

“Stigma against feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands.”

Actual Google search on 09/03/2013

women should |

women should **stay at home**

women should **be slaves**

women should **be in the kitchen**

women should **not speak in church**

women should **have the right to make their own decisions**

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09004807 – European Studies

March 2016

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Abstract

This bachelor dissertation examines whether there is a noticeable stigma against Feminism in the Netherlands and in the Republic of Ireland. To answer that, it looks at the image of feminism in selected Irish and the Dutch online newspapers. Additionally, interviews with eight young women were held as well as current literature on the subject was studied.

In regards to whether young women are refusing to identify as feminists, the results of the interviews showed that young women did not stop identifying as feminists. Even though some women said they were not feminists, the majority of the interviewed participant still identified as such. According to four of the interviewed women, sexism has played a part in their willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs. This accounts for 50% of the participants. One participant mentioned that she relates to feminism after having followed courses on gender equality. This connects to the studies done by both Macalister (1991) and Bargard and Hyde (1991) who argue that women who follow women's study courses are more inclined to start identifying with feminism.

The interviewed participants were well aware of the stigma against feminism. Six of the women agreed to there being a stigma against Feminism in both Ireland and the Netherlands to this day. None of the participants seemed to hold any stigmas against feminism themselves. Six of the participants made use of newspapers (online and/or printed) on a frequent level, however none of them have noticed stigmas against feminism in the articles with correlates with the findings of this dissertation during the analyzing of the four Irish and Dutch newspapers. Newspapers of both countries handled the topic in a similar way and the Irish sun stood out in promoting feminism and educating its readers

The conclusion is that taking on a feminist identity is difficult because it is an stigmatized identity that is not necessarily visible for the outside world as well as it being an identity that can be voluntarily chosen and not determined by race or culture. Feminism still has a long way to go until it reaches absolute equality but it is on the right track.

Word of Thanks

This thesis would not have been possible without a few people. First of all, I would like to thank my Mom and Dad for always supporting me with whatever I plan to do and for always believing in me, even when I can't see the light anymore. They are amazing people that have inspired me to always go on and try my best.

Next I would really like to thank my best friend Koren Cashner and her mom Kathryn Cashner because they offered me so much support with this dissertation and the many other versions of it and have answered the weirdest questions for me. They have helped me with so many things and have offered me their advice and opinions on the dissertation. Thank you so much.

Lastly I would like to thank Dr. Tromble with pointing me in the right direction and advising me well, it is much appreciated.

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Chapter 1: Statement of the issue

This bachelor dissertation examines whether there is a noticeable stigma against Feminism in the Netherlands and in the Republic of Ireland. The countries Ireland and the Netherlands were chosen, as they are two small western European Countries. Living in both countries has offered personal insight as well as the resources to reach the chosen target group. Both countries have a similar culture but differ in political views and earlier achievements of feminists. For example, abortion is not legal in Ireland whereas it has been legalized in the Netherlands since 1981 (United Nations, 2002, Ch. 3). Therefore it is interesting to compare these two countries on a topic as feminism to see whether the opinions and situation is similar or different. The central question that this research addresses is: 'Is there a stigma visible in the Netherlands and Ireland against Feminism?'

Sub questions significant to the main question are:

- 1) Are young women refusing to identify themselves as feminists?
- 2) Does sexism relate to their willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?
- 3) What are the views of these young women of other feminists?
- 4) Are the newspapers that they read influential on their self-identification as feminists?

To answer that, this thesis looks at the image of feminism in selected Irish and Dutch online newspapers. Interviews with several young women were held to assess their personal beliefs. Finally the results of various studies on the effects of sexism on the negative stigma against feminism are reviewed. The aim of this research is to investigate a possible connection between the portrayal of feminism in the online newspapers and young women who might be refusing to identify themselves as feminists. This research is motivated by the question whether women are still identifying as feminists.

In 2011 there were General Elections in Ireland. Only 86 of the 566 running candidates were female, which is 15%. Of those 86 women, 25 were successful enough to gain a Dáil seat, out of a total of 166 seats. This is also a total of 15%. In 2014 this increased to 27 seats and 16%. "This is the best representation women have ever had in Dáil Éireann, but it is an increase of only 5% in the last 35 years" (Womenforelection, 2016, par.8).

According to the website Womenforelection, only 95 women have been elected in the Republic of Ireland since the establishment of the State in 1918; the Dáil has never been less than 84% male (Womenforelection, 2016, par.10).

The progress of women's rights, that has made it possible for women to participate in politics, can mostly be credited to groups of organized women. The suffragettes, for example, in the first part of the 1900s and the women's movement in the 60s brought awareness to the issues of the unfair position of women. These social movements demanded change, and managed to achieve numerous triumphs on behalf of women (Luddy, 2012, Par. 2-5). However, over the years, the names that are used to describe these women changed numerous times. For example, the women's rights movement was first referred to as 'suffragettes'. Later in the 1960s these movements were occasionally called 'women's libbers'. This evolved to women who were part of the movements being referred to as 'feminists' (Evans, 2010, p.33). To this day the term 'Feminism' is being used both in a positive and negative way. It all seems to depend upon the level of agreement with or accepting the goals of feminists.

Comments online are often made about the stereotypical role of women. Think along the lines of: *'het enige recht van een vrouw is het aanrecht'* (Hartmans, 2014, Par. 3), which basically translates to the 'fact' that women only belong in the kitchen and should not get too loud with their opinions. Many women experience insults and comments about appearance and weight. These occur not only in online chat areas, but also in national newspapers such as the Dutch 'Telegraaf'. An example of an article describes how women are expected to be in great shape when the summer comes. It argues that women need to be waxed, polished and dressed fashionably, which is not always painless (Telegraaf, 2014, Gewaxt, opgedoft en gepolijst).

Most people would never voice the opinion that women should not have equal rights. In the article 'The Big, Bad F Word — Feminism' it claims that less than 25 percent of Western European women believe themselves to be feminists (A Lofty Existence, 2011, Par.3). This is happening because either women do not really believe that they are equal to men, or there is something wrong with the word 'feminist' that makes women uncomfortable with the title. During the last decade, researchers have been examining women's self-identification as feminists as well as the opinions they have on equal rights and activism intended for women. This will be further researched in chapter three.

Chapter 2: Research Methods

The main topic of this dissertation, and thus the main focus of this research is whether there is a stigma against feminism in the Netherlands and Ireland. To gain more information about the possible stigma against feminism different resources were consulted. The research methods that are used in this dissertation are a combination of both desk as well as field research. This chapter offers an outline of the used methodology to answer the research questions that were mentioned above.

Qualitative Research methodology

Qualitative methodology is the leading research method of this dissertation. To quote Denzin and Lincoln, this type of study has the main goal “to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p.3). This method offered the opportunity to come in direct contact with young women on the subject of feminism and a stigmatized identity.

Desk Research

Review of literature

To better understand the current situation of the problem, a review of literature was essential. The key objective of it is to set this dissertation within the already existing body of conducted research and so that it can offer context to the research question. For this the style of a systematic review was chosen. This style looks at several different studies and offers an extensive summary of the current relevant studies that are available.

Newspaper articles

To further investigate a possible stigma against feminism this thesis makes use of the online websites of four big newspapers. For the Dutch research ‘De Telegraaf’ & ‘Het Algemeen Dagblad’ were used and for the Irish research there was made use of ‘The Irish Sun’ and ‘The Irish Times’. The Telegraaf and The Irish sun are very similar in target group and style of media, just like Het Algemeen Dagblad and The Irish Sun are also similar in target group and style.

Articles were analyzed and used to answer the research question. The articles were analyzed by looking at the target group, identifying whether or not stereotypes were used, looking at the event that led to the article being written and by seeing if the author used factual material to support the information. Other than that, the search functions of the websites were used to determine whether there is a large amount of articles about feminism and what the general tone of the articles is.

Interviews

Individual Interviews

Eight young women ranging in age from 20 to 25 were interviewed with the use of emailing and participated with the research. The participants for the interviews were recruited with the use of social media such as Instagram, Twitter and Tumblr. During the recruiting, the advert requested women in the age of 18 to 25 with time for a few questions per email. There was no mention of feminism or women or equality to ensure that the participants were not biased. This offered the chance to recruit anonymously and from a wide set of classes and social groups as well as different views on the topic of feminism and different identities to represent the society as it currently is.

The anonymity offered a safe environment so the participants were able to be honest. Four of them were Dutch citizens and four of them were Irish. The interviews were held separately and the participants did not interact with each other. All participants were asked the same set of questions.

Materials

Before conducting the interviews the Ethnics form was filled in, which can be found in Appendix I. Next the participants were requested to fill out a form of consent. A copy of this can be found in Appendix II of the dissertation. The interviewees were offered the definitions of the terms used, which can be found in Chapter 3. The interviews were held through email communication. A copy of every participants interview results is included in Appendix III. The interview discussed the idea of how the participants view feminism, why they do not identify as feminists, if they feel like media such as newspapers influences feminism and whether or not sexism plays a role in the stigma against feminism.

Interview Procedure

The participants were all given the consent form. By returning this they agreed with the terms and for their personal information and opinions to be used. The next logical step of the study involved conducting in dept theoretical research to prepare relevant questions that would answer the sub questions. This resulted in eight open questions, two per sub question. Each participant was introduced to the subject through a standard introduction combined with the questions and the definitions that were used for this thesis. These interview questions were then emailed to the participants to be answered. All the interviews were returned in the time span of a week. To guarantee confidentiality, all participants were requested to provide a pseudonym that would be used instead of their actual name during the interview and in the dissertation. The names will also be replaced with a pseudonym in the Appendix.

Participant Demographics

The first participant chose the pseudonym “Grace”. She is a 24-year-old Irish woman, currently living in Swords. She indicated that she is of higher middle class and has a full time job.

