



Negotiations of socialist feminism

Gender and sexual orientation in conflicting perceptions of socialism, feminism and power in the Danish socialist party, Enhedslisten

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Abstract

This thesis is a study of conflicting perceptions provoked by Enhedslisten's, Danish political party, attempt to practice socialist feminism organizationally. I locate three sites of conflicts; socialism(s) and organization of power, feminism(s), and queer culture and approach them from a theoretical framework of primarily Foucault, Panebianco, Halley, Young, Fraser, and Butler. I conduct four ethnographic observations and nine in-depth interviews located within a feminist framework of standpoint methodologies drawing on Haraway and Harding, poststructuralism drawing on Gannon and Davis, and analyze with a thematic content analysis drawing on Hsieh & Shannon. I argue that the main conflicts are grounded in inequalities Enhedslisten produce within its own structure. The flat structure is experienced as impenetrable and opaque, and the absence of formalized power creates informal power centers. I argue that polarization of feminism is displayed as divisions in intersectional feminism and radical feminism, but those divisions stem from competing stances on what constitutes oppression and social justice. Lastly, I argue that the queer culture is a political goal that manifests itself in the party culture, hence, goals of claiming sexual agency transcend from party to body and become a queer normativity that contains expectations to embody the political goals.

Keywords

Sexism and sexual harassment, socialist feminism, Danish Left, flat structure organization, identity politics and socialism

Sexisme og seksuel chikane, socialistisk feminisme, dansk venstrefløj, flad struktur organisering, identitetspolitik og socialisme

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1. Introduction

Socialist feminism, politics of difference, and organization of power contain divisions in the political Left in Denmark and globally. The attempts to bring meaning to and negotiate socialist feminism come down to questions of what constitutes social justice, power, and oppression is heavily discussed in socialist feminist activism and academics. How does a political party that is declared socialist feminist, yet contains substantial splits in perceiving and approaching feminism, negotiate different understandings of what constitutes oppression and social justice? And how does the attempt to practice socialist feminism organizationally prompt conflicts, contradicting political goals, and views on gender, sexual orientation, and identity? This thesis is a study of the Danish socialist party, Enhedslisten, and their attempts to practice socialist feminism within the party culture, and what political and organizational disagreements and conditions challenge the attempts.

In 2021, Enhedslisten decided to employ Kvininfo, a Danish knowledge center on gender and equality, to conduct a study of the scope and character of sexual harassment and discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation within the party. The study, which was conducted by a coworker at Kvininfo and I from August 2021 to January 2022 (Uglebjerg & From, 2022), focused on sexism and sexual harassment, however themes of power, feminism, and socialism repeatedly appeared in the material but fell outside the study's terms of reference. Therefore, I decided to do my master's thesis on the messiness and complexities in the varied stances on socialist feminism within Enhedslisten.

Conflicting sentiments about socialist feminism are not new in the political Left. However, approaching the discussions from a feminist theoretical framework, and using feminist methodology to study the sites of conflict is helpful to grasp, approach, and conceptualize the nuances in intentions and practices, feminist socialism, and queer culture within Enhedslisten. Enhedslisten aims and works to create a more inclusive culture, and my aim is not to prove how difficult that might be. Instead, I aim to expand the understanding, nuances, and possibilities for change in working with socialist feminism organizationally. The purpose of this thesis is to offer different perspectives from within Enhedslisten that can shed light on more general polarizations within feminist debates on intersectionality and gender, organization of power, and queer culture in Left organizations. The opposing attempts to define social justice, oppression, and how to drive political change provoke discussions of differences, and divisions on redistribution and recognition that are reoccurring in both academic and activist socialist feminism.

1.2 Research problem

In what ways do Enhedslisten's members articulate diverging perceptions around power, gender, and party culture, prompted by the party's attempts to practice socialist feminism?

1.2.1 Sites of conflict

- I. *Socialism(s)*: As an aggregation of three parties, Enhedslisten still experiences power struggles between different socialist and communist branches based on the founding parties. The main conflicts surround distribution of power, party loyalty, morals, commitment, and differentiated political schooling. Enhedslisten's organization of power is based upon a flat structure and is slowly but steadily altered and negotiated. These alterations carry conflicts around opacity, informal power centers, and the inequalities inside Enhedslisten's own structure. They also raise the question of whether a flat structure is effective in eliminating power imbalances within an organization that aims to eliminate power imbalances in society.
- II. *Feminism(s)*: Enhedslisten is a socialist feminist party. However, feminism as both a political goal and an organizational practice is heavily polarized in discussions. Enhedslisten has two different committees working with feminism that make the distinctive interpretations of feminism and "women" as a category tangible. The divisions in the feminist debates are often clashes between intersectional and queer feminism and radical feminism in questions of perceiving inclusion as eradication; generational gaps; and different approaches to the relationship between feminism and socialism.
- III. *Queer culture*: Enhedslisten contains a lot of subcultures within the party, and the queer culture within the party as well as the youth organizations affiliated with Enhedslisten is a main site of conflict. This stems from conflicting perceptions of the political and the private; different perceptions of gender, sexual orientation, and identity; and political aims to normalize queerness and female sexuality. The conflicting perceptions emphasize general gaps in understanding queerness and diverging looks upon how queerness should be displayed and take up space within the party. Lastly, the party contains contradicting accounts of identity politics in the political Left.

1.3 Terminology

For the accessibility of the thesis, all names of political parties, titles, and organizational organs are translated. However, a direct translation from Danish to English does not always sufficiently cover the meaning and context of the original word. Thus, I have included a list of relevant translations where some might differ in meaning from Danish to English in the appendix. I translate quotes from Danish to English but for long quotes from interviews and observations, I provide both the original quote and a translation for the transparency of the analysis for Scandinavian speakers. Certain titles, such as *Enhedslisten*, are consistently used in Danish instead of the official translation, the Red-Green Alliance. I have chosen to do so to avoid confusing party names as newer political parties in Denmark share similar names, and the Red-Green Alliance is not popularly known to be *Enhedslisten*'s name in English.

1.4 Background on *Enhedslisten* and its historical context

Enhedslisten was established in 1990 from “the ash of three small dying communist parties without seats in the parliament and, thus, originates from an ideology that in the aftermath of the fall of the Berlin Wall belonged to the past” (Seeberg, 2020, p. 290, my translation). Less loaded is *Enhedslisten*'s own explanation of its creation as an aggregation of three political parties that no longer had parliamentary representation (*Enhedslisten*, 2022a): Denmark's Communist party (DKP), Socialist Workers' party (SAP), and Left-wing Socialists (VS) in 1989. In the same year, the cooperation presented its joint election platform and held the first annual meeting for all members (*Enhedslisten*, 2022a). In 1994, *Enhedslisten* achieved representation in the parliament, helped by the EU referendum in 1993¹ where *Enhedslisten* campaigned for a “no” and positioned in contrast to the Socialist Peoples' party² (Kristensen, 2019b, 20).

Enhedslisten's successes from 1994-2007 led to an expansion of the party, and a decentralization of power was built into the organizational structures inherited from the Left-wing Socialists. However, the structure was not adapted for *Enhedslisten*'s fractionated party organization (Ibid., 40). The organization of power altered in 2009 when *Enhedslisten*'s success ceased with regress at the parliamentary election in 2007. Due to the voters' lack of recognition of *Enhedslisten*, Johanne

¹ The Maastricht-Edinburg Treaty which resulted in the defense opt-out that was revoked in 2022.

