VISUALIZING THE CLAIM FOR THE WOMEN'S RIGHT TO VOTE:

REPRESENTING FEMININITY IN THE FIRST WAVE GERMAN WOMEN'S MOVEMENT 1900-1919

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MASTER’S THESIS

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Figure 4.6 *"Eure Kinder brauchen Frieden und Brot / Darum Frauen: Wählt!" Poster, December 1918, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.*

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When searching for a suitable topic of my Master thesis in October 2018, I built upon my connection to the Historical Museum of Frankfurt and its current special exhibition that commemorated the centenary of the women's right to vote in Germany. Enqueuing into the revitalized attention the centenary gave to the women's right to vote, the exhibition *Damenwahl! – 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht*, staged from August 2018 to January 2019, outlined women's protracted struggle for social and political emancipation from the Kaiserreich up to present times. Inspired by the visualization of the early women's movement's engagement into changes of women's societal conditions, I questioned the impact the visual factor had on women's imagination of past, present and future conditions of the female being. This gave rise to a visually guided examination of the first wave German women's movement and its articulation of the claim for the women's right to vote as huge factor for women's emancipation. I therefore want to thank the Historical Museum of Frankfurt and my colleagues who, knowingly or unknowingly, supported my research.

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1. Introduction

Since 2018, the global commemoration of the centenary of women's suffrage revitalizes reflections on its underlying development and driving force: the first-wave women's movement and its protracted struggle for a political say and the right to vote. Multiple, mostly national, projects have been initiated "to commemorate a milestone of democracy and to explore its relevance to the issue of equal rights today".[1] Also in Germany, the centenary of the women's right to vote gave rise to a commemorative initiative: within the federally initiated campaign *100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht* (100 years of the women's right to vote), the Historical Museum Frankfurt staged a special exhibition to remember achieved successes in female struggles for gender equality.[2] *Damenwahl! – 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht* (Votes for Women – The 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in Germany) calls attention to female protagonists who were involved in the introduction of the women's right to vote in Germany in 1918/19.[3] This thesis aims to explore further how the first wave German women's movement articulated its claim for the women's right to vote in visual sources.

With 450 exhibits, the Frankfurt exhibition gives insight into the great diversity visually engaging items were used to express women's role in society as well as to visualize the increasing demand for a political say. *Damenwahl!* allows the visitor to experience a visually guided tour through the scope of female experiences in the German Empire and afterwards, to explore women's rights and duties as well as desires and demands that crystalized in Wilhelmine society. The display of corsets and fashion pieces, items of women's everyday life and relics of the women's movement in textual, pictorial and material form, draws the visitor into the world of early twentieth-century women and the female fight for equality. Effectively, the exhibits do not only accompany and visualize the historical narrative and the development of female emancipation but articulate their own memoir. They convey values and ideas, but they also mirror imaginaries – perspectives and perceptions of the producer, user or receiver. Within the exhibition *Damenwahl*!, the displayed relicts trace a history of female fights for women's right to education, a fair working environment, the right to bodily integrity and particularly women's political participation. As memorabilia, they not only represent but physically embody the women's movement and their claim for the right to vote.

However, the visually guided presentation of the early women's movement and its voting rights cause exposes a striking paradox: while the struggle for gender equality and women's suffrage –

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[1] "The 2020 Women's Vote Centennial Initiative," National Women's Party, accessed January 1, 2019, https://www.2020centennial.org/. The US Initiative "2020 Women's Vote Centennial" is set up by collaborating women centered institutions and organizations to ensure the anniversary and its underlying fight for female political say to be reminisce.

[2] The German anniversary campaign *100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht* is part of the political initiative *Frauen. Macht. Politik*. (Women. Power. Politics.) that aims to support female networking in politics. Under the auspices of the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth the campaign remembers the first national election of Weimar Germany as milestone for German democratic history and gender equality but also hints at ongoing difficulties within it; cf. "100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht," Europäische Akademie für Frauen in Politik und Wirtschaft Berlin e.V, accessed January 1, 2019.

[3] Cf. "Votes for Women – The 100th Anniversary of Women's Suffrage in Germany," Historisches Museum Frankfurt, accessed January 1, 2019.

regardless its national origin – already covers a broad field of research, the analysis of visual material is still underrepresented in historical enquiry.[4] This is especially apparent in historiography about the German women's movement. Whereas historical exhibitions like *Damenwahl!* in Frankfurt demonstrate the common practice to visualize historical developments by showcasing contemporary visual materials, historians seem to have downgraded those sources for a long time. Only since the visual turn of the 1980s have historians acquired the assumption "that images and objects help to generate insights about past times" and have deliberately started to analyze visual sources as additional material to address historical problems.[5] While the lacking academic representation of visual sources in research of the German women's movement may also be traced to the constrained availability of materials, the *Damenwahl!* exhibition has just shown that, although confined, an array of sources is available to feature how the movement visually fought for gender equality. This emphasizes the fact that the slim set of sources must not be devaluated to academic non-observance.

Given these points, this thesis, inspired by the Frankfurt exhibition on *Votes for Women*, aims to contribute to opening a new academic perspective on early feminist struggles in Germany and the women's movement's voting rights campaign. To do so, it will examine visualized images of femininity that occurred in the early twentieth-century German Empire in relation to the claim for the women's right to vote.

1.1. Research question

Considering how historic exhibitions vastly further a visual presentation of the women's movement and suffrage case, the necessity to pay further attention to visual objects originated in it cannot be denied. This assumption does not only consider the given contradiction that recently afresh promoted visual aspects of the German women's movement are lacking an academic account. It also regards the increasing use of visual representation within the successively growing media scene of the outgoing nineteenth and beginning twentieth century.[6] Following these perceptions, the thesis employs a visually guided research question on the early German women's movement and its political demand: *How did the first wave German women's movement visually articulate its claim for the women's right to vote between 1900 and 1919?*

Herein, two elements need further explanation: the German women's movement as protagonist and the defined time frame of its agitation. In the first place, dealing with a broad, international movement that, starting in the early nineteenth century, promoted collective action by women to improve

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[4] Cf. Michael L. Wilson, "Visual Culture. A useful category of historical analysis?" in: *The Nineteenth-Century Visual Culture Reader*, ed. Vanessa R. Schwartz, Jeannene M. Przyblyski (Routledge: New York, 2004), 26-33 about the necessity for historians to open up for 'visual culture' as analytical category.

[5] Ludmilla Jordanova, "Approaching Visual Material" in *Research Methods for History*, ed. by Simon Gunn, Lucy Faire (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 32.

[6] Cf. Jane Beckett, Deborah Cherry, "Foreword" in: *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise*, ed. Miranda Garrett, Zoë Thomas (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018). The authors emphasize the transformative character of the early twentieth century where (British) campaigns for women's suffrage were intensively supplemented by the newly generated source of visual media.

their position in society, this thesis explicitly focuses on the women's movement's claim for women's voting rights in Germany.[7] Yet, labelling the early feminist demand for women's voting rights and its representatives, research vastly differs between the Anglo-American suffragette movement and German women's rights campaigners.[8] In the following, I will adapt to the distinction and speak of the women's voting rights (campaign) while using the suffrage notion only as generalized term for the political aspect of the (international) women's liberation movement. Regarding the German women's movement, it is then necessary to acknowledge its far-reaching organizational network that defined a heterogeneous appearance of women's agency on behalf of their rights. The academic discourse thereby established a distinction between the bourgeois and the proletarian/social-democrat women's movement.[9] These differed not only in the women's social (meaning class-bound) origin, but also in their goals, strategies and even spheres of influence. Although acknowledging this characteristic feature of early German feminism, I here intend to take a more holistic approach to the German women's movement. Considering bourgeois and social-democrat attributions as differing wings of feminist struggles rather than separate movements essentially acknowledges that German women's rights campaigners, in relation to the voting rights cause, formed an even more polyglot movement than grounded in their class differentiation while still targeting a collective objective in the broadest sense: 'votes for women' as the universal slogan claims.

Examining its articulation in the German public, the thesis then traces a period were demands for gender equality and sociopolitical codetermination rose gradually in the Wilhelmine Empire. The turn to the twentieth century initiated a high degree of politization in the German women's movement in which the women's right to vote was perceived the center of unequal gender relations on the private as well as public level.[10] The voting rights campaign rose not only regarding its quantitative support but also in its claim-making outcome.[11] As the underlying sources of this thesis mirror, the women's voting

[7] Gabriele Griffin, "women's movement," in *A Dictionary of Gender Studies* (Oxford: University Press, 2017), accessed June 21, 2019.
[8] This refers back to the self-presentation of the committed women. Hereby, German Frauenrechtlerinnen (women's rights campaigners) distinguished themselves essentially from the British(-American) suffragettes who, at the turn to the twentieth century, became increasingly militant in their public agency. Cf. Christl Wickert, *'Heraus mit dem Frauenwahlrecht' – Die Kämpfe der Frauen in Deutschland und England um die politische Gleichberechtigung* (Pfaffenweiler: Centarus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), 8f; also Anne Kerr and Edmund Wright, "suffragette," in *A Dictionary of World History* (Oxford: University Press, 2015), accessed June 21, 2019. Yet, the adoption of this differentiation in the academic discourse also acknowledges that more than their international counterparts, German women's rights campaigners not only build upon enfranchisement and the fight for 'votes for women' but included the political struggle in women's rights in educational, professional and bodily respect.
[9] As will be outlined in the subsequent chapter, the social-democrat women's movement was inherently incorporated into the general labor movement and thus strictly tied to its class belonging and objectives, while the bourgeois women's movement established a sole female tone on societal issues.
[10] Cf. about the peak stage of the early German women's movement from the foundation of the umbrella organization Bund deutscher Frauenvereine 1894 until World War I Ulla Wischermann, *Frauenbewegungen und Öffentlichkeiten um 1900. Netzwerke – Gegenöffentlichkeiten – Protestinszenierungen*, Frankfurter Feministische Texte vol. 4, ed. by Ute Gerhard (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2003), 16f.
[11] Cf. about the intensified claim-making agency of women's voting rights campaigners in Germany "Die Organisationsphase: Die Frauenbewegung und ihre Aktivitäten," Archiv der Deutschen Frauenbewegung, accessed March 12, 2019.

rights campaign made, especially in its visual appearance, efforts to strengthen its voice in early twentieth-century society. The thesis therefore spans a time frame from 1900 (the year the earliest source is dated) until 1919 (when the women's right to vote was finally implemented in the national election of the newly constituted Weimar Republic).

Three sub-questions then supplement the analytical objective and help answering the research question. The first concentrates on background information about the women's movement and the circumstances under which it operated in the German Empire: *In which context did the women's movement articulate its demand for the women's right to vote?* Tracing the historical conditions of the German women's movement allows to identify the setting wherein it rose gradually. This constitutes the indispensable fundament to analyze the movement's visual articulation of its intensified claim for the right to vote. It also takes into account that interfering in the public discourse – an attempt that was highly preconditioned by the female restriction to the private sphere – is generally shaped by established norms and values and thus considers how images of femininity defined women's opportunities in the Wilhelmine society.

Secondly, further attention will be given to specific strategies that allowed the German women's movement to become publicly visible: *Which strategies did the women's movement use between 1900 and 1919 to convince the public of its cause and what role had visual materials therein?* When targeting changes in society at large, social movements strive for public recognition but also for mobilizing effects in favor of their claims. To achieve such outcomes of confirmation and support, convincing arguments and their appropriate presentation are inevitable. Considering this allows to depict how the German women's movement concretely used its social agency to achieve its goals. Tracing to which extent and manner these strategies incorporated visual aspects then bridges the women's movement's agitational framework with its visual articulations of the demanded right to vote.

Thirdly, the analysis takes its concrete visual turn: *Which images of femininity did the German women's movement use between 1900 and 1919 to visually represent the demand for the women's right to vote?* This centers representations that visualize the movement's demand for a political say as form of female emancipation in the German society. It includes semiotic understandings of signs and tropes as well as their interplay with textual elements that visually compose the claim for the women's right to vote. In doing so, the analysis aims to extend findings about female agitation in general, such as those examined beforehand. More specifically, this allows to open new perspectives on how women experienced their role and envisioned changes in their sociopolitical status.

1.2. Main theoretical concepts

Incorporating visual sources in the study of modern history not only extends the basis of primary sources but also poses new questions and suggest new answers which show the object of research from another angle. To apply such new outlooks on the German women's movement, a conceptual agenda that gives shape to the visual analysis is essential.

As Peter Burke has stated, "[visually conveyed] images propagate values" that inform us about social behavior but also about imaginaries.[12] This also refers to the group-specific imaginaries that were central to the German women's movement. They trace contemporary perceptions and interpretations of female identities that were established or challenged within Wilhelmine society. In this sense, imaginaries conveyed by pictorial materials of the German women's movement can uncover broader communicative strategies and the public appearance of feminist attitudes and agency. Additionally, to use this new vantage point and draw connections between pictorial images and social discourses, the thesis requires a semiotic understanding of visual representation, one that still acknowledges the cultural and rhetorical intertwining of visual accounts of femininity.

Within the exploration of female identity in the German Empire, attitudes and agency in the German women's movement and the visualization of its claim for the right to vote, three main conceptual ideas build the theoretical framework of this thesis: *femininity and female (collective) identity*, *social movements and repertories of contention* and *visuality*, *visual culture and visual rhetoric*. In their respective compilation, they will be also mirrored in the analytical chapters of the thesis. (For a short outline about the thesis' structure see section 1.5)

1.2.1 Femininity and female (collective) identity

Considering the German women's movement as the (essential) voice of female claims towards their social environment, the concept of femininity becomes pivotal for its analysis. Adapted in various discourses and scholarly fields, femininity generally refers to "distinctive ways of acting and feeling on the part of women" and constitutes the antithesis to masculinity.[13] As such, femininity denotes a versatile set of gendered attributes that are associated with and applied to the female sex. These are meant to conform to gender stereotypes, labels which are socially originated, culturally shaped and historically variable. They commonly reach from certain assumptions of female outward appearance (having long hair, wearing skirts and dresses etc.) to specific character traits, patterns of behavior and values.[14]

As a matter of fact, the set of attributes is not only a historical variable that indicates social and cultural requirements and normative powers. Femininity has long been considered inseparable from biological factors. Features of the female body such as childbearing or women's relatively smaller size and strength compared to men have therefore preconditioned forms of behavior and personality applied to women's presumed attitude.[15] In this, connotations of emotionality and warmth as well as passivity, dependence and weakness have been ascribed to women and their appearance in socio-cultural life.

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[12] Cf. Helena Waddy, review of *Eyewitnessing: The Use of Images as Historical Evidence*, by Peter Burk. *Journal of Social History* 36, no. 3 (March 2003): 767.
[13] John Scott, "femininity," in *A Dictionary of Sociology* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), accessed January 24, 2019.
[14] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, "femininity," in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: University Press, 2016), accessed January 24, 2019; Gabriele Griffin, "femininity," in *A Dictionary of Gender Studies* (Oxford: University Press, 2017), accessed January 24, 2019.
[15] Craig Calhoun, "femininity," in *Dictionary of the Social Science* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), accessed January 24, 2019.

These sex- and gender-identifying markers, internal or external qualities depicting an individual as feminine can be understood as an "image of who one is".[16] Such an image, whether self-composed or externally imposed, are generally referred to as identity. The concept of identity takes various shapes in modern sociology but loosely unites them in its "[constructivist] reference to one's sense of self, and one's feelings and ideas about oneself":

> It is sometimes assumed that our identity comes from the expectations attached to the social roles that we occupy, and which we then internalize, so that it is formed through the process of socialization. Alternatively, it is elsewhere assumed that we construct our identities more actively out of the materials presented to us during socialization, or in our various roles.[17]

Either way, identity rests upon "a complex mix of background, personal traits, qualities, beliefs, and behavior" and it essentially preconditions where we find our place within society.[18] One such position might then be 'gender identity', indicating an individual's belonging to notions of masculinity or femininity. This belonging allows individuals to establish group-specific definitions that potentially culminate in a shared collective identity and an inherent sense of differentiating sameness and otherness.

Considering this identity forming distinction between masculine identity and its supposed feminine counterpart, femininity is commonly seen as representing "the weaker, lesser Other of masculinity." Critical theory therefore points not only at the constructivist character of femininity (or female identity), placing social demands on women. Beyond that, feminism considers it as an "imposed system of rules governing how women should act, look, feel and even think within a particular society."[19] Since the late eighteenth-century rise of emancipative voices for equality between the sexes, feminist social criticism has been directed at two fronts: first, against the patriarchal society that unjustly limits women's rights, and secondly, it also addressed women for assimilating to prescribed femininity.[20]

The role of female identity is thus the breeding ground for the first wave feminism, constituting social movements in distinct, predominantly nationally framed environments. Although by far not the only claim of the arising women's movement, the right to vote was supposed to build the foundation for women's efforts to initiate change in several spheres. In order to achieve their claims, female identities reflecting assumptions about (restrictive) femininity were challenged and tried to be replaced by more emancipative notions. Correspondingly, it has become common in feminist circles to talk of femininities in the plural to indicate that female identities can be produced and enacted in a variety of ways.[21]

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[16] Ian Buchanan, "identity," in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: University Press, 2018), accessed January 24, 2019.
[17] John Scott, "identity," in A *Dictionary of the Sociology* (Oxford: University Press, 2014), accessed January 24, 2019.
[18] Gabriele Griffin, "identity," in *A Dictionary of Gender Studies* (Oxford: University Press, 2017), accessed January 24, 2019.
[19] Ian Buchanan, "femininity," in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: University Press, 2018), accessed January 24, 2019.
[20] Ian Buchanan, "feminism," in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: University Press, 2018), accessed January 24, 2019.
[21] Griffin, "femininity".

From this perspective, an analysis of the German women's movement poses the hitherto neglected question how ideas about femininity or determined femininities became central to its (visual) articulation of emancipatory claims. It is therefore valuable to build upon Sara Mills' concept of the "discursive framework of femininity."[22] Mill's notion aligns with Michel Foucault's emphasis to "reveal not only how actors construct identities, concepts and labels in specific historical and social contexts, but also how these discursive patterns are essential to the way society is organized and functions."[23] Both ideas perfectly announce how the gender discourse in the German Empire preconditioned (meaning narrowed) women's scope of action to slowly begin to challenge images of femininity that were imposed on them. It also refers to what Simone de Beauvoir made a dictum in feminist studies, that "woman is not born, but made."[24] Targeting the women's movement by its discursively shaped identity politics also illuminates how women "can be remade as the meanings of femininity change."[25] I will therefore take up Linda Martin Alcoff's approach to identity as an intertwining of externally suggested role models and their individual or collective interpretation and acceptance. Women in the Kaiserreich were highly narrowed in their scope of action and belief and to free themselves from prescribed gender identities they had to challenge these and find their own interpretation of femininity. It is explicitly this correlation between external images and self-perception that lays a valuable foundation for the further analysis of women's voting rights campaigning.

1.2.2 Social movements and repertories of contention

Considering a collectively shared identity and a resulting collective action as central component of social movements bridges their sociological constitution with arising political actions. In order to become actually recognized, establish their demands in the public discourse and eventually achieve change by transforming "social conditions and/or power relations", social movements rely on some form of "cultural or political agenda".[26] According to Charles Tilly, social movements hereby emerge through a synthesis of three elements:

1. the campaign of social movements, meaning "a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities" by extending beyond one single event
2. the social movement repertoire, meaning the combined application of various forms of political action, a "variable ensemble of performances" such as creating associations, generating public meetings, initiating demonstrations, pamphleteering of statements in media

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[22] Sara Mills, "Introduction," in *Discourse*, ed. ibid. (London: Routledge, 2004), 16.
[23] Keth Stanski, "'So These Folks are Aggressive': An Orientalist Reading of 'Afghan Warlords'," in *Security Dialogue* 40, no. 1 (February 2009): 73-94, here 75.
[24] Craig Calhoun, "feminism," in *Dictionary of Social Science* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), accessed June 21, 2019. Cf. also Ian Buchanan, "feminist theory," in *A Dictionary of Critical Theory* (Oxford: Universtiy Press, 2019), accessed June 21, 2019.
[25] Linda Martín Alcoff, "Introduction Identities: Modern and Postmodern," in Identities. Race, Class, Gender and Nationality ed. Linda Martín Alcoff and Eduardo Mendieta (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 1-8, here 3.
[26] Luis A. Vivanco, "social movement," in *A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology* (Oxford: University Press, 2018), accessed January 24, 2019.

3. a collective self-representation in terms of WUNC, meaning displays of worthiness, unity, numbers, and commitment mainly through externally visible signs like matching badges or banners, petitions, subscription or benefaction.[27]

Unifying those elements then creates the power of social movements: Together,

> They [since the mid-eighteenth century] made a powerful assertion of popular sovereignty: we, the people, have the right to voice on our own initiative; worthy, united, numerous and committed, we have the capacity to change things.[28]

In this sense, social movements have become able to enter the arena of 'contentious politics.'

> Contentious politics, then, includes all occasions a) on which some set of people make collective, visible claims on other people, claims which if realised would affect the object's interests, and b) in which at least one party to the claims, including third parties, is a government.[29]

As pioneer of this concept, Tilly forms analogies between what he calls "zones of contention" to social movements and denotes social movements as actors of contentious politics: they constitute a previously disadvantaged actor who "1) advertises the vulnerability of authorities, 2) provides a model for effective claim-making, 3) identifies possible allies for other challengers, and 4) threatens the interests of yet other political actors who have stakes in the *status quo*, thus activating them as well."[30]

In doing so, contentious politics highly draw from identities such as class or gender and the reciprocal process wherein they are negotiated. As collective "experiences of distinctive social relations" and their representation, contentious identities commonly present performances to which other parties can relate. Their acceptance or rejection then facilitates or constrains a collective action of those sharing the identity in question.[31] Contentious identities hereby rely on an adequate "claim-making repertoire" that serves the movement's purpose. Tilly identifies specific mechanisms that allow social movements to take advantage of their specific social, political or cultural setting(s). These commonly reach from tactical adoptions and modifications to bargaining or negotiating interactions with addressees. Two historical occurrences, highly valuable for this thesis, shall briefly exemplify Tilly's conception: first, the individual modifications of movement's repertoires may become obvious in nineteenth-century demonstrations (the campaign in its display of worthiness, unity, commitment and number) where written signs were equally included in the claim-making process as non-verbal symbols (the concrete repertoires applied to the campaign). Secondly, mediating functions of the movement's institutions or allies can be traced in women's organizations (the allied human repertoire) which (nationally) standardized the local female claim-making (the campaigning representation of worthiness, unity,

[27] Charles Tilly, "Introduction to Part II: Invention, Diffusion, and Transformation of the Social Movement Repertoire," in *European Review of History – Revue européenne d'Histoire* 12, no. 2 (July 2005): 308f.
[28] Ibid., 309.
[29] Charles Tilly, "Contentious Politics and Social Change," in *African Studies* 56, no 1 (1997): 56.
[30] Ibid., 58.
[31] Ibid., 59-61.

number and commitment).[32] In Tilly's perspective, the specific character of social movements is then affected through the consequential individual combination of these mechanisms and their precise occurrence. Assuming the collective identity of social movements as preconditioning factor of the way they interfere in the public sphere may supplement this even further.

Drawing upon a concept of contentious repertoires thus opens perspectives to analyze the concrete public performance of social movements such as the German women's movement. Tilly suggests the great value of this outlook for historical research, offering a conceptual agenda that allows to identify through which agents, channels and mechanisms the specific elements of a social movement succeeded in their diffusion.[33] As will be further outlined in section 1.3, this is essential for the history of the German women's movement which is in urgent need for approaches that consider its strategic and representational conditions. Framing the German women's movement with contentious repertoires then meets appeals from two sides: first, Tilly himself called for historical research to further explore mechanisms of social movements that allowed the transfer of ideas, programs and/or practices, applicable to the visual articulation of the women's right to vote.[34] Secondly, it clearly exceeds previous approaches to the German women's movement and adds those strategic and representational perspectives which are in urgent need. Unraveling strategies of (public) representation in using Tilly's concept of contentious repertoires, also takes up a call by German feminist scholars. While Ulla Wischermann suggests a generally extended treatment of 'old' movements with 'new' concepts of social movement culture, Christina Klausmann, already in the late 1990s, demanded further research of the communicative strategies and forms of action and representation in the German women's movement.[35]

1.2.3 Visuality, visual culture and visual rhetoric

Building upon visual sources to target such communicative strategies, the notion of the 'visual' comes to the fore. Visuality is largely perceived as a mere condition or state of being optically tangible. However, visuality does not only mark something as being physically visible, say in factual or imaginable form. It also considers the visual aspect of and perspective on cultural artefacts and thereby reflects a "visual experience" of culture.[36] It relies simultaneously on its deliberate representation and conscious recognition. Following the *Oxford Dictionary*, visuality is a "system of visual meanings" that describes the "relation between seeing, knowing, visual representation, and power."[37]

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[32] Tilly, "Introduction to Part Two," 314f.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Ibid. 316.
[35] Ulla Wischermann, *Frauenbewegungen und Öffentlichkeiten um 1900. Netzwerke – Gegenöffentlichkeiten – Protestinszenierungen*, Frankfurter Feministische Texte vol. 4, ed. Ute Gerhard (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2003); Christina Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur der Frauenbewegung im Kaiserreich: Das Beispiel Frankfurt am Main* (Frankfurt/Main: Campus Verlag, 1997), 12.
[36] Alexa Sand, "Visuality," *Studies in Iconography*, 33, Special Issue Medieval Art History Today—Critical Terms (2012), 89.
[37] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, "visuality," *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: University Press, 2016), accessed January 19, 2019.

