Shaping a Climate-Just World

Unravelling Gender Gaps in the EU's External Climate Policy

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Abstract

Gender plays a role in both a person's impact on the climate and their experience of the climate crisis. Studies show that gender equitable societies have a lower carbon footprint. At the same time, climate change is a 'threat multiplier' and escalates any social, political or economic tensions and inequalities in fragile settings. To assume that a one-dimensional solution for climate change is sufficient to resolve present inequalities is therefore a fallacy. This thesis zooms in on the EU's external climate policy and gender and asks: *What is the level of gender integration in the EU's external climate policy, and to what extent does it align with eco-feminist principles?* Subsequently, this thesis aims to provide concrete action steps and poses the question: *What strategies or measures can the EU adopt to enhance its role as a gender-transformative normative power in its external climate policy?* The methodology combines a document analysis and expert interviews. Both types of data indicate that gender integration in the EU's external climate policy is insufficient. This shortfall can be attributed to lacking political will, institutional resistance, and lack of awareness, knowledge, and capacity. Seven measures were identified that can make the EU's external climate policy gender-transformative. They can help the EU to re-gain credibility as normative power by actively improving the situation at home and offer important opportunities for structural transformation through epistemic justice.

Keywords*: EU External Climate Policy, Gender, Ecofeminism, Normative Power Europe*

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Introduction

In recent decades, climate change has manifested as a pressing global challenge and is intricately interwoven within a nexus of crises that mutually reinforce each other. Addressing this complex issue requires coordinated efforts on a global scale. In this course, the European Union (hereinafter EU) has been actively engaging in climate diplomacy on the global stage. Climate protection thus became not only a priority in policy making but an integral part of European identity at the international level.

At the same time, the election of the first-ever female Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and her prioritisation of gender equality brought about a new verve following the motto 'equality for all and equality in all its senses'. Repeated statements of high-level EU officials referring to the pioneering role of the EU in gender equality policy underpin the importance of this normative narrative to the external and internal identity of the EU (Guerrina & Wright 2016). Thus, gender considerations have become increasingly more integrated into many parts of EU policy in recent years. Nevertheless, progress on gender commitments varies among policy areas: Despite obligations to gender mainstreaming, the EU's climate change policy remains largely gender blind (Abels et al. 2021; Allwood 2014). This gender blindness contrasts sharply with scientific evidence that demonstrates how gender equality is essential to respond to climate change. Gender plays a role in both the impact a person has on the climate and in how the impacts of the climate crisis are experienced (Allwood 2020)[1].

The first important aspect is the impact that gender has on climate change: Research shows that women's higher risk awareness is associated with lower 'social domination

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[1] The decisive factor for gender-specific climate vulnerability is not biological gender, but social gender. Social gender expresses the socially shaped understanding of roles and role behavior, which are associated with structural inequality (Lorber 2011).

orientation' and suggest that in combination with less conservative attitudes, women[2] show lower scepticism of anthropogenic climate change (Jylhä & Akrami 2015). At the same time, there is evidence that carbon emissions are lower in countries in which women constitute a bigger share of political decision-making (Magnusdottir & Kronsell 2015). In addition, women see the need to make trade-offs for climate change mitigation to a greater extent (Tschakert and Machado 2012) and are more engaged in climate activism (Bendo 2022). Besides that, studies have demonstrated that there are gendered causes of climate change, for example in transport and energy use (Tschakert & Machado 2012 in Allwood 2020).

A second important aspect is the impact that the climate crisis has on people of different genders: According to UN Women, climate change is a 'threat multiplier' and escalates any social, political or economic tensions and inequalities in fragile settings (UN Women 2022; Allwood 2020). In most regions of the world, the impacts of climate change are increasing the amount of work needed to run a household – whether through scarcity of water, reduction in agricultural productivity, repair of damage from severe, climate-related weather disasters or increasing health burdens. This stresses the need to implement gender-transformative climate adaptation measures, since access to resources are unevenly distributed (Dankelman 2010). Multiple studies warn that violence against women will increase because of the climate crisis (Memon 2020). For example, due to discriminatory laws, women often do not own land with which they could provide for themselves. If resources then become scarcer due to the climate crisis, women will be even more exposed to exploitation. In addition, a tense social situation and post-traumatic stress disorders after natural disasters increase gender-based violence.

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[2] Although this thesis does not seek to reproduce the binary understanding of gender exclusively as men and women, it does refer to this terminology in some contexts. This decision is based on the binary understanding of gender held and reproduced by the EU in many cases. For the purpose of analysis, this terminology is adopted. However, the author understands the term woman to include all persons who experience misogyny.

Looking through an intersectional feminist lens, it becomes clear that gender intersects and exacerbates other inequalities and makes indigenous, Afro-descendent, LGBTQI+, disabled and migrant women the most prone to climate-related threats (UN Women 2022). To assume that a one-dimensional solution for climate change is sufficient to resolve present inequalities or resolve these inequalities subsequently is simply a fallacy. In summary, "policies that ignore gender inequalities risk perpetuating or even exacerbating them" (Allwood 2020, p. 5).

Due to the significant demand to include gender in climate policymaking, this thesis zooms in on the EU's external climate policy and its incorporation of gender. While earlier studies have examined certain issues from theoretical or philosophical stances, few of them have derived practical inference and explored potential policy measures to advance a gender-transformative external climate policy. The concept of Normative Power Europe reveals how the EU bases power and self-image on normative values and provides a meaningful angle to understand the current state of external climate policy. To address the structural inequalities of climate change, this study applies an ecofeminist lens, which is a novel approach in the field of EU external climate policy analysis. An ecofeminist angle assumes that hegemonic systems of power and oppression are reflected both in the dominance of men over women and in the dominance of people over the environment (Gaard 2015). Accordingly, the following questions are posed:

1. *What is the level of gender integration in the EU's external climate policy, and to what extent does it align with eco-feminist principles?*

2. *What strategies or measures can the EU adopt to enhance its role as a gender-transformative normative power in its external climate policy?*

To answer the research questions, empirical data has been retrieved incorporating two different methodological pillars to allow for the triangulation of methods. Through a document analysis of flagship strategy papers on the EU's external climate policy, a basic impression was gained as to the status of gender integration in the EU's external climate

policy. Data derived from expert interviews substantiated these findings and exhibited explanatory strands that are at the root of the current circumstances. As a result, this study develops a multidimensional framework including concrete steps and measures to make the EU's external climate policy gender-transformative and thereby gain credibility as a normative power.

This thesis is structured in six chapters. The first chapter provides an overview over the EU's external policy and gender and an introduction to the EU's external climate policy. The second chapter outlines the theoretical framework and its components Ecofeminism, Normative Power Europe and their intersection Gendered Normative Power Europe. The methodological considerations and conceptual framework are discussed in chapter three. Chapter four features findings and discussion on the presence of gender in the EU's external climate policy, explanatory strands and pathways to improve current circumstances. Moreover, limitations of this study are addressed. An outlook and suggestions for further research are provided in the concluding chapter.

1. Literature review

This section outlines the EU's understanding of gender equality, gender mainstreaming and the status quo of policy. Subsequently, it discusses the current state of the EU's external policy and gender. Lastly, the EU's external climate policy and its aspirations as a climate diplomat on the global stage are explored.

Understanding the EU's External Policy and Gender

The EU and Gender

The EU is built on the notion of a post-war, anti-nationalist sentiment out of which the fundamental and constitutive 'core' norms peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights emerged. Gender equality can be directly derived from this group of norms and, just like these core norms, has been established in different legal documents (i.a. captured in the Treaty of Lisbon 2007 Article 1a). The Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU) further captures that all the EU's activities must aim to abolish inequalities and promote equality between men and women. The EU's internal and external self-image is substantially entwined with these norms, and the EU frequently frames itself as a global gender pioneer (Guerrina & Wright 2016).

The EU's understanding of gender equality is captured in descriptions of the European Institute for Gender Equality (EIGE):

> *"Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialisation processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context."* (EIGE 2023).

In addition, EIGE defines gender equality the following way:

> *"This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs*

and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development." (EIGE 2023)

One key tool to advance gender equality is gender mainstreaming. It has first been featured in the Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and since then has been referred to by the EU. EIGE establishes gender mainstreaming as the "integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programs, with a view to promoting equality between women and men and combating discrimination" (EIGE 2023).

The EU's approach to gender mainstreaming above all incorporates these features: (1) Evoke changes in institutional working methods and shared responsibility, (2) obtain and use gender-disaggregated data and qualitative information as a basis to develop policy, (3) gender analysis in differences in access to resources, opportunities, constraints and power between and among women and men and (4) implemented policies need to be supervised by putting a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system in place. The EU's commitment to mainstream gender in all policies must however be closely associated with technical capacity to accomplish sensitive consideration of such (O'Connell 2013).

The approach is to be applied at all stages of the policy-making process; it leads to procedural and institutional adjustments in policy practice and entails the use of new instruments (e.g. analysis of the gender impact of legislative measures, training measures, gender-sensitive statistical indicators and the dissemination of so-called best practice models or financial support for programs). The implementation of gender mainstreaming is shaped by the Commission in multi-year framework strategies.

Current attempts to mainstream gender have been based on conventional gender-sensitive methodologies that revolve around addressing symptoms of gender inequality without treating the structural factors of the problem (Hillenbrand 2022). Approaches that move beyond that are therefore needed. A gender-transformative approach "strives to correct for

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these shortcomings, by leveraging feminist theory and confronting the power relations that underpin gender inequality" (Mullinax et al. 2018 in Hillenbrand 2022) and can therefore tackle imbalanced power dynamics and gender-blind policy frameworks.

Although there has been some progress in the representation of genders through gender-sensitive policymaking, white men still constitute the norm in European institutions (Joannin & Bloj 2019). This imbalance of genders in decision-making positions impairs legitimacy and hampers decision-making processes (van der Walt & Ingley 2003). It has become evident that a diverse set of perspectives in decision-making positions raise the likelihood of policy decisions responding to the needs of all members of society (Brechenmacher 2021).

However, the improvement in the growing proportion of women in leadership positions is now repeatedly being used as the figurehead of diversity in the EU institutions, while also emphasising a multicultural Europe. Coincidentally, ethnic minorities and People of Colour are rare to be found in the institutional workforce. EU diversity activists state that they face condescension in their work and describe a prevailing audacity due to the notion of working on the idea of multicultural EU "while every single one of them is white" (Heath 2017).

At the same time, the EU's engagement on gender equality has not gone uncontested. Gender politics have become a central field of political and cultural debate around the world in recent decades (Kuhar 2015; Wittenius 2022; Mayer 2022). 'Anti-gender movements' could be witnessed not only at the local or national level but also at the European level, where alliances are forming to undermine the already built consensus on advancing gender equality (Mayer 2022). 'Gender ideology' seems to be an adverse denominator for all different sorts of agendas and serves as a projection screen for racist, antisemitic, homophobic, transphobic or ethnic-nationalist ideas and hostility towards elites. Such narratives are thereby commonly employed by different actors such as fundamentalist religious groups, right wing or populist groups but also conservative bourgeois or neoliberal circles (Henninger et al. 2021). While online discourse becomes more polarised (Schmid et al. 2022), this agenda is not only promoted from institutional outsiders but has long since arrived within the institutions.

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According to Zacharenko, the number of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) that take oppositional stances towards gender equality, women's reproductive rights, same sex marriage or the Istanbul Convention on Combating All Forms of Violence against Women has doubled and risen to around 30 percent in the 2019 parliamentary election (2019). Resistance also takes place in the intergovernmental bodies of the EU. The strengthening of right-wing, populist parties is not only seen in the European Parliament, but their influence can also well be observed in the European Council or the Council of the European Union, where the wording or concept of 'gender' is frequently blocked-in official documents (Wittenius 2022). Despite a large majority still being in favour of promoting gender equality, such developments jeopardise the intention to advance gender equality at home and abroad.

The EU's External Policy & Gender

Over the years, the EU has refined its commitment to gender equality in development and foreign policy several times. To the EU, taking a gender perspective in external relations has become just as important as in the domestic context. The EU has recognized that security, peace, development and gender are closely linked and acknowledges that the underprivileged socio-economic situation of women constitutes their insecurity (Elomäki 2015). Moreover, progress in women's rights and gender equality are considered a prerequisite for the democratic development of societies. Among other things, it can contribute to the prevention of conflicts and is in this sense an important concern of the EU to establish partnerships with non-European countries to promote these issues.