² Socialist Peoples' Party is a breakaway party from Denmark's Communist party created in 1959 by Aksel Larsen, who was excluded by Denmark's Communist party due to critical statements about the Soviet Union's imperialism.

Schmidt-Nielsen was appointed by the parliamentary group as the party's first "frontperson". In the 2011 parliamentary election, Enhedslisten tripled their representation in the parliament. It was popularly known as "the effect of Johanne" ("Johanne-effekten") implying that Schmidt-Nielsen gained one of the highest numbers of votes among all candidates across parties due to her physical appearance (Hartung, 2011).

In the years 2012-2014, a modernization process took place within Enhedslisten. One element of the modernization was "cleaning" the communication by replacing "revolution" with "fundamental change only executed by peaceful means" (Ringberg, 2019, my translation) in the political program. The modernization of Enhedslisten culminated with a new political program in 2014 that only mentions "revolution" once and by that, 28 times less than the former program from 2003, and emphasizes free and secret elections as the driving factor for change (Mortensen, 2014). The recent parliamentary election in November, 2022 resulted in a decline in votes and the party lost four mandates in the parliament (DR, 2022). This has been explained by Pernille Skipper, former political spokesperson, as the result of stagnation of the modernization of Enhedslisten's organizational structure (Skipper, 2022a). Thereby, the discussion about the organization of power, and the party's cultural and political heritage from the aggregation has prompted again, both internally and publicly.

Today, Enhedslisten has about 9350 members and is represented in the European Parliament by one member, the Danish parliament by nine members, and the city councils by 114 members. Enhedslisten retains not having a leader but collective management and a political spokesperson for the parliamentary group, currently Mai Villadsen (Enhedslisten, 2022). The supreme authority is the annual national meetings for all members, and the decision-making power between the annual national meetings is placed with the executive committee and the steering committee. In the organizational structure, Enhedslisten has rotation principles and party taxation for parliamentary politicians. To increase equality, Enhedslisten works with minority protection and gender quotas in the executive committee and candidate lists for elections (Enhedslisten, 2022). Enhedslisten is a declared socialist and, by 2017, a socialist feminist party (Blom, 2017).

Enhedslisten as an aggregation was founded on the three parties, but different communist and socialist parties and autonomous Left environments, such as International Socialists³ and Communist Workers' party⁴, fled into the party during the 1990s and compromised Enhedslisten's political aims and organizational structure. I have provided two maps in the appendix; an overview of Enhedslisten and the founding parties, parties affiliated, and flow of members. The second map is an axis of Enhedslisten's political position in the current political landscape after the parliamentary election 2022. The maps originate from my understanding based upon the works of Kristensen, Nygaard, Ringberg, and Seeberg. I have mapped relevant organizations in relation to Enhedslisten as they appeared in the analysis.

³ International Socialists was created in 1984 as a part of a tendency that more small left-wing groups in Denmark in the 1970s expressed skepticism about the Soviet Union's expansion and perceived it as state capitalistic. Those groups have their roots in the 1940s disagreements about the Soviet Union within the Trotskyist Fourth International (Nygaard, 2011).

⁴ Communist Workers' Party was rooted in Maoist environments at the beginning of the 1960s and was defined by its affiliation with the Chinese communist party during Mao and its strong opposition to Soviet imperialism. The party descended from Communist Association Marxists-Leninists; a party-preparatory organization (Nygaard, 2012).

1.5 Research field

1.5.1 Gendered and sexual norms in socialism and communism

Andrés Brink Pinto studies how constructions of gender and sexuality were created in descriptions of class in the Swedish communist movement from 1921 – 1939. The constructions of gender and sexuality in the communist movement are relevant to draw upon when discussing the generational and ideological divisions in the perceptions of gender, sexual orientation, and identity. It is possible to compare but not to transfer the constructions of masculinity and femininity from a Swedish to a Danish context; the study is placed within a different historical context; and certain Swedish working-class norms such as abstinence are not present in a Danish context to the same extent.

Pinto looks at how working-class norms are constructed through gender and sexuality with a methodological framework departing from Foucault's *The Order of Discourse* (1970) and Butler's theorization of performativity (Pinto, 2008, p. 32). Heterosexual and consensual intercourse is, according to Pinto, "the highest level in an implied hierarchy" of naturalized sexual desires (Ibid., 227) and the sexual norms construct the working class as inherently heterosexual. While "false homosexuality" belongs to the lumpenproletariat, "real homosexuality" is constructed as a bourgeois phenomenon which has considerable similarities to how the bourgeoisie described a connection between gay sex and the nobility (Ibid., 116). Pinto also looks at constructions of masculinity as a "controlled masculinity" and a "belligerent masculinity" in opposition to German Nazis that had a "deviant masculinity since they lacked control, especially regarding their use of violence" (Ibid., 228). Excessive violence is linked to an animalistic and perverse lasciviousness where acts of violence were linked to indulgence and lust (Ibid., 133). Femininity is constructed as family-centered and identified with communism. The antithesis of the female communist is sexually loose, hysterical, and indifferent to their home (Ibid., 229). Undesirable femininity is characterized by bourgeois women's expensive clothes and wrong interests such as entertainment, fashion, or lack of interest in the party (Ibid.). Pinto argues that it is possible to consider the description of the communist "housewife norm" as functioning destabilizing of femininity through a harsh class-coded body (Ibid., 163-4).

Pinto's accounts of how masculinity and femininity norms functioned in the communist movement in the interwar years are interesting considering the clashes of varied gendered and sex norms across

Enhedslisten. While I look at the queer culture, Pinto's argument that "collective political actions both creates and reinforces the norms it is founded in meanwhile the goal can be its demolition" (Ibid., 223, my translation) is central to how some of the practices in Enhedslisten are experienced as reinforcing what they attempt to deconstruct. While Pinto looks at gender and sexuality in the Swedish communist movement in the interwar period, I find many questions on the constructions of gender and sexuality in a political Left interesting regarding conflicting perceptions of identity in Enhedslisten today. However, I seek to understand how they challenge the attempt to practice social feminism organizationally a century after Pinto's timeframe.

1.5.2 Socialist feminist conversations in the political Left in the 1980s

Enhedslisten is a declared socialist feminist party and thereby positions itself in a long tradition of socialist feminist struggles and practices in Left party organizing. Feminist Review had a socialist feminist issue in 1986 that engaged different socialist feminist academics and activists in the British Left to discuss the different stances on socialist feminism. Those positions, discussions, and outlooks are important to bear in mind discussing current negotiations of socialist feminism in Enhedslisten.

Angela Weir and Elizabeth Wilson participated in the socialist feminist panel discussion about feminism and class politics by the Feminist Review and argued in a paper discussed in the panel that the main disagreement on socialist feminism in the early 70s was alignment with Left groups (Weir & Wilson, 1984). They argue that the blind spots in the Marxist social analysis led to a position "which argued that the subordination of women in the twentieth century, both in the developing countries and in the West, resulted from the complex interaction of capitalist relations of production with institutions of male power" (Ibid.). But by the end of the decade, socialist feminism was not a coherent tendency within feminism, according to Weir and Wilson, due to populist tendencies and the aim of the British Women's Liberation Movement to become a mass movement of women and not "a narrow socialist sect" (Ibid.).