This rather abstract understanding of the 'visual' was mainly leveraged by the visual turn of cultural studies, starting in the late 1980s. Since then, the concept of visual culture rose steadily, introducing new ideas and methodological approaches to analyze visual sources in an interdisciplinary way. As such, it units all "visual forms and practices within a society" and refers to "the process of production and consumption or reception associated with them."[38] Visual culture explicitly focuses on the visual experience that shifts visuality away from formal settings of visual representation (such as cinemas) and includes the looking of everyday life. According to Nicholas Mirzoeff, visual culture, rather than being an academic discipline, is an interpretative tactic to understand the interactive quality of the visual depiction and its cognitive processing.[39] While the visual itself offers a given image, its meaning relies on "the crucial completion" by its "cultural perception", meaning the look, reading and interpretation of the viewer.[40] The process of image-making is thus a mutual exchange between visual representation and consumption. Thereby, its underlying narration and reception of the visual image and its message are vastly shaped by a set of impact factors building upon "structures of social, [political,] economic and cultural relations and power".[41] It is this framework of identity-forming factors, socio-cultural traditions, established norms and ideals and conditions of everyday life, wherein the image's value is negotiated. Hence, in its direct interaction with its, say, cultural setting the visual itself becomes a concrete "place where meanings are created and contested".[42]

Consequently, the interpretation of images as scientific sources must not only consider the information being transmitted, but also strategic and rhetoric functions behind it.[43] By using rhetorical strategies like metaphoric imaginaries and symbolism, visual representation thus aims to evoke associations in the recipient's mind. In doing so, a visual does not only transmit a certain narrative in a specific stylistic representation but also relies on its communicative desire to evoke certain responses in the addressee. This allows the visual to provoke reactions that may vary from mere recognition up to a certain behavior such as ongoing dialogue or specific actions.[44] Acting in a system of symbolism, a visual image contains a 'connotative meaning' that encompasses the feelings and ideas which people may connect with the image.[45] Effectively, visual representation, in its rhetorical shape, attempts "to draw us … into its value system" and invites us to find "our own place within it."[46] Based on this emotional or ideological state imprinted in the image, rhetorical language constitutes a set of codes. However, the ability to unravel these rhetorical structures of "unconscious cultural codes" is embedded

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[38] Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday, "visual culture," *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: University Press, 2016), accessed January 20, 2019.
[39] Nicholas Mirzoeff, *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (London: Routledge, 1999), 4-6.
[40] Nicholas Mirzoeff, "What is visual culture?" in *Visual Culture Reader*, ed. ibid. (London: Routledge, 1998), 3.
[41] Matthew Rampley, "Visual Rhetoric", in *Exploring Visual Culture. Definitions, Concepts, Contexts*, ed. ibid. (Edinburgh: University Press, 2005), 134.
[42] Mirzoeff, "What is visual culture?", 6.
[43] Rampley, "Visual Rhetoric", 140.
[44] Ibid., 147.
[45] Marcel Danesi, "Visual Rhetoric and Semiotic", in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (May 2017), accessed January 20, 2019.
[46] Rampley, "Visual Rhetoric", 147.

in a broader frame of cultural traditions and their "representational practices".[47] Knowing about them and the rhetoric character of visual representation then allows to decode implicit meanings of an image.

This is where the approach of visual rhetoric becomes central. In order to unravel the aforementioned connotative meanings of visual images, the code system of its rhetorical language, visual rhetoric dives deeper into the intertwining of visual semiotics ("the study of the meanings of visual signs in cultural contexts") and the "psychology of visual thinking" ("the capacity to extract meaning from visual images") and thereby exceeds the denotative level of visual analysis.[48] In doing so, it refers to "cognitive-associative processes" that are anchored in the visual's rhetorical structure and allow the recipient to attach meaning to what is represented in the image. Grounding on the recognition that we read images connotatively and thus rhetorically, the goal of visual rhetoric is twofold: first, to depict rhetorical structures in visual images and second, to identify their ethical, social, political and/or ideological functions. Drawing from techniques of visual semiotics, visual rhetoric "provides critical insights into how rhetorical structure affects us emotionally and cognitively."[49]

While, from this outlook, visual culture helps to "highlight those moments where the visual is contested, debated and transformed" in its social interaction, visual rhetoric uncovers its displayed figurative language and resulting rhetorical-psychological consequences. Taken one step further, this allows to understand the visual "as a constantly challenging place of social interaction and definition in terms of class, gender, sexual and racialized identities."[50] From this perspective, visual representation interacts with social identities. Such identities of class and gender were also crucial in the Wilhelmine society and influenced the strategic opportunities, the 'repertoires of contention', of the women's movement. Hence, a semiotic treatment of its visual representations allows to shed light on characterizations of femininity and images of the female identity which occurred in Germany during the early twentieth century. Drawing from visual culture and rhetoric allows understanding the visual campaigning for the women's right to vote as more than a visual component of the women's movements repertoires. It expands on the impact on the voting rights campaign and considers its influence on women's self-awareness as well as its depiction of demands for outside perception.

1.3 Scientific contextualization, state of research and literature

Despite the highly valuable visual angle on social and political movements, visual approaches to understanding perspectives, ideologies and practices of the women's movement and its voting rights campaign are still rather exceptional in historical enquiry and explicitly rare for the German case.[51] The

[47] Danesi, "Visual Rhetoric and Semiotic."
[48] Ibid.
[49] Ibid.
[50] Mirzoeff, "What is visual culture?", 6.
[51] If applied to women and gender studies, visual approaches may more be found for the second or third wave women's movement such as Elisabeth Merman-Jozwiak, "The German Feminist Movement and the Question of Female Aesthetics", in *Women's Studies International Forum* 16, no. 6 (1993): 615-626. Enquiry of the "old" women's movement has long been led by the distinction between the bourgeois and socialist expression of women's demands. This may be seen within the general development of women's history as relatively new field of historical enquiry: Coming from the exploration of general processes in the 1960s and 70s, the following two

early German women's movement has, until now, been mainly traced from a perspective of its politics, organization and ideas. Historical work has focused on the movement's protagonists or associations, its programmatic discourse about concepts of emancipation and appropriate goals for that time.[52] Within a research project, Ulla Wischermann and Christina Klausmann aimed to extend these perspectives by new approaches to social movements and their strategic performance. Wischermann therefore spans a framework around notions of networks, counter-publics and protest-staging, combining views of social history, political science and communication theory.[53] This acknowledges an intertwining of multiple levels of publics and questions the women's movement by its forms of internal communication and interaction that allowed to externally act in broader societal patterns. With 'Frauenbewegungskultur' Klausmann refers to a group culture that manifests the self-image of the women's movement in spiritual and physical means. This perspective does not only incorporate material appearances but also symbols and rituals that may be interpreted as group specific suggestive patterns.[54]

Although these performative approaches bring forward the idea of (self-)representation in the German women's movement, the call for more strategic and representational perspectives is far from being realized. While the centenary of the women's right to vote led to a number of recently published contributions to the issue of women's suffrage, there is still little attention given to visual analysis of female representation in the struggle for a political say in Germany. The most central volumes of Hedwig Richter and Kerstin Wollf frame the early women's movement in a broader context of democratic history, the opportunities and boundaries of female agitation on behalf of women's struggle for enfranchisement and take the contemporary common touch of transnational linkages within historical developments and its agents.[55] Even the *Damenwahl!* exhibition, although giving a broad and various visualized insight into women's fight for political equality, still treats the implemented exhibits as mere supplement to the broader narrative of social and political developments.[56] Enlightening their cultural component of visual representation therefore requires a look at international research.

While several examinations still focus on methods and channels as constituent part of women's movements' promoting agitation, the classical suffragist case of Anglo-American origin gives continuous rise to visual approaches to the women's movement and its voting rights claim.[57] With *The*

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decades were captured with feminist theories while recent women's history is shaped by a regionalization and structuralizing – but also internationalization and democratizing. For the periodization cf. Katharina Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons 1890-1920: Female Representation and the Changing Concepts of Femininity During the American Woman Suffrage Movement: An Empirical Analysis* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlang, 2012), 14f.

[52] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 9f.

[53] Wischermann, *Frauenbewegungen und Öffentlichkeiten um 1900.*

[54] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 15f.

[55] Hedwig Richter and Kerstin Wolff, *Frauenwahlrecht. Demokratisierung der Demokratie in Deutschland und Europe* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2018); Kerstin Wolff, *Unsere Stimme zählt!* (Überlingen: Bast Medien, 2018).

[56] Cf. the exhibition's accompanying book, Dorothee Linnemann, *Damenwahl. 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht* (Frankfurt am Main: Societäts Verlag, 2018).

[57] Additional to the visual approaches outlined below, Norman Watson, "Text and Imagery in Suffrage Propaganda", Unknown, Unknown, 1-19 published a contribution to the Scottish case. Examining pro- and anti-suffrage iconography, he argues that the campaign's verbal debate was tightly bound to the imagery provided by

Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1917 Lisa Tickner, already in 1988, introduced visual culture studies to the analysis of suffrage movements and analyzes suffrage imageries within their cultural-political context.[58] Tickner's underlying assumption is that ideas about women were no "private mental property" of individuals but highly influenced the public sphere in legal, political and social terms.[59] Combining tools from semiotics, anthropology, feminist and critical theory and psychoanalysis, Tickner identifies four types of female identity: the Modern Woman, the Militant Woman, the Working Woman, and the Womanly Woman. All of them mostly intended to oppose established representations of femininity but also helped to create identity among the women themselves.[60] This confirms that suffrage imageries were created as "political argument in visual form" that combined the practices of the political campaign and those of artist representation; it depicts the power of images "to shape thought, focus debates and stimulate action".[61] By tracing the common belief that femininity was "written on the body", Tickner shows how suffrage imagery and suffrage argument were indivisibly interwoven.[62]

Several subsequent studies have built upon Tickner's work and approached the question of visual representation and artist culture to the study of women's history and the suffrage cause. In *Selling Suffrage. Consumer Culture and Votes for Women* Margaret Finnegan depicts a multifaceted political culture wherein the movement "practiced the art of politics".[63] In doing so, Finnegan detects how suffragettes, in the turn to the twentieth century, steadily linked occurring questions about the possibilities of mass culture and consumerism to earlier feminist demands about voting rights and greater public freedom and responsibility for women. This acknowledges how consumer culture "allowed suffragists to creatively negotiate the cultural boundaries of politics, physical space, personal identity, and ideology" and provided "a new set of tools for identifying and representing themselves and their needs", for justifying their goals and broadly influencing opinions and for understanding female identity.[64] Understanding the suffragists' campaigning as an expression of verbal and non-verbal codes which made consumer culture central to political shapes of women's demands then expands Tickner's

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pictorial representation of the opposing (anti)-suffragist camps. Alice Sheppard, "Suffrage Art and Feminism", in *Hypatia* 5, no 2 (Summer 1990): 122-136, here 122 highlights how suffrage graphics as "one of the first collective ideological, artistic expressions by American woman … challenged traditional [artist] practices and demanded political change" and therefore examines the interrelations between feminism, art and the historical context within women's imagery.

[58] Lisa Tickner, *The Spectacle of Women: Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-1917* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1987), here ix.

[59] Tickner, *The Spectacle*, xi.

[60] Susan Kingsley Kent, "Women Working Together," review of *The Spectacle of Women. Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14* by Lisa Tickner, American Historical Review 95, no. 1 (February 1990), 196 about Tickner's conceptual framework; Lynne Walker, "Women Working Together," review of *The Spectacle of Women. Imagery of the Suffrage Campaign 1907-14,* by Lisa Tickner. *Woman's Art Journal* 11, no. 2 (Autumn 1990-Winter 1991): 50 about the analytical outcomes.

[61] Tickner, *The Spectacle*, ix.

[62] Kingsley Kent, "Women Working Together," 196.

[63] Margaret Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage. Consumer Culture and Votes for Women* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), here., 2.

[64] Ibid., 171.

approach of women visually selling their claims to the public.[65] Finnegan argues that drawing on cultural theories and its comprehension of discourse as more than linguistic communication but interaction about social norms and cultural power helps understanding how suffragettes used "images and strategies of the new commercial world" to build a new female political identity that presents individuals who learned political behavior of making a rational and efficient choice through their consumer experiences.[66]

Revitalizing Tickner's pioneering research of suffrage culture in the suffrage centenary, Miranda Garrett and Zoë Thomas' volume *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise* gives a comprehensive insight into the manifold way British suffrage campaigners, from the 1880s to the 1950s, spread imaginaries in their particular visual language.[67] Elizabeth Crawford examines the incorporation of advertisements of suffrage goods in women's magazines.[68] She thereby depicts the twofold character of 'suffrage goods' which on the one hand supported the movement's claims and aimed to generate identification and a mobilizing effect in their addressees while on the other hand allowed to take entrepreneurial advantage of suffragist motives. Kenneth Florey focuses on the increasing usage of badges, buttons and brooches which, in the first decades of the twentieth century, rapidly became "a popular form of 'visual rhetoric'".[69] He argues about their vast influence in conveying the message of the suffrage movement, engaging support and generating individual attachment. Deployed to establish popularity and public omnipresence of the movement's symbolic visualization, badges and buttons served as fashionable jewelry that explicitly stated one's individual commitment to the suffrage cause. The wearing of such items generated identity and collectivity that internally and externally envisioned the individual belonging to the movement but also contributed to women's integration into public discourse over controversial issues. Rosie Broadley then points to the way visual language was used to represent individual identities as well as collective sympathies and how portraits were used to challenge established female representations of an idealized traditional womanhood and to reveal a new female political identity.[70] Taken together, the examinations in *Suffrage and the Arts* trace

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[65] Ibid., 12.

[66] Ibid., 8 and 11. Cf. for women's transfer of consumer experience to political behavior Brooke Speer Orr, review of *Selling Suffrage. Consumer Culture and Votes for Women* by Margaret Finnegan, American Studies International 40, no. 2 (June 2002): 116.

[67] Miranda Garrett, Zoë Thomas, *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise* (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018), here Jane Beckett, Deborah Cherry, "Foreword." Within the centenary, also a second survey approaching British suffrage culture was published. In *Politics and Aesthetics of the Female Form, 1908-1918* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2018), Georgina Williams questions how pictorial representations of suffrage imaginaries contributed to new self-perceptions of women and thus, aesthetically contributed to women's political fight.

[68] Elisabeth Crawford: "'Our readers are careful buyers': Creating goods for the suffrage market," in: *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise*, ed. Miranda Garrett, Zoë Thomas (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018).

[69] Kenneth Florey, "English suffrage badges and the marketing of the campaign," in: *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise*, ed. Miranda Garrett, Zoë Thomas (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018).

[70] Rosie Broadley, "Painting suffragettes: Portraits and the militant movement," in *Suffrage and the Arts. Visual Culture, Politics and Enterprise*, ed. Miranda Garrett, Zoë Thomas (London: Bloomsbury Visual Arts, 2018).

how visual culture contributed to branding suffragettes' activist positions, promoting their ideas, unifying the movement's members and challenging prevalent stereotypes of femininity.[71]

The way visual media supplemented the suffrage movement and its identity politics is also taken up by Katherina Hundhammer and her analysis of visual representations of women in political cartoons in the US between 1910 and 1920.[72] Assessing the significance of cartoons in the development and transportation of new concepts of femininity, Hundhammer questions how they supported the women's movement and which definition of womanhood it reinforced. She confirms that within their "distinctly emotional approach", figurative media not only preconditioned women's public images but also supported the establishment of "a new concept of femininity characterized by equality, independence and competence".[73] In this sense, Hundhammer determines that visual representations not only medially documented social change but also operated as "active initiators of a changed notion of femininity".[74]

All in all, the research contributions outlined above, covering an academic discourse of the last thirty years, refer to a previously specified interdisciplinary tactic to interpret visual sources: visual culture. Several works have made use of its communicative understanding of visual representations and their immense impact on social processes and identity formation. Pioneering the comprehension of women's visual representation as public imaginaries of female role models as well as tools to form female identities, Tickner and Finnegan hint at this approach of visual appearances, their embedment in a broader social, political and cultural framework and contribution to the social discourse about norms and authority. This perspective of a socially shaped visualization of women and their claims for emancipation has been taken up by several recent surveys that confirm the political impetus of female aesthetic productions and their contribution to expand women's public sphere. All visually guided examinations of the (Anglo-American) women's suffrage movement – from Tickner to Garrett and Thomas – emphasize the visual introduction of new concepts of femininity and refer to medially conveyed changes in the female identity. In this, Tickner and her successors consistently build upon the assumptions that suffrage imageries were not only a means of the "specific struggle for the vote alone, but also of a broader debate about definitions of femininity and women's place in public life."[75]

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[71] The way pictorial representations contributed to a new female positioning in society is also examined in Williams, *Politics and Aesthetics*.

[72] Hundhammer. *American Women in Cartoons*. Cf. also "American Women in Cartoons 1890-1920: Female Representation and the Changing Concepts of Femininity During the American Woman Suffrage Movement: An Empirical Analysis," American Journalism. A Journal of Media History. A similar agitative approach to women's medial work to produce images of the women's movement that gain public attendance for transforming female identities is made by Amy Shore, *Suffrage and the Silver Screen* (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 2014).

[73] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 12 and 200. Hundhammer hereby explicitly traces the common idea that gender identity is a social construct.

[74] Ibid., 202.

[75] Tickner, *The Spectacle*, x.

1.4 Innovative aspects

Given that this visually guided type of research conducted in Anglo-American studies on the suffrage movement has not yet been applied in German history on the women's movement and its voting rights claim, this thesis enhances the academic discourse on two significant levels: social history and visual culture studies. For once, a visually guided analysis of the women's movement's articulation of its voting rights claim and occurring images of femininity connected to it contributes to the social history of the German Empire. It adds new perspectives on the German women's movement but also on values and norms of the Wilhelmine society. This constitutes a twofold gain: while on the one hand the concept of femininity as political identity is supplemented by insights on its visual representation, on the other hand the concept of contentious repertoires in its performative character of claim-making agency profits from a visual component.

Moreover, applying the conceptions and findings about Anglo-American suffrage culture to the German women's movement adds an additional case study to visual culture studies. The analysis can hereby benefit from the multifaceted insight into how visual culture was used in suffrage campaigns to further the movement's claims but also to challenge prescribed identities and re-define them. The understanding of the imaginative power of visual representations in suffrage movements, introduced by Tickner and confirmed by her successors, is the essential driving force for this thesis. It grounds the analysis of how the voting rights claim was visually articulated and brought into the public discourse of the German Empire. This research aligns in the assumption of a communicative connection between visual appearance and socio-cultural framework to propagate the political claim for the women's right to vote. It thus positions itself in the tradition of Tickner who remarks the complexity of relations "between politics and representation, between dominant and dissident ideologies, and between women's aspirations and their self-perceptions" which were consistently undermined by, public as private, 'sexual hegemony' of men.[76]

However, this thesis also enhances these previous approaches to visual suffrage culture. It exceeds the visual rhetoric approach and opens it to a more multi-perspective outlook on visual culture. The incorporation of a multimodal attitude towards visual representations goes beyond the perception of visual sources as cultural intermediaries of communication but considers their multifold character and understands their meaning-making communication and representation as a broader rhetoric situation.[77] As methodologically explained in the next section, aiming to give insight into the visual representation of women's self-images and their external perception, the analysis approaches the visualized narrative as well as its further function for societal values and patterns conveyed by visual images. This then expands on more categorical attempts of visual approaches to suffrage imaginaries. Emphasizing broader patterns in the representation of femininity, this thesis thus adds an additional discursive component to visual culture approaches. Its analysis gives profitable insight into imaginaries that

[76] Ibid.

[77] About multimodality cf. Daniel Chandler and Rod Munday. "multimodality," in *A Dictionary of Media and Communication* (Oxford: University Press), accessed May 28, 2019.

circulated around the German women's movement and influenced their visual representations as claim-making repertoires.

1.5 Sources and methods

Building upon a visual approach to the women's voting rights campaign, this thesis focuses on a body of sources that, inspired by its exhibition in Frankfurt, uncovers visual aspects of the German women's movement and its voting rights campaign. Whereas in the overarching frame of twentieth century visual material "there are no natural or obvious criteria for what counts as being of visual interest," the main selection criterion for this thesis is that the materials were self-produced by the women's movement.[78] However, the selection of sources this thesis can build on is highly preconfigured by the constrained availability of material from the German women's movement. Although pictorial media, increased in the considered period of the first two decades in the twentieth century, just a small range of visual material of the German women's movement survived until today (predominantly due to their vast destruction during the fascist regime in Germany).[79] The concrete search for and choice of adequate materials to analyze how the German women's movement articulated its claim for the women's right to vote in visual representation has thus been reliant on their accessibility in archival collections. Therefore, drawing upon the selection of relics of the German women's movement that is presented in the Frankfurt exhibition *Damenwahl!* constitutes a valuable starting point, involving decisions of what the exhibition makers considered valuable for the public discourse. This mainly encompasses materials from the Archiv der deutschen Frauenbewegung in Kassel (AddF) but also involves holdings of the Archiv der sozialen Demokratie Bonn, the Stadtarchiv München, the German Historical Museum (DHM), the Stadtarchiv München, the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig, the Archiv des Lette Vereins in Berlin, the Bundesarchiv in Koblenz and the ATRIA Institute on Gender Equality and Women's History in Amsterdam. To allow broader insight into visual practices of the German women's movement, the exhibition's prefabricated selection of sources is supplemented by additional holdings of the AddF, accessible in the archival collection as well as partially in digitalized form.

Collectively, a multifaceted corpus of sources has been compiled, allowing for a visual analysis of the German women's movement's articulation of the women's right to vote: pictorial printed products incorporating posters, flyers, postcards, stamps and photographs are accompanied by non-print objects considering badges, brooches and banners, all having been produced by and used in the women's voting rights campaign. Additionally, the pictorial series of sources is accompanied by, say, traditional printed products, considering magazines of the women's movement that include more explicit statements of the movement, its emancipative claim(s) and underlying assumptions of femininity. Given the confined set

[78] About general selection criteria for visual materials Ludmilla Jordanova, "Approaching Visual Material," in *Research Methods for History*, ed. Simon Gunn, Lucy Faire, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012), 31.
[79] Within the development of Nazi Germany and the ideology's specific and explicitly reactionary image of women's role in the 'Volksgemeinschaft', a huge – if not the major – number of relicts from the early women's movement were destroyed. Thus, the selection of (visual) sources to analyze the public demeanor of the women's movement is greatly steamed by the absence of a wide-ranging pool of sources.

of sources of the early German women's movement, just a brief remark needs be made about their social origin: there is an imbalance regarding a severe overweight of bourgeois-tied sources in comparison to an explicit social-democrat provenance. However, this should not be considered representative for the productive output of the feminist campaigners, considering that social-democrat women were closely integrated into the labor movement and consequently primary committed to supporting the political agenda of the social democrat party. Moreover, while this circumstance surely influences the analysis in determining the given sources, this is not an obstacle for answering the applied research question. In point of fact, the subsequent analysis does not intend to draw comparisons between different factions of the women's movement, but to uncover visual strategies used in feminist campaigns to further the voting rights claim.

With this intention, the analysis, approaching the multiplicity of visual material and their conveyed imaginaries, does not strictly distinguish between different media but takes an account of the visual whole. Thereby, the analysis follows a synchronic approach. It aims to trace which images of femininity existed in parallel and completion and thereby depict mentalities and perceptions in the German women's sociopolitical environments. This also takes a qualitative methodology that analyzes images of femininity in their informative value rather than frequency of occurrence. In doing so, the analysis hopes to give further answers to the attitude and agency of the women's movement: How did they intend to communicate by using visual representations of their demands? In which ways were their visual representations and the conveyed images shaped by a framework of Wilhelmine norms and values or meant to challenge them? What specific rhetoric strategies were used by the German women's movement to establish their cause for the women's right to vote as a matter of public discourse?

