



THE GERMAN WOMAN'S MOVEMENT

1960's till today

Outline:

- short prehistory
- Second Wave of Feminism
 - in West-Germany
 - in East-Germany
- Third Wave of Feminism
- Current and Fourth Wave of Feminism

Prehistory of the 2nd Wave of feminism in Germany



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1848/49 German Revolution - start of German Woman's Movement

1908 woman can finally become party members and do political work

1918 woman finally reach right to vote in the Weimar Republic

Weimar Constitution -§109 same rights and duties for woman and man

Nine first female deputies

- woman participating in their first elections for the Germans National Convention 1919

Woman during nazism

-- everything achieved, lost again

- all achievements got abolished again
- couldn't be in high political position
- Ethnic-nationalistic ideology assigned woman the role to be especially mothers - had functional role
- strict patriarchy - woman lower in rank than man
- women were supposed to be housewives and encouraged to give birth to many children
- appreciated characteristics of "German- Woman":
loyal, dutiful, self-sacrificing, capable of suffering and selfless

After Nazism two Woman's, second Wave Movements in the 1960s,70s and 80s

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West-Germany
as part of Western
World

East- Germany
as part of Sovjet
Union

Woman's Movement in the west

The 2nd Wave of German Feminism

- Woman ideal of 50s: perfect housewife, works a bit, good mother, cheerful beloved
- Student Movement of 1968
against reactionary state, (vietnam-) war, corruption scandal, missing opposition in government, confronting nazism history
- SDS "New Left" was founded as a movement
woman very represented in student movement
- in the meantime sexual revolution in the Western countries and Germany
- The pill comes on the market



- "Action Council for the liberation of woman" founded
- Woman's interests of Emanzipation in SDS not taken into account enoug "Tomatenwurf"
- Different diverse autonomous woman collectives and groups formed



What the 2nd Wavers wanted:

- equal payment
- recognition for domestic and care work and more male participation
- Redefine the social cultural determination of gender, questioning biologisms
- end of violence against woman
- active participation in politics
- right for self-determination and independance of man
- equal access to qualified occupations
- the abolition of § 218 (which illegalizes abortion)

"Aktion 218"

- initiated by Alice Schwarzer 1971
- diverse participation /Taboo-breacker
- formulated official demand to German Justice Department
 - abolish §218
 - abortions should be legally done by doctors
 - pill and abortion should be paid by health insurance
 - more sexual education according to the needs of woman should be implemented



"We had an abortion"

Characteristics of the 2nd Wave:

- equality by law was given, since new constitution of 1949, Elisabeth Selbert und Friederike Nadig (2 female SPD deputies) participated
- took time till they entered the trajectory of general feminist thought
- History of feminist thought needed to be re-found after Hitler regime

- had interest in identifying reasons for the unequal and discriminated situation of woman

- Wanted to build new society
Focused on three Approches for that:

- Capitalistic exploitation of woman's work
- The dominion of the men over the woman
- The social-cultural determination of genders





3 Phases of 2nd Wave

1. Phase: Creation of female spaces

- inspired by the US american woman's movement
- created exclusive woman's groups in which they shared about their realities as woman, practiced "consciousness-rising" about how the dominant male perspective impacted their life and which different discriminations they were exposed to
- groups were place of solidarization, collective learning and activism
- many autonomous groups were founded
- organized different political actions for their demands (e.g. Strike for equal payments)

3 Phases of 2nd Wave

2. Phase: Projects and re-orientation from 1975 onwards

- Creation of alternative woman's media, feminist magazines, movies, publishing companies, female literature, feminist books
- More woman centers opened, woman bars and woman "Kafeneios"
- 1976 Brussels Woman's Tribunal
- Woman's Houses got established
- 1976 first Summer Universities for woman
- 1978 first meeting of old Woman's Associations and the New Woman's Movement in Berlin



"Violence towards woman"
"And what we can do about it"