The panelists discussed socialist feminism in the British political Left from the British Communist party and Labour. In the same issue of Feminist Review, Sarah Perrigo narrated her experiences of socialist feminism in Labour as such: "It is clear that many Labour Party constituencies remain virtually untouched by feminism or even by a visible women's presence" (Perrigo, 1986). Perrigo elaborates on her account of socialist feminist practice in Labour by arguing that "some men loudly

derided women as both workers and political beings in front of their female ‘comrades’” (Ibid). Particularly the relation between socialism, Marxism, feminism, and the abandonment of socialism were ground for opposing views theoretically and in political practice. Michèle Barrett with a background in Labour argues that Marxism and feminism are not incompatible at a theoretical level however “sometimes their political objectives do not coincide” (Barrett in Connolly et al., 1986). Barrett states that Marxism and feminism are different theories that cannot be reconciled satisfactorily. Instead of theoretically integrating, Barrett argues it is more productive to understand how class is gendered and promote a socialism “that is informed by feminism”. Wilson opposed Barrett’s position and argued that the relation should be considered “a two-way street” (Wilson in Connolly et al., 1986).

I find the questions of the interrelation between socialism and feminism and discussions on feminism abandoning socialism and class politics in the British Left in the 80s interesting considering the same concerns are raised in *Enhedslisten* today. While *Enhedslisten*’s political program on feminism defines socialist feminism, it is heavily contested by members who – like the panel debate – have different perceptions of the interrelation of Marxism, socialism, class, and feminism. The context of the socialist feminist in the British Left differs from the current debates in *Enhedslisten* notably. However, it is important to have socialist feminism tradition and divisions in mind to understand the negotiations of socialist feminism in *Enhedslisten* that currently take space.

1.5.3 History of *Enhedslisten*’s political and organizational development

Kristensen offers a thorough review of *Enhedslisten*’s first 25 years in the parliament focusing on both the political development, mandate periods, and elections, as well internal struggles, negotiations of power, and organizational changes (Kristensen, 2019). Kristensen mediates material such as text messages, emails, statements at meetings, private conversations, and published material in media, archives, political programs, and written statements and places the material in the political and organizational context of *Enhedslisten* and national politics at the time. I primarily use the review to gain insight into organizational changes, times of modernization, and management. But also, how the break with certain organizational principles and practices can be seen in regard to political demands at the time to maintain parliamentary representation. Kristensen is telling *Enhedslisten*’s history from a top-down perspective centering key politicians and parliamentary work as the core of *Enhedslisten*’s development, whereas I look at it from the party organization and the positions of a variety of

members. I believe the focus on narrating the development from an exclusively parliamentary point of view ignores all other aspects of Enhedslisten as a party organization and political movement.

Seeberg offers a different interpretation of Enhedslisten's development from being a small protest party in a left-wing environment closed in on itself to becoming politically mainstream (Seeberg, 2020). Seeberg touches upon the historical context and the political development; times of modernization; Enhedslisten's voters' segment; and how Enhedslisten has adapted by changing its appeal. Seeberg argues that Enhedslisten is a "roaring" but "toothless lion" meaning that Enhedslisten uses its position as a protest party to put pressure on the government but the pressure is not converted into influence on the federal budgets under governments led by the Socialdemocratic party. Seeberg argues that Enhedslisten's, in his view, communist heritage is mirrored in the organizational structures through the party's control of its members of the parliament. Both the party's electoral form of candidacy, the rotation principle, the executive committee's political mandate above the parliamentary group, and the party taxations are, according to Seeberg, means to control that members of the parliament do not "rise above the party" (Ibid., 292). The discussion of the organizational structures and their effect on the parliamentary possibilities and limitations is highly prevalent in the analysis and by Seeberg considered a factor that decreases Enhedslisten's political influence. This is relevant for the altering of the organization of power in Enhedslisten today, but, like my objection to Kristensen's ethnographic work, an objection here is that it primarily contains a parliamentary perspective. I look at some of the same discussions but my approach is from the party organization, whereas Seeberg approaches the discussion from the parliamentary group.

1.5.4 Sexism and sexual harassment in socialist political parties

Before the study on the scope and character of discrimination and sexual harassment based on gender and sexual orientation in Enhedslisten, Kvinno conducted a corresponding study in Socialist Peoples' party (Uglebjerg et al., 2021). Although Enhedslisten's organizational structures and practices are unique, there were certain common denominators in the findings that speak more broadly about socialist feminism and gender, sexual orientation, and identity in socialist party organizations. One denominator, more present in Socialist Peoples' Party than Enhedslisten, is the exclusion of women in the idealization of the "worker" and working-class politics (Ibid., p. 19). The examples of discrimination on this account are prevalent in Enhedslisten as well, but it was more tangibly observed in Socialist Peoples' Party where masculinity norms and norms on physical appearance for men were

especially centered around the cultivation of the “worker”. The view on sexual orientation also differed in Socialist Peoples’ Party. Whereas the main conflicting ideas regarding sexual orientation in Enhedslisten are based upon the “appearance” of queerness and “display” of sexual liberation, we saw notions of considering queerness are caused by a society that cultivates the “unnatural” as the “natural” and leads to disorder and disintegration of society, anomie, in Socialist Peoples’ Party (Ibid., 31). Socialist Peoples’ party and Enhedslisten have divisions on socialist feminism in common, however, both studies were confined by the terms of reference and did not theoretically engage in the debates.

2. Theory

2.1 Power

I apply a Foucauldian understanding of power to approach the discussions of the alterations of power, disciplinary power in political schooling, and how sexual norms are displayed and function in the queer culture. Foucault distinguishes between regulatory power and disciplinary power in the reasoning behind biopower's "make life or let die" (Foucault, 2003, p. 255). "Make life" is supposed to be understood as "make life happen *in a certain way*". Regulatory power has the population as its object of control whereas disciplinary power targets the body. The circulation from body to population and the alternations of disciplinary and regulatory power are where norms function. Foucault explains:

In more general terms, we can still say that there is one element that will circulate between the disciplinary and the regulatory, which will also be applied to body and population alike (...) The element that circulates between the two is the norm. The norm is something that can be applied to both a body one wishes to discipline and a population one wishes to regulate (Ibid., 252-3).

The norms of discipline and norms of regulation must intersect in alignment to be a normalizing society, Foucault argues. In that, the power is controlling the body and the life "with the body as one pole and the population as the other" (Ibid., 253).

Foucault argues that sexuality exists in the very intersection of body and population and is thus a matter of both disciplinary and regulatory power (Ibid., 251-2). To explain sexuality's "privileged position" in the intersection of regulatory and disciplinary power, Foucault exemplifies with regulation of children's masturbation in the late 18th – 20th century (Ibid., 251). "Undisciplined" sexuality affects both body and society and is sanctioned through two levels; the undisciplined body by individual diseases, e.g., the fear that a masturbating child will become blind, and the society by the belief that "perverted" sexuality is hereditary; the theory of degeneracy assumed it would pose a threat towards the population medically, morally, and economically for generations (Ibid.).

The different subcultures in *Enhedslisten* contain very different political schooling, hence, conflicting norms, values, and political morality and contradicting gendered and sexual norms across the party. Applying a Foucauldian framework to approach questions of conflicting norms and values as well as

formations of power will be effective to understand the different perceptions that are brought forward in the interviews and observations.

