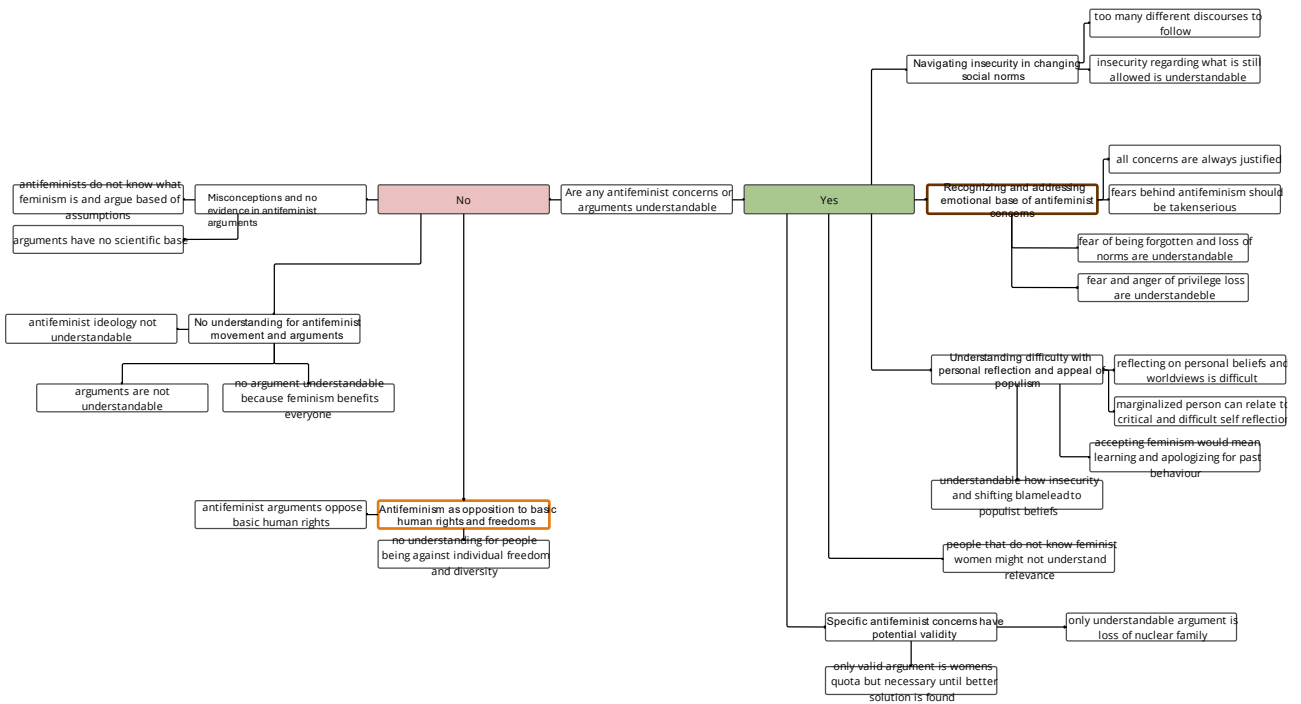
Interview Question 6



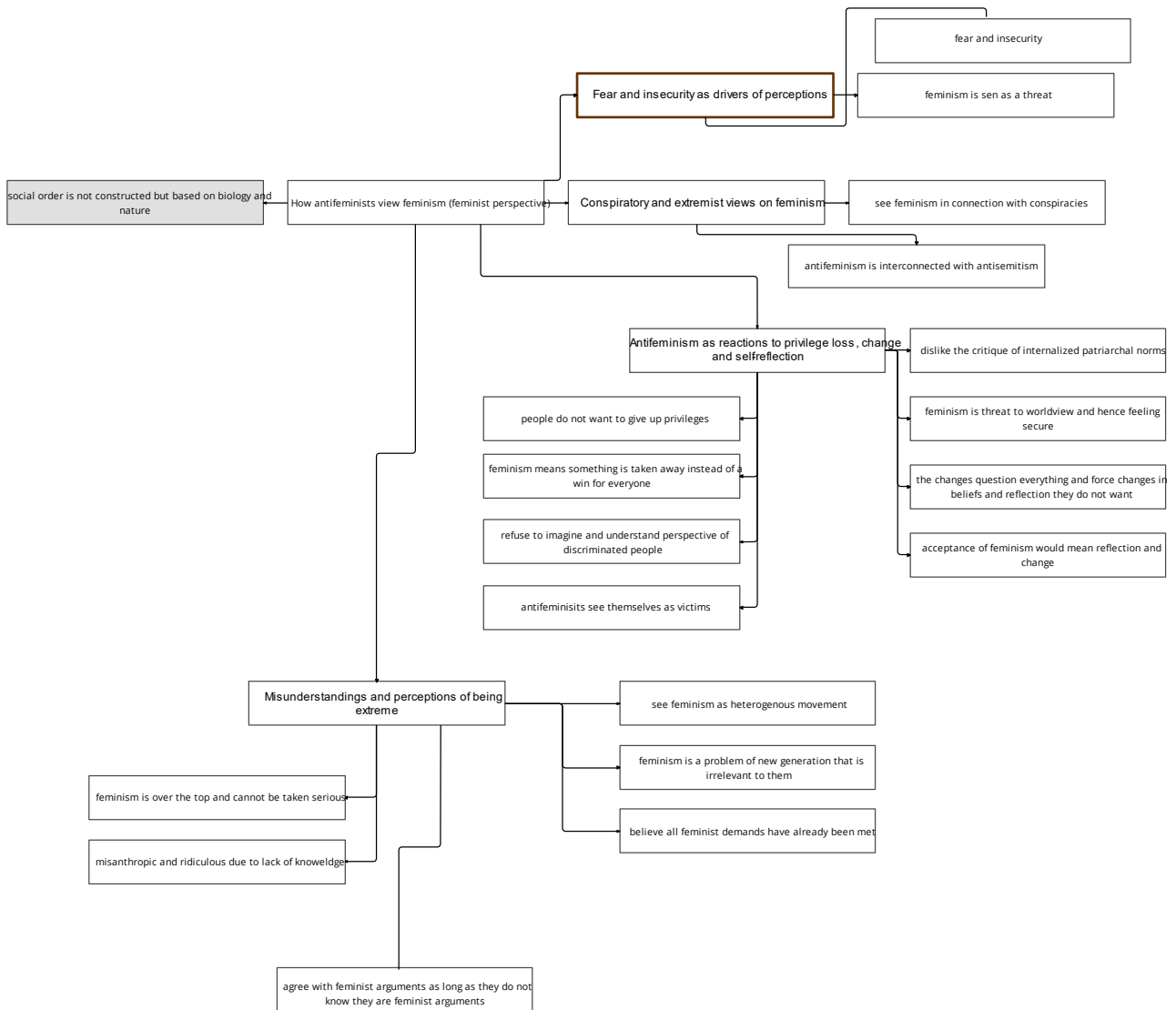