The EU's first articulated commitment to the promotion of gender equality in development was following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (European Commission 1995). The conference was a turning point in global engagement to gender equality advancement. The declaration included the promotion of gender equality in a set of different areas including poverty, education, health, violence, economy, decision-making and women's human rights. To date, the implementation is monitored every five years by UN institutions in cooperation with member states.

The EU's approach to gender integration in its external policy is guided by a number of significant policy documents. Notably, the EU commits to aligning its policies with international agreements like the United Nations Security Council's Women, Peace, and Security Agenda. Next to its commitment to gender mainstreaming across all EU policy, the EU's external policy is determined by the EU's overall Gender Equality Strategy, that aims to promote gender equality globally, both internally and externally.

In addition to these overarching frameworks for integrating gender equality, the European External Action Service (EEAS) also has a separate strategy: the Gender Action Plan (GAP) was first adopted in 2010 (GAP I: 2010-2015) and has been updated with GAP II (2015-2020) and GAP III (2020-2025). While the GAP I made commitments to include gender equality into every policy dialogue with third states and mainstream gender in all policies, its implementation was obstructed by a lack of high-level political prioritisation, limited willingness to allocate resources and a lack of gender expertise in European institutions (Watkins et al. 2015).

With GAP II, there has been substantial progress in pushing for a cultural change in the EEAS headquarters and delegations, mobilising political will and resources for the incorporation of a solid monitoring system for implemented policies. However, it seems that gender mainstreaming is side-lined when it comes to crisis and conflict (Ioannides 2017). GAP III places particular focus on addressing the root causes of inequality, such as traditional gender roles or intersecting social injustices that exacerbate the situation of marginalised women (Brechenmacher 2021).

Gender equality advocates claim that although gender equality strategies exist, their application is limited in practice (Bernarding & Lunz 2020). In response to the still comparably low prioritisation of gender equality on the agenda of foreign policy, calls for a European feminist foreign policy (FFP) have grown louder. FFP refers to a political framework centred around the wellbeing of marginalised people and invokes processes of self-reflection regarding foreign policy's hierarchical global systems (Bernarding & Lunz 2020).

Recently, more and more countries around the world have committed to adopt a FFP, including European member states such as Sweden, France, Spain, Luxembourg, Cyprus and Germany (Bernarding & Lunz 2020). These developments have created attention to the topic and encouraged civil society organisations and parts of the European Parliament to demand the application of a European FFP more vigorously.

Against the background of these developments, the question arises to what extent the integration of gender in the EU's external climate policy deviates from this picture. Thus, the following chapter will provide an introduction to the EU's external climate policy to then empirically examine that matter in the next stage.

The EU's External Climate Policy

With the president of the European Commission von der Leyen announcing that Europe would be the first climate-neutral continent in 2050, climate change policy plays an increasingly major role (Allwood 2020). With the European Green Deal (EGD), the European Commission linked the overarching goal of greenhouse gas neutrality by 2050 with a broad-based growth strategy designed to put Europe on a climate-neutral, resource-efficient and competitive development path (European Commission 2022). Legally, this target is enshrined in the EU Climate Change Act in 2021.

In order to achieve this long-term goal, the EU heads of state and government had already decided in December 2020, on the basis of an impact assessment, to adjust the interim target for 2030 from 40 percent to 55 percent emissions reduction compared with 1990 (European Commission 2022). A process to set a target for 2040 has also been launched. Numerous legislative proposals to implement these climate targets are currently being negotiated at the EU level, known as the "Fit For 55 Package." (European Commission 2022).

Next to the introduction of the European Green Deal and numerous climate laws to achieve the goal of climate neutrality, the EU has strong ambitions to maintain international influence and promote environmental standards in their external policy (Celic 2022). The intentions to

integrate climate change can be witnessed in foreign, security, external migration, and international development policy (Allwood 2021).

The EU has been at the forefront of international agreements on climate policy, such as the Paris Agreement. The EU and its member states are among the nearly 190 parties of the Paris Agreement and have agreed to designate Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). In the EU, the member states - all of which have ratified the Paris Agreement - designate a joint reduction contribution. Moreover, the EU supports partner countries with the formulation and implementation of their NDCs (Allwood 2021). In other bilateral relations beyond the framework of the Paris Agreement, the EU shares its expertise and encourages its partners to take decisive action against global warming, providing targeted support to the most affected countries to transform their economies where needed (Celic 2022)

European external climate policy is characterised by a complicated coexistence of supranational and intergovernmental action, of competences specific to political fields with the corresponding participation of bodies and institutions, and diverse forms of action. On top of this, strong climate action of the EU regularly encounters internal opposition, particularly from Eastern European member states (Allwood 2021). Since 2010, the EU has institutionalised its foreign action in the EEAS, which has delegations in the whole world. The EEAS has made climate action one of its priorities (EEAS 2022).

Moreover, the EU presents itself as a climate diplomat on the global stage and thereby makes efforts to promote climate action and sustainability through diplomatic channels (European Commission 2022). That entails the promotion of climate-related norms in bilateral relations, international organisations and in cooperation with other stakeholders. The EU mainly engages by strengthening and advocating for international cooperation on climate issues, facilitating climate negotiations, and addressing climate-related matters with partner countries. On top of this, the EU supports developing countries in their efforts by providing climate finance and incorporates climate-related considerations in trade agreements and economic partnerships.

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2. Theoretical framework

Ecofeminism

Developed in the 1980s and gaining significance in the early 1990s (Gaard 2011), ecofeminism claims that varieties of oppression, especially but not exclusively the oppression of women and nature are interconnected (Mallory 2010). Thereby, it acknowledges the ethical link between the subjugation of women and the exploitation of nature, as pointed out by Radford-Reuther in 2005. In this line of argumentation, Salleh claims that "the basic premise of ecofeminist political analysis is that ecological crisis is the inevitable effect of a Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture built on the domination of nature, and the domination of woman 'as nature'" (Salleh 1999, p. 6). Ecofeminism thus does not often overlap with liberal feminism that is predominant in EU policymaking (Foster 2021). Ecofeminism criticises that it is easier to imagine the end of the world than to imagine the end of capitalism (Di Chiro 2021).

According to Salleh, "women are not 'closer to nature' than men in any ontological sense. Both women and men are 'in/with/of nature' but attaining the prize of masculine identity depends on men distancing themselves from that fact. Ecofeminists explore the political consequences of this culturally elaborated gender difference" (Salleh 1999, p. 13). Therefore, gender – and belonging to any other marginalised identity – is linked to the degree in which an individual was involved in causing climate change and exposes individuals to particularly severe effects of climate change.

Ecofeminism therefore demands to erode the binary between nature and humanity and undermine the value hierarchy attributed to each (Foster 2021). It is also sceptical over the ways in which technology is regarded as the primary solution to solve climate change and calls for the incorporation of a social perspective in climate policy. Rethinking the humanity/ nature binary can thus be a starting point for environmental sustainability (Foster 2021).

Ecofeminism has formed in multiple different currents. Affinity ecofeminism claims that there is a natural 'affinity' between women and nature. Its subtype spiritual ecofeminism roots

the domination of women and nature within conventional religions that reject female, earth-bound deities and imagine a masculine god residing in the sky. Other currents insist that gender is socially constructed (Mallory, 2010).

Social(ist) ecofeminism agrees that masculinity is linked to environmental illness but highlights both global capitalism and patriarchy as the systems rendered operational through the exploitation and oppression of nature and women (cf. Foster 2021, p. 195). Thus, the affinity between 'women' and 'nature', according to social(ist) ecofeminism is not a biological but an experiential one (Foster 2021, p. 196).

At the end of the 1990s, certain aspects of the ecofeminist school of thought drew substantial criticism from feminist scholarship. Essentialist concerns especially had grown so big that the term ecofeminism was almost spoiled and was only revived in recent years. Feminist scholars reject the ecofeminist tendency that assumes a universal and inherent connection between women and nature. This refers to the notion of ecofeminism that "all women's encounter with nature are pure, benign and respectful" (Moore 2015, p. 29).

Feminist scholarship admonishes the danger of reinforcing harmful stereotypes and overriding the diversity among women's experiences and relationship with nature. Besides, critics argue that early ecofeminisms have predominantly focused on the experiences of white, cis-hetero, middle-class women and neglected the importance of intersectionality of different social identities (Moore 2016; Mallory 2010).

Despite the validity of concerns, the abandonment of a whole school of thought due to some less palatable aspects is, after all, not practise in other (male-dominated) fields of political theory (cf. Foster 2021, p. 200). In recent years, there have been advances by feminist scholars to recover core claims of the ecofeminist idea and revisit critical insights that the theory can provide on contemporary climate governance. These advances actively reject essentialist understandings of women and nature and expand ecofeminist claims with firm intersectional approaches.

Above all, the ecofeminist assertion that patriarchal dominance and environmental exploitation are strongly related has recently received more attention. It thereby calls for something that is more visionary, and as a result, potentially more sustainable in the long run (Foster 2021).

Thus, there are a number of claims that can be derived from ecofeminist scholarship that have implications for climate change policy. First, the erosion of human/ nature binaries is increasingly seen as a starting point for environmental sustainability as mindfulness about how technologies are used grows (Foster 2021). Ecofeminist contributions open a space for critical reflection of the Eurocentric capitalist patriarchal culture as a catalyst of climate change. Thus, the cessation of exploitation of natural resources and the dismantling of patriarchal structures at the same time are one ecofeminist assertion that can translate into policy.

Moreover, the ecofeminist scepticism of technology as the primary solution to climate change infers a valuable petition: technological innovation alone cannot be humankind's redeemer of climate change. Climate change must be understood as a complex social problem and has different implications for different groups of people. Therefore, effective climate change policy needs to address inequalities inherent to our societies.

Normative Power Europe

Like all outward-looking EU policies, external climate policy is shaped by a pattern of normative power exercised by the EU (Silander 2022; Falkner 2007). The role of norms in the EU's external climate policy is of twofold interest for this thesis. First, the concept of Normative Power Europe (NPE) is strongly intertwined with the EU's ambitions as a climate diplomat on the global stage and can help understand the phenomenon. Second, it holds implications for the EU's self-perception as a gender equality pioneer and the associated promotion of gender equality norms abroad.

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Since this research aims to gain a deeper understanding of the integration of gender norms in the EU's external climate policy and as a next step propose possible paths towards improvement, the concept of NPE provides a valuable angle to analyse the current state of external climate policy. Along with an ecofeminist perspective, it can help to obtain a comprehensive picture and derive action steps towards a more gender-transformative external climate policy. This section will thus introduce the concept of Normative Power Europe and its relevance for this research.

Since Manners established the concept in 2002, many scholars have built on his argument that the EU as an actor on the international stage does not only bear power through military or civilian means but exerts major influence through the distribution of norms (Manners 2002). Basing power and the external and internal self-image on normative value stems from the very core of the EU's constitutive notion based on which member states have committed to fundamental cooperation.

After the EU's departure from a strict focus only on the economic dimension of cooperation and the expansion to other policy domains, fundamental 'core' norms of the EU have been enshrined in the Copenhagen Declaration of 1973. These have been established over time through several ensuing treaties, declarations, policies or conditions (Manners 2002, p. 242). A set of core norms that coin the European[3] self-image and serve as a basis for the exertion of power through norm dissemination can be identified:

The central core norms revolve around peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and can all be located in foundational treaties of the EU (Manners 2002). In addition, a number of 'minor norms' derived from the core norms can be identified. These are social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance. Both

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[3] When the term 'European' is used in this context, the author is referring only to the community of members of the European Union. The author is aware that Europe does not equal the European Union, but uses this term for reasons of comprehensibility. This applies to the whole thesis.

gender equality and climate protection can be directly derived from this group of norms and have been established in different legal documents (see also in Chapter 1).