During the 1960s and 1970s, Ås watched how her female colleagues in a city council in Norway were consistently kept from power by male members of the city council, and formulated five master suppressing techniques as a theorization of how her female colleagues were kept from power: invisibilizing, ridiculing, disclosure of information, double punishment, and imposition of shame and guilt (Ås, 1979). The techniques were based on the framework formulated by Ingjald Nissen in 1945, the Dictatorship of Psychopaths (Nissen, 1945), to describe how groups of people or individuals can obtain and increase power over other people and use techniques to “maintain social superiority” (Nyberg and Wiberg, 2014 in Harr et al., 2016). Ås’ conceptualization of the master suppressing techniques was meant to be used politically and actively by women. Ås used the conceptualization as an intervention for the women in the city council. The number five could be visualized for everyone in the room with one hand (Borg & Bohlin, 2017, p. 24). Every time a woman was invisibilized by the male city council members, Ås instructed the women to put one finger in the air; every time disclosure of information happened – two fingers in the air, etc. (Ibid.). The techniques can be used as a theoretical framework to approach the use of master suppressing techniques within *Enhedslisten*. Ås’ emphasis on structures of power and inferiority and superiority exemplified by her own position in the city council is vital to understand concerning how suppressing techniques are used differently and to a different extent based on gender in *Enhedslisten*.

2.2 Divisions in feminist socialism

The debates about social justice and social change are frequently discussed in regard to identity politics and traditional Marxist accounts of class oppression in *Enhedslisten*. To approach the discussion, I draw on Butler and Fraser’s varied views on the dualistic model Fraser proposes of the “cultural” and the “economic”, namely politics of recognition and politics of redistribution (Fraser, 1997a, p. 17), as a constitutive factor in the “postsocialist” Left (Fraser, 1997b, p. 280). Fraser explains the “postsocialist” condition as a decentering of class and “an apparent shift in the political imaginary, especially in terms in which justice is imagined” (Fraser, 1997a, p. 2), and argues that the shift contains a different socialist political imaginary of the core of justice from redistribution to recognition. Fraser argues that the Left needs an understanding of cultural injustice as distinct from economic injustice (Fraser, 1997a, p. 14).

When referring to “postsocialist”, Fraser puts the term in quotation marks to mark a critical position (Fraser, 1997a, p. 1) yet presents three constitutive factors to the “postsocialist” condition, whereas Butler disagrees with Fraser’s second constitutive factor and the separation of misrecognition and misdistribution; cultural and economic oppression. Butler argues that the argument of needing to return to the Marxist critique of the distribution, and that identity political movements are ‘merely cultural’ is possessing an assumption that the separation of the material and cultural is a stable distinction (Butler, 1997, p. 36). Butler elaborates on their account of wrongful claims against the cultural in Left politics:

The cultural focus of left politics has abandoned the materialist project of Marxism, that it fails to address questions of economic equity and redistribution, that it fails as well to situate culture in terms of a systematic understanding of the social and economic modes of production; that the cultural focus of left politics has splintered the Left into identarian sects, that we have lost a set of common ideals and goals, a sense of common history, a common sense of values, a common language and even an objective and universal mode of rationality. (Butler, 1997, p. 34).

Fraser argues that “Together, such responses construct what appears to be an either/or choice: class politics or identity politics? Social politics or cultural politics? Equality or difference? Redistribution or recognition?” (Fraser, 1997a, p. 3). Fraser does not consider both mutually exclusive, but instead, distinct. In Fraser’s response to Butler, Fraser emphasizes that misrecognition might be accompanied by maldistribution, but is analytically distinct (Fraser, 1997b, p. 280). Butler also claims that the separation of the cultural and economic, particularly on sexuality and gender, is an expression of neo-conservative Marxism (Butler, 1997, p. 36), which Fraser then responds to by arguing that Butler’s framing misrepresents her position (Fraser, 1997b, p. 279-80).

The question about equality and difference in *Enhedslisten* goes beyond the internal discussion and is also discussed by *Enhedslisten*’s parliamentary politician, Pelle Dragsted, in the media. I will return to that discussion in the analysis. Diving into the claims and understanding its roots might, according to Butler, “serve the purpose of overcoming unnecessary divisions on the Left” (Butler, 1997, p. 35). Those unnecessary divisions can be discussed in light of Young’s conception of justice in terms of domination and oppression.

Young understands social justice as “the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression” (Young, 1990, p. 15), which is, mistakenly, reduced to distribution by the distributive paradigm of justice (Ibid., 16). Young identifies two general values that constitute a “good life”, and, if not met, two corresponding conditions that define injustice. One value is “developing and exercising one’s capacities and expressing one’s experiences” and the second, “participating in determining one’s action and the condition of one’s action” (Ibid., 37). The corresponding conditions of injustice become, then, oppression in terms of “institutional constraint on self-development” and domination, “the institutional constraint on self-determination” (Ibid.), which is rather a question of the ability to do, rather than issues of the distribution paradigm’s focus on material distribution; to have.

When Young argues that the differences in social groups must be acknowledged to respond to the oppression, Young also responds to a logic of identity that, according to Young, denies or represses difference (Ibid., 98), but “shoves difference into dichotomous hierarchical oppositions” (Ibid., 99). Instead, Young suggests a politics of difference and argues that the liberation ideal creates a narrative that equality is reached by eliminating differences, and that story is, according to Young, told repeatedly which “inspires new heretics” (Ibid., 157). Young challenges the ideal of liberation by eliminating differences by proposing to seek liberation through a politics of difference that affirms group difference (Ibid., 158). Because, according to Young, ignoring group differences does not eliminate oppression, instead, it continues “even when law and policy declare that all are equal” (Ibid., 169). Justice in a “group differentiated society” is, according to Marion Young, demanding recognition and affirmation of group differences as well as social equality of groups (Ibid., 191).

The feminist debates concerning identity and difference are also struggles of defining social justice, whereas some interview persons expressed concerns about the subtle shift from redistribution to recognition which they identify in the policy. I understand that political struggle as central to Butler and Fraser’s distinct approach to redistribution and recognition, but also in Young’s discussions of politics of difference. The different stances on group differences are demonstrated in the discussion of Enhedslisten’s debates on identity politics and the means to drive political change.

2.3 Political party organization

Sartori has created a scheme and terminology to analyze a political party from within from subunits in the party unit, and how the subunits, fractions, tendencies, and factions constitute the party's anatomy (Sartori, 1976, p. 75). Whereas fractions are subunits within the party, factions are specific power groups, and tendencies are patterned sets of attitudes (Ibid.). Sartori also presents a non-aligned partisan understood as members that identify with the whole party unit and its political platform rather than fractions or tendencies, and the term atomized party that is a fragmented party unit with small groups centering around the different leaders, oftentimes members of the parliament (Ibid.). Sartori also distinguishes between different types of fractions and how they function differently to serve different purposes ranging from a personalist fraction to a coalitionist fraction and policy groups to support groups (Ibid., 80). These can all, as is the case of Enhedslisten, function in the same party unit simultaneously.