The second participant goes by the name of “Charlotte”. She is a 22-year-old Irish female, living in Bray. She is of higher middle class and is a student.

The third participant is “Abbey”. At the moment she is 23 years, Irish, and lives in Dublin. She is a student and qualifies as higher class.

The fourth participant is “Holly”. She is a 21-year-old Irish student living in Cork. She is of lower middle class.

The fifth participant is “Eef”. She is a 24-year-old Dutch woman, currently living in Eindhoven. She is of middle class and is in between jobs.

The sixth participant is “Maarit”. She is 23 years old, Dutch, and is living in Enschede. She is a stay at home mom and she is of middle class.

The seventh participant goes by the name of “Veerle”. She is a 21-year-old Dutch woman, living in Aalsmeer. She is of higher middle class and has a part time job while studying.

The eighth participant is “Roos”. She is a 25-year-old Dutch woman who lives in Amsterdam and she is a fulltime worker.

Chapter 3: Review of Literature

The subject of sexism has been connected to feminism since women movement groups were founded. One of the main goals of feminism is to end such discrimination. Therefore, it is vital to clarify both terms as they will be used in this dissertation. The term stigmatization will be clarified as well.

Definition of Feminism

Ever since the late 1980s, a third wave of feminism started to emerge. This 'third wave' of feminism focuses on new goals and ideals. From the beginning of the 1990's the term 'third feminist wave' was used for this group (Orr, 1997, p. 29). Initially this new wave is hard to see when one is not looking for it. Without the exceptions of, for example, the editor of the Dutch feminist magazine 'Opzij', or the documentary 'Beperkt houdbaar' made by Sunny Bergman, we do not see much of a Third-wave feminism in the traditional media. During the second wave of feminism, both the media and the political sphere were filled with expressions of feminists and feminism seemed omnipresent, it now stays meticulously silent. Young feminists are active in gender studies and women's studies centers at universities, but are today's feminists also present in the general public on all levels?

A primary goal of feminism is to achieve equality for women and men in all aspects. The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes feminism as followed:

“feminism noun

BrE /'femənɪzəm/ ; NAmE /'femənɪzəm/

The belief and aim that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men; the struggle to achieve this aim. Origin: late 19th cent.: from French féminisme.”

Third wave feminism

The metaphor of waves is one that can be sometimes problematic. Thus it is not true that waves always correspond to specific ages and generations, historical era or specific feminist ideas. The second wave of feminism, for example, is associated with political feminism. However, a feminist text from the 1970s does not necessarily mean it is about political feminism. A young feminist in 2015 may have ideas that are generally associated with the second wave of feminism, instead of the third wave of feminism.

Therefore, the term "wave" is incomplete, but it can be useful for indicating a set of paradigms, priorities and ideas that occurred in a certain period of time.

Feminists of the third wave, for example, generally emphasize the differences between women (and feminists), rather than focusing on agreements and "sisterhood". Other than that, they make heavy use of the Internet and little use of large-scale offline political activism (Brouwers & Pouwer, 2010, p. 5).

This is not to say that there are no young, contemporary feminists who think all women are fighting the same fight and who are completely offline political activist. Feminists do not always agree on all subjects. There are many different kinds of feminists, all with a different focus: postmodern, sex-positive, gay, anarchistic, black, queer etc. Moreover, there are also differences in ideas and content, within these subgroups.

The reason that this dissertation uses the word feminism instead of 'uniform feminism' is therefore not to lose sight of the diversity of feminist positions. Precisely that plurality is important for third wave feminism. The third wave feminists focus their attention specifically on the differences between themselves and the second wave, mainly to rebel against the idea of rigidity that exists about the second wave (Henry, 2004). Third wave feminists often emphasize the differences between women (and feminists) in ideology, sexuality, ethnicity, class, nationality, age, etc.

Feminist perspectives

In general, feminist ideas can be divided into three perspectives: equality thinking, differential thinking and deconstructive thinking (Buikema & Smelik, 1993). Equality thinking Feminism aims to eliminate the social differences between men and women. This is based on the idea that there are actually no fundamental differences between women and men. Differential thinking feminism focuses on positively identifying the differences between women and men. This perspective does not see the differences between women and men as a problem but it does recognize the fact that women and what they do are less appreciated. Deconstructivistic thinking feminism questions the concepts of masculinity and femininity. They see the dichotomy between men and women as something constructed through language in our society. The fact that the third wave feminists started to use the Web has a very obvious reason: during the first and second feminist wave there was no Internet yet (Braidotto, 1996, H.6, Par.1).

Definition of Sexism

Within feminism there are two distinct streams: women's equality to men, and women's equal rights and treatment. For that reason, it is essential to be familiar with what the word sexism means and, above all, to understand how this relates to feminism. Sexism is a very important problem that feminism is constantly trying to eliminate. Sexism and the negative stigma against feminism go hand in hand as one feeds the other. Sexism is seen everywhere; in the media, online, on the streets, at work. Many people are unaware of the true meaning of the term sexism. Often, people think that this term is associated only with sex. However, although this is indeed an element of sexism in the media, the definition of sexism is not as simple as is thought.

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary describes feminism as followed:

“sexism

[mass noun]sex'izm/'sɛksɪz(ə)m/

Prejudice, stereotyping, or discrimination, typically against women, on the basis of sex: sexism in language is an offensive reminder of the way the culture sees women”

In the term sexism, sex is not meant as an activity but is used in relation to the genders. Sexism is the same as gender discrimination. Discrimination is the exercise of treating a particular group in the populace less fairly than others often because of their culture, race, wealth or sex. When talking of feminism and equal rights for all sexes, Rothenberg says that sexism "involves the subordination of women by men" (Rothenberg, 1988, p.6). One of the primary goals in the feminist agenda is to eradicate sexism and gender discrimination and create the equality of men and women. Alena Veselá (2012) claims that gender discrimination is separated in two different categories; direct and indirect. Direct gender discrimination is connected to the unjust and unfair demeanor towards a person in comparison with others in on the basis of his or her sex. Indirect gender discrimination can be defined as the circumstances in which the law, politics or state clearly see one sex as superior to the other and show this with the help of benefits or rules (Veselá, 2012, p.28). Even though some people are still unsure whether feminism and sexism have anything in common, the definitions above show that feminism is necessary to form and support the fight of ever-present sexism. Feminism represents equality and at the same time it struggles against gender discrimination in society. Therefore, feminism and sexism are two terms that are crucial to be aware of in order to live in a society focused on equality without any prejudices.

The Portrayal of Women in the Media

The media is frequently used in all modern societies. The mass media is a foremost source of news and entertainment that is being offered to the general public. The main goal of the mass media is providing information to the people by broadcasting advertisements, entertainment, and news. This is done through a variety of mediums such as 'online' media: (TV, Films, Internet, Radio) but also as 'offline' media: (Newspapers, Magazines, Posters, Banners, and Billboards) Through these different mediums the media is able to shape ideas, behavior and beliefs of people. Even though the media has a positive effect in spreading information and entertainment, there are also negative aspects. One of these problems is the one-dimensional gender portrayal in the media commonly resulting in stereotyping women and presenting an unrealistic representation of them. Women are often depicted as mothers or sexual objects (Roberts, 1979, p. 66-72).

The times that they are shown as independent human beings with successful careers while not having to take care of a family is limited. Often in advertisements, women are testing a new detergent or shown to be cooking for their families. In advertisements that are focused on men, they are sexual objects used to please the men (Veselá, 2012, p. 30).

The portrayal of women in the media has always been unequal in comparison to men. It often has depicted women to be nothing more than objects to be used, trophies to be shown off, and toys to be mistreated. It has also created an unrealistic definition of beauty that women should strive to achieve. According to Stephanie Nicholl Berberick, who is the author of 'The Objectification of Women in Mass Media: Female Self-Image in Misogynist Culture' three studies have shown that the relations between sexist beliefs, objectification of others and media exposure are all in correlation with each other (Berberick, 2011, p. 2-3).

"... Also, men compare the women in their lives to what they see on television screens, in magazines, and on billboards. Both the self and society has suffered because of the objectification, sexism, exploitation and assessment" (Berberick, 2011, p. 2).

Scholar Viren Swami claims that sexism is mostly visible where beauty ideals and practices are severely consumed (Swami, 2010, p.367). In societies build by men, the roles and constitutional rights meant for women are substandard to those meant for men. Therefore, sexism plays a fundamental role in the ongoing repression of women.

The continuation of patriarchal constructions and opinions should result in considerable relations between sexist beliefs and the support of beauty ideals and practices (Swami, 2010, p. 366). The damaging beauty ideal which is promoted by the Western media and accepted in large by both the Irish and the Dutch patriarchal society has caused radical increases in plastic surgery, a number of sexual assaults, and an overwhelming amount of eating disorders (Lintel, P. van, 2010). The objectification of women is not limited to inducing states of shame and fear in women but it also encourages the handling of them as if they are merely objects to use as men please. The sexual exploitation is particularly present in advertising. Advertisements are impossible to escape or ignore, as they are everywhere. Extremely skinny and barely covered bodies appear in magazines and on the backs of busses. Pelvic shots and thighs are broadcasted on the television and in newspapers, magazines, and billboards (Berberick, 2011, p.8).

Representation of Women in the Media

Women receive less airtime than men. 50.5% of the Dutch population is female. However, when looking at a talk show or the news only one in five people that get the opportunity to talk are female. A study on the Media Emancipation Effect shows that since the second feminist wave, those responsible for television content are no longer consciously trying to improve the equality of genders on TV (Michielsens, Saeys & Demoor, 2003, p. 11).

The first reason according to the researchers is that the problem has been solved many years ago and is no longer a priority anymore (Michielsens, Saeys & Demoor, 2003, p. 11-12). A second reason is the increase of women in journalism. This might have brought a more accurate image to television programs. Unfortunately, practice shows a different reality.