Interview Question 7



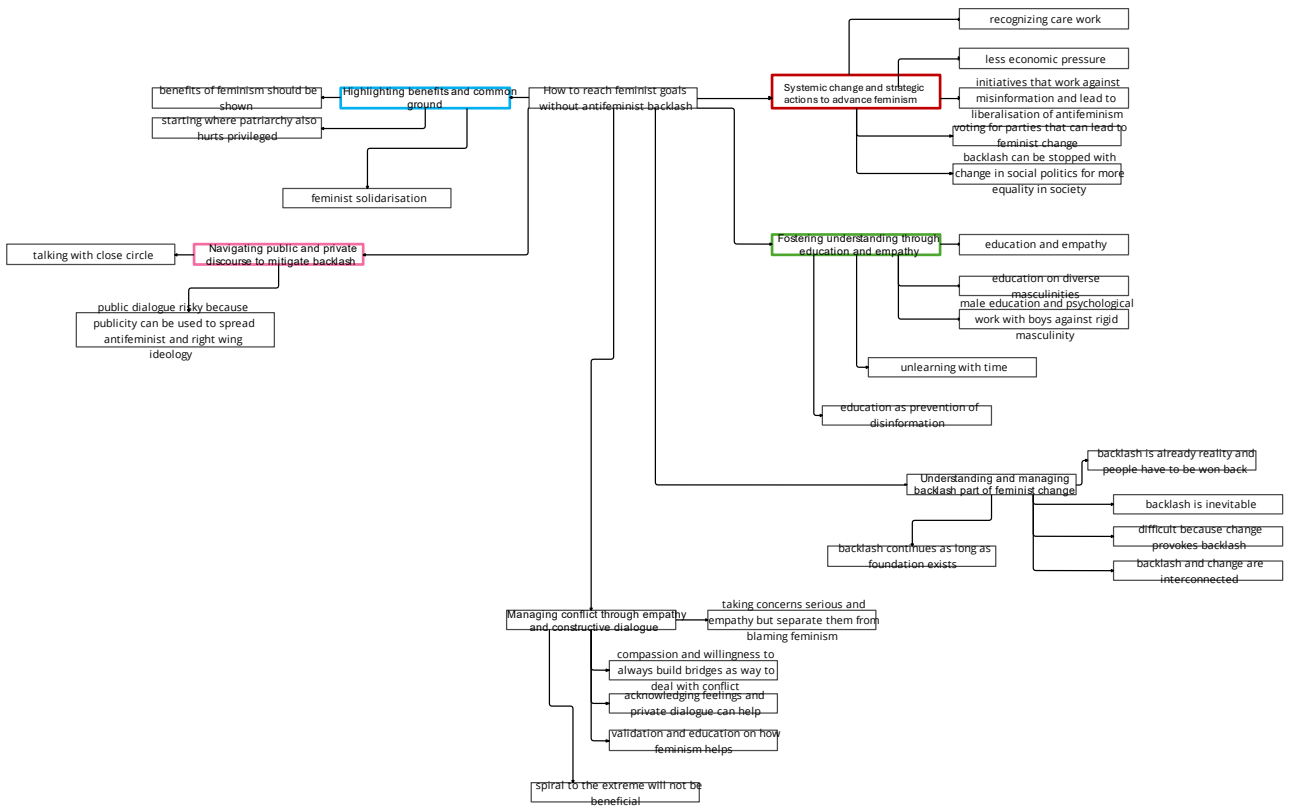
Interview Question 8