Panebianco also offers a framework to approach a political party's organization and presents three prejudices in understanding a political party's internal structure and behavior. Panebianco argues that the "sociological prejudice" hinders the realization of the complex relationship between parties and social inequality by stating, "it makes us forget that not only does the party not mechanically mirror, either in its organization or in its politics, the system of social inequality but that the party itself is a producer of inequalities within its own structure" (Panebianco, 1988, p. 4). This explanation is helpful to understand the conflicts in Enhedslisten that trace back to the distribution of power in the party. Panebianco also presents the "teleological prejudice" that consists of "assigning" a party "goals" that serve as the justification of existence and can have two outcomes; the goals either a) logically decide upon the party's activities and organizational characteristics, in case of Enhedslisten, flat structure; or b) monitor or measure the inconsistencies between political goals and the party's behavior or organization (Ibid.). Lastly, Panebianco touches upon the duality of the party organization and the environment it seeks to impact and identifies two different approaches happening concurrently: "every organization will be pushed by its relations with the external world in two different directions at the same time: it will be tempted both to colonize its environment through domination, and "reach a pact" with it through adaption" (Ibid., 13). The idea of "reaching a pact" with the environment is fruitful in the discussions of the "necessity" used to frame modernization of Enhedslisten to better align with the parliamentary conditions.

2.4 Sexism and feminist practice

In the divisions of the feminist debate in *Enhedslisten*, some feminists feel that the younger generations of intersectional and queer feminists have “hijacked” the feminist agenda and conversation by bringing a different meaning to feminism. This “new meaning” and practices some feminists do not understand nor condone are especially centered around sexual liberation, normalization of queer sex, and claiming sexual agency. In line with that debate, Halley argues that feminism is not a universal ideology and advocacy for all sexual liberations that liberal, progressive, and Left advocates and intellectuals are promoting:

In the United States over the last twenty years, we have seen a range of political and theoretical incursions, all indicatively “left” of center, and all adding significantly different analyses and agendas. These projects – gay-identity thought and politics, sex-positive feminism, antiracist, post-colonial, and socialist feminisms that are willing to diverge from feminist priorities, postmodernizing feminism, queer theory with or without feminism – have been competing with various feminisms – some of them compete with tout court – for intellectual authority and political fealty among left, progressive, liberal people (Halley, 2006, p. 11).

These divisions on sexual politics in Left and progressive theory and activism are, according to Halley, considered “a problem” for feminism, due to “postfeminism” only allowing for two possible outcomes: a) feminism either welcomes and includes all sexual politics on the Left or b) “it is burned alive” (Ibid., 12). While Halley explicitly states her own position as a sex-positive postmodernist, skeptical about identity politics’ “powerlessness” and “only rarely and intermittently feminist” (Ibid., 15), she does not explicitly “pick a side” in the feminist divisions but instead provides her account of how the divisions are splitting feminism that fragmentizes and becomes “something else” (Ibid., 13).

When Halley suggests “taking a break from feminism” it is partly due to what Halley conceptualizes as the “Injury Triad” (Ibid., 326). The triad consists of “injury + female innocence + male immunity” (Ibid., 324) followed by the reasoning: If harm, then regulate; If no harm, then liberty and explains its precondition of female innocence as such: “If you do harm to me and I do no harm to you, the state must punish you and leave me in my freedom. But if you do harm to me and I also do harm to you—well, then, the grid doesn’t have a third set of boxes; the harm principle would kind of run out” (Ibid., 325). Halley argues that the triad leads to internalized powerlessness and unreasonable statements about the subordination of women and demands on how the law can interfere (Ibid., 332).

I find the Injury Triad helpful to use analytically to understand the argumentation and reasoning behind the questioning of young women in Ehedslisten that are exposed to sexual harassment. I also find Halley's stances on sexual politics, powerlessness, and the divisions between various feminisms and sexual politics helpful to understand the articulation of the divisions within Ehedslisten's feminist debate.

To understand the functioning of sexism and misogyny, I depart from Manne's reconceptualizing of misogyny as not being held by individuals but by structures and institutions. I also use the conceptualization of sexism as a justifying force that legitimizes structures that subordinate women and function as the reasoning behind the woman's subordination in social relations (Manne, 2018, p. 79). Misogyny becomes the serving force in systems and structures and social environments where women will meet hostile sexism because they are women "in men's world" (Ibid., 78-81). That means environments and structures can be sexist without the people within them are being sexist themselves even though they benefit from and partake in a sexist and misogynistic structure, relation, or environment (Ibid., 32-33). Cases of sexism and sexual harassment in Ehedslisten often turn into conflicts because there is an assumption that a man discriminating a woman must be inherently misogynistic and generally think less of women. However, those assumptions are harmful in addressing cases in the party and tend to escalate the case into a conflict between groups within the party. Understanding sexism as "held" by structures and environments rather than an individual is helpful to understand the organizational factors that enable and promote a sexist environment such as narratives, power imbalances, opposing perceptions of gender, sexuality and identity.

3. Methodology

3.1 Poststructuralism and standpoint theory

When I argue that feminist debates are political negotiations of bringing meaning to socialist feminism, thus discourse, I apply a poststructuralist theoretical and methodological framework to approach the study. I also study sexual norms, political schooling, and masculinity norms from a Foucauldian conceptualization of biopower. Gannon and Davies argue that poststructuralism “took a discursive turn and an ontological turn. It recognized the constitutive power of discourse” (Gannon and Davis, 2014, p. 72), and by that challenged the positivistic and realist approach to depict “reality” and the “real world”. Gannon and Davis, while referring to Haraway, argue that poststructuralism is not a simple set of practices “that might be taken up and ossified as a “method”” (Ibid.). However, they argue that poststructuralism encourages textual analysis that goes beyond what is considered the object for textual analysis and allows for “micro-level” texts such as interviews and literature, and “macro-texts” texts such as “feminism”, “Marxism”, “capitalism”, etc. (Ibid.). Haraway, in opposition to positivism, argues that:

The moral is simple: only partial perspective promises objective vision. This is an objective vision that initiates, rather than closes off, the problem of responsibility for the generativity of all visual practices. (...) Feminist objectivity is about limited location and situated knowledge, not about transcendence and splitting of subject and object. In this way we might become answerable for what we learn how to see. (Haraway, 1991, 190)

When Haraway argues that only by partial perspectives and situated knowledge, we can become “answerable for what we learn how to see” it is also a question of taking responsibility for how interpretation relies on partial perspectives. When Haraway argues that standpoint from subjugated knowledge and partial perspectives are preferred, it is because they, contrary to positivism, “are the least likely to allow denial of the critical and interpretative core of all knowledge” (Ibid., 191). Haraway hereby states that knowledge is a matter of interpretation, thus, the standpoint from which one perceives the world becomes central to knowledge. Haraway understands positivistic and relativistic “God-tricks” as promising an impossible vision “from everywhere and nowhere equally and fully” (Ibid.). Harding also discusses the “God-trick” and considers it problematic in knowledge production, since objectivism values neutrality and supposes an outcome of “value-free research” which misperceives value neutrality. According to Harding, some values generate “less partial and

distorted beliefs than those typically held by the dominant social institutions” (Ibid., 49) and while some values can block generating of knowledge, others are productive. Harding responds to the critique that standpoint methodologies favor a “women’s way of knowing” (Grant, 1987, in Harding, 2014, p. 57), and argues that women’s experiences in knowledge production are valued but are not in “itself public, authenticated knowledge” (Harding, 2014, p. 57). I wonder about the risk of homogenizing the experiences of a certain group as universal experiences to the group. When I attempt to dig into the conflicting perceptions, I present different locations and positions within the party but with no belief that they are representative of an entire stance, generation, or group. But I am consistently considering the risk of overgeneralizing and fixating when depicting generational differences. I also wonder about how to talk about patterns in different perceptions without making the pattern representative of groups in the party and then unwillingly contributing to stigmatization between groups in the party.