Research done by Dagblad DAG reveals that almost 80% of the domestic coverage in the Netherlands involves men. In the run up to International Women's Day Dagblad DAG counted the numbers of names of men and women in the domestic news. After the results were published, it was shown that women account for only 22% of the news (Dagblad Dag, 2008, Par. 3). This study also showed that 22% of women who were counted, were often not the politicians, businesswomen or scientists shown in interviews of males. For example, when looking at 'De Volkskrant' the score of woman nearly doubled when counting schoolgirls talking about their exams and the wife of a complaining mussel fisherman.

Journalist Hans Beerekamp has done a quantitative study on ‘the talking heads’ on television. The results are similar to the study of the daily newspapers. Of the 296 counted speakers there are 75 women, which is just over a quarter. In the top 100 their share drops to 16%. Five out of the six regularly appearing guests and experts are therefore males (Beerekamp, 2008, Par. 20).

Definition of Stigma

The Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines stigma as followed:

“Stigma

[noun] /'stigmə/

A mark of disgrace associated with a particular circumstance, quality, or person: the stigma of mental disorder to be a non-reader carries a social stigma”

Stigmatization of Feminism

Women still face gender discrimination in their everyday lives. Ever since the Internet became accessible to everyone it has become very difficult to escape from it. The amount of sexism has negatively influenced the outlook on feminism by the general public. Johanna Lee, a Harvard student recently came out as a feminist:

“I am a feminist.

Whew, there, I said it. I hope other people aren’t judging me right now. Wait, they are. I can tell by their raised brows and inquisitive looks. Maybe I should have held my tongue...

Now they are going to think that I am a crazy, radical liberal who never shaves, likes to burn bras and believes that the male species should be eradicated from planet earth. Wait, let me try that again.

I am a feminist” (Lee, J. 2015, Par. 2).

Feminism continues to be a controversial topic. In theory, feminism promotes the concept that people of each gender should have equal rights and opportunities. It is worth examining the divide between feminism in theory and in practice, as there are so many people who are not identifying themselves as feminists. Although there are national celebrities or politicians such as Amy Huberman in Ireland or Ayaan Hirsi Ali in the Netherlands discussing and supporting feminism, negative associations and misunderstandings about the movement still exist.

“The problem that many feminists face is the stigma attached to the word ‘feminism’. The difficulty of getting people to join the movement is the fear of being labelled a ‘feminist’. Do you believe women deserve a chance at education? Do you believe women deserve equal opportunity and equal wages in the workplace? Do you believe women deserve the same rights as men? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then, congratulations, you are a feminist! If you answered no, then I’m sorry to inform you that you are a misogynistic, sexist person. Really, it’s one or the other” (Phoon, 2015, Par. 3).

The word “Feminism” has gotten an increasingly negative association in society. While doing research for this research by simply googling, “Feminists should..” It became clear that the suggested words or sentences were all insults aimed at women who want to support and strive for equal rights.

Kay Deaux, who is the author of the article Social Identification, states that social identities are characteristics of self-concepts build on being part of a certain group. With the help of these identities we feel safely positioned within the distinct group. These social identities are a part of how we choose to define ourselves and they often help expand our self-identities. Taking on a feminist standpoint can possibly be the start of an identity crisis. A probable way for feminism to cause a certain identity crisis could be because feminist beliefs dispute numerous of the opinions and practices of society. This causes it to be seen as a stigmatized identity. Feminism is stigmatized as an interest group of extreme man-haters and lesbians. Lesbians are another group that are being stigmatized in this modern society for practicing a sexuality that is not accommodating the idea that one should be exclusively attracted to the opposite sex. The lesbians’ connection with feminism has partly caused the unfavorable outlook on feminism (Deaux, 1996, p. 777- 798).

Bargad and Hyde have conducted a study on younger women and middle-aged women and their self-identity as feminists. It turned out that women who were in their mid-twenties described preliminary resistance in regards to feminism because of the negative media portrayal (Bargad & Hyde, 1991, p.181-201).

However, women in their mid-forties, who were feminists at the time of the second feminist wave, saw feminism as a beneficial and empowering movement. Feminists who were part of the second wave were in the centre of defining and developing the feminist movement with no social media or internet around and as a result these feminists were not exposed to the same level and amount of negative media attention. Modern day feminists are occasionally shown in the media as being less useful and significant as the previous waves of feminism (Bargad & Hyde, 1991, p.181-201).

A Dutch article in the *Telegraaf* called 'Is feminisme nog wel van deze tijd?' attempts to show the different opinions of women on feminism. A few of the interviewed women in these articles believe that feminism is part of history but has no place in the future as all goals have already been achieved (such as suffrage rights and being able to work in any kind of job). The term 'post feminism' is frequently used to illustrate women who deem feminism unnecessary since women have already accomplished several of their second feminism wave goals. This causes young women to struggle with their self-identity when it comes to feminism, as it is difficult to be part of a certain movement that is often described in most western European culture as being dead (Aronson, 2003, p. 903 – 922).

The reasons why feminism is feared in the current society are examined in the works of Baumgardner and Richards. The authors explain that feminism is often described as what it is not rather than what it is (Baumgardner and Richards, 2000). For example, taking a look at Pat Robertson, who is an American former Southern Baptist minister and who has a strong position in the media and is a powerful CEO. This influential man said "The feminist agenda is not about equal rights for women. Instead it is about a socialist, anti-family political movement that encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism and become lesbians" (NY Times, 1992, Par. 3 & 4). Pat Robertson has acknowledged this in a hyperbolic manner intended to prevent people from turning into feminists. Baumgardner and Richards claim that people left of Robertson's opinions could say: "You know this rap: some feminists think all sex is rape, all men are evil, you have to be a lesbian to be a feminist, you can't wear Girlie clothes or makeup, married women are lame, et cetera" (2000, p.62).

Education is an additional aspect linked to the feminist identity. The author Renzetti explains that as young women advance through their education, their support for feminism has a tendency to increase (1987, p. 265-277). Most women are not too familiar with the concept of feminism until they attend university. In university, women's studies courses are usually the place where a deeper sense of the concept of feminism is first introduced.

Macalister argues that women studies courses have many reflective and positive results on the student's self-identity (1991, p.283-292). According to the studies of both Macalister as well as the studies of Bargad and Hyde (1991, p.181-201), an increase in the development of the feminist identity was seen as consequence of attending women's studies courses.

Liss, O'Connor, Morosky, and Crawford researched the aspects and associations of developing a feminist identity. The women who participated in the study were given examples and definitions of feminist ideology, collectivism and individualism. Those who identified as a feminist were prone to be positive of feminists, to consider collectivist action, as well as to have liberal and sometimes even radical ideologies. These women were also less probable to think all feminists to be lesbians (2001, p. 124-133). A study conducted by Myaskovsky and Wittig also showed that women who already identify as feminists expected to have a positive judgment of the feminist interest group and of other feminists. The women also recognized discrimination against women more easily (1997, p. 861-883).

The study of Sherman and Witte showed that women who already identify as feminists will experience multiple positive effects because of this. For example they are more likely to look critically at traditional gender roles and question them, as well as understanding and recognizing women's oppression. This makes it less likely for them to be self-silencing (2002, p. 1075-1083).

Negative encounters with sexism could change the way that young women see feminism. According to the studies conducted by Buschman & Lenart this is because sexism challenges the ideology and perception of everything being ok as it is (1996, p. 59-75). For instance, when a woman experiences sexual prejudice or harassment, this is related to identification as feminist. If she faces sexual discrimination at work or at school, she is more likely to develop a feminist outlook (Renzetti, 1987, p. 265-277).

The studies are contradictory whether the age of women plays a role in identifying as a feminist. For example, the research of Schnittker, Freese and Powell established that women who were young adults for the period of the second wave of feminism have a higher likelihood to identify as feminists than women who were born subsequent to the second wave of feminism (2003, p. 607-622). However, Huddy, Neely and Lafay stated that young women are actually just as probable become a feminist as older generations (2000, p. 309-351). These conflicting results fuel the confusion related to the feminist identity.

A frequent seen matter in the feminist literature is that women tend to agree with feminist philosophy, they recognize the improvements that were implemented because of the feminist movement, and feel negative of gender inequality but still refuse to identify as feminists themselves. A significant motive for this is that women might steer clear of feminism because of the negative association the word 'feminism' has received (Burn, Aboud & Moyles, 2000, p. 1081-1090).

The word 'feminism' has a negative association because several have effectively created the false hypothesis that all feminists do not like men and have no respect for women who choose to stay at home (Huddy, Neely & Lafay, 2000, 309-351). The concept of feminism has become coupled with expressions such as 'feminazi' and 'man hating'. Identifying is an option and since it is frequently stigmatized, women are not that eager to come out as a feminist. However, studies show that women who do not choose to identify as a feminist are more often concerned about the reactions of others than the women who do identify as a feminist (Williams & Wittig, 1997, p. 885-904). According to studies such as the one of Zucker, a number of women find a way between self-identifying as a feminist and the feminist philosophy by using sayings such as 'I am not a feminist, but...' (2004, p. 423-435 & Aronson, 2003, p. 903-922).

Aronson conducted a research in which several women were interviewed. During these interviews she found five different answers: 'I am a feminist', 'I am a feminist but..', 'I am not a feminist, but..', 'I am a fence sitter' and lastly 'I never thought about feminism'. The researcher stated that over half of the young women who participated in her interviews were hesitant about feminism. These women claimed to be 'on the fence', implicating that they accepted some ideas of feminism but rejected others. Thus, they successfully avoided a definitive identification of themselves as a feminist to circumvent a possible negative association (Aronson, 2003, p. 903-922).