Having identified the fundamental norms of the EU, the definition of the norm itself remains a question. Although the definition is not concordant in NPE scholarship, it can be concluded that the N in NPE implies the 'qualities intrinsic to human condition' and implicitly suggests the European moral obligation to defend these in world politics (cf. Merlingen 2007, p. 439). The EU constructs these norms to be important as a basis for cooperation inside the EU but also conveys them within cooperation with external actors. This pre-eminence of European norms, according to the idea of Manners, is disseminated through a variety of factors that shape European cooperation with other actors: These include contagion, informational diffusion, institutionalisation, transference, overt diffusion and cultural filter (Manners 2002) and can all be witnessed in the European climate diplomacy.

Different scholars have employed the concept and argue that the diffusion of norms is an imperialist practice (Merlingen 2007; Diez 2013; Martin-Maze 2015; Staeger 2016). Staeger claims that Europe's past as an imperial power is absent in the narrative (2016). Merlingen expands the concept with his contribution and locates the two faces of NPE (2007). He agrees with Hyde-Price (2006) on the notion that EU foreign policy of course follows strategic calculations and if forced to choose strategically, material interests often win over the established norm construct (Merlingen 2007, p. 437).

Concordantly, the EU's reflexivity is limited regarding internal practices and conveniently forgets about the imperfect situation at home (Diez 2013). By calling out other international actors on malpractice, the EU 'others' those lacking moral fervour and demonstrates the violent potential and dominant dimension that NPE and the diffusion of supposedly universal norms implies (Merlingen 2007, p. 438).

Merlingen adduces Foucault's idea of norms and locates the two faces that norms have. In line with the Foucauldian argument that "not everything is bad, but everything is dangerous" (Foucault 1991, p. 343), he argues that norms entail arbitrary constraints and limit the

expression of difference, leading to epistemic violence. Norms, according to Foucault, cannot be understood as unproblematic frontiers safeguarding cosmopolitan morality but are also a claim to super-ordination (Merlingen 2007, p. 441-443). In other words, the promotion of means of emancipation from violence and suppression abroad and the means of control imposing constraints on human action are two sides of the same coin. Normative Power Europe as a practice is therefore made up of elements in tension with each other and constitutes a serious dichotomy of power exertion.

Gendering Normative Power Europe

Building on the European core norm of equality, the formulation of gender policies and the subsequent projection on external policy is key to the EU's role as a normative power in international affairs (Guerrina & Wright 2016; Van der Vleuten 2017; David & Guerrina 2013; Lucarelli & Manners 2006). The intentions to promote gender equality domestically and through its foreign policy constitutes a crucial step in the process of norm diffusion. This is derived from the underlying expectation that foundational values will permeate external relations and that in turn this process would reinforce the EU's own identity. By implication, the internal and the external become mutually constitutive (cf. Guerrina & Wright 2016, p. 307).

There is a discrepancy between the rhetoric and the actions the EU takes to mainstream gender in all their policies (Bernarding & Lunz 2020; Kronsell 2015; Guerrina & Wright 2016; Van der Vleuten 2017; Hoijtink & Muehlenhoff 2019). This discrepancy is particularly displayed with the failure to insist on gender equality in negotiations when seeing a disadvantage in its further promotion (Guerrina & Wright 2016). Van der Vleuten has therefore claimed that the EU fills both the role of a merchant and a priest on the international stage until the role of the priest interferes with the role of the merchant (2017).

Guerrina & Wright have brought forward a perspective linking normative power practices to a gender dimension. While the EU has manifested its role as a leader in transnational

settings, it remains open to what extent the EU holds true to its core values such as gender equality (Guerrina & Wright 2016). The authors argue that the silence around global gender norms reflect the limitations of both its approach to gender mainstreaming and its identity as a normative power (cf. Guerrina & Wright 2016, p. 295). That, again, shows the disparity between rhetoric and reality in the self-perception of the EU as an advocate of equality and the effort to mainstream gender in all policies (cf. Guerrina & Wright 2016, p. 295).

Likewise, the advocacy for a Feminist Foreign Policy (FFP) within the EU overlooks the profound influence of Europe's colonial history on notions of equality. Feminist narratives may be be co-opted, simultaneously reinforcing Eurocentrism and white supremacy. Urging the EU to establish a FFP runs the risk of perpetuating a perspective rooted in white liberal feminism, whereas states in the Global North assume the role of saviours for women in the Global South. Failure to address prevailing power hierarchies within the global system would undermine the projected values of "feminism" in such a policy approach (Wright et al. 2020).

Key points brought up by Guerrina & Wright help to build a basis for examining the EU's external climate policy regarding its integration of gender norms and recognise pathways towards a more gender-transformative external climate policy. First, the authors identify the need for the formation of velvet triangles. Velvet triangles consist of actors involved in feminist cooperation coming from the organisation of the state, the civil society and universities and consultancies (cf. Woodward 2003, p. 84 in Holli 2004, p. 173).

In EU-level policymaking specifically, "the co-operative constellation consists of, first, Commission officials, i.e. femocrats (in the widest sense) and Euro-parliamentarians with feminist agendas; second, gender experts in academia or consultancies; and, third, the established organised women's movement" (Woodward 2003 in Holli 2004, p. 173). By cooperating strategically, they open access to policy-making circles and processes for key actors, thus increasing the effectiveness of interest representation (Holli 2010 in Guerrina & Wright 2016, p. 296).

Although velvet triangles have become one of the most crucial explanatory variables for policy-making success in the field of gender equality (Guerrina & Wright 2016), their consolidation is especially difficult within policy areas that are traditionally portrayed as gender neutral, such as the EU's external policy. There has been a noticeable absence of femocrats in the EEAS, which may not least be a result of the tension between feminist ethic to 'understand, criticise, correct' and the pursuit of (supra)national interest (Wright et al. 2020). The intergovernmental nature of the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) as well and the limited purchase of civil society actors and academic experts have complicated the formation of velvet triangles in the EU's external policy further (Guerrina & Wright 2016).

Feminist scholarship has widely agreed that the incorporation of gender into the EU's external policy is coined by significant shortcomings (Guerrina & Wright 2016; Allwood 2020; Van der Vleuten 2017; Hoijtink & Muehlenhoff 2020). However, this assessment was made seven years ago and mostly focused on the broader framework of external policy rather than specifically addressing external climate policy. This shows the need to reiterate these assumptions to determine their applicability to the EU's contemporary external climate policy. The following chapter describes the methodological considerations of the study.

3. Methods and conceptual framework

This research employs an interpretative approach to explore complex political phenomena, understand contextual factors and generate in-depth knowledge about the integration of gender into the EU's external climate policy. Identifying patterns and themes can help to enhance the understanding of the phenomenon and may provide the groundwork for more efficacious integration of gender equality issues into external climate policy.

Regarding the author's influence in this research, the development of the research interest can be accredited to my own feminist activism. I am aware of the influence that it may entail in meaning making (Beach & Kaas 2020) and therefore chose the EU external climate policy as the unit of analysis as a so far unfamiliar field deliberately. On top of that, transparency on the researcher's positionality enables the reader to consider the potential influence of bias. Below, explanations on the rationale for document analysis and expert interviews are given. Subsequently, the research design and the approach taken for analysis are explained.

The empirical data has been retrieved incorporating two different methodological pillars to allow for the triangulation of methods (Denzin 1970; Bowen 2009). By seeking convergence and corroboration using different data sources and methods, "a confluence of evidence that breeds credibility" is created (Eisner 1991 in Bowen 2009, p. 28). While document analysis allows for an in-depth exploration of flagship strategy papers, expert interviews enable direct engagement with knowledgeable individuals who can provide additional context, clarifications, or alternative viewpoints.

A document analysis requires "data be examined and interpreted in order to elicit meaning, gain understanding, and develop empirical knowledge" (Corbin & Strauss 2008 in Bowen, 2009, p. 27). Thus, analysing flagship strategy papers of the EU regarding its external climate policy allowed one to gain an overall understanding of the level of gender integration and their alignment with eco-feminist principles.

Using documents as a first step of analysis is beneficial for this study for the following reasons: First, document analysis is a non-intrusive and non-reactive research method that allows for thorough examination without affecting the content (Kutsyuruba 2023; Bowen 2009). Second, flagship strategy papers are well accessible to the researcher and provide a rich and comprehensive source of information (Campbell et al. 2020). Third, the combination of a document analysis with expert interviews provides a more comprehensive understanding, allows for cross-validation and supports the interpretation of findings from other data sources (Bowen 2009).

Retrieval of Data

Document Analysis

The flagship strategy papers were purposefully sampled using the criterion sampling method to ensure that the cases provide a rich and meaningful data, and offer unique insights, diverse perspectives and an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon (Palinkas et al. 2015). Specifically, documents were selected that

- were published in the last five years to ensure topicality.

- have a high degree of relevance and can be considered 'flagship strategy papers'.

- are published by different EU institutions.

- concern the EU's external climate policy.

Through this process, four documents were selected: the European Green Deal, published by the European Commission in 2019; the Strategic Agenda 2019-2024, agreed on by the European Council in 2019, Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy published by the Council of the European Union in 2023 and the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap published in 2020 by the European External Action Service. A list of the selected documents can be found in Annex A.

The European Green Deal was presented by the von der Leyen Commission in December 2019, and aims to make Europe the first continent to reach climate neutrality by 2050 through substantial reductions in net greenhouse gas emissions within the EU (European Commission 2019). The European Green Deal constitutes one of the von der Leyen Commission's six priorities. It is a central component of the EU's climate policy and comprises a series of measures in the areas of financial market regulation (sustainable finance), energy supply, transport, trade, industry, and agriculture and forestry (European Commission 2019).

The Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 has been published by the Council of the European Union in 2019 and aims to determine priority areas that guide work programmes and policy for EU institutions. Among others, it focuses on the priority areas of building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe and promoting European interests and values on the global stage (Council of the European Union 2019). This makes it a relevant document to analyse for this research.

The Council Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy have been published by the Council of the European Union in March 2023 and address the handling of very topical issues that the EU faces. Even though it has received less public attention, it can still be characterised as a flagship strategy paper due to its topicality and its political relevance and is therefore of interest for analysis.

The Climate Change and Defence Roadmap is a publication by the EEAS and is concerned with the EU's strategy responding to current security and climate challenges. It focuses on civilian and military CSDP, capability development, multilateralism and partnerships. While the CSDP is a domain of European action that is traditionally viewed as gender neutral, it in fact has for the longest time been gender blind (Hoijtink & Muehlenhoff 2020; Muehlenhoff et al. 2020). Hence, it is of relevance to this study because like all other EU policy, it is subject to gender mainstreaming. Moreover, its topicality and the inference that can be drawn to the EU's approaches to external climate policy in times of crisis make it a flagship strategy paper worth studying.

Expert Interviews

As a second method of data retrieval, this research relied on semi-structured, guide-based expert interviews. In addition to the document analysis, it enabled the researcher to understand context, specific or informal information or alternative viewpoints (von Soest 2023). The choice to conduct expert interviews has been made for the following reasons: First, the expertise of specialised professionals allows one to tap into their in-depth understanding and insights on the complexities and nuances of the topic. That enables the researcher to obtain contextual and informal knowledge that shape policy decisions, challenges, and opportunities (Helfferich 2019).

Second, expert interviews give the researcher the opportunity to ask for validation and the clarification of expert interviews, make references to findings from other sources, address ambiguities, verify interpretations and enhance accuracy of findings (Döhringer 2020). Third, expert interviews offer the opportunity to gather diverse perspectives from experts with varying backgrounds and experiences, leading to a more comprehensive and well-rounded analysis of the topic (Döhringer 2020).

Viewing the expert interview as an analytic construction and as a "variable produced by the interaction" (Bogner & Menz 2009, p. 70), the aim is to reconstruct subjective truth and social structures of meaning (Helfferich 2019). Through conversation in a semi-structured interview, knowledge is co-constructed (Brinkman & Kvale 2018; Bogner et al. 2002). A semi-structured interview setting was selected to obtain relevant information through pre-set open questions but also leave room for follow up questions to emerge (Brinkman & Kvale 2018). By employing a guide as a structured framework to steer the interview process, prompts, pre-formulated questions, keywords, and agreements were developed to facilitate effective communication during the interview (Helfferich 2019). Interviews were conducted using online video conferencing tools. A summary of primary guiding questions can be found in Annex B.