I have mentioned in interviews that I formerly was a member of Enhedslisten but opted out to avoid conflict of interest when it seemed relevant to clarify my position as an “outsider-within” conceptualized by Mulinari and Sandell as “bifurcated consciousness” (Mulinari & Sandell, 1999, p. 296). But my position is further challenged by having a double-role within Enhedslisten: for this study being a master’s student but for a former study an employee at Kvinfo. Kvinfo and I are not perceived “neutral” in the conflicts of feminism, power, and gender – we are by some even considered a tool to legitimize positions on gender equality within the party and push agendas. This was clearly expressed in one interview: “I have some uncertainties about what this is going to be used for. Is it going to be used for moving someone politically (...) is it supposed to be used for moving a political focus somewhere else, somewhere we do not know where is?” (Bjarne). However, I felt my background was mostly interfering in terms of my experiences in Denmark’s Socialdemocratic party and its corresponding youth party. I was a member from the age of 14 – 22 years, and my recognition of experiences with political schooling, raising the collective above the individual, and party culture made me consistently wonder throughout the study how much I interpret their words in the light of my own experiences. It also directly interfered in the interviews as it is not possible, nor desirable, to hide my past engagement in the Socialdemocratic party. I was wondering if it could have implications for the interview persons who might considered my former political background in a negative light. In one interview, I was directly asked if I participated in a documentary about sexual violence in political youth parties, which I confirmed, but felt conflicted talking about. In another interview, the

interview person told me he reads my columns but does not always agree with me, here, referring to my job as a columnist in the newspaper Berlingske. Mulinari and Sandell explain that three kinds of criticism of the notion of experiences evolved in the 1980s, where the second points to the power relation of the researcher and the researched; “the notion of ‘shared experience’ obscured power relations between women researcher and women researched” (Mulinari & Sandell, 1999, p. 290). Shared experiences can not only obscure power relations but also challenge them if shared experiences are heavily present in the interview but not considered by both parts in the same ways. However, it can and did also contribute to a mutual understanding that I believe resulted in a greater trust.

3.2 Ethical considerations

Talking about experiences of sensitive topics can be distressing. It can also be perceived as somewhat disloyal to the party to problematize certain things to someone studying the party “from outside” and potentially have social sanctions to reveal too much if the participation is disclosed. It was clear that the younger interview persons felt uncomfortable around certain topics, had a hard time articulating some problems, and seemed worried about how they appeared. Realizing that, I offered to conduct interviews online even though no one ended up deciding to do so. Harding argues that “the ideal conditions for producing reliable knowledge require genuinely democratic societies in which inequality has already disappeared and no group is or can legitimately be silenced through formal or informal means” (Harding, 2014, p. 59). As is displayed in the analysis many of the conflicts stem from the inequalities *Enhedslisten* produces in its own structure. In an organizational context of a nontransparent distribution of power, members have different means to voice their opinions, experiences, and raise problems and concerns. That was also very prevalent in those whose voices I could not reach in the study.

I had to remove ethnic minorities from the proposed interview groups because it would not be possible to secure confidentiality. I believe that certain smaller groups of people in regard to ethnicity and gender- and sexual identity are more exposed to discrimination than others but it was not possible to include due to the risk of identification. Kolankiewicz discusses the ethical considerations of anonymization in a study of court cases on racism, and argues that in treating the cases like statistics, Kolankiewicz felt strange and states, “I slowly came to realize that one of the reasons for this was that the judicial language in which the courts describe the cases and express their judgments was dry

and distanced in a somewhat similar way” (Kolankiewicz, 2022, p. 119). When I take out certain groups of people from the study, I am, similar to what Kolankiewicz explains as perpetuating judicial distance, perpetuating the invisibilization and erasure of their experiences. And where Kolankiewicz overcame the distance by renaming as a way of rehumanizing the people behind the cases, I still cannot include their experiences in an analysis of their own organization. Kolankiewicz also discussed the potential of letting people speak in their own names as an act of giving voice to marginalized groups and argues that while trying to reclaim the voice of those involved in the trials in the study, Kolankiewicz was perpetuating the act of the courts by speaking in their name (Ibid., 125). The question of speaking in others’ name made me wonder about how this study presents participants’ experiences, opinions, and perceptions. I aim to present opinions and positions that might be silenced and shamed and it is also important to represent the opposing position to understand the division. However, I found it difficult at certain times to navigate what exactly is being said in interviews. I tried to maintain an open reading by not speculating about the intentions behind a certain depiction or seeking to confirm my own ideas, drawing on Sedgwick’s critique of the hermeneutics of suspicion (Sedgwick et al., 2003, p. 124). But during observations and interviews at certain times, I felt there were attempts to place the “fault” upon certain groups or to portray Enhedslisten in a specific light. All that was, indeed, speculation. But I became more attentive to not contributing unintentionally to antagonizing by entering conflicts I was unaware of through this study.

4. Method and material

4.1 Primary and secondary material and data collection

The primary material consists of four ethnographic observations and nine in-depth interviews with members of Enhedslisten. Secondary material consists of the findings published in the study of the scope and character of discrimination based on gender and sexual orientation and sexual harassment in Enhedslisten by a coworker and I in the role of an employee at Kvinno (Uglebjerg & From, 2022). The findings were originally used to locate three main sites of conflict and prompted the research question, but the analysis is based upon the primary material of interviews and observations. Other secondary materials to supplement the discussions in the primary material are a social media post by Pernille Skipper; Kristensen's ethnographic work on the development of Enhedslisten; a media piece by journalist and editor, Anne Sofie Allarp; and an interview with parliamentarian politician, Pelle Dragsted.

4.1.1 Ethnographic observations

I have conducted observations of the discussions following presentations of the original study in four different settings: a national committee, a political committee, and two local presentations. All observations had between 20 – 60 participants which gave me approximately a total of 160 participants. The observations sparked reactions and concerns that shaped the sites of conflict and research problems and are included as material in the analysis. For all observations, I have presented myself and briefly the study, explained the purpose of the observation and how I conduct it, and informed about my presence beforehand by email to give participants the option to ask me not to observe before the presentation and again at the beginning. To gain access to the party, the thesis proposal was presented and approved when the original study was presented to the executive committee in February 2022. Mason suggests questioning before conducting ethnographic observation if it is possible to gain access and “what does access really mean?” (Mason, 2002, pp. 91). My purpose of conducting observations was to look at the discussions and reactions concerning gender, sexual orientation, feminist practice, and disagreement on socialist feminism prompted by the presentation of the original study. However, the discussions between participants were undoubtedly affected by my presence and further by the fact that I also was a co-writer on the report they were discussing. So, while I had access to the setting, I do not have access to their “unfiltered” discussions and reactions. The reason why I still found it beneficial to conduct the observations was

due to the focus on perceptions of gender and sexual orientation and positions in the socialist feminist debate in the discussions followed by the presentations rather than the reactions on the original study in itself.