The authors Quinn and Radtke claimed that women find it difficult to accept a feminist identity but they also had issues with completely rejecting it. This study showed that that women often categorized feminists into diverse types. This made their acceptance possible without having to consider themselves as feminists. The participants of the research separated feminists into two different groups; the first being a open-minded version which emphasized on the equality and rights of genders and the second being a negative extremist version which focused on 'hating men'. The women in the study did not want to be perceived as extremists, and this was the main reason for them not to self-identify as a feminist. However, the focus on equality for women was acknowledged making it hard for them to reject the label completely (Quinn & Radtke, 2006, p. 196).

Chapter 4: Results of Research

Online newspapers

De Telegraaf

'De Telegraaf' is a well-known Dutch newspaper. The printed edition of the newspaper has a daily circulation of over 450.000. It can be seen as a newspaper that focuses on sensational and sport related news and has a broad, primarily conservative and populist audience of readers. The online version of the newspaper has a daily visiting quotation of 500.000 registered visitors (TMG, 2016). When entering the search term of 'feminism' there were 30 available articles that came back as results. However, oddly enough 12 results were about soccer matches. Seven other results had nothing to do with feminism either as they were connected to a popular tv show or about passwords leaking from Spotify premium. Either the search function of the website is not working correctly or there really are only 11 articles related to feminism on the website.

The first article that was used for this dissertation is of the Dutch Newspaper 'De Telegraaf'. The article is called (translated) 'Feminism is the freedom of choice'. To summarize the article, the author explains how she is a feminist and still wears dresses and red lipstick and that although she values her freedom of whatever she wants to wear, she also values equal chances and thus she wants to continue being a feminist and raise her children accordingly. The article is written by Marjolein Hurkmans who is a feminist and a journalist. The author frequently writes articles and blogposts on the specific 'vrouw' (women) part of the website. This is a part of 'De Telegraaf' with the target group being Dutch women in the ages of 30-55 years (brightsideoflife, 2016, par. 2). The event that led to the article being written was the international women's day on March 8th, 2015. The stigma of feminism is discussed briefly in the article. The article has a positive outlook on feminism and shows that one will not have to change their hobbies or likes to become a feminist.

The author starts with a flashback where a boy found it odd to believe that she was a feminist. She said that she was 19 and found him very handsome. But she was also of the age where she still valued her principles highly and preferred to propagate them throughout the entire day with gusto.

The boy was surprised that she had nice hair, make up and clothing and did not find them fitting for a feminist. The author then continues with the question if the readers had been able to compose an image of her. The dungarees type with short hair, orthopedic shoes and rampant armpit hair. No, of course not. She says that she still has cute curls. And red lipstick. She prefers to wear dresses, likes knitting and baking sausages, she love romantic comedies and new shoes. But above all she loves freedom of choice. She chooses to color her lips. She buys beautiful lingerie because she like to do so herself. That her husband is glad of that, is fine, but not the approach. (Hurkmans, 2015, par. 1-5)

The second article used of 'De Telegraaf' is called 'Hillary, let the catfight begin'. In summary this article is about whether or not there are enough women in top positions in the business life and how Hillary Clinton is being a prime example. The article is written by Bert Dijksta who is a journalist of 'De Telegraaf' and is posted on the 'vrouw' part of the website just like the previous article. The event that led to the article being written is a website which is created by the minister of Education, Culture and Science, the website she created is called www.navigerennaardetop.nl which is meant for women with the ambition to make it in the business world. The article states that the biggest enemies of women are other women (Dijkstra, 2016, par. 1-8).

The author of the article claims that the website was doomed to fail. He argues that it only creates more misery on the emancipation front. According to Bert Dijkstra, Ms. Günel – the founder of Woman Capital - snorts while saying that it is disrespectful and insulting that this website is needed. He continues with quoting her and finds it necessary to note that she talks with a pout. According to the article she said that again it is the women who themselves need to put themselves out there. Dijkstra claims that this is a rather strange phrase and asks who else would need to put the women out there? Then he continues that this is not a discussion to have now. Dijkstra claims that it is dangerous to let women discuss among themselves about the strengthening of their position in society as he says it will not take long before they will start to pull out each other's hairs. (Dijkstra, 2016, par. 3-4)

As can be seen, in the first article there is a mentioning of the stigma as discussed earlier in this dissertation whereas the second article is more negative towards feminism as it is perceived as whiny ("..with a pout") and believes that feminist are only fighting each other.

Het Algemeen Dagblad

‘Het Algemeen Dagblad’ has a daily circulation of 570.000 and is (after ‘De Telegraaf’) the second best paid newspaper of the Netherlands. The focus of the newspaper is claimed to be neutral without a political or religious tie. When it combines the results of readers of the printed edition, the online website and the mobile app it has 2 million readers a day (De Persgroep Nederland, 2016). When entering the term feminism, there are 108 results. This is considerably more than ‘De Telegraaf’.

Most of the results are actually about feminism or the position of women. However, what is noticeable is that many of the articles about feminism are related to nude feminists. The first four pages, enough for 40 results entailed 7 articles about topless feminists or completely naked feminists. Instead of simply reporting on the event of action, it had to state the fact that they were topless in the title and multiple times in the article itself.

The third article that will be used is of the Dutch Newspaper ‘Het Algemeen Dagblad’. It states that the classical feminism has died and that we should celebrate the differences between men and women instead of trying to make everything equal. It also states that feminism denied the human nature and that we have to go back to what our hormones tell us to do (Reumer, 2009, Par. 1-17). The article is written by biologist and professor paleontology Jelle Reumer. It is written for the target group of the newspaper with an interest in feminism and biology.

This target group is focused on men and women of 20 years and older who are having a broad interest and who have an above average income (Krantenaanbiedingen, 2016, Par. 3). The event that led to the article being written is a letter correspondence between two readers, Andreas and Naema, who discussed gender roles, feminism and love. The writer makes use of several biological facts such as women and men having different chromosomes and different hormones but it is also heavily opinionated as can be seen in the below. The author describes how it is a good thing that classical feminism is dead.

Jelle Reumer says that the classical feminism is targeting the biological differences between men and women. According to him it is a distasteful ideal that everything must be equal. This ideal is, according to Reumer, that all children will go to middle school and all mothers will go to work while dressed in overalls, with pixie cut hair and flat shoes. The author is glad that this is a rare sight by now. He says that the classical feminism is dead because it denied human nature.

According to him, the woman may be female again and the man can be a man again. He continues to argue that nature chased the equality ideology through the back door, straight to the rubbish heap where the rest of the 20th century was already turning to compost. (Reumer, 2009, Par. 13-14)

The fourth article is also from the Dutch newspaper 'Het Algemeen Dagblad' and is called 'The Myth of the woman as a better human'. The main subject of the article is the Netherlands needing a third feminist wave as there is still room for improvement left to develop the position of the native and immigrant women of the Netherlands. The author argues that women are neither better nor worse than men. They are only different because of historic and cultural events. The article is written by Jolande Withuis who is a Dutch sociologist and a feminist as well as a writer. It is written for the target group of the newspaper with an interest in feminism and emancipation. There is seemingly no clear event that has led to this article being written, it does not state a current problem that it ties into nor does it mention the cause of it being written.

Jolande Withuis starts with explaining that the Netherlands in 2007 urgently needs a third-wave feminism for immigrant and native women. She argues that however great the differences in positions, perspectives and problems are, the subordination of both immigrant and native women stems from the idea that men and women are two completely different types of people, and that this dichotomy should remain. Withuis continues that in its most extreme, most sexualized form this idea leads to an apartheid system that segregates men and women and prohibits free to go about the streets. She says that we can still spend years arguing on care and maternity leave and the of the ideal work week, it continues to muddle through as long as we implicitly or explicitly assume that gender determines our identity, personality, intelligence, ambition and competence. The author claims that women are not the better or the worse sex. According to her women and men have been attributed such diverse needs and talents over the centuries, and their true nature and destiny is so much twisted that only one conclusion rest: the sexual difference does not exist (Withuis, 2007, par. 17-19).

The first article of 'Het Algemeen Dagblad' mentions the stigma and is positive about not seeing such radical feminists lately. It also argues that feminism is not needed as it is a fact that men and women are not equal and that it should not be fought. The second article is focused on women mostly and that there is no difference between the two sexes and that the Netherlands needs a new wave of feminism. There were no other articles in this newspaper that discussed the stigma of feminism or had a stigma against the movement itself.

The Irish Sun

The Irish Sun has 306.000 daily readers (Newsbrandsireland, 2013, p.8). The target group of the newspaper is mostly readers who prefer their news delivered in an entertaining way much like the Dutch 'Telegraaf'. The Irish edition shares some content with the British editions but entails mainly Irish news and editorial content. The Sun is a daily newspaper in print in the United Kingdom and Ireland. The Irish edition of the newspaper is based in Dublin and is known as the Irish Sun. The online version of the newspaper has 299.000 readers per day (Newsbrandsireland, 2013, p.8). When entering the term feminism there are 175 unique results. There are at least 7 articles that face the dilemmas of the stigma against feminism.

The fifth article is from the Irish newspaper 'The Sun'. The title of the article is 'The Internet Feminism' and it focuses on whether or not Internet is helping Feminism and the stigma that it faces online. The article describes how a new hashtag on twitter (#WomenAgainstFeminism) has taken over and shows thousands of young women giving reasons why they do not need feminism (Schoale, 2016, Par. 1-5). The author is Gayle Schoales who is deputy editor of Fabulous, a large glossy. The article was posted on the specific 'women' part of the website called Fabulous, a glossy owned by Irish Sun. This glossy has 267.000 readers for their printed form, which comes out every Sunday alongside with the newspaper and it aimed at women older than 20 years (Newsbrandsireland, 2013, p.8). The event that led to this article being written is the new hashtag that temporarily took over twitter. This gained popularity in the WAF movement, also known as the Women Against Feminism and it gained them 23.000 likes to their facebook group with the help of the tag. To write the article, the author made use of several interviews with for example Dr. Alison Phipps who is the director of Gender Studies at a university in England as well as several young women to test their opinions. The stereotypes of feminism are visible in the article as it shows examples of the women who are against the movement (Schoale, 2016, Par. 3-8).