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The experts were sampled drawing on Dexter's classic understanding of an expert as "any person who has specialised information on or who has been involved in the political or social process of interest" (Dexter 2006 in von Soest 2023, p. 278). To account for potential information gaps and personal biases, the sampling includes both inside and outside experts and involves both high-level but also lower-level experts (von Soest 2023). While inside experts are involved in the policy making process and can provide insider information (e.g. bureaucrats, politicians, interest group representatives), outside experts provide a higher potential for prior reflection but also rely on information from others (e.g. policy analysts, academics) (von Soest 2023, p. 279).

Suitable experts were identified through preparatory research. After contacting a sample of experts via email, four inside experts and one outside expert were interviewed. The sample of inside experts consisted of one expert from the European Parliament, one former official from the European Commission and two representatives of civil society organisations advocating gender equality. The outside expert was an academic researcher. Thus, the composition of consulted experts resembles a velvet triangle (Holli 2004). In the analysis, the participants are listed as I1 to I5. An anonymised list of interviewees can be found in Annex C.

Data Analysis

Analysis followed an interpretative approach and can be described as a hybrid concept balancing both deductive coding derived from the theoretical framework and inductive coding from recurrent patterns emerging within the data (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane 2006; Ligurgo et al. 2018). The initial stages of research were defined by deductive coding following ecofeminist theory. This helped to answer some aspects of the first research question. In addition to deductive coding regarding the level of gender integration in the EU's external climate policy, inductive coding strategies helped to identify explanatory strands that emerged from expert interviews. Later stages of the research revolving around the examination of the second research question followed inductive coding practices using principles from grounded theory (Ligurgo et al. 2018).

This approach was suitable because by coding for theoretical meaning, it balances knowledge derived from the data and being informed by previous research (Charmaz 2014). Understanding analysis as an iterative process, the analysis started while data collection was still ongoing. This allowed the data collection to be guided by early-stage analysis and reflection within memo-writing during the process (Charmaz 2014). By constantly going back and forth between observations and analysis (Pawluch & Neiterman 2010), the process of extracting theory yielded the formation of categories and allowed the theory to take shape. Thereby, patterns could be derived that resulted in the formation of measures and strategies for the EU to adopt. These were then contextualised with literature on normative power Europe.

4. Findings & Discussion

This chapter is structured according to the sequence of research questions. First, the level of gender integration in the EU's external climate policy and to what extent that aligns with eco-feminist principles is explored. To do so, evidence is drawn from the document analysis of EU flagship strategy papers. The observations are affirmed and refined with evidence drawn from expert interview data. In this course, explanatory strands for the lack of integration of gender into external climate policy are presented. To answer the second research question, data drawn from expert interviews provides evidence on what strategies or measures the EU can adopt to enhance its role as a gender-transformative normative power in its external climate policy.

Integration of gender in the EU's External Climate Policy

To understand the extent to which gender is integrated into the EU's external climate policy, four flagship strategy papers of the EU were analysed. Two of them are distinctly concerned with external climate policy (EEAS Climate Change and Defence Roadmap; Council Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy), two of them include issues of both internal and external climate policy (European Green Deal; Strategic Agenda 2019-2024).

<u>European Green Deal</u>

While most measures exclusively involve technological and economic strategies, some parts also consider the social factors of climate policy. For example, in the introduction it is mentioned that "*this transition must be just and inclusive*" (2,3) and that European climate action "*must put people first, and pay attention to the regions, industries and workers who will face the greatest challenges*" (2,3). Further, the EGD directly acknowledges the fact that "*the most vulnerable are the most exposed to the harmful effects of climate change and environmental degradation*" (16,3). In terms of external cooperation, the EU pledges to "*support a just transition globally*" (21,4).

This aligns with the fundamental principle of ecofeminism that climate change impacts people differently and that policy needs to especially consider its impacts on marginalised groups. While technical issues are discussed in depth and are riddled with quantified goals, this is not the case for the social dimension. As it can be seen in the quotes, the EGD's pursuits in the social dimension remain on a broad scale and do not include specific action steps.

Beyond these pledges to a socially just external climate policy, the EGD does not feature the word gender, nor women or men once. This is despite the EU's commitment to gender mainstreaming and the dedication to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris agreement, both of which emphasise the link between climate and gender. This situation is fundamentally in contrast with ecofeminist ideas, as those consider the conjunction of climate protection and gender equality as a prerequisite to achieve one of the two.

A new strategic agenda 2019-2024

Unlike the European Green Deal, the New Strategic Agenda does include gender inequalities and quotes: "*We need to do more to ensure equality between women and men, as well as rights and equal opportunities for all. This is both a societal imperative and an economic asset.*" (5,8). Although these commitments to ensure the equality between women and men are stated in the chapter "*Building a climate-neutral, green, fair and social Europe*" (5,1), the connection between gender and climate is not made directly.

From an ecofeminist perspective, these attempts are therefore to some extent appreciated, but are not sufficient to address the exploitation of both women and nature.

Council conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy

In this document, the connection between climate change policy and gender equality is made multiple times. Here, the Council pledges to take a gender-responsive approach to climate action:

> "*The Council is committed to promoting a human rights-based and gender-responsive approach to climate action, promoting social justice, fairness and inclusiveness in the global transition towards climate neutrality, full, equal and meaningful participation and engagement of women in climate-related decision-making*

and fully meeting our human rights obligations when taking action to address climate change" (18,1)

It then assures to "*actively engage in discussions advancing this right and promote inclusion and non-discrimination*" (18,1). This is a valuable integration of gender and climate issues from an ecofeminist perspective. It must be stressed, however, that as observed in other strategy papers before, this integration remains on a superficial level and does not include tangible action points for implementation.

<u>Climate Change and Defence Roadmap</u>

In the Climate Change and Defence Roadmap, there is no mention of gender, or women or men. Moreover, the social dimension of the climate and security implications are disregarded to a large extent. Looking at it from an ecofeminist perspective, this is insufficient in many ways. It fails to recognize that climate change and security and defence are highly gendered spheres where action to address inequalities is urgently needed. As a domain in which EU policy is largely made by men, it is particularly important to emphasise and strengthen the role of women as agents and addressees of policy.

With the analysis of the flagship strategy papers in European external climate policy, it becomes clear that gender plays only a subordinate role, if at all. While the European Green Deal makes a few mentions of a socially just transition to a climate neutral Europe, it does not acknowledge gender as a factor of inequality. The Climate Change and Defence Roadmap makes no mention of the gender nor the social dimension at all and thereby disregards their link completely.

Although the New Strategic Agenda 2019-2024 mentions gender equality once, it does not establish a direct relationship between gender and climate. Moreover, the paper mentions the equality between women and men, expressing a continued binary understanding of gender and the exclusion of non-binary identities.

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The council resolution on climate and energy diplomacy, on the other hand, partly displays a more progressive picture of gender. While some statements refer to a gender-responsive approach to climate policy, others again speak from a binary gender perspective. Nevertheless, it draws attention to the link between climate and gender and pledges to include it as part of the EU climate diplomacy. A lack of coherent action steps and the position in the document at which gender is mentioned remains as evidence for a generally low prioritisation of gender.

The picture that the document analysis paints of the integration of gender into EU external climate policy is corroborated overall by statements made in expert interviews. EU officials, gender equality advocates and academic experts all stated that they can see the integration of gender is lacking. One expert points out that "*there was no connection being made on the ground at all*" (I1). Further, they add that they "*haven't yet found really consistent evidence of implementation of a gender mainstreamed external climate policy on the ground*" (I1).

An expert working in advocacy confirms that by saying that "*EU policy is a little bit underdeveloped in terms of gender, so environmental and climate change policy.*" (I2). A third expert adds that they are "*not aware of any concrete measures that have actually been done by the EU*" (I4). An expert working in the European Parliament points out that "*the Green Deal remains gender blind*" (I3). To ask if gender equality played a role at the policy level, an EU official replies: "*I must confess, rather not.*" (I5).

One expert brings in the perspective that "*gender as an issue of development policy is well established both at EU level and in the various countries. (…) At least on paper*" (I2). However, they add that this is also problematic because "*they always point to the Global South rather than looking at gender inequality in industrialised countries*" (I2) and that also in the domain of development policy, "*gender-transformative approaches are quite rare*" (I2). Thus, all experts agree here that gender is integrated in policy to a low extent and even less in the implementation of external climate policy. Ecofeminist

perspectives are largely disregarded and the EU's approach to external climate policy remains a technical one.

Therefore, the level of integration of gender into the EU's external climate policy and its alignment with eco-feminist principles can be observed only to a low extent. It does not clearly acknowledge the link between climate change and gender inequality, consequently, does not take appropriate measures and persists in recognizing climate change as a mainly technology-related problem. Despite major ambitions in the Gender Action Plan and through gender mainstreaming obligations, gender plays a negligible role in external climate policy. The climate strategy therefore continues to be based on technological solutions and hardly includes social nor gender perspectives among its solutions.

The EU's intention to mainstream gender and the self-proclaimed focus on gender equality of the von der Leyen Commission can hardly be recognized in the flagship strategy papers on external climate policy. Expert statements confirm this finding and add that if gender and climate are linked in strategy papers, it is rarely applied at the practical level.

These findings align with previous work done by Guerrina & Wright, Van der Vleuten and Hoijtink & Muehlenhoff, who identify a discrepancy between the EU's self-image as a gender pioneer and actual implementation in the EU's foreign policy (Guerrina & Wright 2016; Van der Vleuten 2017; Hoiktink & Muehlenhoff 2020). It confirms the argument of Guerrina & Wright that the silence around global gender norms reflects the limitations of both the EU's approach to gender mainstreaming and its identity as a normative power (Guerrina & Wright 2016) and extends it to the domain of external climate policy.

This also links back to claims made by Normative Power Europe scholars, who note that the EU engages with the norms adopted and disseminated only at a superficial level (i.a. Merlingen 2007; Dietz 2013). Although the norm of gender equality has been put at

the core of the EU's self-portrayal, a thorough reflection on how gender equality can be pursued efficaciously has yet to take place.

Explaining the Lack of Gender in External Climate Policy

Three main explanatory strands were identified as mechanisms accounting for the marginal engagement of EU external climate policy with gender. These can be subsumed under institutional resistance, political will, lack of awareness, knowledge and capacity. Although they all circumscribe distinct roots, they are all interconnected and overlapping.

<u>Political Will</u>

One explanatory strand that appeared is political will, which, according to data from expert interviews, is insufficient to consistently integrate gender perspectives into the EU's external climate policy: "*What I see today missing is this strong political will, that this is important*" (I3). Another expert states that "*we know what it takes to mainstream cross cutting issues. What we need is genuine political will, so there has to be the will to do this*" (I1).

While both gender equality and combatting climate change have been high up on the agenda of the von der Leyen Commission, there has not been a genuine connection of the two issues (I1; I3; I4). Moreover, Interviewee 4 adds that "*there was a bit of a push two or three years ago but now, yeah, you don't really hear so much about it anymore. Other priorities basically*" (I4).

Furthermore, it was mentioned that the slack in high-level focus on these topics may be related to current crises: "*Because of the war in Ukraine, I think there wasn't a lot of focus on this*" (I4). Gender equality is simply not regarded as high politics because its "*seen as something feminine and soft*" and is viewed as a dissociated, subordinal interest (I4). The lack of political will is also associated with the growing opposition towards gender policy. "*Unfortunately, we do see a bit of a backlash especially from the*

conservative and right-wing parties" (I4). Another interviewee confirms this observation since a consensus for the integration of a gender perspective is increasingly difficult to reach in the intergovernmental EU institutions (I2).

One expert working within an EU institution brings in an alternative perspective and says "*I think the will does exist. But the question is, are there incentives, is there a goal?*" (I5). They add that "*[bureaucrats] see it as an additional task and not as their main goal*" and thereby substantiates the notion that gender is not a prioritised issue (I5).

Institutional resistance

A second, closely related explanatory strand identified in the data is institutional resistance. As one expert puts it, the deficient integration of gender into the EU's external climate policy "*in this case is an institutional problem*" (I2). Interviewee 1 agrees that "*institutionally, there continues to be significant separation of these two agendas*" (I1).