To address these questions, the analysis, as introduced above, expends on visual culture studies in their multimodal rhetoric. Rather than applying an inductive approach to visualized patterns of femininity (as Tickner does) this follows a deductive method that aligns the visual images with the campaigners' general argumentative patterns and transfers them into the analytical parameter of tropes. A trope as rhetorical figure can generally be understood as broadly recognizable convention that has a strong affective impact and may, in its symbolic shape, narrate a story. It is "a form of expression used to convey meaning or heighten effect, often by comparing or identifying one thing with another that has a connotation familiar to the audience." [80] As such, they build "mental and emotional templates" which represent specific concepts that are indispensably grounded on their cultural-normative framework and commonly "gendered along the traditional conceptions of femininity and masculinity."[81] Drawing upon iconology then allows to not only identify depicted signs, but also to recognize their conventional meanings and attach them to their symbolic values. Identifying the image's explicit depiction and implicit codifications and messages, the interpretation of the predefined tropes of femininity (outlined below) builds upon the idea of a pictorial suffrage language: whether labeled as form of political

[80] Martin Kleppe and Marta Zarzycka, "Awards, archives, and affects: tropes in the World Press Photo contest 2009-11," in *Media, Culture & Society* 35, no. 8 (2013): 982.
[81] Ibid., 980.

propaganda (Tickner) or commercial marketing (Finnegan), the rhetoric of suffrage imageries is the essential juncture between visual culture and historical enquiry.

With this in mind, dealing with visual material in an interdisciplinary way of social, cultural and historical studies encompasses a wide range of approaches, reaching from discourse analysis to iconography and semiotics.[82] To address the analytical complexity to interpret stylistic devises and pictorial rhetoric in their historical context, the thesis pursues a structural line of argumentation. The conceptual framework outlined above allows to understand the visual representations within their social, political and cultural settings. It is therefore mirrored in the three empirical chapters of the thesis, posing distinct questions to the women's movement, its historical context and underlying contemporary gendered assumptions, subsequently, its concrete agency and the place of visual representation within it, and finally, the concrete visual articulation of its claim for the women's right to vote.

As introductory segment of the thesis, the second chapter generates a descriptive gateway for the further analysis. It provides a contextualizing framework about women's life and protest in the German Empire and embeds the analytical material therein. In doing so, the analysis targets the discourse of femininity in the Kaiserreich from about the 1880s up to 1919, therefore reaching slightly backward from the discrete period of analysis that will then cover the last two decades of this historical section. The goal in this chapter is to identify the underlying schemes of a female identity and imaginaries of femininity that shaped women's interfering in the public discourse of the German Empire. Placing the women's movement as a developing voice in the Wilhelmine gender discourse draws the development of a gradual emancipation up to the first parliamentary elections with women's participation in January 1919. This specifically traces norms and values of the Wilhelmine society which were then used, challenged or countered by the women's movement. Therefore, the chapter initially refers to assumptions about women's appropriate appearance, behavior and values that were based on multifold ideas of a female character and thereby framed women's scope of action in the Kaiserreich. Uncovering the origins of the voting rights claim, this chapter secondly traces the developments of the women's movement as a rising force in the German Empire. Thirdly then, this chapter considers the First World War as essential rupture of the Kaiserreich and asks in how far experiences, practices and needs have changed society over wartime and contributed to transform (or reinforce) the female role models therein. Thereby, ideas about femininity and a female identity within and beyond the women's movement build the continuous threat.

In the following, the agency of the women's movement and its appearance in the public sphere will come to the fore. The third chapter introduces strategies the German women's movement used to become publicly recognized and implement its claim in public discourse. This considers how cultural capital in written, committed or pictorial form was used to oppose authoritarian forces in Wilhelmine

[82] Cf. Jordanova, "Approaching Visual Material", 36 and 38. While the defining work of Michel Foucault determines discourse in the way written documents structure power and knowledge, iconography and semiotics trace the meanings of specific visual items and their composition.

society and thereby introduced thoughts of social emancipation.[83] In view of that, the chapter examines how the German women's movement used the enlarged potential of cultural contributions – specifically of visual representations –as vehicle for social and political protest and the establishment of group-specific claims. Examining such strategic attempts to become publicly visible allows for uncovering what marks the first wave feminism as a social movement. To do so, the chapter moves within a theoretical framework that is inspired by Charles Tilly's concept of contentious repertoires and will be traced on three performative levels: considering social movements' sustained and organized public campaigning, the first section takes account of women's literary and publicist activities which allowed them to find their public voice on behalf of the women's right to vote. Regarding the performative expressions of social campaigning, the second part then considers women's rising public appearance and looks at their physical agitation in campaigning the women's right to vote. Finally, this chapter pays attention to social movements' representation in visual forms. This bridges the visual component and explores the use of visual elements in the voting rights campaign of the German women's movement.

Building upon findings of such agitational repertoires, the forth chapter finally traces how members of the women's movement visualized their demand for the right to vote. The analysis hereby targets imaginaries of femininity and the way they were intertwined with the claim for women's political say. In doing so, the analysis expands on the approach of visual culture and rhetoric and takes a semiotic turn. This not only acknowledges rhetoric performance of images but, expanding on their communicative nature and the interrelation between production, representation and consumption, also their contribution to identity work. The visuals chosen for the analysis therefore include representations of femininity, meaning female figures that epitomize ideas of the female being in relation to the right to vote. Covering this, the analysis focuses on three tropes that are considered representative for argumentative patterns in the voting rights campaigning and thus identified in the campaigners' depiction of femininity. The first one addresses the idea of justice that inevitably occurred in the women's movement when arguing for women's rights in all spheres of life. This reports on questions of legitimacy, rightfulness and correctness to implement the women's right to vote and examines in how far the female identity was interpreted and represented to assert the women's right to vote as just cause. The second trope relates to notions of progress and their conjunction with femininity. Therein, questions of improvement and innovation of women's status and position in society are addressed by reflecting on more rebellious or revolutionary images of femininity. The third trope traces how notions of maternity were reestablished in the voting rights campaign. This examines in how far images of the caring, nurturing and relational temper of women, ideas of female empathy, compassion and gentleness became redefined to reason women's contribution to the public sphere and the nature of politics.

On the whole, it is the connection between visual appearance, its rhetorical strategy and the socio-cultural framework of its production and reception that promises a profitable outcome for the visual

[83] This assumption is emphasized by Godela Weiss-Sussex and Charlotte Woodford, "Introduction", in: *Protest and Reform in German literature and Visual Culture, 1871-1918*, ed. ibid. (München: Iudicium Verlag, 2015), 8.

analysis. In this, the thesis aims to contribute to the comprehension of how women envisioned their role and status and thereby used visual representation (as 'strategic form of communication') to mobilize further agency in their feminist movement and finally achieve their claim for the women's right to vote.

2. Contextualizing the Women's Movement: Spaces and Places of Women in the German Empire

Since the times of revolution in the late eighteenth century, concepts of universal equality, liberty and justice have shaped the European continent and furthered democratic ideals. The claim to universality hints at the overwhelming power of modernity, defining democracy by the egalitarian view of all people – regardless their sex or gender. Yet, as Hedwig Richter and Kerstin Wolff clarify, gender is one of the most efficient producers of inequality and as such highly contributes to the construction of the modern state.[1] While, over the nineteenth century, the incorporation of more and more men in the democratic system was sometimes even imposed from above, women, regardless their struggle, remained excluded from political participation. Until the end of the nineteenth century, this exclusion was remarkably undisputed and stable. But why was it so unproblematic to exclude women from the contemporary understanding of equality? Why then did, around the years of the First World War, what had been considered absurd for decades become possible: the recognition of women as equal political subjects?

Approaching this area of gender relations, gender discourse and the changing role of femininity in the political sphere shall be part of this contextualizing chapter. Analyzing how the German women's movement of the early twentieth century imagined (new) modes of femininity primarily requires taking a step back and looking at women's starting position for defining women's role and status they thought appropriate for that time. Consequently, the first analytical step targets at the historical context of the first wave German women's movement. This addresses the first sub-question of the thesis, asking *in which context did the women's movement articulate its demand for the women's right to vote?* As outlined in chapter 1, the analysis aims to depict a framework in which women, over the turn to the twentieth century, began to collaborate and find ways for a collective engagement into a newly articulated cause: female emancipation and their claim for the women's right to vote.

2.1. The Wilhelmine Gender Discourse: Norms and Values of Femininity in the *Kaiserreich*

Women's appearance in the Wilhelmine era was preconfigured by fashion. The image of women, highly stimulated through pictorial representations, was defined by the essential fashion piece, the corset and its resulting female shape of the wasp waist.[2] In that their gender identity was accentuated by highlighting female curves in their dressing, women's fashion represented female sexuality. This, however, did not only confirm male views on women, emphasizing women's sex appeal. Clothing had an essential social function and allowed to convey messages, norms or values. The corset then not only contributed to giving women a perfect bodily shape, just as the normative ideals suggested it to be. It

[1] Hedwig Richter, Kerstin Wolff, "Demokratiegeschichte als Frauengeschichte," in *Frauenwahlrecht. Demokratisierung der Demokratie in Deutschland und Europa* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2018), 14-17.
[2] Michael Salewski, "'Bewegte Frauen' im Kaiserreich," in *Das Deutsche Kaiserreich 1890-1914*, ed. Bernd Heidenreich and Sönke Neitzel (Ferdinand Schöningh: Paderborn, 2011), 115f. Aligning with this, the Frankfurt exhibition preludes the history of the German women's movement with the display of corsets as indicator for women's everyday life around the turn to the twentieth century.

also symbolized women's restrictions, their narrowed scope of action and their subjection under cultural values. Likewise, the saying 'come under the hood', meaning women to get married, may be taken in the literal sense: hoods, headscarves or hats symbolized women's subservience to their husbands.[3] Clothing, thus, mirrors how women's sexuality was interpreted as biological predisposed inferiority of their sex and exemplifies how women's prescribed gender identity preconditioned their social status.

At least since the French Revolution and its promise of equality, the social place of women in the modern world was recurrently up for discussion. While until the eighteenth century, gender (or rather sex) was understood as a mere biological classification, the nineteenth century gave rise to assumptions of the sex character. Conceptions of gender relations gained cultural validity and became a powerful element in all spaces of social discourse. Therein, motivations from ontological over anthropological to psychological ones were used to codify and prescribe the place of the male and female sex in modern society. The difference between men and women was no longer solely decoded through their biological distinction but also through their inner being. [4] Herein, character traits like innocence, gentleness, modesty, decency and a friendly cheerful nature were considered desirable for women.[5] Perspectives of a distinct masculine and particular feminine psyche let deduce distinct social functions and duties for men and women.

This bipolar gender model, based on the prescribed 'natural' characteristics, anticipated the man as public operator while referring the woman to the domestic sphere. Linking outward appearance with moral expectations, women were ascribed to the sphere of love, men to the one of law. Even encyclopedias spread ideas of gender relations and argued for men's and women's distinct roles in society: The *Brockhaus*, for example, explicitly ascribed the female part of society the sole role as "Gattinnen, Mütter und Hausfrauen" (wives, mothers and housewives), while the *Deutsches Staats-Wörterbuch* stated women's reliance on the conjugal partnership and family.[6] Within the ascending bourgeois society, the naturalization of such social role assignments explicitly unscrambled women's scope of the familial domesticity and men's space of the rising public. This public sphere was envisioned as a room by men for men that established a common exclusion of female participation in it.[7] This applied especially for the fields of legislation, administration, political representation, jurisdiction and military – yet the whole area whose democratization had been demanded in the revolution of 1848.[8] As a matter of fact, these spheres became highly important for the newly founded German Empire. Manifested in the tradition of German state philosophy, the state was envisioned as masculine. In this, the patriarchal state requested feudal services from his vassals and, in exchange, offered material

[3] Ibid., 115f.
[4] Ute Planert, *Antifeminismus im Kaiserreich: Diskurs, soziale Formation und Mentalität.* Kritische Studien zur Gesiteswissenschaft, 124 (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 20f.
[5] Rosemarie Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung in Deutschland* (Opladen: Leske + Budrich, 1994), 19f.
[6] "Frauen," in *Allgemeine deutsche Real-Encyclopädie*, vol. 4, 1824, 877, quoted from Planert, Antifeminismus, 21; "Frauen," in *Staats-Wörterbuch*, vol. 3, 1858, 722, quoted from Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 23,
[7] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 21.
[8] Ibid., 24.

security and participative rights. Those services were based on exclusively masculine areas, women, due to their sex, were excluded from: the military service, education as precondition to contribute to the civil service and property as precondition for tax liability, to mention just the most significant ones.[9] The Prussia-led Kaiserreich even intensified the state's masculine imagined values that underpinned the idea of a strong nation, guided by militaristic, aristocratic but also bourgeois virtues.[10]

The spread of the bourgeois lifestyle essentially codified the ideal of the nuclear family and its distinctly assigned roles:[11] the husband, meritocratic and blessed with reason, was responsible for the material existence of the family and therefore pursued a career out of the house[12]. While the man was envisioned as worker and sole breadwinner, the woman, by contrast, was imagined as caregiver of the family's home.[13] As wife and mother her mere existence provided a harmonic family life and necessary balance to the rough outside world.[14] Dictums such as 'The man deserves the fight for work, but the woman wipes the sweat from his forehead' mirror the contemporary patriarchal principle of the industrialized bourgeoisie.[15] Consequently, already the education of girls targeted at cultural devices; the education of artistic and creative manners should guarantee their socially acceptable appearance and establish abilities to entertain the men. Her place was the home, family and places of sociability but the sphere of education, economy, law and politics were taboo zones for women.[16] In a political lecture held at the university of Berlin in 1897, the famous historian Heinrich von Treitschke strengthened this perspective substantially:

> The real profession of woman will at all times be of the house and marriage. She shall bear and bring up children. To her family she shall send the pure source of her loving soul, breeding and custom, fear of God and joy of life.[17]

Building upon such bourgeois ideals of womanhood, women in the German Empire were socially and legally rejected any shapes of equal possibilities in education and profession, not to speak of political participation. Although well integrated into the idea of the modern state, women's societal, and increasing economic duties did not legitimize their equal rights, in this ascribed to a representative rather than participating role. Even the introduction of the Civil Code at January 1, 1900 did not define women as fully legally competent. They remained dependent on their husbands in all parts of life, preventing

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[9] Bärbel Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," in *'Heraus mit dem Frauenwahlrecht' – Die Kämpfe der Frauen in Deutschland und England um die politische Gleichberechtigung*, ed. Christl Wickert (Pfaffenweiler: Centarus-Verlagsgesellschaft, 1990), 52.
[10] Michael Epkenhans, *Leben im Kaiserreich: Deutschland um 1900* (Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft: Darmstadt, 2007), 108.
[11] Cf. about the nuclear, or 'conjugal,' family as bound the parents' marriage and framed by the industrialized (Western) society Luis A. Vivanco, "nuclear family," in *A Dictionary of Cultural Anthropology*, (Oxford: University Press), accessed May 29, 2019.
[12] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 53.
[13] Epkenhans, *Leben im Kaiserreich*, 124.
[14] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 53.
[15] Hermann Jacobi in 1871, quoted from Epkenhans, *Leben im Kaiserreich*, 124, translated by SE.
[16] Ibid., as well as Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 53.
[17] Heinrich von Treitschke, Political lecture held at the university of Berlin, 1897, quoted from Epkenhans, *Leben im Kaiserreich*, 128, translated by SE.

women from political participation but also from economic, legal or even social independency.[18] Anyhow, not only men restricted women the entrance to their domains, but also most of the bourgeois women themselves accepted their exclusion from politics as part of the 'natural destiny of the woman.'[19] Many adopted and internalized the assumption that women could lose their femininity through participating in the political life and confirmed the belief that

> The spiritual individuality of women and their predominant emotional life make them seem ill-suited for active participation in public life.[20]

Within this patriarchal frame of 'Vater Staat' (father state), women who notwithstanding intended to interfere into the political sphere were ridiculed and even defamed as dangerous.[21] However, women's political lawlessness was stiffened and reinforces as hurdle for any struggle for emancipation and equality. From 1850 to 1908 the Law on Associations banned women from any political activity and only men could decide whether reforms in favor of women should be implemented or not. Consequently, in their growing strive for social change, women relied on the goodwill and inclination of men.[22] In retrospective, the liberal feminist Agnes von Zahn-Harnack in 1928 got to the heart of women's dilemma in the Kaiserreich:

> Die Frau des 19. Jahrhunderts erkannte, dass sie in einer Männerwelt lebte: Sie sah, daß die Familie, der Beruf, die Bildungsmöglichkeiten, die Stadt, der Staat, die innere und die äußere Politik, ja auch die Kirche von Männern nach Männerbedürfnissen und -wünschen eingerichtet waren.
>
> [The woman of the 19th century recognized that she lived in a male world: she saw that the family, the profession, the educational opportunities, the city, the state, the internal and external politics, even the church were designed by men according to men's needs and desires.][23]

It is this perception, that truly characterizes the extent to which the female citizen was rejected from public appearance due to her sex but also her socially constructed gender identity.

2.2. The German Women's Movement: A Rising Force in the German Empire

The role women were assigned by the existing (bourgeois) image of femininity essentially hampered any initiative to stand up for their rights. Over the whole nineteenth century, and effectively far into the twentieth, the widely established ideas of the male public and female private led women themselves align to the views of those (men) in charge who equated civil rights with unfemininity and thereby

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[18] Ibid., 126.
[19] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 53.
[20] "Frauenfrage." In *Meyers Großes Konversations-Lexikon*, vol. 7, 1905[6], 40, quoted from Planert, *Antifeminism*, 30, translates by SE.
[21] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 52.
[22] Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung,* 19f.
[23] Agnes von Zahn-Harnack, *Die Frauenbewegung – Geschichte, Probleme, Ziele* (Berlin, 1928): 28, quoted from Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 14, translated by SE.

rejected women's active public appearance, especially as contribution to the political opinion-forming.[24] However, not all women accepted these assumptions that women could lose their femininity through participating in the public or even political sphere. Since the 1848 Revolution, feminist individuals gradually aimed to shake of their traditional gender identity that restricted their scope of action and limited their human dignity. Caught in a politicized spirit about democratic ideals of civic subjectivity, a gently rising feminist community gave women an unmistakable voice in the intensifying gender discourse of the German territories. In what became the 'Frauenfrage' (Women's Question) in the Kaiserreich, women were not only the object in question but increasingly strove for their own subject position within the discourse. Tracing this unified feminist voice, its ideas of a proper female identity and their claims to realize them, the understanding of the German women's movement by Rosemrie Nave-Herz shall be expounded: she understands the women's movement as occurring from a sense of belonging between women that was based on a collective protest and, since 1865, founded its expression in first organizational associations.[25] Since then, women explicitly fought a struggle for equality in the economic, political, social and cultural sphere. The history of the women's movement can then be seen as a history of coexisting organizations and the modification of targets and strategies.

2.2.1. Women's Awakening: The Origins of the German Women's Movement

If searching for a founding mother of the German women's movement, one comes across Louise Otto-Peters (1819-1895). Inspired by contemporary ideas of liberty, equality and autonomy, she soon began to orientate her literary and political activity towards women's awareness of their own specific position in society. In 1849, she used her newly founded magazine to formulate her feminist goal:

> Wir wollen unseren Teil fordern: das Recht, das Rein-Menschliche in uns in freier Entwicklung aller unserer Kräfte auszubilden, und das Recht der Mündigkeit und Selbstständigkeit im Staat.
>
> [We want to demand our part: the right to educate the pure human in us in free development of all our forces, and the right of maturity and independence in the state.][26]

With this, she pioneered a rising feminist assumption of the rightfulness and necessity for women's emancipation. From this time onward, women gained increasing confidence that, to dissolve the fundamental problem of a lack in women's public recognition, they needed to take action. Gradually, women began to concretely collaborate and dive into the public sphere. Especially middle-class women wanted to escape the bourgeois gender ideals and family ethos that envisioned them as merely waiting for marriage to give new meaning and security to their life. They therefore focused on the right for education and work that should not solely correct and supplement their cultural life but also serve the professional qualification to secure an independent material basis of existence for women. Thus, women

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[24] Referring to Eliza Ichenhäuser, *Die politische Gleichberechtigung der Frau*, Berlin 1898, 27, quoted from Clemens, "Der Kamp um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 51.
[25] Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung,* 8.
[26] Louise Otto Peters, "Programm," in *Frauen Zeitung*, April 21, 1849, quoted from Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 12, translated by SE.

explicitly referred to their present living conditions, limited through rejected rights in social, economic and cultural respect.[27]

In October 1865 then, the first women's conference was set up in Germany. With Louise Otto-Peters as chairwoman, for the first time, a woman conducted a public meeting. Resulting in the foundation of the Allgemeinen Deutschen Frauenverein (General German Women's Association, ADF) the conference initiated the organized women's movement in Germany.[28] The ADF aligned in the sentiments of bourgeois women and generally made the case for higher education of the female sex and women's right for employment.[29] It is therefore emblematic what the association still claimed in one of its later programs:

> The women's movement … demands from the state and communities to confirm the same interest in the education of girls as boys. … Considering the large number of women who remain unmarried and the further number of those who cannot find sufficient economic provision in marriage, the professional work of women is an economic and moral necessity. The women's movement, however, also regards women's professional work in a broader sense and independent of any external necessity as a cultural value, since women can also be carriers of outstanding specific talents.[30]

However, the women's movement did not constitute a homogeneous collective and, through its history, was framed by ideological, strategical and organizational fights. Most common to define the German women's movement is, as outlined in chapter 1, a separation between bourgeois and proletarian/social-democrat constitution. While the bourgeois women's movement started with its fight for employment, the proletarian wing engaged itself at its victory, recording women's increasing participation in industrial work.[31] This became apparent in their conceptual and strategic appearance. The bourgeois wing defined its feminist attitude in pursuing women's demands within the existing economic and social order and therefore attached importance to their independent organizational unit. The proletarian wing, on the other hand, was *ab initio* embedded in the socialist labor movement. It was meant to convey its members awareness about their class belonging and thus to propagate a change in the social order to secure a socioeconomic liberation for women and men likewise.[32] Regarding the intrinsic difference of both wings in that the bourgeois women fought a fight against the men of their own class, while

[27] Ibid., 15.
[28] Ibid., 16f.
[29] Ibid., 20f. To fight more efficiently for the elimination of hurdles for women's education and employment on a smaller scale, the association organized a variety of information events and initiated local offshoots of its umbrella organization. In its work, the association immediately took up demands about industrial and commercial schools for girls, protection of female workers, protection of mothers, equal opportunities in employment, equal pay for equal work, equal freedom of trade for women and the women's right to vote.
[30] ADF, Program, 1905, quoted from Epkenhans, *Leben im Kaiserreich*, 125, translated by SE.
[31] Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*,33.
[32] Ibid., 31f. Women of the proletarian wing therefore had to fight at three fronts: 1. for the enforcement of the demands of the labor movement in general, 2. for the implementation of women's causes within the labor movement, and 3. for the co-participation in arguments within the party.

proletarian women fought collectively with the men of their class for social, economic and political emancipation, a collaboration was mostly rejected.[33]

Within their class-oriented fight for social change, proletarian feminists also criticized their bourgeois counterparts for the images of femininity they pursued. This points at the second division within the women's movement, the different human image, which constituted an opposition between advocates of dualistic and egalitarian gender models. While the latter emphasized the equality of humans from both sexes, the former pursued the politics of femininity and continued to highlight differences in sexual identities.[34] Herein, early moderate feminists of the bourgeois faction were still bound to traditional ideas of femininity and envisioned women's public appearance as reconciliatory and harmonically balancing part. They intended to implement the 'eternal feminine' into the public sphere so that the whole of humanity could profit from women's essence. Building upon 'soft weapons' such as moral pressure, moderate feminists intended, through the fulfilment of duties, to prove that women were worthy and able to assume further responsibilities and corresponding rights. The early women's movement thus adhered to the valid image of women and femininity, envisioning women's place in the domestic sector and 'unpolitical' part of life.[35] Contrary to proletarian feminism, the cause of political equality was not explicitly furthered and mainly envisioned as long-term goal in that the right to vote would crown prior achievements in other, socio-cultural and economic sectors.[36]

2.2.2. Fighting for Political Equality: The German Women's Voting Right Campaigning

The turn to the twentieth century, then gave an expression of a changed consciousness and self-image of women who were increasingly aware of their contribution to society. The women's movement grew on multiple levels (from 1900 until the First World War, the 1894 founded umbrella association Bund Deutscher Frauenvereine (Federation of German Women's Associations, BDF) enjoyed a large increase in members, rising from 70.000 to 250.000) and opened up towards women's political cause.[37] While the majority of the women's movement did not envision an emancipated female identity as mirrored in its equal integration into political participation, feminist voices began more and more to incorporate the political sphere alongside their educational and economic claims.