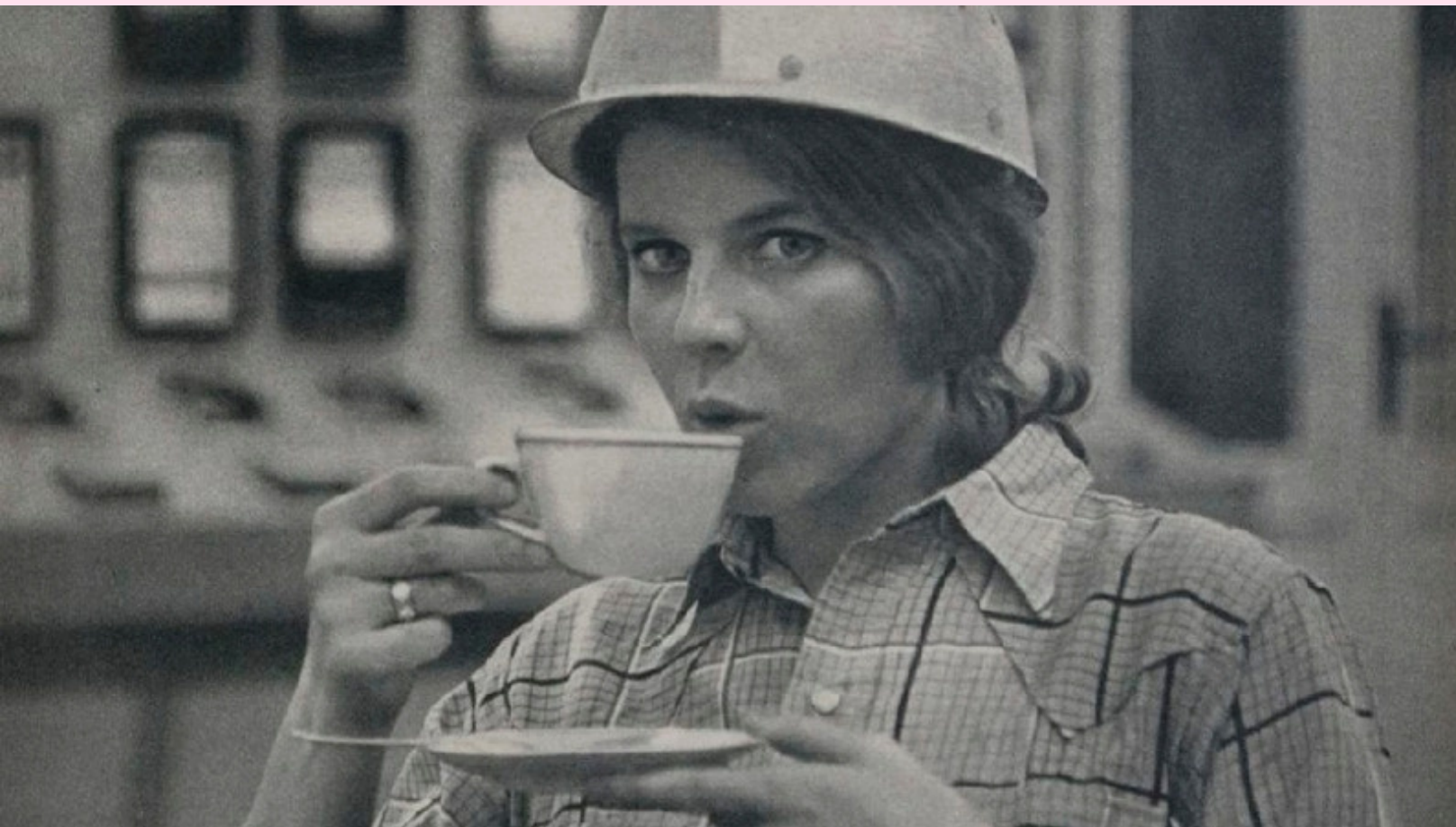
3 Phases of 2nd Wave

3. Phase: Institutional integration and differentiation

- The movement differentiated itself
many autonomous groups, which had their own missions
(e.g. lesbians, lawyers, mothers, peace activists,
migrants
-> collective activism got less
- Mid 1980s ADEFRA found
- Woman research got established more comprehensive
- Green party with 50% woman
- state financed many woman's projects - they
professionalized
- Most communes get Gender-Mainstreaming Offices and
Equal Opportunities commissioners

Woman's Movement in GDR (East-Germany)

Identity of Woman, in 40 years of GDR socialism



- equality of genders basic part of communism
- 1949 new constitution - > equality implemented and all opposing paragraphs removed
- integration of woman in labour market
- equal payment and access to all professions
- DFD womans organization was founded
- woman commissions on all state levels
- mother protection laws
- measures to increase representation in leading positions (e.g. further qualifications, courses, science)
- Kindergardens were build
- scientific council for woman to advice policy makers

Later in 60s and 70s:

- law that domestic and care work should be equally devided between woman and man
- laws to better the compatibility of family and employment

Equality from above

- still the numbers of woman in leading positions remained low
- socio-cultural change slower
- woman were overloaded, still woman did, most domestic and care work, low wages, long working hours, bad working conditions
- family-politics called woman-politics
 - >Solidification of old roles
- other topics of female-life not adressed
- deeper Internalisation of lower rank of woman also not adressed