The EU institutional structures are still not fit to allow for a consistent integration of gender issues into its external climate policy. Interviewee 4 added that even though each department now has a gender focal point, that person is responsible for integrating gender aspects across the institution, which can often consist of hundreds of people. Thus, the resources provided for positions are not commensurate with the magnitude of the task of mainstreaming gender consistently. Moreover, there is usually no focal point that deals with the interface between climate and gender and can promote its necessity (I4).

Lack of Awareness, Lack of Knowledge & Capacity

A further explanatory strand is the lacking awareness of the importance to integrate gender into external climate policy. Interviewee 5 claims "*I think the importance of this has simply not yet been recognized*" (I5). Interviewee 4 agrees: "*There's (...) still a lack of awareness of why should we even [care], and do we not have other problems*?" (I4).

This lack of awareness is interconnected with a lack of capacity and knowledge to mainstream gender. As mentioned above, the overload for the gender focal point within institutions is also a big capacity problem. Interviewee 4 has brought up that in a conversation with a gender officer in the EEAS, the gender officer stated that they are "*overwhelmed because I am literally the only one*" (I4). Outside of the gender focal points, there is a lack of knowledge on how to consistently integrate gender. Interviewee 5 mentioned that "*you have to have knowledge (…) about what could have an impact on gender. So, is this knowledge actually existing? I think not*" (I5).

Furthermore, they stated that "*there are people who are working on it, also in the DG CLIMA4 teams, but that is rather the exception and I think many of them simply lack the knowledge*". Interviewee 2 confirms this observation and says that "*in most cases they tick 'no' [for the question if the policy has gendered impacts] because people don't have the knowledge*" (I2). It was also mentioned that bureaucrats "*find it too complicated*" or "*too laborious*" (I2).

Therefore, the consistent integration of gender depends on whether individual bureaucrats or politicians have a vested interest, passion, or motivation to enforce gender mainstreaming (I5). The experts' explanations build on the previous findings about the inadequate integration of gender in European External Climate policy. Data suggest that the main reason for this is a lack of political will, lacking institutional infrastructure and lack of awareness, knowledge and capacity within the institutions.

These findings are in line with the argument of Guerrina & Wright, who point out the lack of political will and the institutional resistance to form velvet triangles within the EU's foreign policy institutions (Guerrina & Wright 2016). From an ecofeminist perspective, this reflects a picture in which the importance of integrating gender

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4 Directorate General for Climate Action in the European Commission

continues to be unrecognised, resulting in a lack of political will and an inability to implement it in institutional structures.

To answer the first research question, the integration of gender into the EU's external climate policy was examined. It became clear that neither in strategy documents nor in on the ground implementation gender plays a big role. It is therefore not in line with ecofeminist perspectives. This low level of gender integration can be traced back to three key factors: a lack of political will, institutional resistance and lack of awareness, knowledge and capacity.

Steps towards a gender-transformative external climate policy

Since gaps in the consistent integration of gender aspects in the EU's external climate policy including some explanatory approaches have been identified, the focus is now on possible courses of action to improve the prevailing conditions. By systemizing expert interview data, seven measures to enhance the EU's role as a gender-transformative normative power in its external climate policy could be determined.

1. <u>Making everybody a gender expert</u>

All experts criticised the inconsistent implementation of the gender mainstreaming commitments of the EU and agreed that a consistent enforcement would be a big step into the right direction. To address insufficient institutional circumstances and lack of capacity and knowledge, multiple experts have mentioned the importance of adequate capacity building for institutional staff to integrate gender into the EU's external climate policy. Interviewee 4 states that "*more workshops or capacity building need to be done if you want actually the tools to then integrate this and how can you also monitor how it's going*". Interviewee 5 adds "*that very few people have this perspective, that the training also improves the work*".

With the help of mandatory courses, workshops and training, staff of all levels could gain awareness of the importance of gender mainstreaming in all policy. Moreover, such

training can help to debunk presumed gender-neutrality of policy, educate staff about subliminal drivers of intersectional inequalities and acquire mechanisms to draft and implement gender-transformative policies. Such training should also include education on (de)coloniality, epistemic justice and a reflection of the EU's role in the world.

2. Gender-climate focal point

At the same time, centres of competence within institutions are important to push the gender perspective further up on the agenda. The current composition of the institutions already includes gender focal points in the form of a gender officer within every DG or unit. Experts mentioned that so far, however, these have played a secondary role, are passive actors and are fundamentally understaffed. This continues to be one main institutional resistance. Therefore, the staffing and expansion of the fields of competence of the gender focal points within the European external climate policy would be an important step.

Particularly crucial would be to build competencies around the gender-climate nexus in order to bring increased attention to this perspective in the work of the institutions. This expansion can help to give gender focal points more leeway and thereby underpin the consistent implementation of gender mainstreaming.

3. Gender-transformative budgeting

Next to capacity building of EU staff, the data repeatedly highlighted the importance of gender-transformative budgeting. Gender-transformative budgeting would entail an analysis of expenditures in terms of gender equality objectives and subsequent changes with the aim of achieving gender equality objectives.

While many member states of the EU have committed to gender-budget their foreign policy, the Commission and its External Action Service have yet to adopt such an approach. According to one expert, "*it would be really helpful to have sort of binding conditions when it comes to spending money*" (I3), since if there is no binding amount,

other priorities will continue to overshadow gender equality within external climate policy.

4. Strengthening velvet triangles

Expert interview data reveals the importance of strengthening velvet triangles. As discussed above, femocrats have a big impact on their institutional framework (Guerrina & Wright 2016; Holli 2004). This is especially the case if they cooperate with feminist academic researchers and consultants pushing the boundaries of knowledge and civil society and advocacy actively pushing media attention, lobbying and policy (I5, I1, I4). Institutional change towards more gender-transformative policy is most likely to happen if these coalitions are firmly in place (I5).

5. Institutionalising cooperation with feminist movements across the world

Experts mentioned the institutionalisation of cooperation with feminist movements around the world to account for different perspectives and counteract a Eurocentric way of gender-transformative external climate policy. Interviewee 4 proposes to "*connect with other feminist movements around the world*" and "*elevate their voice a bit more here in Brussels*" (I4). That could be done via "*visits, invitations to write blogs or as speakers at events*" (cf. I4).

Moreover, feminist stakeholders from partner countries should be involved in decision-making processes. By taking advice from feminist experts in partner countries, a more diverse understanding of norms and of policy can be integrated. This could help to include and push for intersectional perspectives in EU external climate policy making and thereby increase its epistemic justice.

6. Departure from binary understanding of gender

To this date, most external climate policy of the EU speaks of men and women exclusively as the two genders and thus do not include non-binary genders in their policy. Experts have insisted that the EU needs to leave its binary understanding of

gender behind to achieve gender equality for all. One expert mentions: *"I'm also a bit concerned that we do mainstream gender, but then we do think in categories again. So, it also excludes certain people"* (I4). Besides the fact that it is exclusionary, this binary paradigm reproduces a division of roles in which men are portrayed as actors and women as victims. This truncates the complexity of achieving gender equality and can only lead to superficial progress.

7. <u>Addressing anti-movements</u>

At the same time, it is imperative for the EU to also address growing opposition towards gender policy within and outside of institutions (Zacharenko 2019). They show ideological proximity to climate denialist movements, as both are characterised by the non-recognition of scientific evidence and a shared opposition of progressive politics (Jolly 2022). In this regard, such movements pose a threat to the advancement of gender-transformative climate policies by negating the importance of both causes.

The dealing with anti-movements was also included in the interview questions. It was remarkable that none of the experts from the various fields was able to offer a solution. All experts agreed, however, that overcoming this polarisation is a decisive factor in advancing gender-just climate policy (I1, I2, I3, I4, I5). This shows that a crucial task for the future is to look for solution strategies and political communication against the spread of such dangerous ideological positions and the division of society.

A gender-transformative normative power?

The empirical data has shown seven measures that have the potential make the EU's external climate policy more gender-transformative. Genuinely adhering to gender mainstreaming commitments that are already in place can make a big difference. This can be achieved through capacity building, trainings and workshops for EU staff, and the expansion of gender focal points. Gender-transformative budgeting and the strengthening of velvet triangles can make a big difference.

On top of that, the EU needs to leave behind the reproduction of binary gender norms and make cooperation with feminist movements around the world a part of the policy-process to intercorporate diverse voices and account for intersectional perspectives. One crucial issue that remains unsolved is the growing opposition towards gender and climate related norms. Still, it is absolutely necessary to address this rift to advance a gender-transformative external climate policy.

These described approaches from expert interviews connect directly to evidence from the preceding chapter, and results from previous research. For example, the call for velvet triangles relates to findings of Guerrina & Wright, who confirm their need as a very efficient mechanism to promote gender equality in institutional frameworks (2016). In summary, these proposals take identified criticisms of the EU external climate policy and proceed to call for its improvement through concrete action steps.
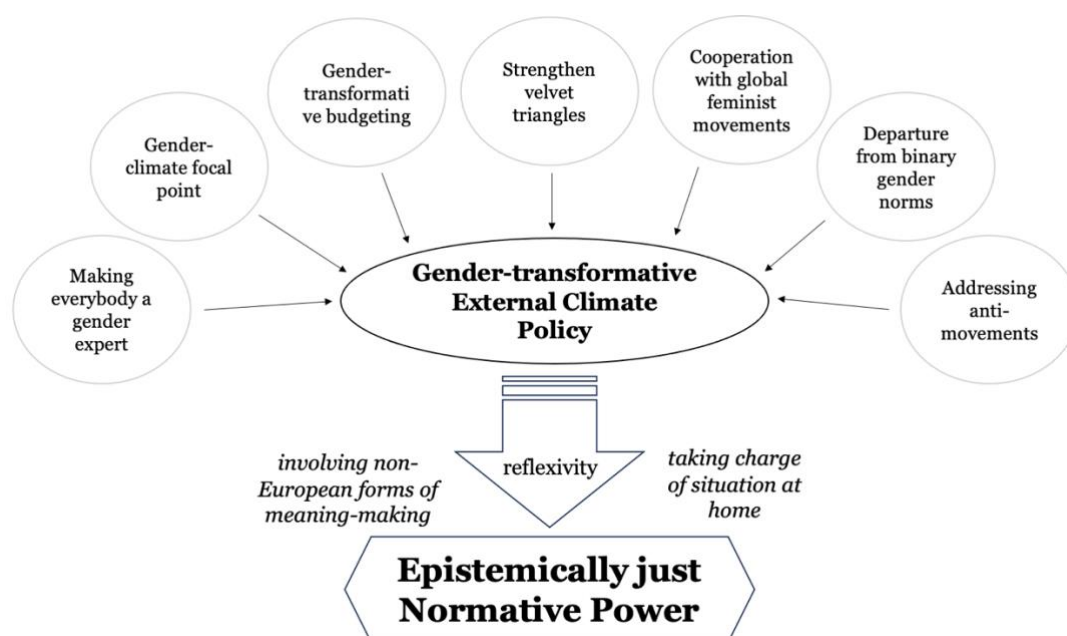

Figure 1: *Towards an epistemically just normative power.*

Implementing these measures can address major criticisms of the EU as a normative power. The benefits for the EU are therefore twofold: One fundamental criticism is the discrepancy between the rhetoric on an international stage and the actions the EU takes at home towards gender equality (i.a. Bernarding & Lunz 2020; Kronsell 2015; Guerrina

& Wright 2016; Van der Vleuten 2017; Hoijtink & Muehlenhoff 2020). This shows a limited reflexivity on its own status quo of gender equality within its policy practices.

Figure 1 illustrates that taking the proposed measures can help address this discrepancy: consistently mainstreaming gender, encouraging velvet triangles and departing from a binary framing of gender would allow the EU to radically reformulate its normative system around gender and thoroughly integrate it into its policy. Only by reifying gender into its external climate policy, the EU could win credibility when disseminating norms abroad.