However, the idea of the women's right to vote and its active propagation already had its past.[38] Though never speaking for the women's movement or intensely engaging in its associations, the socially and politically engaged writer Hedwig Dohm (1831-1919) laid the foundation for several of the women's movements prominent leaders. Already in the 1870s, she argued against the supposed fatherly appearance of the state, who, contradictory, was hostile to women. Her conviction was that the existing

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[33] Ibid., 37.
[34] Ibid., 28.
[35] Ibid., 15.
[36] Ibid., 28. Essentially since the publication *Die Frau und der Sozialismus* (*The Woman and Socialism*) by social democratic party leader August Bebel, demands for women's equality in all spheres of live were (officially) positioned by the collective labor organization and gradually brought into the parliamentary debate.
[37] Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 38f.
[38] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 55.

laws could only oppose women, as they were established without women's say. Arguing that women's situation could only change if they engaged for their rights, she began to mobilize women to take their cause into their own hands, thus breaking away from men's paternalism.[39] In 1876, Hedwig Dohm explicitly demanded the constitution of associations for the women's right to vote:

> … does the German woman, the ever-tired Sleeping Beauty, want to sleep forever? Awake, German women, if you have a heart to feel the sufferings of your fellow sisters ... Awake, if you have fury enough to feel your humiliation and understanding enough to recognize the source of your misery. Demand the right to vote, for it is only the right to vote that leads the way to independence and equality, to freedom and happiness for women. Without political rights you ... are powerless against the most monstrous crimes committed against your sex. ... Do not rely on the help of German men! … few would like to be willing to help [women] in obtaining their immortal citizenship in humanity.[40]

With incredible clarity, Dohm herein interpreted the existing gender relations as repressive mechanisms women could only break out by themselves. She emphasized that the inferior position of women was not the expression of biological conditions but the result of a historical development. Demanding the possibility for women for unlimited self-expression, in the private as well as public sphere, Dohm then referred to the idea of human rights. Her most prominent dictum then became "Menschenrechte haben kein Geschlecht!" (Human rights know no gender!).[41]

However, the disparate human image in the bourgeois women's movement preconditioned internal policy clashes regarding the women's right to vote: some women around Mina Cauer, Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann pursued the right to vote as most urgent objective and basis to solve the movement's additional issues through legislation. They promoted an egalitarian human image on which the demand for full civil rights was grounded. Representatives of the moderate wing like Helene Lange or Gertrud Bäumer on the other hand thought of the explicit demand for the women's right to vote as premature and argued that thinking of political rights could only start when changes in women's living conditions were already achieved. They mostly feared that opposition to women in politics was too great and the demand for the right to vote would discredit the movement's whole efficiency. Additionally, they argued for the gender-specific characteristics of women. From their point of view, it would not be formal equality that counted but the ability to equally bring women's cultural values into society at large. As Clemens indicates, the moderate faction interpreted the women's movement not as community of interest to improve women's social and legal situation, but as cultural movement that would weaken the dominant influence of masculinity by introducing femininity in the cultural discourse. Hence, there was a fundamental difference in the self-image of the women's movements factions: the women's movement as movement of interests or cultural movement, the women's question as legal or cultural issue, emphasis on equality or difference. Despite continuous

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[39] Ibid., 55.
[40] Hedwig Dohm, 1876, 183f, quoted from Clemens "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 56.
[41] Clemens "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 56 and also Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 24f

struggles between the radical and moderate minded members, the women's movement still began to explicitly understand itself as feminist voice, furthering a durable change in women's social conditions through legislation (and exceeded earlier single charity projects that targeted individual cases).[42]

The foundation of the Deutsche Verein für Frauenstimmrecht (German Association for the Women's Right to Vote) in 1902 seemed like a start signal for further attention and local initiatives of the cause. While women were still restricted a membership in political associations, Anita Augspurg and Lida Gustava Heymann made use of a gap in the Law on Associations in Hamburg and formed the first politically oriented women's associations, explicitly linked to the voting rights cause.[43] When in 1907 the modification of the existing Law on Associations was announced, also the German women's voting rights movement entered a new stage. Fulfilling an old demand of the women's movement in women's freedom of association, the women's voting rights campaigners set up new objectives and adjusted their strategies as newly accredited political agents (as will be further outlined in chapter 3.2).[44]

Continuously though, the rivalry between the organizations and between the women themselves about the 'right' political opinion threatened the movement's unity. The members continuously argued about their fundamental direction, including their strategies, political positioning and even goals. It was not even clear, whether it was preferable to support the idea of a general electoral reform and thereby align in the call for equal political participation or stick to concepts of social privileges.[45] The women's movement continued to split apart and thereby constituted new associations. Following Bärbel Clemens, four organizational unities then became the main carrier of the voting rights cause: 1. the social-democrat women's movement, agreeing to the SPD's concept of a general electoral reform, 2. the Verband für Frauenwahlrecht (Association of the Women's Right to Vote, renamed from the 1902 founded Verein in 1904), avoiding a clear positioning to the nature of its demanded voting rights and thus split into 3. the Vereinigung für Frauenwahlrecht (Union for the Women's Right to Vote, founded 1911), claiming a transfer of men's voting rights on women, and 4. the Deutsche Frauenstimmrechtsbund (German Women's Voting Rights Association, founded in 1913), arguing for an unrestricted democratic voting right while referring to women only.[46]

2.3. A New Dawn: Reshaping Femininity in the First World War

With its entrance into the Reichstag, at least during the Civil Code debate at the turn to the twentieth century, the so-called 'Frauenfrage' had spread in Wilhelmine Germany.[47] Already since the 1890s there

[42] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 60-63.
[43] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 240.
[44] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 86f.
[45] Ibid., 88-93. Still, the SPD constituted the only party that demanded a democratic electoral reform, including the equal voting right for men and women. Thus, demanding an equal right to vote always meant to represent a democratic and progressive position and thereby support a demand of the SPD. Remaining indifferent here might, on the contrary, mean the toleration of traditional concepts of property-based voting rights such as the Prussian three-class suffrage. With the creeping incorporating of women's rights into the liberal parties, many female campaigners put their hopes on the left-wing liberalism.
[46] Ibid., 103.
[47] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 33.

have been slight but broad changes in the gender relations. Formally, women and men had equal access to school and university, women's employment shifted from the traditional agricultural and domestic service to modern sectors of industry, trade and transport.[48] While women's restrictions from education and profession softened slowly but steadily, ideas of legal political equality were continuously considered misconceptions of emancipation. Nevertheless, the discourse of the women's right to vote gained increasing attention. The history of women's enfranchisement in Germany and the discourse about the women's voting rights campaign therein is though dominated by two explicitly national narratives: first, women's supposed large disinterest in the right to vote framed contemporary and retrospective perspectives. This perception was already furthered by members of the bourgeois women's movement who therein marginalized the fight for enfranchisement and the own contribution to it. However, not only the socialist wing of the women's movement contradicted such assumptions by emphasizing the centrality of the right to vote for the general emancipative cause. Indeed, the fight for enfranchisement became the central cause in the new century. Secondly then, a revolutionary narrative continuously strengthens the assumption that the revolution at the end of the First World War gave birth to the general right to vote and is understood as the sole force that was able to do so.[49]

Certainly, at the outbreak of the First World War, women were confronted with new problems. Although the associative work continued, the claim for the women's right to vote lost its immediate importance. While the distinct wings of the women's movement hardly tried to find a common ground for, at least organizational, cooperation, the beginning of the war once again made their distinct standpoints obvious. It was thus a matter of discussion, whether the German women's movement should contribute to an international women's peace movement or postpone its emancipative work and focus on societal duties. In the latter's sentiment, many women followed a call of the BDF, assigning women their place in welfare work and organizing the support of warfare. Chairwoman Gertrud Bäumer therefore referred to the national sense of belonging and solidarity that especially women would feel and make them aware of the national challenges that were about to come.[50] Collaborating in the Nationale Frauendienst (National Women's Service), many bourgeois women hoped to achieve an equal integration into state and society through proving themselves in wartimes. Indeed, while social-democrat women's associations contributed to caritative means, the Nationale Frauendienst became an organ of state care. Its representative of the women's movement became a quasi-authority institution and their exercise of public duties earned state legitimation and a public recognition of their achievements. The government, in fact, highly relied on the collaboration of women in the Heimatfront (home front) and by no means thought of affronting the female sex.[51]

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[48] Ibid., 11.

[49] Richter, Wolff, „Demokratiegeschichte als Frauengeschichte," 12f and 8.

[50] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 105f.

[51] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 178. Additionally, the national service made the bourgeois women's movement also attractive to women who had been skeptical about it pre to the war. Over wartime, the BDF could, again, more than triple its number of members.

Indeed, women from all origins, bourgeois as well as proletarian, worked together to secure war welfare care and social work. Women completed a variety of tasks, including job placement and procurement, maternity and children's welfare, the organization of meals and food distribution and voluntary nursing.[52] Although women's employment rate rose only slightly, the war opened a range of new professional perspectives in previous 'male professions.' As a paper cutting from 1916 *(Figure 2.1)* shows, women took a variety of professions that were not only unknown to themselves but prior to the war also unimaginable to be performed by them.

***Figure 2.1** „Die deutschen Frauen in der Kriegszeit," illustrated broadsheet, 1916, HMF.*

Generally, maids, farm workers and sellers moved into the factories, working women transferred to the armament industry and women with office and commercial knowledge signed up for the writing office service. Newspapers advertised jobs as conductor, waitress, lab assistant or postwoman.[53] In this, women had found their place within "gendered questions of responsibility."[54] Over their extended societal role in war, women had achieved a high degree of public involvement. Women's situational tasks had basically fulfilled what the BDF's founding mother Helene Lange had envisioned as women's gradual inclusion into public responsibilities.

[52] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 105f.
[53] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 180.
[54] Catherine Smale, "'Erwachende Frauen': Grief as Protest in Expressionist Women's Poetry from the First World War," in *Protest and Reform in German Literature and Visual Culture*, 1871-1918, ed. Godela Weiss-Sussex and Charlotte Woodford (Munich: Iudicum Verlag, 2015), 193. Besides aligning to the patriotic spirit, helping to hold up the national society, its economy and even its warfare, women also found their place in "an intellectual tradition of 'weiblicher Pazifismus'" (female pacifism) and sought female support for lobbying a peaceful resolution of conflict beyond national borders.

However, the moral status during and in the end of war reinforced a common distinction between Mensch (human being) and Weib (woman). While men were envisioned as brothers or friends, meant to actively participate in the creation of a renewed society, women were repeatedly excluded from this sphere and devalued as wives and whores. If at all, they were imagined as the passive part, repeatedly excluded from a full participation in the new humanity that was envisioned for the post-war era.[55] Although by the dawn of war, women had already penetrated into Wilhelmine politics – and politicians became aware that women were not only a tool to, through their relational nature and emotional vein, influence the men in favor of the party, but also constituted an additional electoral base – the masculine political elite was not willing to actually grant women this position.[56] Despite the role women took in war, actively holding up the Heimatfront, as soon as the men in charge could turn their gaze back to the nation's inner affairs, women had to repeatedly demand their rights as participants in public life. This had already become obvious in the emperor's Osterbotschaft (Easter message) from April 1917. Wilhelm II. announced the abolition of three-class suffrage in Prussia and therein for whole Germany. Although intending a state-lead advance to further democratization – an attempt to secure the inner peace of the rumoring nation – the emperor did not refer to the participation of women therein. This might have been the last stimulus that led even moderate women interpret the proclaimed reforms as highest legitimation to claim full civil rights for women.[57] In the same year, the BDF finally published a memorandum about women's incorporation in the active and passive right to vote. In "Die Stellung der Frau in der politsch-sozialen Neugestaltung Deutschlands" (The Position of the Woman in the political-social Redesing of Germany), addressed to parliaments and governments in the German Empire, the federation, for the first time, clearly took a position towards the legislators.[58] Within the blurred frame of opening opportunities and continuous rejection, the distinct groups of the women's movement also began to think of a concrete cooperation to further their cause from a unified position. Since November 1917, when bourgeois and social-democrat women intended to initiate a public announcement on an electoral reform in Berlin (an attempt that was prohibited by the police), women became aware of their shared target and the possible voice they could collectively bring to the fore. Several further initiatives then followed, such as an 'Erklärung zur Wahlrechtsfrage' (Declaration on the Electoral Question). Herein the newly united female front explained how many duties women had uncomplainingly fulfilled during war, but that they still lacked the rights to fully participate in public:

> Gegen diese Rechtlosigkeit legen die Frauen, kraft ihrer Arbeit für die Allgemeinheit wie Kraft ihrer Würde als vollwertige Menschen Protest ein. Sie fordern politische Gleichberechtigung mit dem Manne: Allgemeines, gleiches, direktes und geheimes Wahlrecht für alle gesetzgebenden Interessenvertretungen.

[55] Ibid., 190f.
[56] Cf. for the 'feminizing' of party politics Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 172-175.
[57] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 226.
[58] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 106.

[Women protest against this lack of rights, by virtue of their work for the common good and by virtue of their dignity as full human beings. They demand political equality with the man: universal, equal, direct and secret suffrage for all legislative representation of interests.][59]

While women's continuous pressure on the government and the president in person did not succeed, the workers' and soldier's councils of the revolution broke with the state philosophy of the nineteenth century, heard the women's voices and incorporated them in their political concept. The declaration of the Rat der Volksbeauftragten (the German revolutionary government at the end of World War I) from November 12, 1918 then clearly stated that all future elections will be exercised in equal, secret, direct and general suffrage *(Figure 2.2)*.[60]

Figure 2.2 *Ordering appeal of the provisional government, announcing the equal voting right and women's right to vote, poster, 1919. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn.*

For the women's voting rights campaigners this meant the realization of their demands and objective they had pursuit for a long time and in multiple ways.

[59] Printed in *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht*, vol. 11 (1917): 48, quoted from Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 109, translated by SE.
[60] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 110.

2.4. Conclusion: The Discursive Framework of Femininity in the Kaiserreich

This chapter has given insight into three main aspects that frame the following analysis: the Wilhelmine gender discourse and its definition of femininity, the roots of the German women's movement and its voting rights campaign and the changes the First World War brought for women's life and protest. This allows to answer the first sub-question of the thesis, asking *in which context did the women's movement articulate its demand for the women's right to vote?*

For once, the Wilhelmine gender discourse exemplifies how, until the twentieth century, the public sphere was predominantly thought, conceptualized and practiced in masculine senses.[61] The discursive construction of femininity, the ascribed roles of women and their social standing predefined women's living conditions as well as their scope of action. Based on a long-established dualist gender model, intensified through bourgeois ideals of separate spheres, women were attributed to the domestic domain. Instead of accompanying the publicly agitating man, the woman was supposed to secure the wellbeing of her family in her caring role as wife, mother and housewife. Rejected from any public participation, social, economic and political rights, women lacked coherent forms of representation for an independent voice in society.

Secondly, these assumptions slowly but gradually rose opposition that resulted in the formation of women's organizations. However, the women's movement did by far not build a homogeneous unit that stood up for women's rights. Instead, the women's movement imagined different concepts of a preferable female identity and thereby emphasized or neglected the concrete demand for the women's right to vote. Bärbel Clemens therefore gives a valuable summary of the positions and emancipative concepts that occurred within the women's voting rights movement: the bourgeois inspired moderate concept referred to women's individual nature. Its advocates imagined furthering those conditions that were required for the female nature to gain its full unfolding and societal effectiveness. The more radical position highly referred to social-democrat ideas of equality and advocated an egalitarian concept of femininity that inherently included the demand for women's comprehensive participation in public.[62] Both conceptions had their strengths and weaknesses for emancipating public images of femininity and guaranteeing women's rights: Emphasizing equality strengthened the legal position of women which opened new spaces for development beyond traditional images of women. Holding on to gender-related differences relativized the superiority of masculinity and allowed to strengthen female peculiarities. Since the turn to the twentieth century, the gradually merging voting rights associations gained ground in the women's movement and broadly established a general claim for the women's right to vote.[63]

Finally, it were the conditions the First World War brought with it that allowed women to prove their value for and contribution to the German society. As women had an immense impact on holding up the Heimatfront, they found a new argumentative foundation for claiming the legal acknowledgment of their societal role. Torn between sustaining society's functioning and their emancipative cause,

[61] Richter, Wolff, "Demokratiegeschichte als Frauengeschichte," 14.
[62] Ibid., 122.
[63] Ibid., 123.

German feminists finally found a unified voice for their voting rights claim and became heard by the revolutionary government of November 1918. In this, the ‘discursive framework of femininity’ underwent a gradual while controversial change, until finally allowing to envision a female identity of political emancipation and participation.

3. Feminist Repertoires of Contention: Public Strategies of the German Women's Movement

In November 1918, the Rat der Volksbeauftragten implemented the women's right to vote in the German territories. Its temporal link with the end of the First World War and the beginning of the November Revolution suggests a close interlacing of these events. Indeed, as the previous chapter has shown, the historical context has vastly shaped the preconditions for implementing the women's right to vote into a new form of German government. Yet, considering the war as the 'father of the women's right to vote' vastly neglects the significance of another factor: the women's movement and the impact its rising force had on the realization of women's voting rights.[1] As most prominently Kerstin Wolff states, the fight for women's (political) rights has already had its history when the women's right to vote was finally implemented in the electoral regulations of January 1919.[2] Since the turn to the twentieth century, the female voice for the women's right to vote had risen steadily. Women's organizations recorded growing numbers of members and, once legal burdens on women's public agitations began to fall one after the other, the movement increased its public appearance and claim-making process. The women's call for their right to vote became an unmissable component of the Wilhelmine public discourse – the campaigns of the women's movement contributed to the appearance of public life in the Kaiserreich.

After having already covered discursive patterns about femininity and images of a female identity within and beyond the women's movement, this chapter shall give further insight into the actual feminist campaigning for women's rights. It thereby opposes the continuous occurring assumptions of the war-born women's right to vote by emphasizing a social driving force behind its realization. Analyzing how the women's movement articulated its claim for the women's right to vote in the early twentieth century requires a look on deliberate approaches that targeted the spread and circulation of a feminist voice and implementation of its legal demand in the public. It entails reflecting on the women's movement's public performance to further its demand for the women's right to vote. Highlighting the collective appearance of the women's movement covers the second sub-question of this thesis, asking *which strategies did the women's movement use between 1900 and 1919 to convince the public of its cause and what role had visual materials therein?* As outlined in chapter 1, the analysis aims to draw a picture of feminist agency in the heating discourse about the women's right to vote in the Kaiserreich. It intends to reveal vehicles and channels that were used in the German women's movement to promote women's voting rights and thereby pays special attention to visual tools.

3.1. Female Texting: Publicist Activities in the Voting Rights Discourse

Although the continuous burdens which prohibited women to be active in politics endured over the turn to the twentieth century, women had found and established ways of sustainably furthering their cause

[1] Richter, Wolff, "Demokratiegeschichte als Frauengeschichte," 8.
[2] Kerstin Wolff, "Der Kampf der Frauenbewegung um das Frauenwahlrecht," Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, accessed February 3, 2019.

for female emancipation and the women's right to vote. Channeled through its organizational forces, the women's movement specifically counted on public relations and educational work. When in 1902, the umbrella organization BDF incorporated the fight for the women's right to vote into its program and Anita Augspurg founded Germany's first association for the women's right to vote, a massive range of publications occurred in favor of the voting rights campaign.[3] Magazines such as *Die Frauenbewegung* (1895-1914), *Centralblatt des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine* (1899-1914) or *Die Gleichheit: Zeitschrift für die Interessen der Arbeiterinnen* (1892-1914) increasingly adopted the feminist struggle for a political say into their emancipatory publications.

Such journalistic forms of written protest allowed the women's movement to establish 'a voice of their own'.[4] As such, female texting – which I understand as form of written communication that, mainly through publishing agency, targets a broad audience in society at large – became a central tool within the women's movement's 'cultural or political agenda' that generally allows social movements to actively make an impact on social conditions and power relations.[5] Publicist productions thus characterize a vital part of the first stage of social movements' contentious politics: the campaign. Following Charles Tilly, a concrete campaign exceeds a single event and, beyond that, constitutes "a sustained, organized public effort [that makes] collective claims on target authorities."[6]

Through textual initiatives in form of flyers, magazines and brochures the women's movement publicly furthered its cause(s) and operated on a twofold level. The written accounts allowed to supplement the movement's educational work in informing women about current socio-political conditions, especially electoral law. The magazines provided information and background knowledge on individual political questions.[7] Besides, such clarifications about women's exclusion from the sphere of male policy-making allowed to strengthen a protesting female voice to distribute a concrete claim for the women's right to vote. They hereby aligned in a literal development the new century brought with it: women generally enlarged their written protest against dominant images of femininity. Several literary products "echo the discourse of protest of the campaigns of the contemporary feminist movement" and its demand for women's participation in the public sphere.[8] Feminist and emancipatory literature challenged and rejected the 'sexual double standard' that mirrored the conventional morality and foundation of gender relations not only in the Wilhelmine but general nineteenth century society. It opposed the repressive bourgeois family ideology of the nineteenth-century, its image of female passivity and inferiority towards men and, contrarily, furthered the idea of women's emancipation and

[3] "Die Organisationsphase: Die Frauenbewegung und ihre Aktivitäten," Archiv der Deutschen Frauenbewegung, accessed March 12, 2019. Cf. also Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 77.
[4] The notion 'a voice on their own' derives from the eponymous volume about the American woman suffrage press Martha M. Solomon, *A Voice of Their Own. The Woman Suffrage Press, 1840-1910* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 1991).
[5] Vivanco, "social movement."
[6] Tilly, "Introduction to Part Two," 308.
[7] Ibid., 77.
[8] Charlotte Woodford, "Protest in Women's Fiction around 1900: Maria Janitschek's Short Stories and Hedwig Dohm's *Christa Ruland*," in *Protest and Reform in German Literature and Visual Culture*, 1871-1918, ed. Godela Weiss-Sussex and Charlotte Woodford (Munich: Iudicum Verlag, 2015), 152-157.

self-determination. Feminist and emancipatory publications made a literal attempt to impact society's moral values and contributed to the self-risen discourse about sexual morality that went hand in hand with the women's movement organizational work.[9]

Drawing from the effective outcome of publishing magazines in the international women's movement, the German campaigners understood women's magazines as the most effective tool for agitation – both within and beyond the women's movement. Following this perceptions, women around Minna Cauer founded the magazine *Die Frauenbewegung* (The Women's Movement) in 1894, stating that women's journals "build the center of their [the women's] aims, they internally convey the acquaintance of their single associations, they inform the outsider."[10] Indeed, accompanying an association with its own publicist organ as communication device can be found as recurring organizational pattern of the nineteenth- and early twentieth-century women's movement.[11] Generally, as Elizabeth Crawford has proven for the Anglo-American suffrage movement, an own newspaper was one main means of suffrage societies to communicate within its community and with a broader public audience. They used the print medium to generate "the spirit of camaraderie" as well as to spread information. The papers aimed to shape opinions and perceptions and moreover to influence actions.[12] In a notification from 1914 for example, the Deutsche Frauenstimmrechtsbund even connected the campaigners' holiday pleasures with the movement's political propaganda and called for distributing flyers, magazines and brochures as well as declarations of association in waiting rooms, railway wagons, trams or any other visited places.[13]

Although claiming a unifying spirit for the movement, the different magazines, published through the distinct associations, mirrored the distinct wings of the women's movement and channeled their varying positions and divergent argumentative patterns. Those distinct motifs reached from women's proof of their gradual emancipative maturity and consequent growing into the civic duties of reliable voters, over women's humanist fight against injustices in the process of male enfranchisement and masculine rule, up to a general egalitarian view of a necessary change in the socio-political conditions of the industrialized state.[14] From 1890 on, social-democrat women around Clara Zetkin published their own women's magazine, first *Die Arbeiterin* (The Female Worker), since 1891 *Die Gleichheit* (Equality).[15] Although highly incorporated in the general labor movement, women's journalism not only supplemented activities of their male comrades to mobilize support for the voting

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[9] Ibid., 154f.
[10] Minna Cauer, Lily von Gizycki, "Programm," in: *Die Frauenbewegung*, vol. 1 no. 1 (1895), quoted from Susanne Kinnebrock, "'Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk!?': Die erste deutsche Frauenbewegung und die Stimmrechtsfrage," in *Jahrbuch für Kommunikationsgeschichte*, vol. 1 (1999), 145, translated by SE.
[11] Kerstin Wolff, "Ziele, Organisation und Entwicklung der ersten deutschen Frauenbewegung (1865-1914)," in *Damenwahl. 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht*, ed. Dorothee Linnemann (Frankfurt/Main: Societäts Verlag, 2018), 71.
[12] Crawford, "'Our readers are careful buyers'."
[13] "Mitteilung des Deutschen Frauenstimmrechtbundes", vol. 1 no. 6, (1914), AddF.
[14] Cf for an overview of the women's movements distinct accounts towards publishing the claim for the women's right to vote Kinnebrock, "'Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk?!'".
[15] Nave-Her, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 36.

rights cause as condition for social change. They also found their explicit voice for claiming the women's right to vote as issue of social equality and hugely encouraged their like-minded fellows to agitate in favor of women's political rights.