Movement forming

- As "equality" was institutionalized, the actual lack of it was hard to identify, many perceived gender equality as reached
- In 80s female critics grew - informal groups formed
- Freedom and Alternative movement / Peace Movement
- 1984 first GDR Woman's Meeting
- Protests
- Woman's groups continued meeting - also for political work (LILLO&EWA)
- Wanted equal political participation and abolishment of old gender roles
- ZIF and "Independent Woman Committee" founded
- Participation round table & constitution of Social Charta for re-unification
- participated in Volkskammerwahl



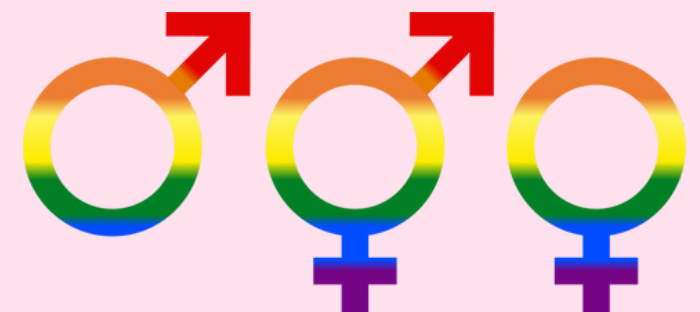
Start of the Third Wave

Two Woman's Movements coming together after reunification of Germany 1990

- political woman of GDR saw reunification critical - steps back
- negotiations around §218 compromise
- "West-Woman" sceptical about "Ost-Mommys" - lack of reflection of dimension of patriarchy

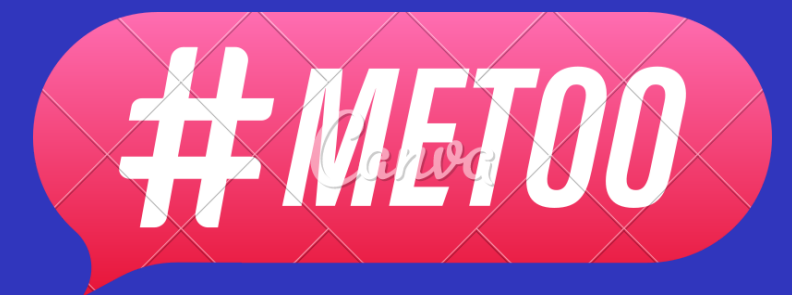
The third Wave of Feminism 90s

- Woman's Movement now very diverse - many different groups
- No collective unified movement - no clear self-designation of 3rd Wave
- institutionalized - governmental gender mainstreaming, woman act more from within the system
- autonomous Woman's Movement not much attention, partly considered obsolete
- post-modern Society - everyone can live how they want!?
for woman less pressure to take on specific "woman-role"
- new antifeminisms and biologisms come up, woman-issues are seen with indifference
- word "Feminist" negative konnotation - "something from old times"
- new feminist movements arise
- Judith Butlers text's spark debates and reflections



3rd Wave

- 2005 Angela Merkel becomes chancellor for 16 years
 - not an active feminist / no big progress
- 2013 #Aufschrei Twitter-sharings about sexual harassment go viral
 - with 50.000 posts in a few days
- Misogyny and sexual harassment get attention
- 2017 International Womensmarch
- 2017 #MeToo - Demonstrations and Debates
- Word "Feminist" loses negative connotation - relevance is proved



Important law changes during the second and third wave

- 1957 - German law (west) gets adjusted to article 3
Laws that contradict the equality of woman and man get adjusted
- 1977 reform on marriage and family policy
no obligation for domestic work, man can not quit employment contact of wife, woman can keep their name when marrying
- 1980 law about equal treatment of woman and man at the workplace
- 1997 Rape in marriage becomes a concept and a crime
- 2001 introduction of Law about "Life-partnerships" for homosexual couples





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men of
Quality
do not
fear
Equality



The 4th Wave of Feminism?



Ongoing issues and inequalities in Germany

- every third day a femicide
- Every third woman experiences sexual or psychological violence
- sexism omnipresent
- abortion still considered crime
- underrepresentation of woman in politics (2023: 35,05% female deputies)
- woman much higher risk of poverty than man
- gender pay gap (21% less)
- woman underrepresented in leading positions "Glass-Wall"
- tax-system that prevents assimilation of equal opportunities
- mothers suffer from overload of expectations
- woman's bodies sexualized and objectified
- rape culture