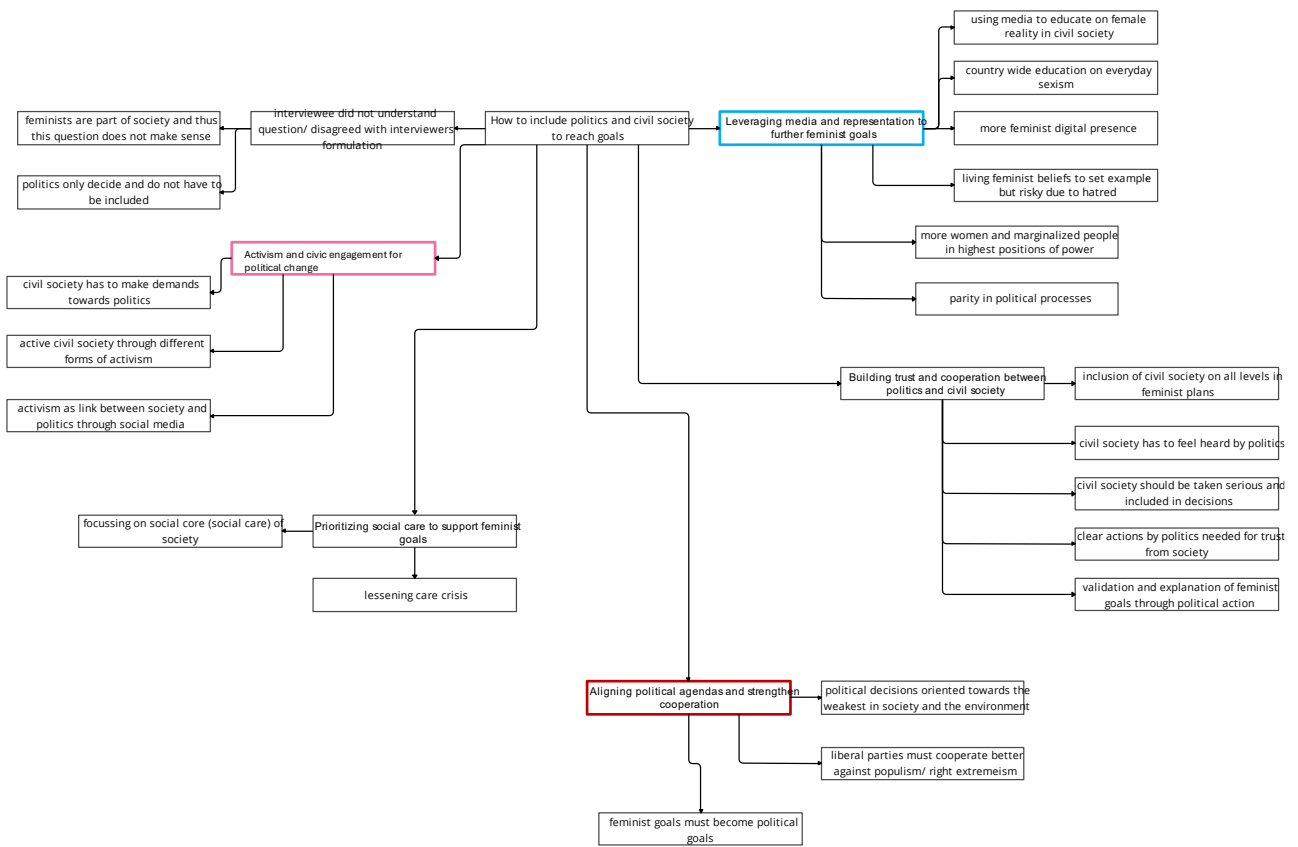
Interview Question 9



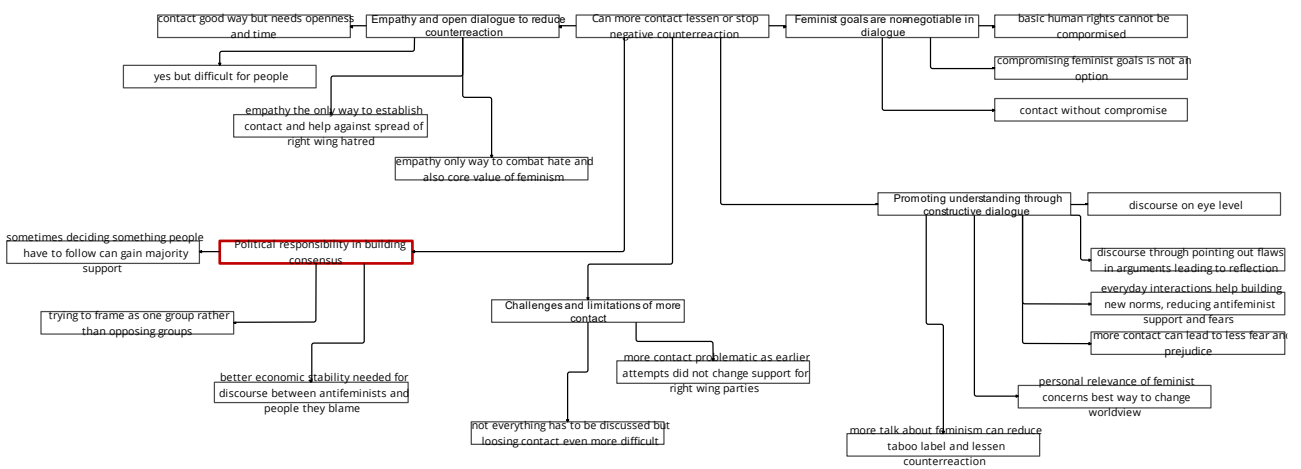
Interview Question 10