Then again, women's magazines enabled bourgeois women to foster their arguments. They built upon a publicist tradition from the nineteenth century wherein Louise Otto and Hedwig Dohm had introduced women's awareness of their political rights into feminist discourse and had, journalistically channeled, called for feminist agency on behalf of changes in the electoral law.[16] Since the turn of the twentieth century then, bourgeois women intensified their publicist activities and tared their reasoning and claim-making process in written form.[17] With her magazine *Die Frauenbewegung*, Minna Cauer furthered the radical argument of the women's right to vote being 'the be-all and end-all' of the women's movement. Instead of wasting female power on desultory fights for women's education and association rights, only fostering the political electoral right would allow women to fully establish women's rights.[18] As everyone would be best in representing one's own needs, readers were called to organize themselves in voting rights associations for that the political arena should be entered as quickly as possible.[19]

Just as *Die Frauenbewegung*, the *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht* (Magazine of the Women's Right to Vote), published by Anita Augspurg since 1907, made the cause for the immediate implementation of the universal and equal right to vote.[20] The new magazine equally traced the argumentative pattern of justice and universal right.[21] Fighting the degeneration of political rights of men and women in the German Empire, the magazine claimed to regulate the laws of the country for the good of the whole people and by the will of the people *(Figure 3.1)*. Political rights for women, their authorization to participate in politics as equal citizens, were rationalized by referring to the liberal sense of civic freedom and justice.[22] Following a humanitarian and partially egalitarian reasoning, the voting rights struggle was featured as a duty of honor for each freedom-loving and justice-thinking man and

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[16] Cf. Kerstin Wolff, "Geschichte des Frauenwahlrechts in Deutschland," *Digitales Deutsche Frauenarchiv*, accessed April 1, 2019.

[17] Cf. about the approach to the women's right to vote in *Die Gleichheit* e.g. ibid., 150f.

[18] Alice Dullo, "Krone oder Fundament?," in *Die Frauenbewegung*, vol. 12, no. 3 (1906), 50 quoted from Kinnebrock, "'Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk?!',“ 148.

[19] Dullo, "Krone oder Fundament?," 50 quoted from Kinnebrock, "'Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk?!',“ 148.

[20] Its foundation came about when the Deutsche Verband für Frauenstimmrecht initially discussed the universal, equal and direct voting right at its assembly in 1907. Cf. Addf, "Die Organisationsphase."

[21] While *Die Frauenbewegung* was taken over as organ of the Deutsche Verband für Frauenstimmrecht in 1902, it was, within the continuous programmatic fights of the bourgeoise women's movement, quickly accused of merely representing the radical wing. After first supplementing Cauer's magazine, the *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht*, published by the associations funding mother Anita Augspurg herself, replaced *Die Frauenbewegung* in 1912 as the association's organ. This was mainly an attempt to give room to every position in the women's movement, not only the radical one advocated by Cauer herself. Cf. Nave-Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 100.

[22] An example for the magazines reasoning can be found in the print "Aufruf der Ortsgruppe Berlin des Deutschen Verbandes für Frauen-Stimmrecht," in *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht*, vol. 2 no. 3 (March 1, 1908).

woman; keeping away from it would, in the contrary, mean to undermine the fundamental rights of the people.[23]

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zu kämpfen.
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allgemeine, gleiche, geheime und direkte Wahlrecht

ernsthaft aufnehmen wollen.

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Es gilt, für Freiheit und Recht zu streiten!
Es gilt, die Gesetze des Landes zum Wohle des ganzen Volkes und durch den Willen des Volkes zu regeln!
Es gilt, Deutschland zu einem mächtigen, grossen, in sich gefestigten Staat auszubauen.
Darum Männer und Frauen Preussens:

Auf in den Kampf für das allgemeine, gleiche, geheime und direkte Wahlrecht.

***Figure 3.1** Cover of the* Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht*, vol. 2, no 3. Berlin, March 1, 1908. AddF, Kassel.*

To appeal women over any ideological boundaries, the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht increasingly strengthened its non-partisan attempt and targeted at women's solidarity. Its magazine proclaimed more social understanding and a sense of justice from women in all circles.[24] Supplementing Augspurg's publicist activity, her campaign and life companion Lida Gustava Heymann designed a brochure to mobilize women for explicitly supporting the women's right to vote *(Figure 3.2)*. Titeling "Gleiches Recht, Frauenstimmrecht. Wacht auf Ihr deutschen Frauen aller Stände, aller Partaien!" (Equal Right, Women's Right to Vote. Awake German Women of all classes, of all parties!), Heymann not only referred to the notion of justice in the women's right to vote. Especially in its poster-like appearance with visual devices of a rising sun, the brochure's cover also called for a unified rising of women from all social and political backgrounds and intended to mobilize them to publicly claim their right to vote.

[23] In above March issue of 1908, the *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht* enqueues in the call of the association's Berlin group call to fight the Prussian three-class suffrage and make the cause for the universal, equal, secret and direct right to vote.
[24] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 95.

Figure 3.2 Cover of the broschure *"Gleiches Recht, Frauenstimmrecht. Wacht auf Ihr deutschen Frauen aller Stände, aller Parteien!" Munich 1907. AddF, Kassel.*

Heymann's 1907 brochure presents the women's right to vote as a claim of justice against legal restrictions of women in a democratic pretense, one of social necessity for the socio-economically engaged female citizen, and of culture to secure women from arbitrariness.[25] To free themselves from the exceptional conditions of the "Männerstaat" (Men's state) and allow women a just and humane being in juridical, socio-economic and cultural respects, Heymann propagates women's united fight for political liberation:

> Nur gemeinsam organisiertes Vorgehen kann zum Erfolge führen. … Nur die Wucht der Masse wird unseren Forderungen Nachdruck geben. Frauen Deutschlands, vergesst, was euch sonst trennt. Uns alle einigt die Forderung der politischen Rechte für unser ganzes Geschlecht.
>
> [Only a jointly organized approach can lead to success. ... Only the force of the masses will give emphasis to our demands. Women of Germany, forget what else separates you. We are all united by the demand for political rights for our entire sex.][26]

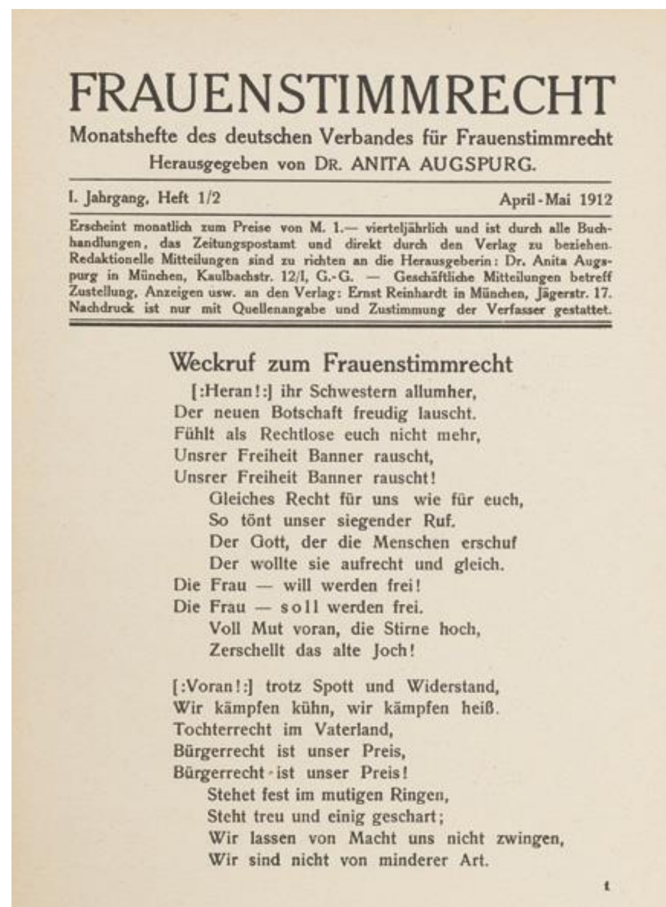
In this, publicist accounts of the German women's movement internalized and represented vital attempts to strengthen its internal as well as external power to persuade, mobilize and establish a public voice for its cause.[27] Female texting allowed the German women's movement to strengthen their campaign, to bring forward what Tilly implies with "a sustained, organized public effort [that makes] collective

[25] Lida Gustava Heymann, *Gleiches Recht, Frauenstimmrecht. Wacht auf Ihr deutschen Frauen aller Stände, aller Partaien* (Munich: Königliche Hofbuchdruckerei Kastner & Caltwey: 1907) accessed March 28, 2019.
[26] Ibid., translated by SE.
[27] Cf. about communication history perspectives on political magazines: Kinnebrock, "'Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk?!'," 158 about Franz Ronneburg and the notion of a 'qualified public' generated by political magazines.

claims on target authorities." Within their magazines, the feminist voice tared its reasoning and clarified the importance of its cause. Despite the different orientations (social-democratic to bourgeois radical or moderate) that were mirrored in the magazines' functions and lines of argumentation (from informing to mobilizing, from arguing about humane justice to social necessity), publishing accounts from magazines and brochures to pamphlets and flyers allowed to make an actual campaign of the women's right to vote perceptible in public.

3.2. Female Performing: Public Agitation and Suffrage Performativity

In April 1912, the *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht* incorporated a more poetic attempt in its publicist account *(Figure 3.3)* and printed two lyrics of yet well-known melodies: Titled with "Weckruf zum Frauenstimmrecht" (Wake-up Call for the Women's Right to Vote) and "Nationalhymne der Frauen" (National Anthem of the Women) Anita Augspurg presented attempts to find intoned words which would express the being and aspirations of the women's movement.[28]



FRAUENSTIMMRECHT

Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht

Herausgegeben von DR. ANITA AUGSPURG.

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Weckruf zum Frauenstimmrecht

[:Heran!:] ihr Schwestern allumher,
Der neuen Botschaft freudig lauscht.
Fühlt als Rechtlose euch nicht mehr,
Unsrer Freiheit Banner rauscht,
Unsrer Freiheit Banner rauscht!
Gleiches Recht für uns wie für euch,
So tönt unser siegender Ruf.
Der Gott, der die Menschen erschuf
Der wollte sie aufrecht und gleich.
Die Frau — will werden frei!
Die Frau — soll werden frei.
Voll Mut voran, die Stirne hoch,
Zerschellt das alte Joch!

[:Voran!:] trotz Spott und Widerstand,
Wir kämpfen kühn, wir kämpfen heiß.
Tochterrecht im Vaterland,
Bürgerrecht ist unser Preis,
Bürgerrecht ist unser Preis!
Stehet fest im mutigen Ringen,
Steht treu und einig geschart;
Wir lassen von Macht uns nicht zwingen,
Wir sind nicht von minderer Art.

1

Figure 3.3 *"Weckruf zum Frauenstimmrecht."Anita Augspurg, in Frauenstimmrecht 1, no. 1/2 (April-May 1912). AddF, Kassel.*

Directly referring to the legacy of the French Revolution, the "Weckruf" took up the melody of the Marseillaise and intoned called for freedom and civil rights, justice and protest. The "Nationalhymne der Frauen" then presented a more patriotic tone and referred to the democratic legacy of the Revolution

[28] Cf. Anita Augspurg in *Frauenstimmrecht: Monatshefte des deutschen Verbandes für Frauenstimmrecht*, vol. 1, no 1/2 (April-May 1912), 3.

of 1848. The hymn modified Fallersleben's text and linked female patriotism "Deutschland, Deutschland über alles" (Germany, Germany above all) with equal democratic participation and liberties "Einigkeit und Recht und Freiheit/ heischt die Frau gleich wie der Mann" (Unity and justice and freedom/ demands the woman the same as the man). As Christina Klausmann points out, the reference to democratic traditions of German history and even more the connection to revolutionary and republican traditions of the French 'Erzfeind' (archenemy) expressed oppositional attitudes in the political culture of the Kaiserreich.[29] Text and melody of Augspurg's songs thus enqueued the voting rights movement into the tradition of radical democratic emancipation movements and conveyed a combative pathos of freedom.[30] But moreover, Augspurg's initiative strove for a community-building effect of these musical attempts. This also incorporated the expression of solidarity with the campaigner's international 'sisters' whose use of feminist lyrics in international suffrage congresses had inspired Augspurg. She wanted to allow German women to join in the suffrage choir and additionally, accompany the German women's movement's own assemblies. Generally, she envisioned a truly irresistible and compelling outcome of united choral singing that furthers the women's cause.[31]

In her musical project, Augspurg then not only extended the sphere of female texting but also incorporated women's publishing effort for the voting rights cause to a broader, more personalized appearance. Effectively, the turn to the century had not only given rise to women's strengthened voice as claim-making agent in the public discourse. While their publicist endeavor intensified the necessity to consider the 'Frauenfrage' as concrete political task, women additionally found their physical place in the public sphere. Building upon the words of the historian Philippa Levine the women's movement may be described as being "as much the history of friendship, emotional attachments and social and intellectual networks as it is the history of organized campaigns and lobbying."[32] Thus, the women's movement can be framed in what Christina Klausmann introduced as 'Frauenbewegungskultur' and its group specific way of performing and representing themselves and their objectives.[33] This connects to what Charles Tilly calls the social movement's repertoires, the assortment of performances to stage a collective agency that can be found in the German women's movement.[34] Thus, considering a (agitational) culture of the women's movement allows for exceeding the question of what the women did but takes into account how the movement performed.

One expression of women's collective agitation was the organizational work of the women's movement (as already outlined in the previous chapter). Historians generally refer to the association as the most central element of nineteenth-century German society to negotiate societal concerns and elaborate on

[29] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 270.
[30] Ibid., 170.
[31] Anita Augspurg, in *Frauenstimmrecht*, vol. 1 no. 1/2 (April-May 1912), 3, accessed March 28, 2019.
[32] Philippa Levine, "Love, Friendship and Feminism in later 19th. Century England," in *Women's Studies International Forum* 13, no 1/2 (1990): 63, quoted from Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 14.
[33] Cf. Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 15f.
[34] Cf. Tilly, "Introduction to Part Two," 308.

solutions for social and political problems.[35] With its broadening web of women's associations, the women's movement in general and the voting rights campaigners in particular aligned in this process and found their own structures and strategies. Whereas the social-democratic women were incorporated in the general labor movement, bourgeois women invented their own organizational network. When in 1902 the BDF incorporated the women's political aims in its program, the bourgeois fight for the women's right to vote entered its concrete organizational stage.[36] The Verein für Frauenstimmrecht, joining the BDF in 1907, then increasingly guided the federation's way towards a further echo of the voting rights campaign.[37] To strengthen the political awareness of women, the association conceptualized a comprehensive program of political education, targeting at the internal information as well as external propaganda of and mobilization for the voting rights cause.[38] Although not consistently unanimous in its voice, it is surely true what Klausmann argues about the mobilizational character of the ADF's (later BDF's) umbrella function: It highly aimed to phrase the women's policy issues and, whether homogeneous or not, it spread agitational commitment in its regional bases.[39]

Within the women's movement's increasing institutionalization, women developed a network of agency. While concrete ideas for the movement's public relations were delegated by the executive board, local offshoots built the catalysts for the spread and organization of the campaign. Besides self-help organizations for educational and professional issues, bourgeois women also arranged more culturally fashioned assemblies and revitalized customs of women's cultural clubs.[40] Conventional forms of female sociability, such as the 'Fünfuhrtee' (Five-o'clock tea) or the 'Kaffekränzchen' (coffee party) were converted into 'Stimmrechtstees' (voting rights teas). Originally constituting a mean for middle-class women to socialize and serve women's pleasure, such midday tea parties allowed women a public appearance in fostering artistic and cultural values beneath each other.[41] The women's movement took advantage of this scope of action, politicized the spheres of female culture and created scopes for reinforcing their sense of community. Consequently, their freedom to operate on cultural levels provided a tool to re-interpret the conventional socio-cultural repertoire of women and attach a political meaning to it.[42] In this, women enabled themselves to bridge lacks of public campaigning and strengthen – at least their internal – conviction of and commitment to the voting rights cause.

Gradually, women moved out of their reinterpreted sphere of private agitation and established a broader scope of action. As Augspurg's musical approach implies, the voting rights campaign gained its effect through huge public assemblies. In following an internalized, almost pathetic agenda these

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[35] Cf. Wollf, "Ziele, Organisation und Entwicklung," 71.
[36] Cf. Kerstin Wollf, "Wir wollen wählen! Kampf der Frauenbewegung um das Wahlrecht in Deutschland," in *Damenwahl. 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht*, ed. Dorothee Linnemann. (Frankfurt/Main: Societäts Verlag, 2018), 74.
[37] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 256.
[38] Cf. Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 81.
[39] Cf. Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 361
[40] Ibid., 371.
[41] Ibid., 265.
[42] Ibid., 371

voting rights assemblies even presented characteristics of demonstrations. In the end of each assembly, the audience voted for a resolution that, spread via the press, requested political decision-makers to act on behalf of the women's right to vote.[43] In their assembling attitude, the German campaigners were again highly influenced by their embeddedness in international developments and connections to the worldwide women's suffrage movement. This became most obvious when Augspurg and Heymann founded the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht in 1902. They reacted to the organization of an international women's suffrage conference that was to be staged in Washington the same year. German voting rights campaigners needed their own national representation to participate in the conference, but also to become a member in the International Woman Suffrage Alliance (IWSA) that aimed to unify national women's voting rights associations. As part of the international alliance, the German women then hosted the second international women's suffrage conference in 1904. The Berlin congress allowed the German voting rights campaigners not only to immediately strengthen their ties to the international movement but also to make their distinct contribution to the internationalized cause of women's political rights. To do so, the congress was not merely held as female assembly but elaborately staged with a huge program that included visits of distinct women's associations *(Figure 3.4)* and even an audience to the empress.

Figure 3.4 *Welcome of participants of the women's congress at the Berlin Lette-house, photography, Berlin 1904, Archiv des Lette Vereins – Stiftung des öffentlichen Rechts, Berlin.*

The women's engagement was highly successful in that it strengthened the internal commitment of the voting rights campaigners but also gained huge public response. While the women themselves vastly advertised the international meeting, also the daily press escorted the participants and reported

[43] Ibid., 263f. In October 1902, i.e., the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht held a broad and widely resonated assembly in Frankfurt. The choice of place and date underlay a set of strategic considerations: while international spokeswomen reported experiences of foreign suffrage campaigns, the city of Frankfurt also hosted an international congress against white slavery where voting rights campaigners aimed to leave their feminist mark at. Both elements were supposed to secure a broad recognition of the women's cause and, effectively, the resonance in public (300 women and 100 men attended the assembly) and the press confirmed these intentions. Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 242.

extensively and even sympathetically.[44] One of the congress' main promoters Alice Salomon therefore recorded its far-reaching implications:

> It has helped the women's movement to gain recognition even where it was not known about or wanted to be known [...], and it has proved that the combined strength of capable women can create events that can [...] accompany the glittering congresses of men.[45]

Despite the collectively mobilizing spirit of assemblies, the women's movement and its voting rights campaign still highly relied on its national spokeswomen. Especially their panel discussions gave rise to local agitations.[46] Protagonists of the social-democrat as well as bourgeois wing, such as Clara Zetkin or Anita Augspurg, made agitation trips or lecture tours throughout the German territories.[47] They intended to rise more awareness of women's political capacities and the necessity to further the female voting rights cause. Augspurg indeed remained one of the main campaigners of the women's right to vote and her political commitment went beyond its achievement. She immediately ran for a seat in parliament and therefore continuously advertised women's political engagement. With her first electoral campaign in 1919, she still emphasized the importance of women adopting their voter-role *(Figure 3.5)*.

Figure 3.5 *Public assembly for women regarding their information about their duty to exercise the women's right to vote with Anita Augpurg, poster, January 11, 1919. Stadtarchiv München.*

[44] Katja Koblitz, "Zur internationalen Verflechtung der deutschen Frauenbewegung," in *Damenwahl. 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht*, ed. Dorothee Linnemann (Frankfurt/Main: Societäts Verlag, 2018), 81.
[45] Alice Salomon, "Der Internationale Frauenkongress," in *Soziale Praxis* 13 (1904), quoted from Anja Schüler, "Formen, Bilder, Sprache: Frauenbewegungskulturen im 20. und 21. Jahrhundert," in *Damenwahl. 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht*, ed. Dorothee Linnemann (Frankfurt/Main: Societäts Verlag, 2018), 82; translated by SE.
[46] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 361 and 290.
[47] Ibid., 244 and 290.

In transferring the women's struggle for a political say from the street to parliament (and adopting general manners of election campaigns), she simultaneously implied that only a female deputy could continuously represent the demands of women in parliament.

Already before their actual participation in elections, women became involved in the election process. Mainly achieved through recurring discussion events which brought the need for the women's right to vote in close proximity to the individuals, the 1900s trace a growing resonance for the voting rights cause in the female public.[48] When election campaigns opened up the free space for political agitation, also women were able to politically engage themselves and propagate their claim for the right to vote with public efficiency.[49] While social-democrat women hoped to strengthen the party members' acceptance of the claim for the women's right to vote by intensifying their party support, also bourgeois women endeavored to gain a closer party-political connection, namely in left-liberal circles.[50] For the election period of 1906 (on regional and local level) and 1907 (on the imperial level) the *Centralblatt des Bundes deutscher Frauenvereine* reported women's vast contribution to the election organization: they were engaged with telephone services and correspondences in polling stations, they prepared election assemblies, distribute flyers and collected money to finance the election campaigns.[51] Social-democrat women even exceeded a pure support of election campaigning and explicitly staged their public appearance as civic agents. In holding banners and posters in front of polling stations or organizing silent demonstrations through the city, they showcased how women were already part of the political sphere.[52]

However, despite the huge female support of election campaigns (and the resulting success of the distinct candidates), the political parties (even the SPD) still passed over the claim for the women's right to vote. Petitions, resolutions or bills for changes in the electoral law went unheard. Only in 1914, a petition for the women's right to vote exceeded pure parliamentary ignorance and was transmitted to the chancellor. While signaling willingness to negotiate was predominantly intended to prevent a radicalization of the women's movement it still conveyed further meaning.[53] Though more a symbolic act than a factual take for responsibility it confirmed that women – no matter if as object or subject in the first instance – could no longer be ignored in the political sphere.

Since women, in 1908, were officially allowed to enter the political arena, this had already become an undeniable fact of public life.[54] Progressively, female voting rights campaigners transferred their mobilizing effort from the closed space of their associations and assemblies to the open public.

[48] Ibid., 247.
[49] Ibid., 372f.
[50] Ibid., 243.
[51] Ibid., 250.
[52] Cf. about the social-democratic attempts to use modified scopes of elections in election periods Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 71f.
[53] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 174.
[54] Salewski, "'Bewegte Frauen'," 114. Although by far not annulling the discriminating paragraphs of the Civil Code, the opening of political associations for women allowed them to at least (officially and legally) denounce the injustice they continuously had to suffer from.

Since 1911, social-democrat women had established themselves an effective way of public campaigning. The International Women's Day constituted a day of struggle for the women's right to vote that perfectly fit into women's extended scope of action *(Figure 3.6)*.

Figure 3.6 *Protest march in the streets of Berlin for women's right to vote at the International Women's Day, photography, Berlin 19.3.1912. Deutsches Historisches Museum, Berlin.*

It was officially initiated on the II. International Socialist Women's Conference in Copenhagen in August 1910 and signified the intense international solidarity and collaboration over socialist women and voting rights campaigners. At the initially held Women's Day in Germany in 1911, about 45.000 women demonstrated at over 42 events for the active and passive right to vote (as well as for maternity leave and occupational safety and the eight-hour day).[55] With its prompting poster, especially the Women's Day of 1914 rose widespread attention *(Figure 3.7)*. Displaying a barefoot woman who waves a huge red flag above the claim "Heraus mit dem Frauenwahlrecht" (Forth with the Women's Right to Vote) it was prohibited as considered offensive to the authorities.[56] Nevertheless, the poster seemed to have accomplished its mobilizing effort and made the 1914 Women's Day a huge success in the German Empire (just before it decreased over the war).

[55] Doris Blume, "Internationaler Frauentag," *Deutsches Historisches Museum* (Berlin, 2019), accessed April 1, 2019. However, the participants in the Women's Day demonstrations continuously separated themselves from their bourgeois counterparts in stating their fight explicitly only for themselves. Cf. Wollf, "Wir wollen wählen!," 77 and Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 296.
[56] Kerstin Wolff, "Die Geschichte(n) des Internationalen Frauentages," *Digitales Deutsches Frauenarchiv*, accessed April 1, 2019.

Figure 3.7 *"Heraus mit dem Frauenwahlrecht" poster in respect of the International Women's Day, paper, colored print, 1914. Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn.*

Encouraged through the fallen boundaries to publicly agitate for political causes, also bourgeois women began to represent themselves more persuasively in the public. They took the chance to overcome their fear of authoritative repressions and made notable use of the new possibilities to agitate in public. From now on, they increasingly used demonstrations to claim the right to vote and it were particularly liberal centers such as Stuttgart, Munich, Mannheim or Frankfurt that became venues for protest assemblies and resolutions.[57] In 1912 a congress in Munich was accompanied by a huge demonstration through the city that gained public attention on the street as well as in the media *(Figure 3.8)*.

[57] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*,252.