“Twitter was the usual bubbling stew of political protest, celeb gossip, animal pics and hysterical One Directioners when a hashtag suddenly appeared out of nowhere and sent the Twittersphere into meltdown. Sprung from a Tumblr of the same name, #WomenAgainstFeminism (WAF) saw thousands of young women holding a handwritten placard explaining why they rejected the feminist label. While many saw it as a chance to make banal comments like “I don’t need feminism because I can admit I need my husband to open a jar for me” and “I don’t need feminism because I like masculine guys like 50 Shades’ Christian Grey”, the majority of supporters have focused on the idea that present-day feminism doesn’t represent them. Common sentiments include:

“I don’t need feminism because I want equality, not privilege,” and “I don’t need feminism because not all men are monsters”.” (Schoale, 2016, Par. 1-3)

The sixth article is one published in the ‘Irish sun’ and is called ‘Feminism is not a stick to beat men’. To summarize the article, the author Jane Moore explains how she is continuously confused with the concept of feminism as she feels like one day she is accused of being a feminazi while the next day she is lambasted for betraying the ‘sisterhood’ (Moore, 2015, Par. 1-4). It states that instead of the usual division between men and women there is a division between young women and women over 40. It ends with saying that if feminism is a way to beat men with a stick she wants no part of it. Since the article is published on the regular website of the Irish sun, the target group is not only women but also men who are interested in feminism and or equality. The event that led to the article being written was the author attending a West End play by Nicole Kidman about the scientist Rosalind Franklin who is the suspected pioneer being the discovery of DNA, which idea was later taken by three men who won the Nobel Prize for it. After the show the author heard several women complain about the men in the mindset of ‘all men are evil’ and felt differently about the situation which she wanted to express in this article (Moore, 2015, Par. 7-9).

“AFTER yet another week in which feminism has dominated the headlines, I find myself hankering after the days when it was a simple case of burning your bra and laying the disposable Bic razor to rest. For the modern-day interpretation of the word is leaving me as confused as Adam and Eve on Mother’s Day. Some weeks, when I express views that differentiate me from a doormat, I am accused of being a “feminazi”.

At other times, such as my recent support of, as I saw it, Chrissie Hynde's common-sense stance on her reckless youth, I am lambasted for a "betrayal of the sisterhood". It seems that instead of the age-old schism between men and women over feminism, there's a new divide on the block between young women and those over 40" (Moore, 2015, Par. 1-4).

The two articles both discuss the present stigma against feminism in Ireland and how the two authors are coping with it. The newspaper has more articles like this and it tries to make an effort to show that feminism does not equal hating men or wanting female domination. It tries to show that it strives for equal opportunities.

The Irish Times

The Irish times has a total daily print of 321.000. The typical reader is a professional with an above average income. The focus of the newspaper is on opinions and analyses as well as finance, technology and innovation. The newspaper has a unique visitors number of 427.000 readers (Newsbrandsireland, 2013, p.3). The target group of the newspaper is 100% adults, of which 51% men and 49% women. 22 % is under 35 year and 71% has reached the 3rd level of education (Irish times, 2016, Table 1). When entering the term feminism in the search option, there are 1218 results. However, not all of them are open to read as the website also holds an archive for the printed articles but those are not open if one does not hold an (paid) account.

The seventh article is of the 'Irish Times' newspaper, which focuses on the current 'Fempower' conference in Dublin and how the disadvantaged women of Ireland are excluded from feminist discourse as well as that the gender pay gap was getting wider instead of narrower. The author of the article is Elaine Edwards who is an Irish journalist for the newspaper the 'Irish Times'. The event that led to the article being written is the 'Fempower' conference in Dublin, which took place January 16th, 2016. The article states several facts such as that only 16% of those who receive a full contributory pension are women or the fact that 46,137 calls were made to help lines by women who have suffered violence.

"Fempower, a conference and activist fair organised by Independent Senator Katherine Zappone, also heard calls for greater gender balance in certain fields, including in the media. Highlighting areas where women are disadvantaged in society, Ms Zappone noted that just 16 per cent of those who receive a full contributory pension were women.

Just one in 10 of those on the boards of listed companies in Ireland were women and the gender pay gap had widened. Ms Zappone said the average life expectancy for Traveller women, at 70 years, was 11.5 per cent lower than that of women in the wider population. Some 46,137 calls were made last year to helplines providing support to women who had suffered violence " (Edwards, 2016, Par 1- 4).

The eight and final article of the 'Irish Times' is 'Womb with a view: Amy Annette and Esther O'Moore-Donohoe talk feminism', which is written by Amy Anette who has written a book called 'I call myself a feminist'. The book covers 25 women under the age of 30 who go into greater detail on their response to the title. Her own part of the book explains how she feels that everyday politics are taking up her own bodily space and she gives an example of how armpit hair can be seen as taking a stance (Anette, 2015, par. 1-9). The author really enjoyed deconstructing the everyday politics of the female body.

It continues to argue that her most political part of her body is most likely her womb. The target group of the article is the female part of the readers of the newspaper. She addresses them as 'we' in her article, making it more relatable for women. It mostly focuses on her opinions and beliefs and it does not cover many measurable facts.

"However, I realized after submitting the essay that I'd missed something out. I'd addressed my feminist facial hair, my equality elbows, my fair pay paunch, my intersectional stride but I'd not mentioned perhaps the most political part of me. [...] My womb. I mean, where do you start when it comes to wombs? [...] My womb, in contrast, is pretty chill right now and isn't going to be helping me get a seat on public transport any time soon. This I can talk about, this we can all understand. But what about the sense that they are public property? People march for them and pray for them and that's what's not easy to understand. How my internal pear-shaped pal is such a hot item of political debate which so many people and politicians take a position on. I do feel the reality between it and the rhetoric about it hard to comprehend. I sometimes feel this part of my body is part of a global conversation that I'm somehow not invited to. But my womb too deserves a voice!" (Annette, 2015, Par. 5-8).

Although there are many articles, barely any addressed the possible stigma against feminism. Only a handful can be found and in the last two years there is only one article that mentions the stigma. The newspaper is in between neutral and positive about the topic of feminism. No stigma can be found in the articles itself.

Results of the interviews

In this part of the thesis the results of the interviews will be presented. The complete transcripts of the interviews will be added to appendix III.

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist?

In reply to the first question, four of the respondents described themselves as feminists, two did not consider themselves to be feminists and two are unsure about the subject so they are not yet comfortable to make a final decision. This is similar to the research done by Zucker (2004), Aronson (2003), and Williams and Wittig (1997) who, when they conducted their research, also received a variety of answers to the same question. Arensons (2003) study is discussed in Chapter three, where it explained how she got various answers describing the participants' identity. For four of the women, their answers to the question were positive and convinced. Answers varied from "Yes, because I believe men and women are equally valuable and can develop the same abilities and intelligence" (Grace), "I do. Im a feminist because I believe that everyone is of equal importance. Feminism is a pathway to a future where egalitarianism will potentially be a reality" (Charlotte), "Yes, because I think feminism is useful at this moment, to gain equality and help people (mainly women) in getting the job they want, for example" (Eef) & "I identify as a feminist as personally I have been impacted by the inequalities that currently exist, especially in the workplace" (Roos).

In contrast to the four participants who identified themselves as feminists, two of the interviewees, Abbey and Holly were more hesitant to adopting the identity right away although Abbey got confident halfway through her answer and confirmed that she was in fact a feminist. "I don't know if I identify myself as a feminist. I do think everybody should have the same rights and opportunities. Your gender, skincolour, looks, etc. shouldn't matter. For example, when someone brings women down, I will tell them maybe they should think twice before they say something like that" (Holly). "I don't know if I would consider myself a feminist. It's not something I necessarily bring up, it isn't on my Facebook profile, and it's not an issue I particularly participate in, but it is something I often think of, because it's important to me in that it affects my life by the way people see and treat me or by the way I function in everyday society. I suppose I identify as a lowkey feminist primarily because ever since I've become educated in the inequalities between the way men and women are treated, I wish it were different. I wish I didn't have to sit in a class with one woman to every five men because women aren't as encouraged to pursue a career in the maths or sciences, Computer Information Systems for instance.

I wish I wasn't sexualized from an early age, which meant having more restrictions on what I should wear or the gender of friends I should have. I wish my friends weren't constantly harassed and terrified of sexual assault whenever they want to go out and have fun on a night out. I identify as a feminist because to be otherwise would mean to accept the treatment we take now and I can't stand for that" (Abbey).

Only Maarit and Veerle answered that they were not feminists. "No, I believe in the more traditional roles for man and women. Also I don't really mind if there is no absolute equality in household chores or if only the man would work. I believe we do not need to be equal to men as we just are not. We are not as strong and when I have kids it is only natural that I stay at home to take care of them" (Maarit). "I never gave it much thought so I guess not. I am in a job with mainly females in higher functions as well" (Veerle). The reasons Maarit gave for why she did not see herself as a feminist seem fitting to non-feminist views. Her answer fits well into the nature vs. nurture debate (Lorber, 2005).

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

The second subquestion ties in with the first one as it tries to explore how they feel about the movement in general, regardless of their own identification. It shares their personal definition. As mentioned earlier the right to abortion is currently taking over a lot of discussions in Ireland and it is interesting to see how none of the Irish girls mentioned that (nor anywhere else in the interview). It is interesting to see how Grace focuses mostly on the professional front of the problem and how she wishes that to improve whereas others such as Maarit who does not identify as a feminist mostly sees feminism as something that would change her home life. Maarit also seems to believe that all feminists are mothers who send their children to daycare to have a career. "It means I could maybe get treated with respect by men even in a professional environment and women would have a stronger wish to succeed professionally" (Grace). "Equality for man and women on all fronts, women work, kids go to daycare (or grandparents etc) and all household things are also shared equal" (Maarit).