4.1.2 In-depth interviews

I conducted interviews with members of different parts of the party. The nine interviews are distributed on five selected groups with a pseudonym for each person. The groups did not determine the interview guide but reflect different parts of the party that I wanted to include in the study. That does not make the study representative of the member base nor does it cover all parts of the party. While I do not believe the proposed groups share the same beliefs, experiences, or political positions, I find it important to secure different generations and experiences are presented to include more perspectives. After the executive committee's approved the study, I sent an invitation to participate in the interviews to the committee and to participants of the four observations after which the interview persons contacted me to participate in the study. I asked interview persons to pass the invitation with my contact information along to other members of the party. I directly approached members of the youth parties to pass the invitation among the younger parts of the party as most of the initial interviews were among interview persons above the age of sixty and I wanted a broader representation. The distribution of interview persons in the groups is the following:

- Members below the age of 30 years: Ulrikke, Jens, Signe and Martin.
- Members of above the age of 60 years: Bjarne, Christoffer, Berit and Mariam.
- Members identifying as sexual minorities: Martin, Ulrikke and Jens.
- Members below the age of 26 years and members of the youth organizations affiliated to Enhedslisten, Socialist Youth Front and Red-Green Youth: Ulrikke, Signe and Jens.
- Members who were formerly active in the radical left-wing and autonomous communities in Denmark in the 70s – 90s with flat structure: Bjarne, Christoffer, Berit, Rebecka, and Mariam.

All participants were informed that they could withdraw their participation at any point during the study. I recorded interviews but not observations.

4.2 Method for analysis

In operationalizing the research area and topics, I departed from Mason's five questions of strategy in qualitative research: a) the "the social 'reality': your ontological perspective", b) "knowledge and

evidence: your epistemological position”, c) “your broad research area”, and d) “your intellectual puzzle and your research questions” (Mason, 2002, pp. 14-7). While addressing an ontological perspective, Mason suggests questioning the nature of the phenomena studied but argues that there might be more than one ontological perspective of the given phenomena (Ibid., 16), which in my case is prevalent in the varied perceptions that are studied. In addressing the epistemological position, Mason proposes questioning what can represent knowledge of the phenomena studied and argues that the epistemological positions go beyond deciding upon methods to generate or collect data (Ibid.). I draw on feminist epistemologies of standpoint theory; situated knowledge; and partial perspectives as discussed in the methodology chapter. I use ethnographic observations and in-depth interviews as the generator of knowledge located in the party organization. Often a political party’s development and politics are studied from a top down-perspective considering the parliamentary policy-making and key politicians as the center of development, and I am interested in approaching the discussions from within the party hence the political and organizational development is mediated from members’ perspectives.

I initially located the three sites of conflict based on the findings in the original study. The observations elaborated on the sites of conflict and operationalized the themes into research questions that identified groups for interviews and semi-structured interview guides. Subthemes under the three sites of conflict were identified after a thematic content analysis of interviews and observations according to a directed approach to content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1282). As the material and themes differ, the method of analyzing does as well. Some themes that deal with how problems and phenomena are framed, perceived, and negotiated are closer to discourse theory. When I do not use discourse analysis consistently and as a primary method, it is based upon the material and method for data collection. However, discussions of bringing meaning to social justice, socialist feminism, and oppression as discourses still appear in my analysis, and I draw on elements of discourse theory such as hegemony and power to define drawing on Laclau and Mouffe (Jørgensen & Philips, 2000, pp. 40). I do not define terms that appear in the analysis and are a matter of discursive negotiations such as feminist socialism or identity politics. It is not my intention to study the discursive constructions of the terms, but rather what positions are present in the discursive struggles and how they present themselves in the party organization. If my purpose was to look at what discursively constitutes the terms in the party’s politics, it would have been more sensible to include political programs, statements, legislative proposals, speeches, media pieces, or social media posts,

but that would, then, change the perspective to a top-down and foremost a parliamentary point of view. The content analysis I conduct has a directed approach (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1277). According to Hsieh and Shannon, the directed approach is useful when “existing theory or prior research exists about a phenomenon that is incomplete or would benefit from further description. The qualitative researcher might choose to use a directed approach to content analysis” (Ibid., 1781). As this study departs from another study that has themes that feel outside the study’s terms of reference, this study digs deeper into some of those themes and a directed approach is productive.

I approach the discussions on socialist feminism by drawing on Enhedslisten’s socialist feminist political program from 2017 that defines the interrelation of socialism and feminism as such:

Economic redistribution and combating inequality are inextricably linked with feminism. (...) A feminist society is a socialist society. And feminism is a necessity in creating the societal change we believe in. A future where we in a community share the goods of life (Enhedslisten, 2017, my translation).

However, the political program’s definition is highly contested by other perceptions of socialist feminism, socialism and feminism, and the interrelation between the three but is a point of departure to approach the debate.

5. Analysis

The sites of conflicts are divided into subthemes that are interconnected inside of the sites and across the sites and their respective subthemes. Thus, to understand part three of the analysis, queer culture, the divisions in the feminist debates are preconditioned. In the same sense, part one, socialism(s) and the distribution of power, is a foundation on which to perceive the following themes.

In part one, I apply the analytical scheme and terminology offered by Sartori and Panebianco and return to it throughout the analysis. I use their framework to approach the organization of power and how it alters. Moreover, I use their framework to identify positions within the party, organizational behavior in accordance with political goals, and the party's internal system of inequalities as a core of intraparty conflicts. I use Seeberg to provide perspectives on how Enhedslisten's party organization can be perceived differently from the Danish tradition of organization and behavior of political parties. I use Manne's conceptualization of misogyny and Ås' discussion of the master suppressing techniques to discuss interpretations of what constitutes a structure of power.

In part two, I depart from a social media post by Pernille Skipper to commence a subtheme of a narrative that constitutes a ground on which different groups can claim political legitimacy. That and limitations of women's political engagement are analyzed with Manne's conceptualization of misogyny and sexism and their duality. I use Butler and Fraser's debates on redistribution, recognition, and the "postsocialist" condition to discuss the struggle of defining social justice and oppression. I use Pinto's analysis of hegemonic masculinity when discussing masculinity norms in Denmark's Communist party and how it can be traced in Enhedslisten today and upon that discussion, I use Mulinari and Sandell's discussion of experiences' importance of knowledge production in feminist theory in a discussion of a shift in approaching experiences. I use Halley's theorization of the Injury Triad to approach the discussion of underlining assumptions of powerlessness and supplement the discussion with Ås' account of what constitutes power dynamics.

In part three, I supplement the analysis of conflicting perceptions of feminism, socialism, and identity politics with a media piece by Anne Sofie Allarp, an interview with Pelle Dragsted and draw on Fraser and Butler's debate on recognition and redistribution, Fraser's discussions of social justice in the "postsocialist" condition, Thorup's definition of identity politics, and Young's approach to a politic of difference. Lastly, I approach the queer culture with Halley's discussion of "loyalty

projects” in gay culture, Panebianco’s discussion of the “teleological prejudice”, and Foucault’s theorization of biopower and sexuality’s “privileged position” where the body meets the population. I use Federici’s and Clarke’s accounts of politicizing the private to exemplify radical feminist positions on the current debates on politicizing the private and return to Federici’s feminist Marxist critique to analyze how that discussion is reoccurring by taking on new forms in Ehedslisten today.

5.1. Socialism(s): Flat structure, collectivity and killing narratives

It was idealistically reasonable because we had to join forces. And that meant we used the most open tradition to build Enhedslisten upon, namely Left-wing Socialists. But we also knew very few had the same number of conflicts as Left-wing Socialists. Thus, it was an experiment, and it is an experiment, and it is under rapid change many places in the party (Bjarne).