Figure 3.8 *Carriage ride, photo collection, newspaper clipping, Munich 1900-1914. AddF, Kassel.*

In the magazine *Frauenstimmrecht*, the demonstration ride was remembered as a joyful and vastly perceived event that truly made the public aware of the women's political claim:

> About 20 wagons, festively decorated with colorful autumn garlands, with boards in the club colors and the inscription 'Frauenstimmrecht' (Women's Right to Vote), led us for two hours through the busiest parts of Munich to the end point in the magnificent English Garden. There were many onlookers, many bewildered and incomprehensible faces, but also joyful cheers. ... Surely, this journey has caused thousands to grasp for the first time, albeit only out of curiosity, the concept of the women's right to vote.[58]

In this, to borrow Lisa Tickner's notion, social-democrat as well as bourgeois women truly made a 'spectacle' of themselves that could only be publicly recognized. And when the voting rights campaigners, over war, began to increasingly plan and exercise joint actions beyond class boundaries or party attachments, their claim-making repertoire could not be rejected anymore.[59] Eventually, not the empire's political representatives that were targeted in the women's voting rights campaign, but the revolutionary government of November 1918 finally followed the women's claim and led their way towards the ballot box.[60] Either way, women's voting rights campaigners had, in all their performative agency, effectively entered the arena of 'contentious politics.'[61]

3.3. Female Visuality: Visual Representation of the Voting Rights Claim

When in September 1912, female voting rights campaigners came together to stage the first demonstration drive in the German Empire, they did not only bring their human capital but accompanied their physical appearance in public with additional eye-catchers. Press releases document how women

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[58] *Frauenstimmrecht*, vol. 1 (1912), 140f, quoted from Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 98, translated by SE.
[59] While BDF as well as proletarian women had stuck to a clear separation of their campaign, since September 1917 they merged their forces in collaborative assemblies and demonstrations. Cf. Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 238 and 290; also Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 226.
[60] Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 237.
[61] Cf. Tilly, "Introduction to Part Two," 308.

used banners *(Figure 3.8)* and sashes *(Figure 3.9)* which titled "Frauenstimmrecht" (Votes for Women) and thereby immediately stated their political concerns.

Figure 3.9 *Congress for the women's right to vote in Munich September 23./24, 1912, picture in* Illustrierte Zeitung, *Juli/Dezember 1912, vol. 139, 620, Stadtarchiv München.'*

In this, the feminist campaign mirrors what Charles Tilly describes as a nineteenth-century shift in self-representing repertoires of social movements: most visible in demonstrations, written signs as 'claim-making repertoire' became increasingly accompanied by non-verbal symbols.[62] Although the women's banners and sashes were no mere non-verbal devise of (political) claim-making, they indicate how social agents of the modern era broadened their repertoire of claim-making strategies by visual means. Suitably, the various forms of claim-making repertoires outlined above became gradually accompanied by attempts to make the movement not only heard (or readable) and publicly present but also their claim for the women's right to vote increasingly visible and unmissable.

For once, this modification of contentious repertoires, aiming to represent the (social) movement itself as well as its (political) claim can be found in the above-mentioned banners. They were not just re-interpreted protest posters but also indicate women's cultural abilities. Most banners used in their voting rights demonstrations were no printed products, but textile material in white color. Effectively, the color white (in western culture) symbolizes purity and innocence along with illumination and possibility. Thus, women played with the reciprocal appeal of virtue and integrity as well as salvation and beginning. They envisioned not only the illuminating salvation of women's enfranchisement but also justified their claim as morally pure.[63]

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[62] Cf. ibid., 314f.
[63] Following Anglo-American examples of white robes and heads that likewise, at least the chairwoman of the Deutsche Verband für Frauenstimmrecht used her dress code in 1912 to signal women's virtue and purity as political agents (cf. Figure 3.8). Most German campaigners, however, considered white clothing as impractical (and even 'to young'). Cf. Schüler, "Formen, Bilder, Sprache," 82.

Colors in general played a significant role in feminist visual culture. When the British suffrage movement staged its first mass demonstration on Trafalgar Square in June 1908, they introduced an official set of campaign colors in purple, green and white that were connected to their inherent symbolic value. Thus, it was argued by British suffragettes that purple is the royal color, indicating the royal blood that flows in each suffragette's vein and symbolizes freedom and dignity; white stands for purity (in private and public life); and green is the color of hope and the emblem of spring, thus pointing at the dawn of a new era.[64] These colors were applied to various visual products that should help to spread the campaign's idea and generate discourse about as well as support of its demand. The German women's movement imitated these approaches to color the campaign. One example is the poster of the Deutsche Verband für Frauenstimmrecht from 1909 that advertises its third general assembly in Munich in purple, white and green *(Figure 3.11)*.

[64] Cf. Florey, "English suffrage badges" about Emmeline Pethick Lawrence's reasoning.

Figure 3.11 *Third general assembly of the German association for women's right to vote, poster, Munich 1909, Stadtarchiv München.*

The approach of the campaign's coloring and symbolic charge became also apparent in other forms. Initiated by the Bavarian offshoot, the Deutsche Stimmrechtsbund called for the generation of letterheads that could be inspired by each state's emblem. Thus, for example, for the Hamburg voting rights association the emblem of the three towers could be exploited by a storm of women; the Bremen key could serve women for opening the town hall and parliament; the Prussian eagle could be trained by women to fly against the sun, contrary to its normal position, et cetera.[65] The Bavarian model itself

[65] "Mitteilung des Deutschen Frauenstimmrechtbundes", vol. 1 no. 6, (1914).

transformed the state's characteristic lion into a lioness and placed it in front of the rising sun *(Figure 3.12)*.

Figure 3.12 *Logo of the Bavarian voting rights association, in "Mitteilung des Deutschen Frauenstimmrechtbundes." vol. 1 no. 6, magazine, paper, printed, 1914. AddF, Kassel.*

Attempts like these were not only meant to supplement the textual outputs of the women's movement with additional visual approaches and make them more presentable. In connecting the women's voting rights campaign, their institutions and claim-making process to already existing icons of German states, the campaigners also placed themselves in a given public and political frame. They aimed to visually attach the women's right to vote to the current political (and legal) conditions – a symbolic act that asserts the rightness and validity of the campaigners' demand.

To further this, the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht had already relatively early started to create additional forms of commodities. Their own postcard *(Figure 3.13)* and stamp *(Figure 4.6)* should literally spread the association's political cause – and effectively allowed the campaigners to enter the sphere of suffrage consumerism more intensely.

Figure 3.13 *Postcard for the women's right to vote, AddF, Kassel.*

Coming back to Margaret Finnegan, commercial attitudes to present commodities as central mean for building personal identity became a natural assumption of suffrage culture.[66] To bridge attitudes of

[66] Finnegan, *Selling Suffrage*, 9.

consumerism with social movement's manners of identity politics and aims for political claim-making, the voting right campaigners used images of female figures that, as will be further analyzed in the following chapter, represented ideas of femininity in connection to the voting rights claim. In this, German voting rights campaigners established an expressive instrumentalism of presenting their internal solidarity and expressing their external claim for a political change. To encourage its supporters to apply visual repertoires in everyday life, the association again used its publicist organ. The members magazine immediately urged 'friends of the women's rights to vote' to affix the newly produced stamp next to the postage stamp of every postal item. The stamp and the postcard were considered to attract attention wherever they appeared. Therefore, voting rights cards should be kept available after every assembly or event of the associations. Additionally, excursions were envisioned to end with an hour of 'postcard writing' which would surely encourage participants to address recipients who could be won over to the idea of the women's right to vote.[67]

To broaden the effect of such internally and externally functioning expressions, the voting rights associations made continuous use of commercial and advertising products. In 1905, the foundation for the international federation of women's voting right associations in the previous summer was reason for the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht to produce a brooch (*Figure 4.1*).[68] Titling "Welt-Bund-für-Frauenstimmrecht-Berlin, 3, 4. VI. 04" it commemorated the international assembly and thereby revitalized spirit of community for the suffrage cause. In producing stylish badges as claim-making repertoire, female voting rights campaigners in Germany, similar to their Anglo-American counterparts, made use of women's affinity towards fashion. The Frauenstimmrechtsbund notification from 1914 highlights the connection of women's political campaigning and their fashionable appearance. In calling women to never travel without perceptibly wearing a voting rights badge, it addressed women's willingness to fashionably rise public attention for the just cause:

> Mit Stolz sollte es uns erfüllen aller Welt offenkundig zu zeigen, daß wir zu jenen Frauen gehören, die für sich und alle ihres Geschlechts die politische Gleichberechtigung erkämpfen, die für Gerechtigkeit, Fortschritt, Freiheit und Kultur eintreten.
>
> [We should be proud to show the world that we belong to those women who fight for political equality for themselves and all of their sex, who stand up for justice, progress, freedom and culture.][69]

In its prompting tone, the notification encouraged women to explicitly state their commitment to the movement's political cause and mobilized for further agency in campaigning the women's right to vote. As Florey puts it, wearing badges and buttons in different public settings generally intended personal commitment to the suffrage issue. It generated identity and collectivity, a sense of community, that

[67] Cf. Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 77 quoting Parlamentarische Angelegenheiten, vol. 6 (1905), 28.
[68] "An die Mitglieder des Deutschen Vereins für Frauenstimmrecht," in *Die Frauenbewegung*, vol. 11 no. 6 (1905), 47. The brooch itself is not archivally maintained and its existence thus only tracable through the magazin's advertising notification.
[69] "Mitteilung des Deutschen Frauenstimmrechtbundes", vol. 1 no. 6, (1914); translated by SE.

envisioned individual belonging to the movement as a whole.[70] Following him, buttons and badges had an additional appeal for voting rights campaigners to publicize the movement and engage potential supporters. “Although small, with their bright colours, slogans and organizational identifications, they were bold, assertive and virtually impossible to ignore.”[71] Buttons in this sense contributed to conveying the message about a widespread and powerful movement as well as generating individual attachment to it by verifying one’s active support.

Even after the legal implementation (and first execution) of the women’s right to vote, such approaches towards fashion in form of badges were used to commemorate the historical event of women’s first electoral participation and its underlying protracted struggle *(Figure 3.14)*.

Figure 3.14 *Brooch commemorating the implementation of the women’s right to vote, 1919, AddF Kassel.*

By stating “Zur Erinnerung an die Einführung des Fraenwahlrechts 1919” (In Memoriam of the Introduction of the Women’s Right to Vote) the broach implements its relation to the historical event of women’s first execution of their right to vote. Moreover, it introduces possibilities for its further use: The brooch might be envisioned as tool for holding up a collective memory within the protagonists of the women’s voting right campaign but also beyond them, incorporating all women who want to commemorate and celebrate what had been achieved in the dawn of a new era: the legally approved political participation of women in executing the active as well as passive right to vote.

Although Klausmann suggests not to overestimate the visualized commitment to the suffrage cause in the German women’s movement as it would be far poorer than in the Anglo-American case, the selection of visual claim-making products outlined above shows that visual attempts were made.[72] In fact, the women’s movement became (whether extensive or not) a contributor to manufacturing visual means

[70] Florey, “English suffrage badges.”
[71] Florey, “English suffrage badges.”
[72] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 375.

that advertised their voting rights claim but simultaneously supplemented society's cultural heritage. This also complemented the collective self-representation of what Charles Tilly catchily calls WUNC, meaning the display of worthiness, unity, numbers and commitment. Indeed, the public display of banners or sashes, the wearing of brooches and badges as well as the use of postcards and stamps labelled women's commitment to the voting rights campaign as worthy and unified number of claim-making agents in the Kaiserreich.

3.4. Conclusion: Women's Arena of Contentious Politics

This chapter has shown how the German women's movement, more explicitly its voting rights campaigners, made use of a various set of repertoires to enter the sphere of contentious politics as claim-making agent in the German Empire. Approaching the campaigners' public performance and revealing vehicles and channels that were used to promote women's voting rights allows to give an answer to the second sub-question of the thesis: *which strategies did the movement use to convince the public of its cause and what role took visual materials therein?*

In the early twentieth century, the possibilities for women to demonstrate that they were serious, worthy, determined and purposeful enough to be citizens were low and therefore had to be used intensively.[73] As Klausmann puts it, it was mainly the information of women about their lack of rights which was accompanied by slight attempts to convince the public opinion that enabled women to gain civic equal rights out of political immaturity and powerlessness.[74] To do so, voting rights campaigners combined distinct repertoires that allowed them to give shape to their individual agency as social movement and visually enter the sphere of contentious politics. For once, they extensively published about their cause in the association's newspapers that gave voice to the various organizational institutions and their argumentative patterns. Female texting, publicist activities from magazines over brochures to flyers allowed the women's movement to give themselves a publicly audible voice. They generated written account of their campaign and created "a sustained, organized public effort making collective claims on target authorities".[75]

The texting attempt for claim-making operations was intensified when agitational boundaries lowered and the voting rights campaigners could use additional repertoires of public performance. In referring to the creation of associations, the generation of public meetings or the initiation of demonstrations, Tilly likewise frames the performative agency of the women's voting rights campaigners.[76] The distinct associations that spread out of the multicolored voice of the voting rights campaign generated an organizational network to spread women's agency throughout the German territories. Especially its leading figures could personally strengthen local contributions to the national campaign and contributed to the public appearance of the movement. Initiated through its institutional

[73] Clemens, "Der Kampf um das Frauenwahlrecht in Deutschland," 78f.
[74] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 362f.
[75] Cf. Tilly, "Introduction to Part Two," 308.
[76] Cf. ibid., 308.

network, various forms of meetings, from conventional forms of female sociability over information evenings and discussion circles to huge (even international) congresses allowed women to collectively share their political ambitions. While election periods had already allowed women to exceed community-framed spheres and spread out into the general public, women, with their legal permission of political agitation in 1908, began to truly reform their 'Bewegungskultur'. Embedded in broader events such as the Women's Day, demonstrations in form of protest marches and carriage rides consolidated the women's will to change and thus put increasing pressure on male elites in (national) society and politics.

The variable set of performances that strengthened women's appearance as social and political agents was then supplemented by additional repertories that allowed the voting rights campaign to become not only heard but also increasingly visible. In gradually transferring their claim-making appearance from enclosed rooms to the street, women not only staged their human capital but also additional means of self-representation. Visuals from banners and sashes over postcards and stamps to brooches and badges supplemented the public performing of petitions and demonstrations to display women's worthiness, unity, number and commitment to the claim for the women's right to vote. The German women's movement, surely inspired by its international counterparts and Anglo-American role models, understood how visual goods, the coloring and symbolic charging of the voting right campaign could supplement their claim-making process. Moreover, they recognized that visual signs have an inherent mobilizing character that allows to spread the campaign's claim and targets to strengthen internal commitment to as well as external support of it.

In sum, women's voting rights campaigners used their 'propagandist fantasies' to win followers and they used appellative forms of campaigning to influence political decision-makers and institutions.[77] With several repertoires, the voting rights campaigners aimed for the most possible recognition beyond and within the women's movement and additionally strove for the highest possible degree of mobilization and public recognition.[78] However, in the cultural and political sense, both wings of the women's movement, the bourgeois and the proletarian, remained connected to their classes. They agitated in the frame of their respective conditions and made use of their respective opportunities. Both movements only found cooperation in the war's last breaths when they could see realistic opportunities for fulfilling their goal due to the changed political conditions.[79] Over the turn of the twentieth century, women reinterpreted their distinct scope of action and formed their own Bewegungskultur. They borrowed from other socio-political movements, adapted their forms of protest and propaganda and therein developed their own symbolism.[80] In so doing, the female voting rights campaigners profiled their individual repertoires of female claim-making and entered what Charles Tilly calls the 'arena of contentious politics.' Women's voting rights campaigns gained increasing resonance in the public and

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[77] Cf. Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 375.
[78] Cf. ibid., 262f.
[79] Ibid., 372.
[80] Schüler, "Formen, Bilder, Sprache," 82.

broadened their influence on public opinion as well as political decisions.[81] Thus, the metaphor that was used in the introduction of this chapter, considering World War I 'the father of the women's right to vote' needs be augmented: surely not the war alone, but the historical circumstances that framed women's agency since the nineteenth century may still be considered 'the father of the women's right to vote.' Yet, the women's movement, more specifically the women's voting rights campaigners and their public voice then constitute its mother. Using a sustained, organized effort to campaign worthiness, unity, commitment and number for the voting right cause, women generated their individual ensemble of performances. Staging their interpretation of contentious politics in the public allowed them to perform a collective voice of claim-making agents and represent their ideas of a female social identity.

[81] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*,297f.

4. Becoming Visible: Imagining Femininity in the Women's Right to Vote

Considering that the voting rights campaign was not only a collective struggle for a political say, but also accompanied and shaped a contemporary contestation of how femininity was conceptualized as collective identity of women, it becomes central to shift the analytical focus from the women's movement's performative character to its modes of representation. This acknowledges how, in becoming increasingly visible in the pubic sphere, the feminist campaigners at the turn to the twentieth century extensively explored dimensions of a female identity in visual means. After tracing the discursive framework of the Wilhelmine gender discourse up to the end of World War I and elaborating on women's strategies in their voting rights campaign, this chapter therefore analyzes how the German women's movement visualized its political demands between 1900 and 1919. In doing so, it merges both concepts of the previous chapters, meaning the concept of femininity as discursively shaped female identity and the one of contentious repertoires as claim-making tool in the public. The analysis therefore targets visual imaginaries of femininity and the way they were intertwined with and used to further the claim for women's political say. This addresses the third sub-question of the thesis, asking *which images of femininity were used by the German women's movement to visually represent the demand for the women's right to vote*.

In doing so, three tropes of femininity, introduced in chapter 1, will be analyzed regarding their identity forming capacity in relation to their claim-making agency for the women's right to vote. Aligning with the women's movement's overall argumentation about women's rights, these are found in notions of progress, the idea of justice and the concept of maternity. Although slightly tracing developments within the women's movement's reasoning, the tropes do not represent a chronological sequence of feminist reasoning. As they temporally overlapped, they rather exemplify how different ideas and viewpoints could coexist and complement each other – especially when connected with the search for identity. The chapter does thus not target a comparative analysis but intends to uncover broader patterns of feminist reasoning and conventions to address viewers with their visualized voting rights claim.

4.1. Femininity and Progress: Personifying the Female Revolutionary

Within the nineteenth century, historicist views had strengthened the perception that political ideas would become tangible only in their embodiment in (historical) individuals. This revitalized cultural conventions wherein female allegories were thought of symbolizing more than a female figure, but values and desires ascribed on her body. Especially national movements aligned in this convention of ideological visualizations. They broadly visualized and personified their national mythologies through female allegories who, as the nations' patron saints, made the abstract idea of the nation bodily visual.[1]

[1] Cf. about the nineteenth century rise of personified political ideas Gerhard Brunn, "Germania und die Entstehung des deutschen Nationalstaates. Zum Zusammenhang von Symbolen und Wir-Gefühl," in *Symbole der Politik – Politik der Symbole*, ed. Rüdiger Voigt (Leske + Budrich: Opladen, 1989), 103.

Feminist campaigners drew from such national iconography that attributed human (or divine) virtues to women and broadened its visual production as a claim-making repertoire for female identity politics. One example for visualizing a female identity in common iconographic practices can be found in a memorial card from around 1900 *(Figure 4.1)*. Its pictorial focus lays on the front view of a female figure who raises her left arm diagonally skywards. She wears a flowing robe that alludes to the gown of a Greek goddess and her head is covered with a red cap, seamed with a laurel wreath. Her naked shoulders become touched by a huge red flag that states "WAHLRECHT FÜR DIE FRAUEN!" (Voting Rights for Women!). Her risen arm becomes floodlit with rays of a rising sun and the flag's stick grounds behind a golden metal emblem with an engraved male portrait.

Figure 4.1 *"Wahlrecht für die Frauen!" Memorial card for August Bebel, around 1900. Archive der sozialen Demokratie Bonn.*

Making a claim for the necessity to legislate the women's right to vote, the image takes its persuasive and appealing effect from the female allegory. With her headgear, the figure resembles the French national symbol Marianne who symbolizes the fight for democracy and liberty and thereby implies the obligation of female suffrage. Crowned with the liberty cap, the symbol of the French Revolution and visualization of the motto *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, she assumes the role of a female revolutionary who enters the republican fight and its strive for political emancipation. Hereby, the use of semantic symbols "evoke[s] an instant emotional approval of the [image's] message because these values were closely

linked to the viewer's own identity."[2] The female allegory, representing values and virtues and, derived from this, symbolizing social identities, thus integrates the viewer into the visual process. The rhetoric situation addresses the viewers' (national) identity and asks for an individual relation to the new discursive aspect of women's voting rights.

That the feminist campaigners chose the French allegory rather than their own national personification of Germania may have a simple explanation. Germania was no revolutionary symbol but an image of peaceful female dignity who passively awaits an evolutionary change. "She is an object of rapturous worship, not a leader who calls to action."[3] Marianne on the contrary was imagined as an emancipated woman who plays an active, even leading role in a male movement. As Eric Hobsbawm has pointed out, since Eugène Delacroix' famous representation of Liberty, her appearance as strong character exceeds traditional iconographic images of women and introduces one of an active female freedom-fighter.[4] Instead of pleasantly witnessing the development in society like Germania, Marianne confidently takes action to put them on the right track. From a socialist perspective, the reference to the French national figure and symbol of republicanism also symbolizes the campaigners' claim for universality in that women's rights were no pure national concern but one of humanity at large.

Furthermore, the image's rhetoric refers to ideological-political sentiments. While Marianne's liberty cap already hints at republican ideals, the flag's coloring and essentially the gravure printing-portrait, depicting August Bebel, the leading figure of the German social-democratic party, state the image's relation to the socialist movement. Indeed, the commemoration of Bebel is no coincidence but a deliberate decision to honor the one male politician who furthered women's equal status in socialist circles, as well as making women's voting right a subject in parliament. It was essentially his book *Women and Socialism* that introduced a male political voice of female emancipation and therein not only supported the women's movement in its societal goals but also allowed women to envision new shades of a female identity. Additionally, besides the image's symbolism and its indicated political message also the female personification aligns with the socialist movement. Its iconography was largely stimulated by the tradition of French revolutionary imageries such as Delacroix' Liberty. The role women took herein was essentially the one of inspiration[5]. As Hobsbawm states, the female figure in socialist iconography "maintained herself best as an image of utopia: the goddess of freedom, the symbol of victory, the figure who pointed towards the perfect society of the future."[6] Deprived from early nineteenth century utopian socialism, the female figure could then not only be imagined as equal but superior, taking a prophet-like role.

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[2] Ibid., 162.
[3] Ibid., 109f. However, the changed historical conditions around the newly founded empire likewise changed Germania's visual representation, militarizing her to symbolize the nations new identity as military alliance of political unity. Ibid., 114.
[4] Eric Hobsbawm, "Man and Woman in Socialist Iconography," in History Workshop Journal, vol. 6, no. 1 (1978), 124.
[5] Ibid., 125.
[6] Ibid., 133.

In its represented female figure, the memorial card perfectly aligns in this idealization of women. Dressed in a fluent robe that alludes to the gown of a Greek goddess, the depicted female figure takes an august image of a woman. She implies (female) characteristics of justice and knowledge and thereby justifies the idea of women's political rights by their female qualities. With her risen arm, highlighted by the rising sun, the woman then visually points into an illuminated destination. Essentially, the goddess-like figure does not only lead women into a brighter future as enfranchised citizens, but, with her divine qualities, she is also entitled to suggest the concrete change in the social and political conditions: the implementation of the women's right to vote as phrased in her flag. This is even more striking in the composition of the image's axis running through the woman's arm: originating from the portrait of Bebel as pioneer of calling for women's voting rights in parliament it indicates that the woman immediately leads his way, exemplary for male politicians. In this, the memorial card, surely social-democratically tied, visualizes these ideals and conveys an image of the female "as inspiration and symbol of the better world."[7] Yet, in her personification of a female revolutionary, the departure into a brighter and progressive future takes a determined and agitational, even radical shape. The rhetoric situation allows the viewers to imagine a female identity that, shaped in divine and glorious attitude, but also determined and avant-garde spirit, finds its destination of enfranchisement.[8]

A similar approach to visualizing women's almost revolutionary agency on behalf of their voting right can be found in a protest card from 1908 *(Figure 4.2)*. Just as the previous memorial card, the 1908 postcard depicts a female figure, dressed in goddess-like gown and crowned with Marianne's liberty cap. More so than the woman in the memorial card, the female figure here appears in a progressing moving mode, enhanced through the burning torch she holds in her risen hand. The torch lets sprout a fluent frame of seemingly smooth drapery while in the background sun rays raise in a high horizon. The textual component declares the notions "Protest" and "Hoch das gleiche Wahlrecht" (Raise the equal right to vote).