Eef continues to make sure that she is not claiming women are better than men, and states that she believes in true equality. "To me it's mainly something I support and try to explain to my friends or family why it is actually helpful and that feminism is not trying to prove that women are better than men, but simply that feminists are in it for equality and not to prove women are superior" (Eef).

Roos mainly wants the sexism to stop and thinks feminism is playing a big role in achieving that. "The movement to me means striving for equality in all areas of life, changing long ingrained attitudes towards woman mainly but also my gender being used as an insult regarding other genders and creating safe spaces for women" (Roos). Abbey also associates feminism with sexism and is still busy with trying to overcome that with the help of feminism. "Living in a patriarchal household meant learning all the wrong things about what being a strong woman meant, and now I'm trying to unlearn those things. I'd been conditioned to mentally decrease the value of a woman because of the clothes she wears, or the interests she takes. I used to think femininity was weak, but now I'm constantly readjusting my understanding that the strongest thing a woman can be is herself" (Abbey).

Holly, who was unsure about being a feminist is supportive of the ideal of everyone being equal but does not view it as an outstanding movement that needs her sole attention. "I think it's really important people stick up for themselves and others. Everyone is equal, that's why I don't think feminism is more important or meaningful than other movements. All those movements are important to me" (Holly).

Both Veerle and Roos see it as a movement that focuses on equal rights in general even though Veerle seems to have lost hope in it ever happening. "If we go far back as to when it started I benefit from it now. I think it is good that people fight for equal rights even though in these times it shouldn't be necessary anymore. It makes me wonder whether men and women will ever be equal" (Veerle). "The movement to me means striving for equality in all areas of life, changing long ingrained attitudes towards woman mainly but also my gender being used as an insult regarding other genders and creating safe spaces for women" (Roos).

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in Ireland/The Netherlands?

When asked the above question, six of the women agreed to this. The responses of the participants who believed there was a stigma were equal to the studies by for example Burn, Aboud and Moyles (2000, p. 1081-1090) and Huddy, Neely and Lafay (2000, p. 309-351), which both claim that the word 'feminism' suggest the stereotype of feminists being manhaters.

"I believe feminism is especially stigmatized in Western Europe, the development of words and phrases like 'feminazi' and 'social justice warrior' that have been associated with the movement have been damaging as they are belittling the core beliefs of feminism and being used to mock those who support it making it harder for progress or pushes for changes to be taken seriously as people labeled in this way are seen as extreme and ridiculous. For me it has made me somewhat wary of revealing my stance on feminism until others have given an indication of their own feelings towards the matter" (Roos).

"Yes I believe so because a lot of people don't understand the meaning of it and assume that feminism is 'hating men and everything they do'. I don't think it's changed my personal identification but I just rather not tell some people that I'm a feminist" (Grace).

"Oh yes, most definitely. I would not say changed my personal identification but it made me realize who I am on a deeper perspective, and be comfortable with that person even if someone else is not." (Charlotte)

"Yes, I believe feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture. I didn't consider myself as a feminism, but my belief and your definition look pretty much the same.. So apparently I'm a feminist without knowing it myself" (Holly).

"Yes, I think that it's mainly caused me to be more defensive when I explain that I am a feminist. It has actually been the reason I got into feminism, because at first I thought about it as a negative thing. But the further I got to know what actual feminism is and what the goal is, I began to think of myself as a feminist" (Eef).

As can be seen above, the participants were aware of several of the negative stereotypes associated with feminists. Nonetheless, none of them expressed that they defined feminism in a negative manner. Abbey is aware of the stigma on feminism but believes that it is starting to lose the negative association in the Western European countries as of late.

"I believe feminism has been stigmatized from its conception, as is any social equality belief, as the majority of society disagreed with it and branded it as an angry rebellious movement. But I think it's starting to lose that stigma, particularly in current western European culture, as more and more people are educated and understand the reality of the inequality between the sexes and the necessity of feminism" (Abbey).

Only Maarit and Veerle do not believe that feminism is being stigmatized in Western European countries, which are also the only two women who do not identify as feminists. "No I don't, it's in fact promoted a lot and around me, I see that the stigma is more on people who don't really like the whole feminist point. The last part does change my personal identification because I feel old fashioned, but that wasn't the question" (Maarit). "Honestly I do not think it is. Also since I never felt like I had to fight for my rights as a female I do not think it changed my personal identification" (Veerle).

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

When asked the above question it became clear that the opinions differed greatly. Five of the women have experienced sexism in their daily lives and of those five women, and four of them believe that it is connected to their feminist identity. For Grace it means that it has helped to learn more about feminism "Yes, many times, especially in my working field (medicine) because it used to be a mostly male profession and many people still believe so. I think it's influenced me to learn more about feminism and keep my value present within myself, not letting what they say effect me at all" (Grace). Charlotte agrees that it has been a helping factor but also states that it is not the sole reason to identify as a feminist. "Yes I have, and that did influence me to engage in feminist actions but it is not the only influence" (Charlotte). Abbey is convinced that all women experience sexism and that it makes her wish for equality more but also states that feminism helped her identify the sexism around her. "I don't think there is a single woman who hasn't become the victim of sexism at least once in her life. Certainly everyday sexism influences my desire for equality, but it isn't really sexism itself. Because if you simply live inside a sexist bubble, you wouldn't even recognize sexism for what it is. But feminism helped me identify when I was victim to sexist actions or words, and showed me that I was not irrational for feeling affected by it" (Abbey).

Roos explains that sexism has helped her acknowledge the importance of feminism. "I have been a victim of sexism since my early years in high school where I was often treated as less than my male classmates, this only let me see just how important feminism is increased my desire to support it" (Roos). Eef states that she has experienced sexism but that it was the women's study courses that have helped her with identifying as a feminist. This connects to the studies done by both Macalister (1991) and Bargard and Hyde (1991) who state that women who follow women's study courses are more inclined to start identifying with feminism. "I've had minor things like catcalling happen to me, but also the kitchen jokes, weird looks when I say I don't want children and those kinds of things. I never experienced it badly and I don't think it made me more willing to "be" a feminist. That was mainly caused by studies about inequality, the fact that men and women don't get the same amount of money for the same kind of job, the fact that women are poorly represented in politics, etcetera" (Eef).

Three participants claim to have never experienced sexism before and thus it has also not led to them identifying as a feminist. "No, I can't remember something like that"(Holly). "No" (Maarit). "No never. Also I think sexism is just stupidity of the person rather than seeing women as less. I believe theres many good men out there" (Veerle). It is interesting to see how both Maarit and Veerle who are not feminists have not experienced sexism either.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

The sub question was to see whether the participants would be regarding another feminist with positivity or with negativity. "I think it'd be amazing because it's a way everyone should think" (Grace). "I'd think that's awesome and probably give them a high five, and if they want to share anything about it we could strike up a conversation" (Charlotte). "I would probably react enthusiastic and want to get to know more about why they are a feminist etc" (Eef). "I would be pleased that someone had shared their beliefs with me and feel a sense of support as well. Support within the feminist community for me has been a little lacking and I would like to experience more of it" (Roos).

None of them reacted in a negative way to the situation although Holly and Maarit were clearly less eager to discuss the topic after someone would come out to them. To Veerle it seemed to matter less. "I wouldn't do that myself and probably wouldn't do anything with it, but if they wanted me to know, I would be ok with that" (Holly). "That it is their right to do so and I applaud them for doing something they believe in. Just leave me out of it" (Maarit). "I am an open minded person and honestly I think it is nothing to be ashamed off!" (Veerle).

Abbey would consider it needless and preferred it if being a feminist was common enough for it to be unnecessary to come out as one. "Depending on the context, I would appreciate it, but also find it a little redundant. It's like saying, "Hey, I feel like women should be treated equally." Yes, as should everybody. No one identifies as a "race equality campaigner." No, there are only decent people and racists. To have to "come out" as a feminist makes it seem like being a feminist is a strange and uncommon thing" (Abbey).

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

To connect the interviews with the research done regarding newspapers, it was fascinating to see whether the participants frequently made use of newspapers and whether or not this influenced them. After asking them the sixth subquestion, it was clear that five (Grace, Charlotte, Holly, Maarit & Veerle) of them make use of this media whereas three (Abbey, Roos, Eef) did not.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

The above question received mixed results. Both Charlotte and Abbey did not notice a stigma against feminism in newspapers but did notice them in other sources of media. "Not that I have seen from the newspapers. But huge media outlets for sure" (Charlotte). "As I'm not a frequent reader of newspapers, I can't really say, but if we're considering all popular media, I think feminism may have a lingering stigma, but the tides are slowly turning" (Abbey).

Roos and Grace mostly noticed sexism in newspapers. "Some of the article titles are sometimes passive-aggressive against women and sometimes it's just blunt 'machismo' I cannot remember when was the last time I read a news article on feminism. It feels like there are barely any on the subject but that might be because I didn't purposely look for them either" (Grace). Roos also stated that she noticed negativity against feminism. "In some instances when I have engaged with newspapers I have found derogatory terms to be used to describe feminists and feel they are judged more harshly than those who do not identify in that way" (Roos).

Holly, Eef, Maarit and Veerle argue not to have seen a stigma in the newspapers. “No, I haven’t” (Holly). “Nope, because I rarely read newspapers” (Eef). “No but that might be because I simply did not pay much attention to it” (Veerle). Maarit states that the stigma is more visible on the comments of the newspaper reader than in the newspapers themselves. “Not really in the newspapers itself, more in the comments on Facebook made by the readers. But they go both ways, against feminism and against people who don’t like it that much” (Maarit).