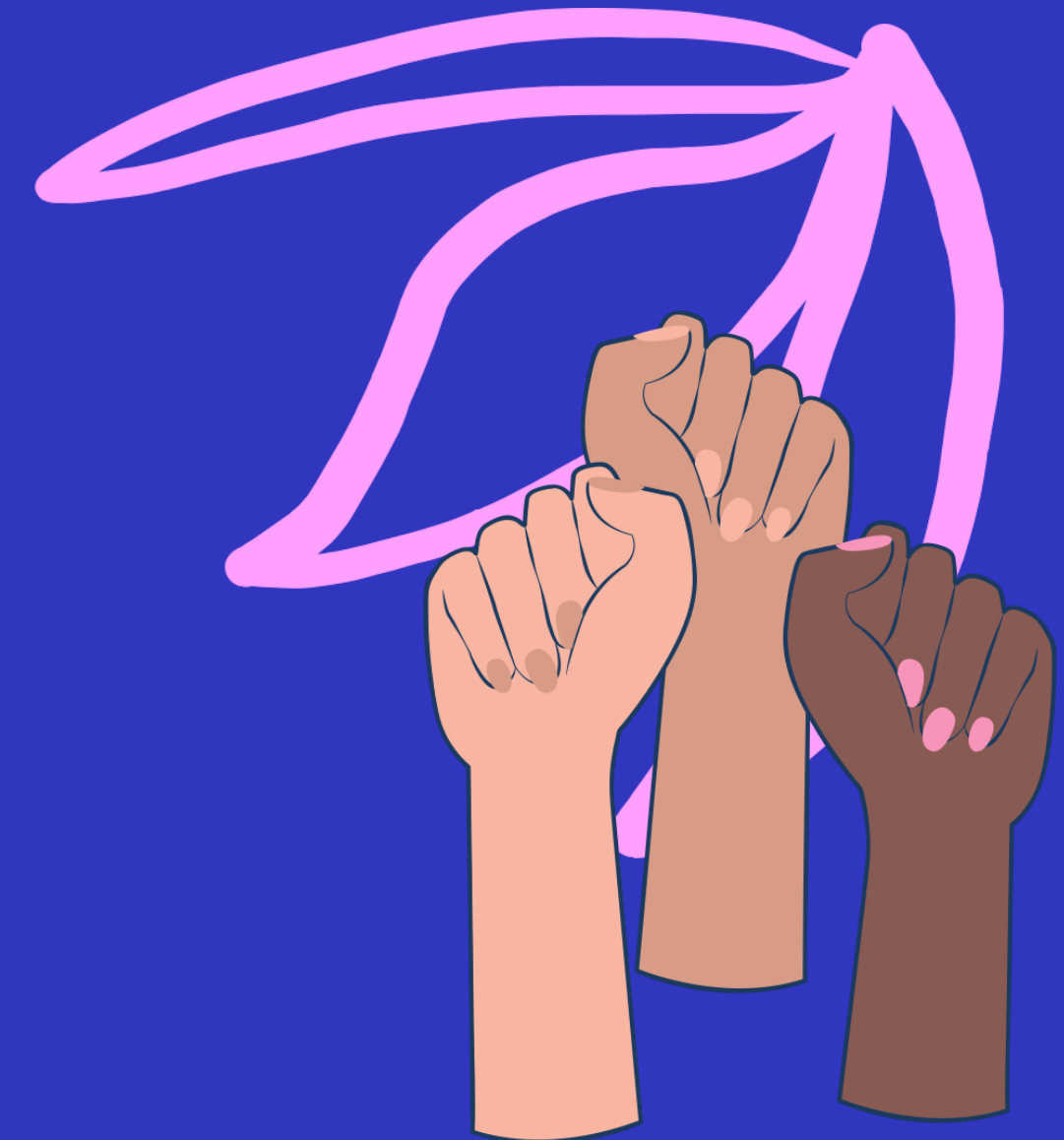


Ongoing issues and inequalities in Germany

- no quotes for woman in different sectors
- gender data gap
- lack of feminist Digital and Networkpolitics
- hate speech and threats- especially online
- judiciary still too often in favour of perpetrators (perpetrator victim reversal)
- woman still do most domestic and care work
- dangerous developments of antifeminists, e.g. Incels
- "Gender" still not debated and questioned enough
- typical female work sectors still have low wages
- not enough kindergarden places
- lacking sexual education in favour of female sexuality
- Destructive promotion of beauty ideal
- ...

Character of 4th Wave

- Analyzes and criticizes **dominion and power relationships** in societies
- takes in wide range of **marginalized groups**
- **intercetionality**
- **use of social media- internet activism**
- aims for **diversity, equal opportunities and participation**
- **Queer* and LGBTQ+ communities** part of it
- concepts like **toxic-masculinity** (man* protest as well)
- **Anti-slutshaming - "sexual liberalism"**
- **ongoing gender discourse**
- **Pop-culture, feminism is hip now**
- **Many collectives and groups - through internet connected - globally**



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