[7] Ibid., 135.
[8] A similar visual approach to women's iconography is made in the 1914 poster (Figure 3.7) that advertised the Women's Day with the decisive slogan "Forth with Women's Right to Vote." The stylistic devices hugely align with the progressive tone analyzed above. In its socialist origin, it depicts a determined woman who, rather than being merely framed by a red flag, actively waves it. In this, the further advanced fight for emancipation and political rights takes an even more resolute and combative tone, indicating women's active role in their emancipative struggle, but more so, hinting at their incorporation into the socialist movement as active agents.

Figure 4.2 *"Protest! / Hoch das gleiche Wahlrecht!" Memorial card for the Märzgefallenen of 1848. Leipzig 1908. Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig.*

Although designed in black-white, the image, mainly through the moving gestures of the female protagonist who even attempts to step out of the picture, conveys a mobilizing message of women's active investment of manpower to provoke a change of their social and political conditions. It clearly emphasizes women's determined protest on behalf of the *equal* right to vote and thereby implies the idea of distinct groups, one that is privileged by civic rights and one that is not. Rather than merely leading a way into a better future, it challenges and opposes the current electoral legislation that manifests the dominant gender discourse and strengthens women's suppression as 'inferior other'.[9] Thereby, women's voting rights campaigners aimed to demonstrate "the ability of women to be serious, responsible and thoughtful citizens in contrast to the notion of infantile and intellectually inferior women, whose only interests consisted of talking about fashion and gossip."[10]

In so doing, the image aims to mobilize women's agency and thereby constructs a new (emancipated) female identity. This is highlighted not only by referring to revolutionary Marianne, but also in, equipping the female figure with a burning torch that reminds of the Statue of Liberty, thus

[9] John McLeod, "Reading Colonial Discourses," in *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: University Press, 2010), 50.
[10] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 173.

strengthening the idea of a (successful) fight for civil rights and liberties and relating women's political demands with ideas of citizenship, political freedom and human rights. More than in the Marianne-allusion of the memorial card, it becomes herein obvious how twentieth-century suffrage campaigners were burdened with what Eric Hobsbawm calls 'invented traditions.'[11] In this, symbols of liberty, equality and fraternity embodied in Lady Liberty and the French revolutionary are symbolic practices that target at certain values and norms and seek to generate continuity with the past. Following Ellen DuBois, social activist who are committed with social change are in need of historical interpretations that build a threat from "one kind of past to a different kind of future."[12] Amy Shore therefore identifies the creation of 'suffrage saints,' linking historical female figures with contemporary individuals to present the claim for the right to vote as tool to generate historic continuity but also lead a way into a better future.[13] This is how the female figure in the protest card addresses its viewers, calling for a female identity of rising self-confidence and awareness of its political rights, fighting for their implementation.

Yet, the historic context sheds further light on the image's increased oppositional and rebellious character that is transferred on the figure's female identity. 1908 marked the year when women were finally allowed to participate in political organizations and thus, the voting rights campaign could legally extend their public performance. The attempt to shape the movement in more vigorous and forceful temperament to the in- as well as outside seems a logical reaction on the external conditions. However, the poster's narrative context also includes an additional message. Commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Märzgefallenen (March victims, victims of the revolution in Vienna and Berlin in 1848) and the revolution of 1848, feminist campaigners made use of the memorial focalization of the revolution's anniversary.[14] Thus, the notion "gleiches Wahlrecht" also alludes to the nation's young liberal tradition of a revolutionary fight for freedom. Calling for the women's right to vote therein, the postcard places women's political emancipation into a process of continuous democratization and claims that ethics of democracy and liberty should include women as well as men. The rising sun in the poster's background then allows to think of a new dawn where the female agency achieved its goal of equal civic rights.

The idea of a new dawn in women's political say was also applied by the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht and its performance of identity politics in visual commodities (as outlined in the previous chapter). While the postcard *(Figure 3.12)* states the association's motto "Gerechtigkeit erhöht ein Volk" (Justice rises a People) and refers to its dogma of the women's right to vote as claim of justice, social necessity and culture (which was introduced by Heymann in her brochure, *Figure 3.2)* the accompanying stamp *(Figure 4.3)* adds a visual approach to this argumentative pattern.

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[11] Shore, *Suffrage and the Silver Screen*, 23 about Eric Hobsbawm.
[12] Ibid. about Ellen DuBois.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Cf. about the concepts of narrator and focalization Mieke Bal, *Narratology. Introduction to the Theory of Narrative* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1997) and Burkhard Niederhoff, "Focalization," in *the living handbook of narratology*, Peter Hühn et al. (Hamburg: University Press, 2011).

Figure 4.3 *"Frauenstimmrecht." Stamp. 1900-1919. AddF, Kassel.*

Both adopt the header of the association's magazine *Zeitschrift für Frauenstimmrecht*, picturing an allegoric image in which a woman raises broken chains in front of the rising sun. Closely linked to the organ's motto, the image refers to Enlightened iconography and visualizes an easily decodable message: the right to vote will break the legal slavery and immaturity.[15] In enlarging ideas of liberty and enfranchisement the voting right campaigners, namely the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht, allow the female part of humanity to realize their full civic being. It is therefore applicable what Klausmann summarizes about the identity forming symbolism of the Verein für Frauenstimmrecht: "The symbols of enlightenment (the rising sun) and liberation from slavery (broken chains) transformed the historical and philosophical legitimacy of the claim to the right to vote into a memorable visual language. A thousand times spread on the title of the association newspaper, voting rights stamps, voting rights postcards and collecting boxes, the image of the female figure breaking her chain was the identification mark of the movement and its followers – the spreading and carrying of this symbol was a confession."[16] It is thus essentially a visualization of hope and optimism but also confidence that the fight for women's rights will actually be successful. The image promises the entrance into an illuminated future, one that through the higher risen sun seems closer than in the previous images. Women's inclusion into the political decision-making thus moves more and more into the realms of the possible. Still, the image conveys a progressive tone of femininity. Rather than passively awaiting some sort of evolutionary development that finally endows women with their political rights, the depicted woman takes her fate into her own hands. She actively breaks the chains which had previously tied her to a role of passivity

[15] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 266f.
[16] Ibid., 375; translated by SE.

and a domestic guardian. Consequently, she enters the stage of public agency and political participation through her own effort.

Effectively, the 1919 metal embossing (introduced in chapter 3.3) that commemorates the first election with female participation then shows how the idea of progressive femininity in connection to the right to vote perceived beyond its legal implementation (*Figure 3.13*). In an oval shape, the simple metal stamping from 1919 displays a nude person whose unprecise bodily shape and hairstyle hints at her female identity. The female figure rises her arms towards the sky and follows the fingertips with her gaze. Her almost vertical gaze towards the sky, emphasized through the low horizon, indicates the pose of a thankful gesture by simultaneously looking into the infinite heights of possibilities. The lettering at the front "Endlich kamst Du gleiches Recht ohne Unterschied im Geschlecht 1918" (Ultimately you came equal right without distinction in sex 1918) thereby refers to the long-lasting bipolar gender model on which basis men in power rejected women their right for political participation in reference to their sex. The notion "gleiches Recht" highlights the equation of both sexes in front of the electoral law and indicates women's argumentative ground of legal justice. The preluding "Endlich" then intensifies the idea of a long rejected right and women's protracted struggle to achieve their equal acknowledgment in the state, their full citizenship.

Identifying women in an innovative, progressive mode of combat readiness and the ability to exercise a political say in a wise and conscious style, representations of women concerned with the voting rights cause then promoted new notions of femininity. This "New Woman represented a new feeling of self-worth that was based on the perception of women as an integral part of society, to which they contributed in various roles."[17] But essentially, it was a deliberate and revolutionary agency that leveraged women's new position as equated citizens.

4.2. Femininity and Justice: The Voting Rights Campaign and its Scales of Justice

When the Verein für Frauenwahlrecht produced its brooch to commemorate the international women's voting rights assembly in Berlin from 1904, the design took up an equally strong and persuasive visual rhetoric: centering scales that are held by a hand, seemingly sprouting out of the top of a globe, the brooch's image symbolizes a general humanist understanding of justice *(Figure 4.4)*. Effectively, it indicates justice not only in the individual right to vote but in a universal sense that incorporates humanity at large.

[17] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 173.

Figure 4.4 *"Welt-Bund für Frauenstimmrecht Berlin 3,4.VI.04, brooch, advertised in* Die Frauenbewegung*, vol. 11, no. 6. March 15, 195. AddF, Kassel."*

In its persuasive power, the symbolic approach towards justice in displaying scales (rising from the foundational globe) highlights the significant role that symbols take in shaping political experiences, political consciousness, the formation of groups and the generation of a collective identity.[18] They play with expressive, sensual and emotional quality and, as Gerhard Brunn points out, they hereby succeed in making group belongings visible and tangible to the in- as well as outside. They allow groups to mentally and emotionally integrate and appear to the outside in that they differentiate themselves from others in an exclusive way as well as stating their political will. Both objectives let collectives strengthen their sense of togetherness and legitimize their need of differentiation.[19]

In this sense, the symbolization of globally rising scales can be understood in a twofold manner: an implementation of the women's right to vote could be seen as an act of fairness towards women but, considering the rising self-understanding of western nations as carriers of democratic values, also as the unrestricted realization of liberty, equality and justice for humanity at large. Visually symbolizing the idea of universal justice in the claim for the women's right to vote thus unmistakably conveys the fact that women, up to the twentieth century, were excluded from the sphere of human justice in all its civic expressions. In this, the mere representation of scales as visual practice of the voting rights campaign strengthens women's sense of a common bond. In differentiating themselves from men, the symbolization of human justice legitimized women's shared ambition to fight the present injustice as collective unit and allowed for imagining a collective identity of female agents.

Effectively, the visual approach took up a line of argumentation Hedwig Dohm had already introduced in the 1870s. Claiming that only women's active participation in legislative processes would allow to solve social, legal and economic aspects of the 'Frauenfrage,' any further changes in the general hierarchical social order were inherently bound to changes in the legal system, meaning civic equality

[18] Brunn, "Germania und die Entstehung des deutschen Nationalstaates," 101.
[19] Ibid., 102f.

before the law. Especially moderate feminists based their argumentation on the sentiment of the natural law and claimed that women were entitled to the right to vote as it constitutes a human right.[20] They were hereby inspired by ideological traditions that shaped the modern western world. Building upon humanism that highlighted humans' self-determination they concluded that women's incorporation in democratic processes was only logical as women were humans too. Deduced from this, voting rights campaigners used the humanist understanding and argued that it was this sense of general human justice that demanded women's enfranchisement.[21] The symbolic visualization of justice then aligns in this argumentative pattern and represents how women recognized themselves as an integral part of this humanist worldview and consequently employed humanist justice as an effective argument for their political claims.[22] They visualized how, in modern theories, justice is generally identified with the principle of fairness and, in variable weighing, aligned with freedom, equality and democracy.[23]

Applying such concepts of justice, feminists not only built upon an argumentative reasoning of the modern, enlightened world. Besides the civic connotation, the idea of justice has also been associated with human virtues and characteristics. Until today, the assumption that abstract concepts can be appropriately expressed by female figures remains vital.[24] Cultural conventions from ancient times onward had established a common understanding of women's true embodiment of justice. In this, "women were thought to be just, any more than they were considered capable of dispensing justice."[25] To express this intrinsic relation of justice and the female being, the idea of female justice became, throughout time, continuously tangible in visual means. Already in Ancient Greece and Rome, the moral force of justice was personified in a female figure, distinct goddesses of justice, that later became the modern allegory of Lady Justice. Deduced from the divine attributes of fairness and natural law as well as moral order and fair judgment she has personified the moral force in judicial systems until today.

Voting rights campaigners beyond national borders adopted this female personification of justice into their repertoire of visual conventions. The probable widest spread of Justitia's visualization by the German women's movement can be found in a postcard from 1904 (*Figure 4.5*), globally calling attention to the international women's congress in Berlin.[26] Wearing the gown of a Greek goddess and holding scales in one hand she clearly displays the goddess of justice and her divine destiny to create justice in humanity.[27] Like the commemorative brooch, the postcard plays with the depiction of the

[20] Klausmann, *Politik und Kultur*, 239.
[21] Hundhammer. *American Women in Cartoons*, 164.
[22] Ibid.
[23] Cf. for a definition of justice Craig Calhoun, "justice," in *Dictionary of the Social Science* (Oxford: University Press, 2002), http://www.oxfordreference.com/view/10.1093/acref/9780195123715.001.0001/acref-9780195123715-e-890?rskey=PWC9OW&result=15.
[24] Mariana Warner, *Monuments and Maidens: The Allegory of the Female Form* (University of California Press, Los Angeles: 2000), 17.
[25] Ibid., xix.
[26] Cf. Linnemann, *Damenwahl.* 79.
[27] A similar approach to representing Lady Justice on behalf of the women's right to vote was taken up by the IWSA. Stating the association's slogan 'Jus Suffragii,' a plate and brooch, originated in 1908 and 1910 both picture Lady Justice in the cautious act of weighing the scales in her hand. While, contrary to the German depiction, the IWSA's images lack the components of the globe and the palm leave, Lady Justice, or rather her

globe. Using both hemispheres here indicates even further the universality of the voting rights cause and the boundlessness of the suffrage movement above which Lady Justice holds her consecrating hand.

Figure 4.5 *"Internationaler Frauen-Congress. Berlin, 12. bis 18. Juni 1904." Postcard for the international women's congress 1904. DHM, Berlin.*

What is striking in the suffragist representation of Lady Justice is that, unlike her typical depiction, she is not blindfolded. Her clear view thus represents the cautious but strongly purposeful process of fairly and equally administering justice that is supposed to be applied to the voting rights cause. In fact, linking Lady Justice to the claim for the women's right to vote then transfers the divine virtues to the female campaigners themselves. In this, the women's movement's agency to further the implementation of women's political rights is legitimized as the women's thoughtful evaluation of fairly and equally administering justice across humanity. It then becomes central that, in her appearance of sighted weighing scales to find a just conclusion for the suffrage cause, Justice is not passive. This vividly indicates women's transition from the supposed passive part of humanity to an equally active agent in society.[28] Personifying women's virtues and desires thus also shapes new characteristics of a female identity and its inherent competencies. In that the administration of justice requires a thoughtful decision

scales, are here framed by heavenward sun rays which indicate a new dawn achieved through the final granting of women's political say as human right.

[28] Cf. Ruth Weisberg, "The Art of Memory and the Allegorical Personification of Justice," in *Yale Journal of Law & the Humanities*, vol. 24, no. 1 (Winter 2012): 259-270.

(emphasized in the figure's glance at her weighing scales) the visual implies women's ability to make a reasonable choice that advances the human being. However, taking responsibility and action for gaining the right to vote is not intended to be a revolutionizing action. Rather, women's exceeding of the passive role in society, represented in Lady Justice's deliberate jurisdiction, is still thought as an evolutionary process wherein women finally find justice in the civil society.

This is emphasized in the palm branch the goddess holds in her hand. As rhetoric figure, the palm leaf commonly symbolizes victory and triumph but also joy and peace. As such it indicates the aspired victory of the suffrage movement that is about to come. In holding the palm branch above both halves of the globe, Lady Justice in her destiny to implement human justice, bridges the hemispheres and transmits the movement's success worldwide. Moreover, the palm leaf replaces the sword Lady Justice is commonly equipped with. It therein emphatically exchanges the notion of judging violence with an idea of peaceful justice that aligns with women's supposed virtues as the emotional, gentle and tolerate peaceful guardian of home and family that could be applied to a universal female identity.

4.3. Femininity and Maternity: The Female Caregiver of a Human Family

It was then this motif of the female domestic guardian that took central stage when the German state was on the verge of rebirth and postwar society called for reshaping. Parallel to the concept of feminized human justice, reshaping the female identity in this new dawn took the idea of women's compassionate and caring role that could be extended to a societal level. An emphasis on women's virtues and true societal value was reinforced and took central stage in the voting rights campaign. Since the November Revolution and the announcement of women's incorporation into the electoral process of January 1919, numerous information pamphlets called attention to women's new right and aimed to answer questions about the electoral procedure. By the same token, the newly unified voice of the voting rights movement, the Ausschuß der Frauenverbände Deutschlands (Committee of the Women's Associations in Germany) directly addressed the female voters in their visual appearance. The committee vastly supplemented traditional election posters with additional feminized appeals to exercise the newly gained right. In this, the voting rights campaign continued over the implementation of the women's right to vote. After mobilizing women for supporting the campaign to make a collective claim on target authorities, the achievement of this claim still required female mobilization for the voting right.

One pictorial example to explicitly reach the female voter in the national election of 1919 is a poster from December 1918 *(Figure 4.7)*. Centering a woman who, surrounded by two children, cuts a loaf of bread, the poster claims "Eure Kinder brauchen Frieden und Brot / Darum Frauen: Wählt!" (Your Children need Peace and Bread / Therefore Women: Vote!).[29]

[29] An equal approach towards women's maternal role as voters was made in a mere textual election poster of the Ausschuß der Frauenverbände Deutschlands, titling "Women! Care for peace and bread! Vote and advertise for the election!" "Frauen! / Sorgt für Frieden und Brot! Wählt und werbt für die Wahl!" Poster as election appeal. 1919. HMF Frankfurt.

Figure 4.7 *"Eure Kinder brauchen Frieden und Brot / Darum Frauen: Wählt!" Poster, December 1918, Bundesarchiv Koblenz.*

Rather than taking a protesting or even revolutionary tone, the poster represents a caring mother who ensures the children's well-being. However, the image also exceeds a one-dimensional reasoning of human justice. Its prompting statement about women's task to care for peace and bread rather strengthens the idea of women's particular values they could bring to society. Moreover, it confirms and extends what Dietlinde Peters argues about the preceding offer of women's contribution to cultural work. Although confirming, even idealizing, distinct spheres of female and male activity, the emphasis on virtues intrinsic in the female being, the female identity, entails a critique about the male-shaped world: the female principle was considered as corrective for the male one.[30] It was essentially the experience of the great war that led women reinforce their gendered identity and envision themselves as "counterbalance [to] the supposedly masculine characteristics of individualism and competitiveness which … had culminated in the bloodshed of the war."[31] When, since November 1918, feminist voices like expressionist Berta Lask, stated "the old order of patriarchal power and conflict" as ruined and called women to take their place alongside men in regenerating society, they thus referred to supposed

[30] Dietlinde Peters, *Mütterlichkeit im Kaiserreich. Die bürgerliche Frauenbewegung und der soziale Beruf der Frau*. Wissenschaftliche Reihe vol. 29, (Bielefeld: Kleine Verlag, 1984), 73.
[31] Smale, "Erwachende Frauen," 191.

female characteristics and their value for society.[32] In this, they suggested that women needed "to bring to the public sphere the compassion and care which they would normally exert in the family."[33] Based on this reference to 'pure' femininity, women's maternity was supposed to be brought to public life. In fact, this maternity was no longer bound to physical motherhood but expanded to a moral and social principle – one that stylized an image of women as mothers of humanity.[34] Consequently, the intrinsic, unconscious and passive doing was meant to be transformed into a conscious action, one that is equal to men's activities.[35] In the sense of spiritual motherhood, bourgeois women set forth to be the same for the people, for humanity, that they already were in family – or become an even better version of it.[36]

Such reasonings expressed a well-thought response to a widespread turnaround in the German society regarding women's incorporation in public life. As it was, the First World War led to a return of female images, envisioning the caring housewife, once again taking the role of the 'guardian of home and hearth'.[37] Antifeminist circles framed emancipating women as societal danger, not fulfilling their required role as wife and mother and thereby upsetting the well-functioning gender balance.[38] Women's emancipation – especially in its political sense, represented in the right to vote – was imagined as pulling women out of their comfort zone and elicit women's neglect of their (familial) duties. Despite the fact that women had stood the test of holding up the home front as female manpower, antifeminist forces as well as political representatives did not acknowledge women's public role. As mentioned in chapter 2, the female worker of wartimes was rather meant to be a placeholder, keeping the seat warm for the initial breadwinner and socio-economic upholder. As soon as her temporal mission ended, the woman was supposed to give way for the homecoming man and take her place at the domestic stove.[39]

Yet, the women's voting rights campaigners, themselves inspired by women's activities during the war and the way they had stood their ground, built upon the motif of the female domestic guardian

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[32] Smale, "'Erwachende Frauen',' 189. In November 1918, the expressionist poet Berta Lask published an "Aufruf an die Frauen" (Call to the Women) and emphasized the necessity of women's contribution to reshaping society. Such ideas of female contribution to the national rebuilding indeed opposed senses of bloodshed and suffering as triggered by the masculine warfare with the "triumph of human values" that was expressed in the spirit of love, freedom and justice ascribed to the female nature – thus not only reinforcing a dualistic gender model but also valuing supposed female characteristics for a healthy society.

[33] Smale, "'Erwachende Frauen'," 189.

[34] Peters, *Mütterlichkeit im Kaiserreich*, 74.

[35] Ibid., 75.

[36] Ibid., 79. As Catherine L. Dollard, "The Maternal Spirit," in *The Surplus Woman. Unmarried in Imperial Germany*, 1871-1918, ed. ibid. (Berghahn Books: New York/Oxford: 2009), 93 shows, the sense of spiritual motherhood also allowed the unmarried 'surplus woman' to gain societal esteem in "wedding herself to the needs of the greater society." In this, efforts especially of the BDF to generate a 'maternal spirit' functioned not only as justification of women's significance for the public sphere but also made it possible to place formerly unvalued women into a nationally renowned role. Cf. about the centrality of spiritual motherhood essentially in the bourgeois shaped women's movement also Nave Herz, *Die Geschichte der Frauenbewegung*, 27.

[37] Salewski, "'Bewegte Frauen'," 121.

[38] Cf. about highly organized agitations about the "Bekämpfung der Frauenemanzipation" (Combating women's emancipation) Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 161-171.

[39] Cf. for women's image of the 'placeholder for the man' ibid., 184-191. Even campaigns were started to support women to return to their household and family, or at least transfer into distinctly promoted female professions in the social and charitable sector. Indeed, the development at the end of war confirmed such protracted antifeminist assumptions. The gender hierarchical reorganization of the labor market and the regeneration of patriarchal gender relations grounded on a broad social consensus. Ibid., 194.

and reversed its reasoning. They argued that, leaving their traditional domain of the private, women would reform society by "infusing the culture with maternal protection, instruction, and care."[40] In this, post-war feminists aligned in argumentative traditions of the bourgeois women's movement. Originally worded in the particular "Kulturaufgabe der Frau" (Cultural task of the Woman) voting rights campaigners reinterpreted the 'ideology of gender difference' in a sense of 'female exceptionalism' society at large could benefit from.[41] They drew from what moderates had created as movement of 'organized motherhood' and thought of as women's objective value for the people and the nation.[42] In doing so, moderate voting rights campaigners argued that women, as a result of their outsider status in the public sphere of policy making, they had a particular insight to bring to contemporary social questions.[43] Effectively, the argumentative pattern of women's value also took a purely moral stance. Justifying the incorporation of women into the voting population by their ability to exert a moralizing influence on the public was again based on more traditional assumptions that women were morally superior to men. This was one of the most obvious results of the nineteenth-century concepts of gender identities that idealized women as morally unfailing and pure 'angels of the household.'[44] Thus, the consolidation of the female role as housewife and mother was taken up and transformed into a confirmation of the necessity for women's political say as equal citizen.[45]

At least since the Rat der Volksbeauftragten had announced women's incorporation into the 1919 election, the argumentative pattern to implement female virtues in the public, to transfer women's qualities from the domestic to political sphere became a, if not the, central motif in women's election campaign. The 1918 poster persuasively visualizes this transfer of motherhood from the physical to spiritual status and addresses women's particular societal virtue. In this, the female gendered identity is framed in a notion of the societal caregiver. This takes a twofold character as women are caring mothers and caring citizens likewise. On the one hand, they are responsible for their children's well-being, they secure peace and nourishment by implementing women's virtues of care and nurturance. On the other hand, women are also responsible for the nation's well-being. In this, the poster visualizes what Katharina Hundhammer found for an American suffrage cartoon: "it shows how caring, responsible and selfless mothers have to be for the good of their children and compares it with the responsibility citizens

[40] Dollard, "The Maternal Spirit," 102.

[41] Woodford, "Protest in Women's Fiction," 155f about how most work of the bourgeois women's movement in the 1890s and 1900s was in fact inspired by the 'ideology of gender difference' and the emphasis that female tasks were generally distinct from male ones. About the 'female exceptionalism' cf. Dollard, "The Maternal Spirit," 95.

[42] Cf. about the movement of 'organized motherhood' Peters, *Mütterlichkeit im Kaiserreich*, 46. Indeed, there is huge academic consensus that the concept of maternalism significantly shaped "the evolution of European women's movements" and it were especially German feminists that were inclined to use the idea of 'organized motherhood' or 'spiritual motherhood' to ground their demands for social and political reform. Cf. Dollard, "The Maternal Spirit," 94f.

[43] Woodford, "Protest in Women's Fiction," 155f.

[44] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 147.