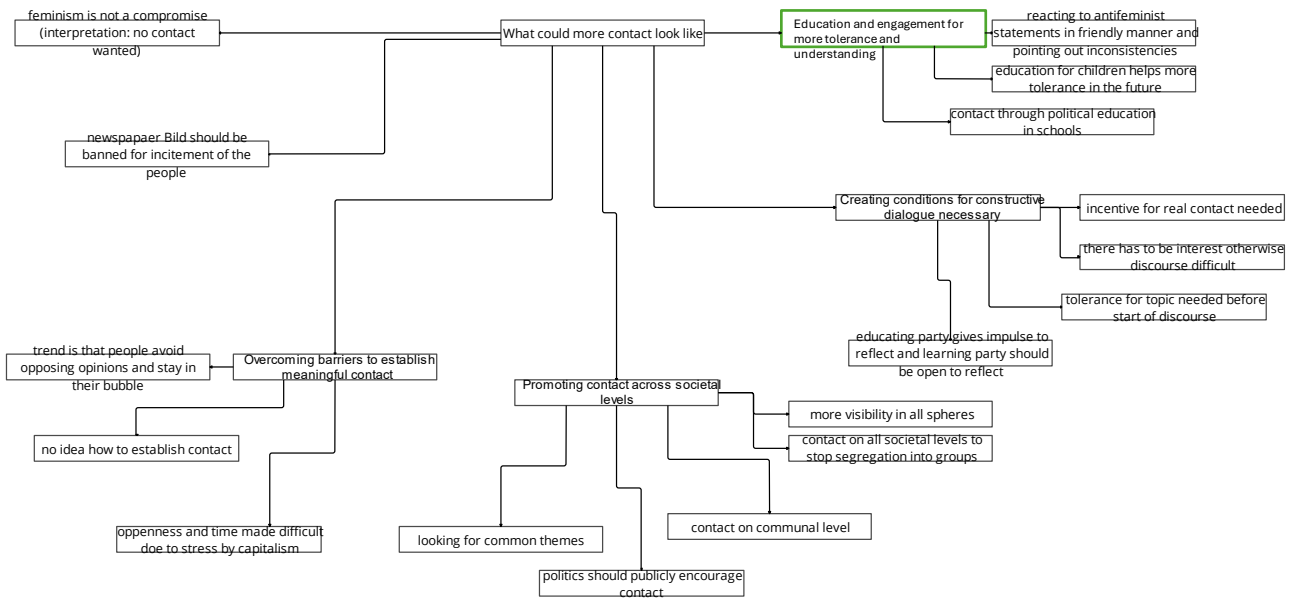
Interview Question 11



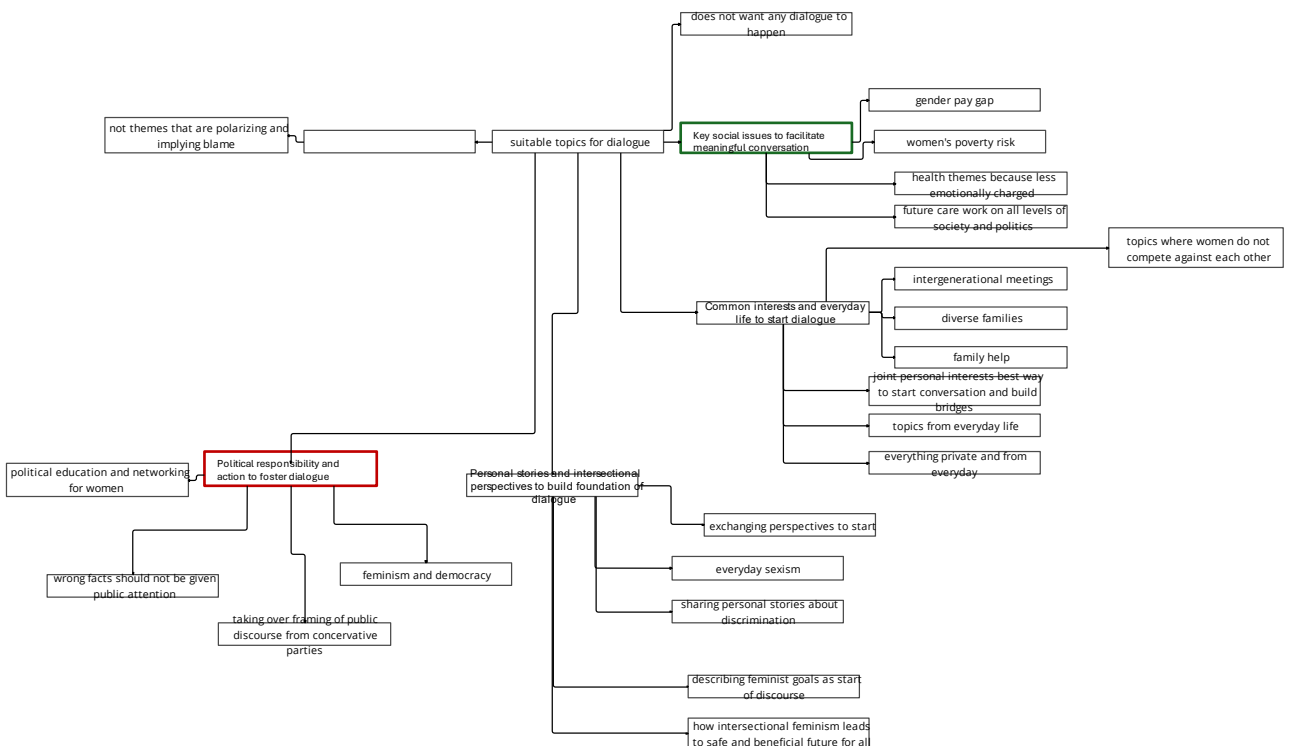
Interview Question 12



Interview Question 13



Interview Question 14



Interview Question 15