A second fundamental criticism is the inherent Eurocentrism (Merlingen 2007) and epistemic violence (Foucault 1991 in Merlingen 2007) the dissemination of norms entail. By institutionalising the consultation of feminist voices across the world and their inclusion into decision-making processes in external climate policy, the epistemic meaning of norms like gender equality becomes subject to discourse. The involvement of non-European forms of meaning-making and local feminist expertise on climate policy can be a step towards tackling epistemic injustice and break up the Eurocentric and falsely universalist notion of norms.

Limitations

One limitation is based on the methodological approach of expert interviews: the selection of experts neither followed clear guidelines, nor were experts' personal biases sufficiently tackled.

A further limitation is that this research did not include a case study, nor did it deal with specific (regional) areas of external climate policy in detail. However, as this thesis is rather intended as a comprehensive orientation with practical insights. Further research should focus on a more detailed examination of regional differences of the EU's external climate policy and gender.

A third limitation is more argumentative in nature: With the practical recommendations for the EU to enhance its nature as a normative power, this study may inadvertently perpetuate Eurocentric perspectives. While the author is aware of this apparent critique, this research's purpose was to offer approaches to address inequalities within the existing system of EU external climate policy. Further studies are needed to explore all-encompassing approaches of transforming the EU based on decolonial theory.

Conclusion & Outlook

In the face of pervasive crises, this study's purpose was to investigate the level to which gender is integrated in the EU's external climate policy and to what extent it is in line with ecofeminist approaches. Moreover, this study aimed at finding strategies and measures that can enhance the EU's role as a gender-transformative normative power. Only by taking a gender-transformative approach can the EU take ownership of advancing global cooperation in addressing climate change.

Answering the first research question, the following observations could be made: Despite evidenced urgency, gender is only to a very low extent integrated into the EU's external climate policy and is not in accordance with ecofeminist principles. The link between gender and climate is not explicitly acknowledged and existing inequalities are not addressed to be potentially adequately dealt with in policy. Three decisive factors contribute to this insufficiency: a lack of political will, institutional resistance and a lack of awareness, knowledge and capacity.

To answer the second research question, the study has systemised seven key strategies and measures that the EU can adopt to enhance its role as a gender-transformative normative power: (1) building expertise through gender mainstreaming courses and trainings for all staff, (2) expanding gender focal points and complementing it with expertise on the gender-climate nexus, (3) appropriate gender responsive budgeting, (4) strengthening of velvet triangles, (5) departing from a binary understanding of gender, (6) institutionalising cooperation with feminist movements across the world and (7) addressing anti-movements.

That way, the EU can address two fundamental criticisms of its normative power exercise: by reformulating the normative system around gender and sincerely anchoring it in external climate policy, the discrepancy between the norms disseminated abroad and the shortcomings at home could be mitigated. If the EU is able to institutionalise dialogue with feminist movements across the world and systematically incorporate

advice from non-European forms of meaning-making, it can establish new formats and structures that are intersectional ecofeminist and thus truly transformational. Hence, epistemically violating practices can be disrupted.

It can be concluded that climate change continues to be perceived primarily as a technological and only to a lesser extent a social problem – which is reflected in the EU's lopsided policy responses. In fact, they ignore that ruling hegemonies bear a significant responsibility for the exploitation of the planet. As long as decision-makers reproduce patriarchal paradigms, a system built on exploitation will neither find solutions for climate change nor for achieving gender equality.

Taking the proposed steps would enable the EU to radically confront gender norms and initiate sustainable change in the domain of external climate policy. If ecofeminist ideas are seriously explored, these new visions can reset power structures and enable agency of marginalised groups. Profoundly anchoring intersectionality and listening to non-European feminist voices within external climate action can lead to international partnerships at eye level and a turn towards a decolonial perspective. Only that way, the EU could act in an epistemically just way and re-gain credibility as a normative power.

This may give birth to a new version of Normative Power Europe: a Europe that demonstrates how a transformation of power structures can take place in an ecological and economic way. In fact, times of geopolitical threats and European identity crisis make this a critical moment for the EU: with the rise of authoritarianism, the intensification of polarised discourses (Schmid et al., 2022) and rampant attacks on human rights principles, Europe must present a successful model of change. This is imperative in order to remain a stable and relevant player in the world, and more than that, contribute to stability and respectful coexistence rather than losing credibility by reproducing imaginaries of domination.

Further research should therefore investigate ways for the EU to become a decolonial power. How can systemic change towards epistemic justice within external climate

policy be achieved? How is it possible for this to occur while also reassuring citizens that their identity remains secure? These emerging questions are worth exploring in further research. Feminist perspectives on normative power Europe through interviews or focus groups in non-European countries would be particularly interesting.

Annex A – Selected Documents

	Title	Publishing institution	Date of publication
1	A European Green Deal	European Commission	2019
2	Strategic Agenda 2019-2024	European Council	2019
3	Conclusions on Climate and Energy Diplomacy	Council of the European Union	2023
4	Climate Change and Defence Roadmap	European External Action Service	2020

Annex B – Interview Questions

1. In what respect is an overall feminist perspective necessary for the shift towards effective climate policy?

2. From your perspective, what role does gender equality play in the daily work and policy implementation in EU external climate policy?

3. Why have the ideas only gained little traction within External Climate Policy, considering the focus that the current Commission places on climate and gender?

4. From your point of view, how would a tangible approach to integrate gender into all EU external climate policy look like?

5. Do you have any suggestions for steps towards a gender-transformative EU external climate policy? (Especially in the light of the emerging "anti-genderism" and growing opposition to Climate Action?)

Annex C – Interviewees

	Title	Role	Date
1	**Academic researcher.** Professor of gender and politics, United Kingdom	Area of expertise: EU climate policy and gender	31 May
2	**Co-founder of gender equality advocacy organisation** Researcher and advocate, Germany	Area of expertise: Gender justice in climate policy	7 June
3	**Elected representative.** European Parliament, FEMM Committee Belgium	Area of expertise: Gender equality and climate change	12 June
4	**Policy Manager at a gender equality advocacy.** Researcher and advocate, Belgium	Area of expertise: Gender equality, economic and environmental justice	23 June
5	**Former Project Manager at DG Clima** European Commission, Belgium	Area of Expertise: Climate Pact and European Green Deal	27 June

Annex D – Master Thesis Report

Stripping norms of their power?

A gender-assessment of European action responding to the Russian war on Ukraine.

Master Thesis Report

by Fabiana Schmid

Erasmus Mundus Master in Public Policy

Central European University & University of York

Deadline: 15th September 2022

Word Count: 6442 (excl. references)

Supervisors:
Thilo Bodenstein, Associate Professor, CEU
Jeremy Moulton, Associate Lecturer, UoY

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Definition
CFFP	Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy
EC	European Commission
EEAS	European External Action Service
EEC	European Economic Community
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
FFP	Feminist Foreign Policy
GAP	Gender Action Plan
MEP	Member of European Parliament
NPE	Normative Power Europe
TEU	Treaty of the European Union
TFEU	Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union
UN	United Nations

INTRODUCTION: PROBLEM SPECIFICATION AND RATIONALE

Gender equality has increasingly become a focus area in European Union's foreign affairs, despite traditionally being portrayed as a 'gender-neutral' domain. Since 2010, the EU commits to include gender mainstreaming into the EEAS strategy. In the form of new gender action plans refined about every 5 years, the Union highlights the focus on the consideration of women's issues in every policy, women's participation in decision-making or in the latest version, the commitment to address the root causes of gender inequality. The increased promotion of gender equality abroad blends in not only with the centrality of equality to the Union's identity but also with the EU's overarching strategy to complement economic power with normative power – not only being a merchant but also a preacher (Van der Vleuten 2017). This practice of power exertion has been referred to as normative power Europe (Manners 2002). The EU constructs these norms to be important as a basis for cooperation inside the Union but also conveys them in cooperation with external actors. Manners argues that the EU as a powerful actor on the world stage can shape the conceptions of 'normal' in international relations (2002).

Repeated statements of high-level EU officials referring to the early pioneering role of the EU in gender equality policy illustrate the importance of this normative narrative to the external and internal identity of the EU (Guerrina & Wright 2016). By coincidentally calling out other international actors on malpractice, the Union 'others' those lacking moral fervour and demonstrates the violent potential and dominant dimension that NPE and the diffusion of supposedly universal norms implies (Merlingen, 2007: 438). Staeger purports that Europe's past as an imperial power is absent in the narrative (2016) and needs to be reflected upon. Despite competing with other global actors such as UN Women, the World Bank or the Istanbul Convention on the promotion of gender equality abroad, the EU sticks to its role as preacher, at least as long as it does not interfere with its role as a merchant (Welfens 2017).

The world is segueing from exceptional circumstances evoked by the Covid-19 pandemic into a war of aggression posing a threat to the international order and bitterly reminding Europe of its strong energy dependence. The Russian war on Ukraine has shaken the EU's perception of foreign relations fundamentally[1]. The EU's immediate reaction to the war has been

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[1] The author is aware that this exclusive focus on the EU's response to the crisis, as opposed to a holistic discussion of the crisis focusing on the most harmed, i.e. the people of Ukraine, may provoke criticism of a Eurocentric worldview. It is due to the scope as well as the orientation of this thesis that this unfortunately cannot happen in this research.

unprecedented in scope, immediacy and vigour. Showcasing a rare unanimity among member states, scholars have called it the "EU's geopolitical awakening" (De Hoop Scheffer & Weber 2022). With sanctions against Russia on an unprecedented scale, military assistance to a third country under the European Peace Fund for the first time, as well as the use of the Temporary Protection Directive for unrestricted asylum for Ukrainian citizens for three years, the EU's response is indeed both unexpected and unparalleled (Bosse 2022).

Like in all conflict and war situations, the war in Ukraine disproportionately affects the most vulnerable groups in a society, including women[2]. Women do not only suffer from by-products of the war but are also targeted as a strategy of war. Rape and sexual violence are used to destabilize families and weaken social ties of communities, which has since 2008 been recognized as a weapon of war by the UN security council (Kangas et al 2014; Puechguirbal, 2012). In May 2022, the European Commission has acknowledged the particularly severe situation of women in Ukraine with a contribution of € 1.5 Mio to support sexual and gender-based violence survivors (European Commission 2022). Considering the size of the overall humanitarian aid spending for Ukraine, this contribution for women and girls only constitutes a very small proportion, namely around 0.5% of total expenditures. Such hesitant behaviour despite the commitment to gender quality is specifically criticized by third-wave feminist scholars, who argue that claiming universal human rights runs the risk of neglecting women due to their particular oppression and in turn demand attention to this circumstance (Muehlenhoff 2017).

The scope of this contribution raises the question in how far the EU is willing to carry their proposed strategy on gender in external affairs and development into action in times of crisis. Drawing back to Risse's idea that identity becomes salient and fought over in crisis situations (2010), this thesis aims to investigate the EU's determination to gender mainstreaming in all policies and their ability to effectively address women's needs in this war situation.

NPE and gender scholarship has so far not extensively analysed concrete cases of power exertion but remained largely focused on the study of the institutional circumstances that facilitate the state of gender equality promotion. Studies that examine policy-making in crisis have so far analysed the impact of previous crises on the inclusion of a gender perspective,

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[2] Although this thesis does not seek to reproduce the binary understanding of gender exclusively as men and women, it does refer this terminology in some contexts. This is based on the binary understanding of gender held by the EU in some cases. For the purpose of analysis, this terminology is adopted. However, the author understands the term woman to include all persons who identify themselves as women.

for example the financial crisis, 'migration crisis' or Covid-19 pandemic (Allwood 2020; Muehlenhoff 2020; Smith 2022)

Feminist foreign policy scholarship criticizes the EU's inability to consistently include the promised gender perspective in policy in turbulent times. Against the backdrop of these claims, this thesis aims at adding to the rich body of literature by analysing a concrete case of EU crisis response in foreign policy. Given the sudden rise of attention of military action towards the exertion of power due to the Russian war on Ukraine, it is particularly interesting to re-assess previous impressions of European exercise of power.

PRELIMINARY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Thus, this thesis aims to analyse the gender dimension in the crisis response of the European Union to the Russian war on Ukraine. Considering the extensive commitments to gender mainstreaming the Union made in foreign affairs, the main research question of this thesis asks:

Q1: To what extent is the EU's reaction to crisis due to the Russian war on Ukraine in line with the gender equality commitments adopted within the Gender Action Plan III?