[45] Cf. Planert, *Antifeminismus*, 194.

have to prove for the greater good of their country."[46] They secure peace through adding female qualities of sensitivity, empathy and tolerance to politics and secure nourishment through their economic contribution. As Hundhammer puts it, women's "public and domestic work [as decisively proven in wartimes] was a necessary contribution to society. As a logical merit for that they deserved a voice in the political creation of this very same society."[47] However, gaining civic rights and the political say as merit for accomplished tasks followed an evolutionary development rather than revolutionary overthrow of previous conditions.

Either way, the idea of the female caregiver of society strengthened an emancipative idea of femininity. Exercising their political say, women did not need a male guardian who, in fact, was not able to permanently secure peace and nurture of the families' and nation's children. Building then upon the audiences' shared understanding that it was masculine politics that directed the society's development and effectively, guided it into war, his identity as warlike and aggressive rather than sensitive and relational part of society needs not be voiced. Instead, the female identity as a universal caregiver is even highlighted by representing children whose identity is implied as dependent on women's maternal care. Thereby, the representation also drew from the recently increased nationalized attribution to a civic identity that had equally given new shape to the maternal role: motherhood gained a civic aspect, requiring women to educate their children (mainly their sons) to good citizens.[48] Drawing from this nationalized sense of motherhood, voting rights campaigners could argue that women could fulfill their maternal duties better if they had full political rights themselves – and consequently transmit them as first-hand experiences. Indeed, the new public dimension of motherhood allowed to even persuade supporters of conservative positions (male or female alike) of the usefulness of women's political rights[49] – an attempt that might be essentially useful for uniting society as a whole behind the newly implemented electoral rights for women and prevent ongoing opposition in its initial phase. Consequently, now that women have been granted the right to vote, rather than campaigning for women's fight to gain the right to vote, women needed to secure the participation of all their gender comrades in their newly achieved right.

In visualizing women's inclusion in electoral processes of political decision-making, the poster also takes a more prompting tone. Besides justifying why women complement the range of political perspectives and virtues, the image of the caring mother also addresses women's (civic) duty to actually exercise their voting right. Enhanced through several flyers and pamphlets, the poster conveys the message that if women stay absent from the election they fail to comply their maternal as well as civic

[46] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 141. While the selfless part might be slightly exaggerated to interpret into this poster, it surely confirms how voting rights campaigners drew from arguments of women's responsibility for and care of the family as smallest societal community and transferred this to the capability to care for the society (or the nation) as a whole.
[47] Ibid., 140. Although stated for the US, this is equally applicable for the (self-)perception of women in Germany.
[48] Ibid., 140.
[49] Ibid., 142.

duties.[50] Any women who did not follow the call for political participation would not only harm herself but also the fatherland. Consequently, women regardless their social status were supposed to appear as 'mothers of the nation' and 'guardians of a new generation' and therefore required the right for and practice of a political say.[51]

4.4. Conclusion: Visualizing New Notions of Femininity

This chapter has shown how visual representations allowed the German women's movement and its voting rights campaigners to not only further their political claim but also contribute to identity-forming processes of what they imagined femininity to be. Taking a semiotic turn thus allowed to find answers to the third-sub-question of the thesis: *which images of femininity were used by the German women's movement to visually represent the demand for the women's right to vote between 1900 and 1919?*

Becoming visually tangible, female symbolism and allegories "give and take value and meaning in relation to actual women."[52] In this, visual representations of femininity allowed feminist movements to counter social constructs of women's supposed inferiority as an assumed biological precondition. They allowed to redefine a female identity that included women's enfranchisement and political say as intrinsic female competencies. To do so, visual representations established a persuasively operating rhetoric language that appealed a sense of emotion and relation to the depiction. The images' rhetoric situation mainly drew from a common set of cultural, aesthetic and stylistic conventions which were based on enlightened western ideological convictions. As such, revolutionary and republican principles occurred besides democratic ideals as well as humanitarian visions of equality and justice. "All of these demanded women's inclusion in the public and especially in the political sphere on the basis that women were humans just as men, and that men's humanist ideological convictions were inconsistent, if women were excluded."[53] Following Katharina Hundhammer, demands to apply humanitarian principles to women also communicated women's capacity to analyze their own social and political position and, consequently, drew a picture of women's emancipation in their self-reliance.[54] This allowed to imagine a new sense of femininity, among women themselves and in society at large. This new female identity vastly suggested women's active advocacy of equal rights and their valuable incorporation in the public sphere and its political processes.

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[50] Feminist pamphlets (accompanied by political parties and the daily press) vastly spread the idea of "Voting Right is Voting Duty." On the one hand they clarified women's role in politics, explicitly referring to women's calming and balancing influence to strengthen the nation's unity. On the other hand, women in their different social positions, from mother over wife to professional were called to secure their particular concerns – speaking of the children's literary bread, the husband's work or the own right. Cf. "Was soll die Frau in der Politik?," flyer, Ausschuß der Frauenverbände Deutschlands, presumably 1919; Frauen vor!," flyer, Ausschuß der Frauenverbände Deutschlands, 1919; "Hausfrauen!," flyer, Ausschuß der Frauenverbände Deutschlands, presumably 1919 and "An die Frauen im gepflegten Heim," flyer, Ausschuß der Frauenverbände Deutschlands, presumably 1919, all AddF, Kassel.

[51] Cf. Leila J. Rupp and Verta Taylor, "Forging Feminist Identity in an International Movement: A Collective Identity Approach to Twentieth-Century Feminism," in *Signs*, vol. 24 no. 2 (Winter 1999): 377 about women's self-conception as international (feminist) community.

[52] Warner, *Monuments and Maidens*, xx.

[53] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 156.

[54] Ibid., 65.

The application of these visual strategies by German voting rights campaigners can valuably be traced in occurring tropes of femininity. Aligning with persuasive semantic symbols and allegories these deliberately addressed the viewers gendered, national or generally social identity and asked for an individual relation to the new discursive link: women's rights and their political say as a national (or even universal) task. Following the above analysis, the feminist appropriation of visual strategies to represent femininity took a multifaceted appearance in connotations of 1. progress and the female revolutionary, 2. justice and the voting rights campaign's scales of justice, and 3. maternity and the female caregiver of a human family.

For once, personifying a female revolutionary conveyed an idea of women's active investment of manpower to provoke social and political change. The female revolutionary represents a concrete and determined feminist protest and the willpower for women's revolutionary liberation from their repressive chains and inequal treatment. Propagating images of a progressive femininity wherein women actively (even revolutionary) fight for their rights then shows how social identities, as sexuality or gender is one of them, are factors of political mobilization and represent social struggles for autonomy.[55] This mobilizing character of a female identity took two forms in the female revolutionary: her image reflected on a social-democratic fight for republican principles as well as the pursuing of ideals of liberty and democracy in a more moderate-bourgeois shape. However, their visual representation was not that strictly separated as the campaigners themselves but rather followed a unified reasoning of women's equality before the law and as human beings in general.

At the same time, women's position in society was also visualized through moderate-bourgeois stimulated lenses of the dualist gender model and women's inherent gender specific virtues. Tying the voting rights campaign to the representation of Lady Justice and her sense of equity, moderate campaigners (visually) reinterpreted the principle of gender differences and suggested women's additive value for societal and political processes. Counting on their true embodiment of justice, women adopted, with their voting rights campaign, the destiny to dispense justice across humanity. Although holding weighing scales to find a just conclusion in the suffrage cause the unblindfolded Lady Justice indicates how women abandon their ascribed passive role in humanity, dispensing the right to vote as cause of human justice was anything else than a revolutionary overthrow. Yet, women's deliberate jurisdiction about voting rights was still bound to an evolutionary development and women relied on changes in the legal system that finally incorporated their gender into concepts of the natural law.

Correspondingly, the caring mother and her extension of social duties suggests that women's role as enfranchised societal caregiver does not require an abandonment of inherent female role models. Rather than overthrowing the female identity as emotional, gentle and peaceful domestic guardian, their internalized characteristics allowed them to prove their worthiness and value for civic duties and the voting right. Essentially women's societal contribution during the war had strengthened their self-confidence to publicly appear as independent and self-sufficient women who did not rely on the men in

[55] Alcoff, "Introduction Identities: Modern and Postmodern," 1.

their lives anymore (not as the family's breadwinner nor as political decision-maker).[56] In this, women could continue their traditional role model of caring mothers and housewives but also transfers these (gendered) values into the public, following an evolutionary development of enfranchised maturity and publicly valuable female exceptionalism. Representations, visualizing the image of the female societal caregiver emphasize women's duty to supplement societal developments and political decisions with female virtues. In fact, their visual representation of femininity imagined how women as mothers as well as "progressive agents against social grievances and purifier of politics" would valuably supplement societal and political developments through their incorporation in (national) decision-making.[57]

The visual analysis herein reveals that, even in their visual production, the voting right campaigners did not speak with a unified voice but continued to introduce several argumentative patterns into the gender and voting rights discourse. Just like the women's organizational splitting, the visuals were separated between those who conveyed a sense of natural right and those who transferred the bourgeois maxim of earned rewards. It could thus either be argued that women, due to their human being, have political rights by nature (rights they were unjustly kept away from), or that women were supposed to prove, by the fulfillment of duties, that they were capable of bearing additional rights that were connected to additional responsibilities. Moreover, in attaching different meanings to the feminist struggle and the shape of a female identity therein, the visual representation expanded the range of feminist reasoning and went beyond the distinction between the radical-socialist emphasis on egalitarian ideals and the moderate-bourgeoise praising of a female exceptionalism. In this, the female struggle for women's enfranchisement could take a rather revolutionary impetus or evolutionary shape that likewise fashioned women as acting protagonists or underlying beneficiaries. While socialist and radical-bourgeois influences shaped a rebellious female character who deliberately fights for women's rights, moderate voting rights campaigners envisioned gaining the right to vote as an evolutionary change that gently led women into an enfranchised being.

In this, representations of femininity visualized different perspectives on the (post-)Wilhelmine gender discourse. The image of the woman was not of a uniform identity but began to differentiate, just as the one of men had already begun to do about a century before. There was not 'the' woman anymore and thus, discrete and standardized assertions about 'the woman' could not easily be brought forward any longer.[58] To find new ideas about the role femininity could take, the visualized argumentative patterns of the German women's movement promoted new notions of femininity but also prolonged older ones, reinterpreted them and put their personal stamp on an enfranchised new woman. Regardless their argumentative differences, the New Women, visualized by voting rights campaigners, insisted, with a new self-esteem, upon the inclusion into those democratic, revolutionary and humanist principles that were already a common frame of masculine life.[59]

[56] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 171.
[57] Ibid., 151.
[58] Salewski, "'Bewegte Frauen'," 121.
[59] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 173.

Given these points, tropes of femininity, their conjunction with allegoric representations and semantic symbols not only functioned as legitimizing reasoning for the voting rights cause but also as identity-building factor. Accordingly, visual representations produced by the German women's movement took a vital role in the voting right campaign and its contribution to redefinitions of gendered identities in early twentieth-century Germany. While generally following a twofold reasoning, highlighting either the maxim of human equality or the need for a complementary representation of gendered identities in the public, the visual approaches surely fulfilled their function in broadening the discourse about concepts of femininity. Visual stylistic devices could hereby valuably supplement the textual and embodied discourse by their emotional argumentation that (possibly more unconsciously) encouraged persuasion of the voting right cause.[60]

[60] Ibid., 152.

5. Conclusion

Driven by the 2019 centenary of women's first electoral participation in Germany, the historical exhibition *Damenwahl! – 100 Jahre Frauenwahlrecht* in the Historical Museum Frankfurt shed light on women's emancipative developments in Germany. It displayed a history of feminist struggle that had its political heyday at the turn of the twentieth century and the women's movement's increasing operation on behalf of the women's right to vote. This traces a high degree of politization in the German women's movement that not only profiles the huge amount of political active women who supplemented the solely masculine represented political sphere. It also acknowledges that the question of the women's right to vote (besides the debate on morality and a sexual reform) became one of the most controversial and burning questions for women in the late Kaiserreich.[1] As showcased in the Frankfurt exhibition, the women's movement's agency in women's emancipative struggle, especially the fight for a political say, took an inherent visual shape. To further their struggle, gain public attendance and recognition in the greatest possible extent, the women's movement and its voting rights campaigners appropriated visual strategies that made the cause of the women's right to vote visually perceptible and strengthened feminist politics as an indispensable component of the early twentieth-century society.

As the visual appearance of the voting rights campaigners shows, the question about social movements' agency needs not a sole consideration of their external effect but explicitly the examination of their internal dynamic.[2] Especially women's movements linked practices of everyday culture with contestations about societal power. They politicized the public as well as private sector and exemplify how internal negotiation of their subject position towards societal conflict situations capture the movement's success as dynamic development. Taking this into account, this thesis combines formerly relatively separate approaches to social movements in questioning, on the one hand, their collective agency and, on the other hand, their collective identity. Adapting to the visual turn in academia, and its urgent application to the academic paradox of recurrently displayed visual objects and images of the German women's movement while scholarly neglecting their significance for the women's movements agency, this thesis raised the following question: *How did the first wave German women's movement visually articulate its claim for the women's right to vote between 1900 and 1919?*

Before conclusively answering the research question, I first want to recap the interrelated research findings in its consecutive stages. As with the previous chapters, these encompass the historical context of the Wilhelmine gender discourse, the women's voting rights campaigners' performative strategies in the early twentieth century and the visual representation of femininity therein. In the first place, the discursive framework of femininity unmistakably fashioned women's life and protest in the Kaiserreich. Within the Wilhelmine gender discourse, patriarchal and bourgeois ideals strengthened imaginations of gender identities and their societal repercussions. Within the ideology of gender differences, men and women were allocated to different spheres of life: while the public sphere was

[1] Cf. Wischermann, *Frauenbewegungen und Öffentlichkeiten um 1900*, 17.
[2] Cf. ibid., 14.

envisioned as room by men for men, women were continuously rejected from any active participation in it. Excluded from the role as a public operator, they were assigned to the domestic sphere and the role as wives, mothers and housewives. Based on a supposed emotional predisposition, femininity was envisioned as guardian of home and family and thereby deprived coherent forms of societal and political representation in public. However, the politicized spirit of the nineteenth century did not stop at gendered frontiers. The constrained scope of femininity gave rise to opposition in form of a multicolored feminist voice. Split between class boundaries and ideological convictions, the growing women's movement found its organizational ground and challenged predefined images of a female identity. Essentially over the turn to the twentieth century, the strive for women's emancipation and underlying redefinitions of femininity increasingly expanded on political claims for the women's right to vote. While the First World War challenged the feminist protest movement(s) and the voting rights campaign(s), its circumstances and requirements at the Heimatfront also allowed women to prove their value and contribution to society. When the German state was on the verge for rebirth, the provisional government of the November Revolution finally heard the recently unified feminist voice and its voting rights claim and implemented the women's right to vote in the national election of January 1919.

While the historical context cardinally shaped a change in the discursive framework of femininity, it was essentially the performative agency of feminist campaigners that drove a transformation in the Kaiserreich's societal and political arena. As chapter 3 has proven, female voting rights campaigners, essentially since the turn to the twentieth century, established themselves a broad and versatile set of repertoires that allowed them to persuasively enter the public stage. Besides their vast publicist effort, voting rights campaigners created associations, generated public meetings, initiated demonstrations and even entered the sphere of commercial manufacturing to unmissably implement their political demand in the public discourse. This followed a double-edged strategy, one that equally targets at internally strengthening a sense of solidarity and belonging to the voting rights campaign and external persuasion of its legitimacy and the necessity to fulfill its demands. The feminist campaigners strove for mobilization and public recognition and shaped their political agenda in a particular 'Frauenbewegungskultur.' They herein approve what Charles Tilly argues about social movements' repertoires as assortment of performances to stage their collective claim-making process.[3] This process was based on a clear sustained and organized campaign and displayed women's worthiness, unity, number and commitment to the claim for the women's right to vote. In pursuing their claim-making agenda of societal and political emancipation, the women's voting rights campaign thus entered the arena of 'contentious politics' and became an undeniable social agent in the Wilhelmine society. Still, to irrevocably implement the claim for the women's right to vote in society, the German women's movement relied not only on strategies that made their voice as claim-making agent in the public discourse readable and heard – they also required to become visible.

[3] Cf. Tilly, "Introduction to Part Two," 308.

The visibility of the women's voting rights campaign was then not only apparent in the campaigners' public performance. While visualizing their own agency on the public stage, they also produced persuasive suffrage commodities whose relicts form a still detectable visual culture of the German women's movement. The voting rights campaigners' visual culture followed an intrinsic practice of identity politics that targeted the redefinition of femininity as women's collective identity. The examination of women's performative agency has uncovered how women's movements (beyond national borders) used visual means for their political claim-making process. A semiotic turn in my analysis then gave insight into the extent women's voting rights campaigners, through the adaption of cultural conventions of representation, established a peculiar performance of identity politics in visualizing ideas of femininity through images of female figures. The tropes of femininity analyzed in chapter 4, expressing progress, justice and maternity, therefore revealed the multilayered perspective feminist campaigners could take to approach female identity. While the female revolutionary personified a feminist protest against and willpower for women's active liberation from their repressive chains, representations of Lady Justice and the maternal societal caregiver revitalized women's embedment into evolutionary developments that let women finally obtain their human justice and civic duties. Analyzing these categorical tropes as occurring in the visual production of the German women's movement confirmed that it was just this visual practice of representing femininity that could be continued for either shape feminist identity politics should take – was it a progressive, humanist or caring one. This strengthens assumptions of visual culture studies that visual materials establish a communicative moment with its observer and create their own historical record. They are no simple supplement of historical narratives but memorabilia that still speak for themselves.

Effectively, the use of visual media, the visualization of women in connection to their political demands, thereby allowed to introduce alternative concepts of femininity. As the semiotic analysis in chapter 4 revealed, visual representations were a strong mean to increase women's societal visibility. Rather than simply wording or calling their female identity, the visualization of what they envisioned femininity to be (in connection to the aspired voting right) made unmissable suggestions of changes in social and political rules that apply to the envisioned New Woman and her diverse shape of an emancipated femininity. This made it possible for the women's movement to not only articulate their claims but also to truly shape the social discourse and influence its development. "The diverse visual stylistic devices … that predominantly operate on a preconscious, emotional level, allowed … the women's movement to enrich the public discourse with the important aspect of visualization."[4] In this, visuals served to carry new notions of femininity out into society, to persuade men and women and let the latter internalize shades of a new identity, offered through encouraging role models. The deliberate use of strong semantical symbols of revolution or more syntactical symbolization of abstractions such as justice and societal values, "asked the viewer in the subtext, if he would betray his own convictions

[4] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons*, 174.

by denying the very naturalistic demands of his own ideology by denying them to women."[5] The use of visual media by the women's movement therein confirms how visually represented associations materialized imaginations of social identities. This is because visualizations represent rational as well as emotional aspects of their subject and its related social character.[6] In this, essentially the argumentative pattern of women's societal value illuminates how women's voting rights campaigners drew from women's actual or aspired contribution to society as justification for their demand of women's voting right. Thereby, visual representations most valuably allowed to address social identities and exercised images' intrinsic capacity to contribute to their discursive negotiation and shaping. It is then essentially through visualization that the women's movement could empower a collective identity. Although taking different and negotiating angles towards femininity, they all allowed for an imagination of a 'new woman,' one who stands up for her rights and voices a feminist identity. In either connotation, representations of femininity by the voting rights campaigners all conveyed an image of an aspired emancipated woman who, through her political participation, was fully incorporated into modern society and the formation of public developments.

Taking everything into account, the way the early German women's movement visually articulated its claim for the women's right to vote then needs be understood from its multidimensional nature. Visualizing their demand for a political say, voting rights campaigners in the early twentieth century staged their human capital as well as visual objects and pictorial representations. Collectively, these repertoires of public claim-making addressed images of a female identity – those traditionally established alongside male lenses, illusions and desires, and those oppositely constructed by feminist agents. The visual analysis proves what Tickner and her successors have claimed for the Anglo-American suffrage movement: that suffrage imageries were not only a means of the "specific struggle for the vote alone, but also of a broader debate about definitions of femininity and women's place in public life."[7] The visual culture of the German women's movement and its voting rights campaign visualizes how the demand for the women's right to vote constituted a crucial part of the struggle for female emancipation and a re-definition of femininity. Visual representations in this sense allowed to generate a female identity of social and political emancipation which opposed reactionary visions of womanhood and femininity. This confirms what Katharina Hundhammer claims about suffrage visuality: a correlation between the success of the suffrage movement and the use of graphic media.[8]

Visual approaches to the voting rights campaign thus vastly contributed to what Hundhammer states as the woman's movement's most central concern: "to disprove the concept of separate spheres."[9] In this, women's rights campaigners tried, from different argumentative angles, to refute that women, due to their biological conditions, were physically and mentally more apt for domestic, private tasks.

[5] Ibid., 166.
[6] Cf. ibid., 166.
[7] Tickner, *The Spectacle*, x.
[8] Hundhammer, *American Women in Cartoons.*
[9] Ibid., 166.

They argued about the concept's inconsistency and proved that they were equally capable as men to bear obligations in all public spheres. In doing so, women's rights campaigners generally argued that the common assessment of women's inferiority was not a natural determinism but indeed a social construct.[10] Therein, feminist campaigners of the early twentieth century visually announced what Simone de Beauvoir made the maxim of feminist theory: the constructivist character of gender in that "one is not born but rather becomes a woman." Representations of femininity allowed feminist campaigners to visually redefine women's societal status. This could easily be remade and female enfranchisement just another expression of society's self-conception.

The visual articulation of women's campaigning thus performed a (counter-)discourse to the contemporary ideologies of femininity and the female exclusion from the public and political sphere.[11] It challenged a discourse that was mainly sustained through male scales, illusions and desires which allowed to produce knowledge about femininity as the 'inferior other.'[12] In doing so, the visuals also reflect what Mills states about the women's movement as social agent in identity politics: being a possibility to map out "new discursive roles" that could be taken by women.[13]

Deduced from these analytical findings, additional inferences can be drawn about the theoretical framework applied in this thesis. While a visual culture approach valuably adds a visual component to the social history of the early German women's movement as well as an additional case study to enquiries of Anglo-American suffrage culture, its underlying semiotic analysis requires additional concepts and can thus not stand on its own. The rhetoric situation visually constructed in voting rights campaigners' representations of femininity can only be understood within the overall framework early feminists agitated in. This involves notions of a female identity created in the nineteenth-century gender discourse and challenged by the emancipative struggle of the rising women's movement. But it also contains to substantiate representative approaches by referring back to the movement's performative character. In this, the application of Charles Tilly's concept of contentious repertories on the early German women's movement allows to extend what Ulla Wischermann already approached in her survey on a feminist public around 1900: the treatment of 'old' movements with 'new' concepts of social movement culture.[14]

Effectively, the notion of repertoires strengthens the perspective that early feminists moved within a framework of public spheres that predefined their agitation and enactment of their protest. In doing so, it becomes obvious how the first wave German women's movement used – and extended – female scopes of action to strengthen a feminist voice and thereby made an impact on public perceptions.

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[10] Ibid., 166.
[11] Cf. for the variety of discourses about femininity, masculinity and gender identities Mills, "Introduction," 16.
[12] Cf. about the production of Otherness and how it legitimizes power through an imagined knowledge of identity, McLeod, "Reading Colonial Discourses," 50.
[13] Ibid., 13.
[14] Cf. Ute Gerhard, "Vorwort," in *Frauenbewegungen und Öffentlichkeiten um 1900. Netzwerke – Gegenöffentlichkeiten – Protestinszenierungen*, Ulla Wischermann, Frankfurter Feministische Texte vol. 4, ed. Ute Gerhard. (Königstein/Taunus: Ulrike Helmer Verlag, 2003), 9.

Reflecting how the protesting women indeed used repertoires of contention to contribute to societal discourses and enter politics not only as object of discussion but subject of decision furthermore strengthens the women's movement's position in research. The above analysis confirms that the early German women's movement was no mere fringe group in times of societal upheaval but a power factor in the Wilhelmine gender discourse. In doing so, the thesis approves the already voiced call to enqueue the women's movement in the row of 'big' social movements in history and to consider the feminist lobby not only as cultural but truly social and political agent who rose its own and, over time, unmistakable voice.

However, concepts of agency as Tilly's model of contentious repertoires (as well as the German historians' notions of Frauenbewegungskultur) are already slightly outdated. They therefore need supplementation by newer academic approaches such as visual culture and visual rhetoric that were introduced by the visual turn. It is here essentially the juncture between social movements' collective agency with their visually represented collective identity that allowed this thesis to add new perspectives on the German women's movement. It shall have become clear that both do not function on their own but vastly relate to and involve each other. Consequently, a juncture of collective agency and collective identity, especially in its visual component of (self-)representation allows for social movement research in general to shed light on internal dynamics and external effects. In this, the thesis exemplifies how different concepts of social identity, performative agency and visual representation are highly beneficial to address the German women's movement. To give meaning to research on social movements and illuminate new perspectives these need to be meshed and considered as intrinsic whole.

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