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to find out whether there is a connection between sexism and a possible visible stigma against feminism in newspapers, and the willingness of young women to identify as a feminist. With the help of eight interviews, eight newspaper articles and extensive desk research it tried to answer the research questions below.

- 1) Are young women refusing to identify themselves as feminists?
- 2) Does sexism relate to their willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?
- 3) What are the views of these young women of other feminists?
- 4) Are the newspapers that they read influential on their self-identification as feminists?

In regards to the question of whether young women are refusing to identify as feminists, the results of the interviews showed that young women did not stop identifying as feminists. Even though some women said they were not feminists, the majority of the interviewed participant still identified as such. Four of the respondents described themselves as feminists, two did not consider themselves to be feminists and two are unsure about the subject but eventually tended to be positive towards feminism later in the interviews. This aligns with the study conducted by (Arondon, 2003) who also received multiple different answers where women support the idea of feminism but not directly identify as one.

According to four of the interviewed women, sexism has played a part in their willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs. This accounts for 50 % of the participants. Two participants did not experience sexism before and are interesting enough the same two women who do not identify as feminists. One participant mentioned that she relates to feminism after having followed courses on gender equality. This connects to the studies done by both Macalister (1991) and Bargard and Hyde (1991) who argue that women who follow women's study courses are more inclined to start identifying with feminism.

The interviewed participants were well aware of the stigma against feminism. Six of the women agreed to there being a stigma against Feminism in both Ireland and the Netherlands to this day.

The responses of the participants who believed there was a stigma were equal to the studies by for example Burn, Aboud and Moyles (2000, p. 1081-1090) and Huddy, Neely and Lafay (2000, p. 309-351), stating that the word 'feminism' suggest the stereotype of feminists being manhaters. When they were asked what they would feel or think if someone told them they were a feminist, none of them reacted in a negative to the possible scenario although two were clearly less eager to discuss the topic after someone would come out to them. They mentioned they would have no problems with it but did not want to be a part of it either. None of the participants seemed to hold any stigmas against feminism themselves.

Six of the participants made use of newspapers (online and/or printed) on a frequent level, however none of them have noticed stigmas against feminism in the articles with correlates with my own findings during the analyzing of the four Irish and Dutch newspapers. Articles on feminism mention the stigma and some authors explain how they overcame the stigma or how they do not fit the expected image but except for two slightly more negative articles, most of the articles approach the topic either positive or neutral. The Irish Sun seems to make the greatest effort on remove the stigmas and explain their readers what feminism really is.

Taking on a feminist identity is difficult because it is an identity that is not necessarily visible for the outside world as well as it being an identity that can be chosen and not determined by race or culture. At first, when starting this research, the belief was that barely any women were identifying as feminist. It was unexpected to hear about so many young women engaging in the gender issues of this day. Other than the expectation was to see many newspaper articles being negative towards feminism but this turned out not to be the case. Lastly the anticipation was to find rather large differences between the Netherlands and Ireland, with Ireland being more conservative but there were barely any differences regarding the stigma. Newspapers of both countries handled the topic in a similar way and the Irish sun stood out in promoting feminism and educating its readers. Feminism still has a long way to go until it reaches absolute equality but it is on the right track and the new generation is not backing up.

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Appendix

Appendix I – Student Ethics Form

European Studies Student Ethics Form

Your name: Celina Helsdingen

Supervisor: Dr. Tromble

Instructions/checklist

Before completing this form you should read the APA Ethics Code (<http://www.apa.org/ethics/code/index.aspx>). If you are planning research with human subjects you should also look at the sample consent form available in the Final Project and Dissertation Guide.

- a. ☒ Read section 3 that your supervisor will have to sign. Make sure that you cover all these issues in section 1.
- b. ☒ Complete sections 1 and, if you are using human subjects, section 2, of this form, and sign it.
- c. ☒ Ask your project supervisor to read these sections (and the draft consent form if you have one) and sign the form.
- d. ☒ Append this signed form as an appendix to your dissertation.

Section 1. Project Outline (to be completed by student)

(i) Title of Project: "Stigma against feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands."

(ii) Aims of project: To research whether or not there is a stigma against feminism. Examining whether young women are refusing to identify themselves as feminists, if sexism plays a role in this and to see how women feel about other women who are feminists.

(iii) Will you involve other people in your project – e.g. via formal or informal interviews, group discussions, questionnaires, internet surveys etc. (Note: if you are using data that has already been collected by another researcher – e.g. recordings or transcripts of conversations given to you by your supervisor, you should answer NO' to this question.)

YES /NO

If no: you should now sign the statement below and return the form to your supervisor. You have completed this form. This project is not designed to include research with human subjects. I understand that I do not have ethical clearance to interview people (formally or informally) about the topic of my research, to carry out internet research (e.g. on chat rooms or discussion boards) or in any other way to use people as subjects in my research.

Student's signature  - date 17-02-2016

If yes: you should complete the rest of this form.

Section 2 Complete this section only if you answered YES to question (iii) above.

(i) What will the participants have to do? (v. brief outline of procedure): The participants will be emailed a set of questions and they will answer these and send it back to me.

(ii) What sort of people will the participants be and how will they be recruited? The participants will be Irish and Dutch young women who I do not know. They will be recruited with the help of social media such as twitter, instagram and tumblr so that I can reach a wide audience of people from all possible social statuses to achieve an accurate portrayal of society.

(iii) What sort stimuli or materials will your participants be exposed to, tick the appropriate boxes and then state what they are in the space below?

Questionnaires[]; Pictures[]; Sounds []; Words[]; Other[X].

They will receive a set of open questions and the definitions that are being used in the thesis of the key words (Feminism, Sexism and Stigma

(iv) Consent: Informed consent must be obtained for all participants before they take part in your project. Either verbally or by means of an informed consent form you should state what participants will be doing, drawing attention to anything they could conceivably object to subsequently. You should also state how they can withdraw from the study at any time and the measures you are taking to ensure the confidentiality of data. A standard informed consent form is available in the Dissertation Manual.

(vi) What procedures will you follow in order to guarantee the confidentiality of participants' data? Personal data (name, addresses etc.) should not be stored in such a way that they can be associated with the participant's data.

After the emails with answers are arrived, the answers are copied to a separate word file with a fake name and the original emails will be deleted and destroyed to ensure confidentiality.

Student's signature: Celina Helsdingen date: 14-02-2016

Supervisor's signature (if satisfied with the proposed procedures):

 date: .17 February 2016.....

Appendix II – Consent forms interviews

Consent for participation in a research interview Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

I agree to participate in a research project led by European Studies Bachelor Student Celina Helsdingen from the The Hague University in Den Haag, The Netherlands. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the project through being interviewed.

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project. The purpose of my participation as an interviewee in this project has been explained to me and is clear.
2. My participation as an interviewee in this project is voluntary. There is no explicit or implicit coercion whatsoever to participate.
3. Participation involves being interviewed by Celina Helsdingen from the The Hague University. The interview will be held digitally with the use of email communication. I allow the researcher to use everything that I supply as an answer.
4. I have the right not to answer any of the questions in case they make me feel uncomfortable. I will always have the right to withdraw from the interview.
5. I have been given the explicit guarantees that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Grace	19-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date
Celina	19-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

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4. I have the right not to answer any of the questions in case they make me feel uncomfortable. I will always have the right to withdraw from the interview.
5. I have been given the explicit guarantees that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. I will sign this document with a chosen alias that I picked myself to ensure confidentiality.

Charlotte	20-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	20-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

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5. I have been given the explicit guarantees that the researcher will not identify me by name or function in any reports using information obtained from this interview, and that my confidentiality as a participant in this study will remain secure.
6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Abbey	18-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	18-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

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6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Holly	19-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	20-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

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6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Eef	18-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	18-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

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6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Maarit	20-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	20-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

I agree to participate in a research project led by European Studies Bachelor Student Celina Helsdingen from the The Hague University in Den Haag, The Netherlands. The purpose of this document is to specify the terms of my participation in the project through being interviewed.

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3. Participation involves being interviewed by Celina Helsdingen from the The Hague University. The interview will be held digitally with the use of email communication. I allow the researcher to use everything that I supply as an answer.
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6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Veerle	20-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	20-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Consent for participation in a research interview

Stigma against Feminism in Ireland and the Netherlands

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6. I have read and understood the points and statements of this form. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

Roos	20-02-2016
Participant's Signature	Date

Celina	20-02-2016
Researcher's Signature	Date

Appendix III – Interviews

Grace – 24 years - Irish

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?

Yes, because I believe men and women are equally valuable and can develop the same abilities and intelligence.

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

It means I could maybe get treated with respect by men even in a professional environment and women would have a stronger wish to succeed professionally.

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current culture? If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

Yes I believe so because a lot of people don't understand the meaning of it and assume that feminism is 'hating men and everything they do'. I don't think it's changed my personal identification but I just rather not tell some people that I'm a feminist.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

Yes, many times, especially in my working field (medicine) because it used to be a mostly male profession and many people still believe so.

I think it's influenced me to learn more about feminism and keep my value present within myself, not letting what they say affect me at all.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

I think it'd be amazing because it's a way everyone should think.

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

Yes I read them a few times a week. Mostly the online version of the Irish Times and sometimes the Irish mirror.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

Some of the article titles are sometimes passive-aggressive against women and sometimes it's just blunt 'machismo'. I cannot remember when was the last time I read a newsarticle on feminism. It feels like there are barely any on the subject but that might be because I didn't purposely look for them either.

Charlotte – 22 year old - Irish

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?

I do. Im a feminist because I believe that everyone is of equal importance. Feminism is a pathway to a future where egalitarianism will potentially be a reality.

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

Its a major step, and a step that I am willing to take. A step to change, a step to progress.