To be able to assess the Union's response and its adherence to gender equality commitments, the commitments made within the framework of the GAP III are identified and analysed as an intermediate step. Subsequently, the extent to which these commitments are met in this particular case will be examined. To look beyond the Union's self-set goals and understand in how far the EU's actions serve gender equality from a social justice perspective, their actions are then examined through a gender analysis lens. For this reason, the following question is posed:

Q2: Is the EU's response adequate to serve women and girls best in this situation?

In a second phase of analysis, this thesis will turn towards the EU as an actor on the international stage in the crisis situation. As discussed above, the Union has a demonstrated track record of exercising power not so much through military power, but rather by means of civil and normative power. Given the fundamental shock that the Russian attack on Ukraine triggered in the EU, which evoked an unprecedented increase in defence spending and the departure from diplomacy and soft-power-guided foreign operations, this research aims to shed light on potential shifts in the pattern of power exertion. Thus, the thesis asks:

Q3: In how far can traces of normative power Europe be detected in the EU response? Has the configuration of power changed?

To answer this question, a framework establishing traces of normative power exertion will be deducted from previous literature on Normative Power Europe. Patterns in the crisis response of the EU will then be observed and classified to afterwards determine potential deviations from the prevailing practice of exercising power.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Different theoretical approaches serve as a basis to answer these research questions. In order to give a substantial answer to the first question, it is important to take a closer look at the EU's understanding of gender equality, specifically the understanding of gender equality employed by the Gender Action Plan. To provide a basis for answering the second research question, gender as an analytical concept will be introduced to assess the EU's actions from a social justice perspective. The third research question requires a framework to examine potential traces of normative power practice which will be derived from previous research in the field. In the following sections, the mentioned concepts will be elaborated upon to function as a theoretical framework for this dissertation.[3]

Q1: THE EU'S UNDERSTANDING OF GENDER EQUALITY

Despite the recent expansion on gender equality promotion, the inclusion of gender equality in the EU's legislation no novelty: The Lisbon Treaty defines the equality between men and women as one of the EU's common values.[4] The Treaty of the European Union establishes gender equality promotion to be one of the tasks of the EU. The Treaty of the Functioning of the European Union furthermore defines all its activities need to aim to abolish inequalities and promote equality between men and women.[5]

The EU's understanding of gender is not directly laid down in the Gender Action Plan III. Nevertheless, it is evident from other official documentation what the EU understands by Gender:

> "Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They

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[3] Since this is a thesis report serving as a basis for future empirical analysis, the theoretical framework is introduced to provide an understanding of the further procedure. Exhaustive description on the framework as well as the intended analysis, however, will be part of the final thesis.

[4] Find here the TEU.

[5] Find here the consolidated version of the TFEU.

are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age." (EIGE, n.d.)

Equally, the Gender Action Plan III does specifically define gender equality, so the understanding will be derived from previous official documentation too. Gender equality, according to European documentation refers to the following:

"This refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development." (EIGE, n.d.)

Next to gender equality, gender equity is the process to achieve gender equality. The latter recognizes that there are historical and social disadvantages that result in women and gender-diverse people not being in the same starting position as men. Treating everyone equally might therefore not necessarily be fair. In order to achieve gender equality and to balance these starting positions of different genders out, gender equity measures may be necessary.

A key tool to incorporating gender equality in all policy deliberations is gender mainstreaming. Gender mainstreaming has first been featured as part of the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 and has been regarded to ever since by the European Union. According EIGE, gender mainstreaming "(…) involves the integration of a gender perspective into the preparation, design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of policies, regulatory measures and spending programs, with a view to promoting equality between women and men, and combating discrimination" (EIGE 2022). According the Gender Action Plan I published in 2008, gender mainstreaming in the EU involves above all the following aspects: First, it needs to evoke changes in institutional working methods and shared responsibility. Second, it needs to obtain and use gender-disaggregated data and qualitative information as a basis to develop policy. Third, it is important that gender analysis in differences in access to resources, opportunities, constraints and power between and among women and men. Fourth, implemented policies need to be supervised by putting a gender-sensitive monitoring and evaluation system in place. This commitment, however, must most importantly be closely associated with technical capacity (O'Connell 2013).

Q2: GENDER ANALYSIS LENS

According to Andrea Cornwall, gender can be regarded as an analytical concept (2007 in O'Connell 2013). Following this line, "Gender analysis examines how people's gender identity and expression (woman, man, trans and intersex) determine their opportunities, access to and control over resources and capacity to enjoy and exercise their rights" (O'Connell 2013: 4).

Applying the Gender Analysis Framework (GAF), the data will be structured with the help of the following dimensions: access to resources is the first domain and includes the collection of information on tangible assets such as land, capital, and tools, and intangible assets such as knowledge, education, and information. The second dimension includes practices and participation, capturing roles and responsibilities as well as capacity to engage in different types of economic, political, and social activities, and their decision-making. Third, the gender analysis framework will focus on beliefs and perceptions that define what it means to be a man or a woman in this specific society. The fourth dimension is the domain of institutions, laws and policies and looks at how men and women are dissimilarly affected by formal or informal rights (Morgan et al 2016; Bhuyan et al. 2010). Power pervades all four dimensions - it informs who has, can acquire and can expend the authority to acquire and expend assets (cf, Bhuyan et al. 2010: 22).

To assess the progress in terms of gender equality, this thesis employs an understanding of gender equality that argues in line with Martha Nussbaum's approach of gender-justice based human development (2000). This approach conflicts with an 'equal rights' based one. This thesis adopts the argument that equal rights do not necessarily mean equal outcomes due to persisting systemic and cultural inequalities. Thus, it draws on an outcome-based instead of a rights-based understanding of gender equality.

Q3: NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE

This section will introduce the concept of Normative Power Europe and pave the way for the identification and operationalisation of its core distinguishing features.

Since Manners established the concept in 2002, many scholars have built on his argument that the EU as an actor on the international stage does not only bear power through military or civilian means but exerts major influence through the distribution of norms (Manners 2002). Basing power and the external and internal self-image on normative value stems from the very core of the EU's origin: by definition, the European Union is built on the constitutive notion of post-war, anti-nationalism sentiment on the basis of which the member states have made a commitment of fundamental cooperation. After the EU's departure from a strict focus only on the economic dimension of cooperation and the expansion to other policy domains,

fundamental 'core' norms of the EU have been set down in the Copenhagen declaration of 1973. These have been established over time through several declarations, treaties, policies or conditions (Manners 2002: 242). A set of core norms that coin the European[6] self-image and serve as a basis for the exertion of power through norm dissemination can be identified:

The central core norms revolve around peace, liberty, democracy, rule of law and respect for human rights and can all be located in foundational treaties of the EU (Manners 2002). In addition to the core norms, a number of 'minor norms' derived from the core norms can be identified. These are social solidarity, anti-discrimination, sustainable development and good governance. Gender equality can be directly derived from this group of norms and has been established in different legal documents (see also in Chapter on the EU's understanding of gender equality).

Having identified the fundamental norms of the Union, the definition of the norm itself still remains a question. Although the definition is not concordant in NPE scholarship, it can be concluded that the N in NPE implies the 'qualities intrinsic to human condition' and implicitly suggests the European moral obligation to defend these in world politics (cf. Merlingen 2007: 439). The EU constructs these norms to be important as a basis for cooperation inside the Union but also conveys them within cooperation with external actors. This pre-eminence of European norms, according to the idea of Manners, is disseminated through a variety of factors that shape European cooperation with other actors: These include contagion, informational diffusion, institutionalization, transference, overt diffusion as well as cultural filter (Manners 2002).

Different scholars have employed the concept and argue that the diffusion of norms is a rather imperialist practice (Merlingen 2007; Diez 2013; Martin-Maze 2015; Staeger 2016), although Manners himself denies this (2002: 253). Staeger claims that Europe's past as an imperial power is absent in the narrative (2016). Merlingen expands the concept with his contribution and locates the two faces of NPE (2007). He agrees with Hyde-Price (2006) on the notion that EU foreign policy of course follows strategic calculations and if forced to choose strategically, material interests often win over the established norm construct (Merlingen 2007: 437). Concordantly, the EU's reflexivity is limited regarding internal practices and conveniently forgets about the imperfect situation at home (Diez 2013). By coincidentally calling out other international actors on malpractice, the Union 'others' those lacking moral fervour and

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[6] When the term 'European' is used in this context, the author is referring only to the community of members of the European Union. The author is aware that Europe does not equal the European Union, but uses this term for reasons of comprehensibility. This applies to the whole essay.

demonstrates the violent potential and dominant dimension that NPE and the diffusion of supposedly universal norms implies (Merlingen 2007: 438).

Merlingen adduces Foucault's idea of norms and locates the two faces that norms have. In line with the Foucauldian argument that "not everything is bad, but everything is dangerous" (Foucault 1991: 343), he argues that norms entail arbitrary constraints and limit the expression of difference, leading to epistemic violence. Norms, according to Foucault, cannot be understood as unproblematic frontiers safeguarding cosmopolitan morality but are also a claim to super-ordination (Merlingen 2007: 441-443). In other words, the promotion of means of emancipation from violence and suppression abroad and the means of control imposing constraints on human action are two sides of the same coin. Normative Power Europe as a practice is therefore made up of elements in tension with each other and constitutes an insurmountable dichotomy of power exertion.

These introductions provide a basis for a more exhaustive and tailored conception of these theoretical frameworks in the final thesis. To provide an overview over relevant scholarly discussion in the field of this thesis, the following chapter will give an initial insight to previous research on core topics.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ensuing to the introduction of key concepts and theoretical frameworks for this thesis, the subsequent sections will provide an overview over gender equality in the EU, the EU foreign policy and its relationship to gender equality, a gendered perspective on Normative Power Europe as well as a brief introduction to EU policy making in times of crisis.

GENDER EQUALITY IN THE EU

The EU considers gender equality as one of its core values and, based on the early legal adoption of gender equality, itself an international pioneer in this field. Equal pay between men and women was already established in 1957 in Art. 119 of the Treaty of Rome. This, however, did not happen out of social justice considerations but in line with the European Economic Community's (ECC) economic orientation, in order to avoid distortions in competition (Jacquot 2020). Ever since gender equality policy arose on the European agenda, it has been instrumentalized for economic progress (Lewis 2006; Young 2000).

Even though gender policy became more influential in multiple domains such as decision-making, the compatibility of work and family or violence against women, the economic framing intensified in the 1990 and 2000s (Elomäki 2015). In the third action program on equal opportunities (1991-1995) the Commission emphasized that women's skills and participation

are 'indispensable for the economic development of Europe' and that equal opportunities policy 'forms an essential part of the strategy for Europe's economic and social cohesion' (CEC, 1990: 2 in Elomäki 2015). In her work published in 2004, Stratigaki gave an example about agreeing on the European employment agenda on reconciling work and family life: the rethinking of gender roles in the family was replaced with promotions of women in the labour market through more flexible working hours (Stratigaki 2004). Such market-oriented, instrumental gender equality approaches are a product of neoliberal institutions and governance and have hijacked and attenuated the discourse on gender equality policy in the EU (Elomäki 2015; Muehlenhoff 2017). On that note, scholars have criticized the EU applying an 'add woman and stir' approach instead of a working towards a true departure from a system that reifies men as the norm (Guerrina & Wright 2016).

Although there has been considerable in representation of genders through the implementation of a quota of 30% since 2020, white men still constitute the norm in European institutions. This imbalance of genders in decision-making positions impairs legitimacy and effectiveness of democratic institutions. It has become evident that different perspectives and varying policy priorities raise the likelihood of policy decisions responding to the needs of all members of society are lacking (Brechenmacher 2021). However, the improvement in the growing proportion of women in leadership positions is now repeatedly being used as the figurehead of diversity in the EU institutions, while also emphasizing a multicultural Europe. Coincidentally, ethnic minorities and Persons of Colour are rare to be found in the institutional workforce. EU diversity activists state that they face condescension in their work and describe a prevailing audacity due to the notion of working on the idea of multicultural Europe "while every single one of them is white" (Chander in Politico 2017).