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture? If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

Oh yes, most definitely. I would not say changed my personal identification but it made me realize who I am on a deeper perspective , and be comfortable with that person even if someone else is not.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced you willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

Yes I have, and that did influence me to engage in feminist actions but it is not the only influence.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

Id think thats awesome and probably give them a high five, and if they want to share anything about it we could strike up a conversation.

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

It is a mixture of both, but out of convenience I'm usually reading online. Usually three to four times a week.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

Not that I have seen from the newspapers. But huge media outlets for sure.

Abbey – 23 years old - Irish**1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?**

I don't know if I would consider myself a feminist. It's not something I necessarily bring up, it isn't on my Facebook profile, and it's not an issue I particularly participate in, but it is something I often think of, because it's important to me in that it affects my life by the way people see and treat me or by the way I function in everyday society. I suppose I identify as a lowkey feminist primarily because ever since I've become educated in the inequalities between the way men and women are treated, I wish it were different. I wish I didn't have to sit in a class with one woman to every five men because women aren't as encouraged to pursue a career in the maths or sciences, Computer Information Systems for instance. I wish I wasn't sexualized from an early age, which meant having more restrictions on what I should wear or the gender of friends I should have. I wish my friends weren't constantly harassed and terrified of sexual assault whenever they want to go out and have fun on a night out. I identify as a feminist because to be otherwise would mean to accept the treatment we take now and I can't stand for that.

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

Living in a patriarchal household meant learning all the wrong things about what being a strong woman meant, and now I'm trying to unlearn those things. I'd been conditioned to mentally decrease the value of a woman because of the clothes she wears, or the interests she takes. I used to think femininity was weak, but now I'm constantly readjusting my understanding that the strongest thing a woman can be is herself.

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture? If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

I believe feminism has been stigmatized from its conception, as is any social equality belief, as the majority of society disagreed with it and branded it as an angry rebellious movement. But I think it's starting to lose that stigma, particularly in current western European culture, as more and more people are educated and understand the reality of the inequality between the sexes and the necessity of feminism.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

I don't think there is a single woman who hasn't become the victim of sexism at least once in her life. Certainly everyday sexism influences my desire for equality, but it isn't really sexism itself. Because if you simply live inside a sexist bubble, you wouldn't even recognize sexism for what it is. But feminism helped me identify when I was victim to sexist actions or words, and showed me that I was not irrational for feeling affected by it.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

Depending on the context, I would appreciate it, but also find it a little redundant. It's like saying, "Hey, I feel like women should be treated equally." Yes, as should everybody. No one identifies as a "race equality campaigner." No, there are only decent people and racists. To have to "come out" as a feminist makes it seem like being a feminist is a strange and uncommon thing.

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

No, I do not.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

As I'm not a frequent reader of newspapers, I can't really say, but if we're considering all popular media, I think feminism may have a lingering stigma, but the tides are slowly turning.

Holly – 21 year old - Irish

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?

I don't know if I identify myself as a feminist. I do think everybody should have the same rights and opportunities. Your gender, skincolour, looks, etc. shouldn't matter. For example, when someone brings women down, I will tell them maybe they should think twice before they say something like that.

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

I think it's really important people stick up for themselves and others. Everyone is equal, that's why I don't think feminism is more important or meaningful than other movements. All those movements are important to me.

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture? If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

Yes, I believe feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture. I didn't consider myself as a femism, but my belief and your definition look pretty much the same.. So apparently I'm a feminist without knowing it myself.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

No, I can't remember something like that.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

I wouldn't do that myself and probably wouldn't do anything with it, but if they wanted me to know, I would be ok with that.

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

About once a week. I do watch the news minimally ones a week.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

No, i haven't.

Eef – 24 year old - Dutch

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?

Yes, because I think feminism is useful at this moment, to gain equality and help people (mainly women) in getting the job they want, for example

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

To me it's mainly something I support and try to explain to my friends or family why it is actually helpful and that feminism is not trying to prove than women are better than men, but simply that feminists are in it for equality and not to prove women are superior.

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture?

If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

Yes, I think that it's mainly caused me to be more defensive when I explain that I am a feminist. It has actually been the reason I got into feminism, because at first I thought about it as a negative thing. But the further I got to know what actual feminism is and what the goal is, I began to think of myself as a feminist.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced you willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs? (For example a comment on the internet such as 'go make a sandwich')

I've had minor things like catcalling happen to me, but also the kitchen jokes, weird looks when I say I don't want children and those kinds of things. I never experienced it badly and I don't think it made me more willing to "be" a feminist. That was mainly caused by studies about inequality, the fact that men and women don't get the same amount of money for the same kind of job, the fact that women are poorly represented in politics, etcetera.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

I would probably react enthusiastic and want to get to know more about why they are a feminist etc.

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

Nope, I rarely read some articles, but those are never about feminism.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

Nope, because I rarely read newspapers.

Maarit– 23 years old - Dutch

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?

No, I believe in the more traditional roles for man and women. Also I don't really mind if there is no absolute equality in household chores or if only the man would work. I believe we do not need to be equal to men as we just are not. We are not as strong and when I have kids it is only natural that I stay at home to take care of them.

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

Equality for man and women on all fronts, women work, kids go to daycare (or grandparents etc) and all household things are also shared equally

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture?

If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

No I don't, it's in fact promoted a lot and around me, I see that the stigma is more on people who don't really like the whole feminist point. The last part does change my personal identification because I feel old fashioned, but that wasn't the question.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

No

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

That it is their right to do so and I applaud them for doing something they believe in. Just leave me out of it

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

Yes, a number of times a week

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

Not really in the newspapers itself, more in the comments on Facebook made by the readers. But they go both ways, against feminism and against people who don't like it that much

Veerle – 21 years old - Dutch

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?

I never gave it much thought so I guess not. I am in a job with mainly females in higher functions aswell.

2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?

If we go far back as to when it started I benefit from it now. I think it is good that people fight for equal rights even though in these times it shouldn't be necessary anymore. It makes me wonder whether men and women will ever be equal.

3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture? If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?

Honestly I do not think it is. Also since I never felt like I had to fight for my rights as a female I do not think it changed my personal identification.

4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?

No never. Also I think sexism is just stupidity of the person rather than seeing women as less. I believe there are many good men out there.

5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?

I am an open minded person and honestly I think it is nothing to be ashamed of!

6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?

I sometimes read it.

7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?

No but that might be because I simply did not pay much attention to it.

Roos – 25 years old - Dutch

1. Do you identify yourself as a feminist? Why (not)?
I identify as a feminist as personally I have been impacted by the inequalities that currently exist, especially in the workplace.
2. What does the movement of feminism mean to you personally?
The movement to me means striving for equality in all areas of life, changing long ingrained attitudes towards woman mainly but also my gender being used as an insult regarding other genders and creating safe spaces for women.
3. Do you believe that feminism is being stigmatized in the current western European culture? If you believe so, do you think that it has changed your personal identification?
I believe feminism is especially stigmatized in Western Europe, the development of words and phrases like 'feminazi' and 'social justice warrior' that have been associated with the movement have been damaging as they are belittling the core beliefs of feminism and being used to mock those who support it making it harder for progress or pushes for changes to be taken seriously as people labeled in this way are seen as extreme and ridiculous. For me it has made me somewhat wary of revealing my stance on feminism until others have given an indication of their own feelings towards the matter.
4. Have you ever been the victim of sexism and has this influenced your willingness to engage in feminist actions and beliefs?
I have been a victim of sexism since my early years in high school where I was often treated as less than my male classmates, this only let me see just how important feminism is increased my desire to support it.
5. What would you think or feel if a stranger came out to you as being a feminist?
I would be pleased that someone had shared their beliefs with me and feel a sense of support as well. Support within the feminist community for me has been a little lacking and I would like to experience more of it.
6. Do you frequently read online or offline newspapers?
I do not often use newspapers and tend to use social media instead to keep up to date with news.
7. Have you ever noticed a stigma against feminism in the newspapers?
In some instances when I have engaged with newspapers I have found derogatory terms to be used to describe feminists and feel they are judged more harshly than those who do not identify in that way.

Appendix IV – Hand in form

Hand in form Final Project/Dissertation	
Month of presentation:	<input type="checkbox"/> October <input type="checkbox"/> January <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> March <input type="checkbox"/> June <input type="checkbox"/> August
Name:	Celina Helsdingen
Proposal Registration Number: (only for students who started in 2014-2015)	^{14 15} ES 4- 1516sem2.pH- 006
Educational course:	ES3 () ES4N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ES4E ()
Specialisation	Public <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Private () Name supervisor: DR. Trambale..... Name second marker: MR. Nixon.....
In case this is a re-sit submission:	Re-sit submission <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Name lecturer who marked your English:
Final Project or Dissertation:	Dissertation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final Project ()
If Final Project, please give: Contact data of assignment provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation: • Name of assignment provider /mentor (+ academic title): • Address of the organisation: • Email address assignment provider/mentor: 	

Appendix V – Final Presentation request

Request form final presentation Final Project/Dissertation	
Month of presentation:	<input type="checkbox"/> October <input type="checkbox"/> January <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> March <input type="checkbox"/> June <input type="checkbox"/> August
Name:	Celina Helsdingen
Student number:	09004807
Educational Course:	ES3 <input type="checkbox"/> ES4N <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ES4E <input type="checkbox"/>
Final Project or Dissertation:	FP <input type="checkbox"/> D <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
If Final Project, please give: Contact data of assignment provider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisation: • Name of assignment provider /mentor (+ academic title): • Address of the organisation: • Email address assignment provider/mentor: 	
Will the assignment provider attend the final presentation?	Yes/No (strike through which is not applicable)
Will other guests, invited by you, attend the final presentation? If yes, how many?	...2...max...?... (mention the number)

Appendix VI – Proof of Ephorus

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