At the same time, the EU's engagement on gender equality has not gone uncontested. Gender politics have become a central field of political and cultural debate around the world in recent decades (Kuhar 2015; Wittenius 2022; Mayer 2022). 'Anti-gender movements' could be witnessed not only at the local or national level but also at the European level, where alliances are forming to undermine the already built consensus on advancing gender equality (Mayer 2022). 'Gender ideology' seems to be an adverse denominator for all different sorts of agendas and serves as projection screen for racist, anti-semitist, homophobic, transphobic or ethnic-nationalist ideas as well as hostility towards elites. Such narratives are thereby commonly employed by different actors such as fundamentalist religious groups, right wing or populist groups but also conservative bourgeois or neoliberal circles (Henninger et al 2021). This agenda is not only promoted from institutional outsiders but has long arrived in the institutions.

According to Zacharenko, the number of MEPs that take oppositional stances towards gender equality, women's reproductive rights, same sex marriage or the Istanbul Convention on

Combating All Forms of Violence against Women has doubled and risen to around 30 percent in the 2019 parliamentary election (2019). Resistance also takes place in the intergovernmental bodies of the Union. The strengthening of right-wing, populist parties is not only seen in the European Parliament, but their influence can also well be observed in the European Council or the Council of the European Union, where the wording or concept of 'gender' is frequently blocked-in official documents (Wittenius 2022). Despite a large majority still being in favour of promoting gender equality, such developments jeopardise the intention to advance gender equality at home and abroad.

EU FOREIGN POLICY AND GENDER EQUALITY

Over the years, the European Union has refined its commitment to gender equality in development and foreign policy several times. To the EU, taking a gender perspective in external relations has become just as important as in the domestic context. The EU has recognized that security, peace, development and gender are closely linked and acknowledges that the underprivileged socioeconomic situation of women constitutes their insecurity (Elomäki 2015). Moreover, progress in women's rights and gender equality are considered a prerequisite for the democratic development of societies. Among other things, it can contribute to the prevention of conflicts and is in this sense an important concern of the EU to establish partnerships with non-European countries and to promote these issues.

The EU's first articulated commitment to the promotion of gender equality in development was following the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995 (European Commission 1995). The conference was a turning point in global engagement to gender equality advancement. The declaration included the promotion of gender equality in a set of different areas including poverty, education, health, violence, economy, decision-making and women's human rights. To date, the implementation is monitored every five years by UN institutions in cooperation with member states.

More than ten years later and based on the growing awareness of the discrepancy between EU policy and practice of EU institutions and member states, the Beijing Declaration 1995 was followed by the Gender Action Plan "EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010 – 2015" (GAP I) (O'Connell 2013). Since then, the EU adopted three Gender Action plans: GAP I (2010-2015), GAP II (2015-2020) and recently GAP III (2020-2025). GAP I aimed to include gender equality into every policy dialogue with third states and generally mainstream gender in all policies. Thereby, it departed from the understanding of women as vulnerable or 'virtuous victims' (Sweetman, 2012 in O'Connell 2013) and aimed to not only include gender considerations in the social domain but also incorporate it into all other policy domains.

Since the 2000's there has been a big surge in the visibility of women in high politics, including the foreign policy and defence domain. Women's entry into traditionally male-dominated but perceived as 'gender-neutral' policy domains has a big effect on how foreign policy is shaped, practiced and perceived (Ansorg et al 2020). Despite major developments in terms of bringing gender into European foreign policy discourse, the implementation of the GAP I was obstructed by a lack of high-level political prioritization, limited willingness to allocate resources as well as a lack of gender expertise in European institutions (Watkins 2015). This shows that if gender equality policy should be implemented effectively and thoroughly, prioritization as well as accountability by the political leadership and high-level staff are vital.

In 2015, the EU framework on 'Gender equality and women's empowerment: transforming the lives of girls and women through EU external relations 2016-2020', also called Gender Action Plan II (GAP II) was released. This new declaration specifically highlighted the need to increase women's participation in decision-making and progressed in reflecting on the underpinnings of gender inequality. With GAP II, there has been substantial progress in pushing for a cultural change in EEAS headquarter and delegations, mobilizing political will and resources to the incorporation of a solid monitoring system for implemented policies. Despite these developments, scholars criticize significant shortcomings in the implementation of the GAP II. While there has been good effort on monitoring and gender mainstreaming, women's participation in negotiations has been neglected. Moreover, it seems that gender mainstreaming is side-lined when it comes to crisis and conflict (Ioannides 2017).

The third version of the GAP places particular focus on addressing the root causes of inequality, such as traditional gender roles or intersecting social injustices that exacerbate the situation of marginalized women (Brechenmacher 2021). On top of that, the GAP III acknowledges unpaid care-work as a burden for women and promises to address it through universal social protection and public health services. The consideration of land, food and natural resources rights have much improved since the GAP II. Despite this recognizable progress in understanding persisting disparities, the global Covid-19 pandemic threatened these advancements and has given rise to inequality, poverty and gender-based violence.

Advocates claim that although gender equality strategies exist, their application is limited in practice (Bernarding & Lunz 2020). In response to the still comparably low prioritization of gender equality on the agenda of foreign policy, calls for a European feminist foreign policy have grown louder. Feminist foreign policy refers to a political framework centred around the wellbeing of marginalized people and invokes processes of self-reflection regarding foreign policy's hierarchical global systems (Centre for Feminist Foreign Policy n.d.). Recently, more and more countries around the world have committed to adopt a feminist foreign policy, including European member states such as Sweden, France, Spain, Luxembourg, Cyprus and

Germany (Bernarding & Lunz 2020). These developments have created attention to the topic and encourage civil society organizations as well as parts of the European parliament to demand the application of a European feminist foreign policy more vigorously.

Against the backdrop of its progression over time, the European gender policy still today tends to focus most on economic advancement of societies (Van der Vleuten 2017; Guerrina & Wright 2016; Elomäki 2015; Muehlenhoff 2017). The acknowledgement of the close links of security, peace, development and gender has also caused the instrumentalization of gender equality as a means to foster development and increase economic benefit (Elomäki 2015). This relates back to the debates on the EU instrumentalizing norms to exert power. The next section will relate the efforts to promote gender equality abroad to the concept of NPE.

NORMATIVE POWER EUROPE AND GENDER

A few scholars have so far explored the relation between the concept of NPE and gender. They agree that gender equality is one of the key norms the EU frequently promotes abroad and, in this course, uses it to exert power (Guerrina & Wright 2016; Van der Vleuten 2017; David & Guerrina 2013; Peto & Manners 2006). Building on the European core norm of equality, the promotion of gender equality has long been a part of the EU development. The intentions to promote gender equality domestically and at the same time integrate it into its foreign policy strategy constitutes a crucial step in the process of norm diffusion. This is derived from the underlying expectation that foundational values will permeate external relations and that in turn this process would reinforce the EU's own identity and sense of self. By implication, the internal and the external become mutually constitutive (cf. Guerrina & Wright 2016: 307).

The role of the EU in promoting gender equality abroad is predominantly seen critically in previous research. Formulating gender policies and then projecting them in foreign and security policy is key to the EU's role as a normative actor in international affairs (Guerrina & Wright 2016). Concurrently, there is a discrepancy between the rhetoric and the actions the EU takes to mainstream gender in all their policies (Bernarding & Lunz 2020; Kronsell 2015; Guerrina & Wright 2016; Van der Vleuten 2017; Hoijtink & Muehlenhoff 2020). This discrepancy is particularly displayed with the failure to insist on gender equality in negotiations when the European Union sees a disadvantage in the further promotion (Guerrina & Wright 2016). Van der Vleuten has therefore claimed that Europe fills both the role of a merchant and a priest on the international stage until the role of the priest interferes with the role of the merchant (2017).

POLICY IN CRISIS SITUATIONS

For the last few years, the term 'crisis' has proliferated in the European political sphere (Muehlenhoff et al. 2020; Allwood 2020). Considering the financial crisis 2008, followed by the so-called migration crisis 2015, an emerging security crisis and the global pandemic starting in 2020, governance has been shaped by the crisis narrative and the resulting demand for immediate and reliable action for over a decade.

Crises, however, are not God-given but are socially constructed through narrative and discourse, which determine how we react to them (Hay 2013 in Allwood 2020). This in turn has influence on the policy agenda and political way of handling the crisis. Powerful actors are better able to shape the narrative and discourse over crises. Accordingly, the way in which an issue is treated determines which political claims are foregrounded over others (Manners & Rosamond 2018). Notwithstanding of the growing exposure of gender inequalities in times of crisis, evidence shows that gender policy is de-prioritized in crisis situations in European governance. Women are usually underrepresented in executive crisis response taskforces which leads less gender-sensitive policies (Smith 2022). Allwood finds that while the climate-security-migration nexus is increasingly prioritized in policy-making in crisis situations, gender is usually absent from the situations (2022).

Within the realm of international affairs, the start of the Russian war on Ukraine has triggered a fundamental, perhaps in the longest time unparalleled political earthquake. Risse argues that identity becomes salient and fought over in times of crisis (2010: 2). Against this backdrop, the question arises about what kind of power the EU wants to be and what this power will be guided by.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

This chapter will provide an overview over the research design and anticipated methodological approach of this thesis. In this course, it will provide sections on the research design as well as a discussion on data collection and analysis. Moreover, it will briefly discuss the methodology this dissertation is planning to use.

Given the interpretative nature of research approach, the research style of this thesis can mostly be considered abductive. The research is based on the ontological assumption that there are multiple constructions of reality. The research design reveals that the epistemological premise is that knowledge needs to be interpreted to discover the underlying meaning. Hence, this research falls under a constructivist paradigm. To answer the research questions, this dissertation will base its results on two empirical foundations.

On the one hand, a critical discourse analysis will be conducted to compare the EU's gender strategy to their actions regarding the Russian war in Ukraine, assess the EU's response through a gender analysis lens and identify traces of NPE. Documents that are potentially selected for analysis are the Gender Action Plan III, other key strategic and implementation documents on the EU foreign policy, gender policy or policy on Ukraine and key policy documents from the Commission, the Council and the European Parliament. If necessary, Commission reports but also external reports (e.g. by international organizations or civil society organizations) on implementation in Ukraine will potentially included to verify the factual situation.

On the other hand, semi-structured interviews will be conducted to underpin and validate findings from the discourse analysis. Potential interview partners are civil servants working on foreign policy and/or gender equality, civil society representatives or gender equality advocates or (if reachable) people with expertise on the situation in Ukraine regarding the EU's policies and gender equality promotion.

These empirical methods are chosen as they are well-suited to answer interpretative research questions. Both textual analysis and interviews allow conducting context-rich and intricate analyses to explain a complex phenomenon. Due to the high topicality of the topic and the likelihood of situational changes by the time of the empirical conduct, the exact documents that will be analysed could not yet determined.

TIMELINE

Action	Required Tasks	Estimate of time needed	Ideally finished by
Revision of thesis report	Incorporate the feedback of supervisors, transformation from thesis report into basis of actual thesis	Approx. 2 weeks	December 2022
Extension of literature review	Conduct extended literature research, revise integrated research, add further relevant sources	Approx. 3 weeks	February 2023

Review of methodological approach	Refine methods, acquire knowledge and skills for data collection and analysis	Approx. 2 weeks	March 2023
Data collection	Prepare documents to be analysed, interviews, process and prepare interviews	Approx. 6 weeks	April/ May 2023
Data analysis	Execute discourse analysis as well as analyse interviews	Approx. 4 weeks	June 2023
Formulation of analysis	Formulate results of analysis as a chapter of the thesis, specify methods section if needed	Approx. 2 weeks	June/ July 2023
Formulation of discussion/ conclusion	Formulate discussion of results by anchoring results with previous scientific insights	Approx. 1 week	July 2023
Refinement of the whole thesis	Refine and polish thesis work, carve out thread, resolve all remaining tasks, review	Approx. 1 week	July 2023
Hand thesis in	Hand thesis in	-	End of July 2023
Defend thesis	Preparation for defence	Approx. 2 weeks	September 2023

Note: The timeline and estimates of the time needed to complete particular tasks are anticipated considering ongoing other obligations such as course work at the University of York as well as part-time work.

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