Det var idealistisk fornuftigt, fordi vi skulle samle kræfterne. Og det vil sige, at vi tog den mest åbne tradition at bygge Enhedslisten på nemlig VS. Men vi vidste også, at der ikke var mange, der havde haft så mange konflikter som VS. Og derfor var det et eksperiment, og det er et eksperiment, og det er under hastig forandring mange steder i partiet. (Bjarne)

Formations of power in a space that does not allow for formal power

You become the person that complains and complains. Instead of saying, “what I am actually unsatisfied with is that I cannot figure out how to go gain influence”. So, I feel ambivalent with what is happening at the moment; it is informal, not decided upon. It is called a “necessity” when it is changed. (Christoffer)

Man bliver den, der brokker sig og brokker sig. I stedet for at sige, ”det jeg egentlig er utilfreds med er, at jeg ikke kan finde ud af, hvordan jeg får indflydelse”. Derfor har jeg dobbelt med det, der sker i øjeblikket. Det er uformelt, det er ikke besluttet. Det kaldes en ”nødvendighed”, når der bliver ændret. (Christoffer)

Panebianco presents an argument related to Christoffer’s frustration: “one of the theses of this book is that the intraparty conflicts are to be found in the party’s internal system of inequalities” (Panebianco, 1988, p. 4). The inequalities in accessing policy-making causes an ambivalence to the subtle changes of the distribution of power. Christoffer explains that while he faces an unnecessary number of obstacles in understanding who makes the decisions due to the lack of transparency caused by the flat structure, he finds himself considering the subtle changes in the organization of power another example of how the exercise of informal power makes it impossible to question because, as Christoffer asks, “who can be questioned about a decision no one officially made?”. The same frustration is shared by Bjarne who also points out a paradox in having a leader in the political spokesperson who is not elected by the members and has no direct link to the executive committee. That will according to Bjarne create an ongoing conflict about management between the parliamentary group and the executive committee due to the inequalities in the distribution of power to a leader that is not formally elected.

Jens talks about what will happen with the distribution of power after the regress at the recent parliamentary election. Panebianco argues that an organization will try to colonize its environment through domination and at the same time “reach a pact” through adaption (Panebianco, 1988, p. 13). This adaption can be framed as the “necessity” Christoffer talked about in the subtle changes in the distribution of power. Jens states a month before the election, “I am curious about what will happen if we start to lose power in the parliament because a frustration will appear and start to shake the system without a formal structure. In times of progress, it is easy to build and centralize”. Jens reflects on Naomi Klein’s chock doctrine and how undemocratic forces take the power in times of crisis.

While Klein looks at macro-movements and not organizations, Jens draws parallels to crisis management in a political party and argues that the response is often less democracy although what is needed is a broadening of democratic participation; “fundamentally, what we need the most in a critical situation is an extended democracy, but I do not believe that will be the response.”

“One needs power to take advantage of power”

The opacity of the flat structure makes exercising of power often considered invisible and thus difficult to question. That goes for the broad organizational structures but also creates confusion on smaller scales about how power is distributed between people in different social and political settings. A case of sexual harassment in a local setting has been discussed in observations and brought up in interviews, and the question of who holds the power in that specific case split the members. Berit brings up the case and argues “one needs power to take advantage of power”, and explains that the man did not formally hold any power contrary to the woman who was sexually harassed by him. Jens has a different approach to the matter, “an old man sexually harassing a young woman with power as a way to gain power over her is the oldest story. She had power and he wanted that so he took it by harassing her until she was inferior to him”. Here, Jens’ reasoning is in line with Manne’s argument about misogyny’s function as policing by shaming a woman who claims a man’s “property” and does not conform with her gender by entering a male domain (Manne, 2018, pp. 106-7, 192).

I do not ask about specific cases of sexual harassment, and I am not talking to people directly involved in that specific matter. However, the case was debated widely within the party and in the media. In addition, all documents regarding the man’s exclusion have been made publicly accessible by himself. Therefore, I decided to use it as a case study of the different perceptions of power when it was brought up by interview persons and in observations, but I do not engage in the conversation, state any unnecessary information, or discuss the actual case; only the reactions it fosters.

Berit’s hesitance to connect the case to power can be seen in the light of interpreting this case as master suppressing techniques. Ås opposes calling anything not directly connected to a structure of power master suppressing techniques, ”do not use the term ”master suppressing techniques” if it is not connected to a structure of power and subordination. Master suppressing techniques are a behavior a superior group can be allowed to use as exercising of power over an inferior group” (Ås in Berg & Bohlin, 2017, p. 26, my translation). The question here, and the reason for the conflicting

perceptions of whether or not the man exercised power, is really a question of what constitutes the structure of power and subordination. In this case, Berit only sees the formal power: the man did not have any, and the woman did. Whereas Jens takes the informal power into the structure of power: it was an older man with experience and network against a young woman. In this case age, gender, and experiences are all examples of informal power that feed into Jens' perception of the structure of power that makes the matter a question of master suppressing technique. For Berit, the lack of a power structure in favor of the man that exercised the sexual harassment makes the matter something else than a question of power through master suppressing techniques. The small and large-scale contradicting perceptions of power result in conflicts about what constitutes power.

However, all interview persons problematized the limited potential for actions against the power when it is not formalized, as Bjarne articulates, "you cannot go against a power that is not formally assigned. You might not even see it". When questioned about why formalizing informal power, Bjarne elaborates: "we have no means against informal power in the hands of people. It becomes whoever takes the power. And power is not supposed to be taken. It is supposed to be given. Because then it can be revoked. You cannot revoke power that is taken".

The dangers in illusions, narratives, and cracks in ideological faith

Christoffer reflects upon the reason for the flat structure in the early years of *Enhedslisten*, "most people still have the illusion of a democratic flat structure. In the party, there is a crucial illusion about the flat structure and its excellences". Bjarne compares the flat structure in *Enhedslisten* to the autonomous environment in Copenhagen in the 80s and concludes, in line with Christoffer, that flat structure is rather an ideal than a practice, "the BZ-movement was, so to speak, autonomous but it was so controlled from the top, you wouldn't believe it. Communist Workers' party was nothing compared to BZ". Rebecka, Christoffer, Berit, and Mariam mention different attempts to create a flat structure. Tvind⁵ was pointed to as a location of anti-authoritarian people engaging in an extremely authoritarian culture where the "collective broke the individual". In that lies the danger of power formations in a flat structure, according to Rebecka, "no space is without power and attempts to create that space can make us blind to misuse of power to raise the collective above the individual, as it happened in Tvind, it can break people". When asked about what is meant by "raising the collective

⁵ Founded in Denmark in the 1970s by Mogens Amdi Petersen as an alternate and Left-wing approach to education and collectivity through the Traveling Folk School (den Rejsende Højskole) (Sæhl et al., 2017).

above the individual”, Rebecka responds: “have you ever sat in a chair in the middle of a room full of people being criticized and torn apart and expected to wake up the next day and give your all to the community?”. Another aspect of illusion is heroic images in international politics. In all interviews, international politics was considered central to many conflicts. Bjarne talks about a specific conflict of a Latin American dictator. I ask if he thinks the, according to Bjarne, disillusion, are because the dictator was seen as a socialist and Bjarne responds, ”he has been one of the biggest socialist heroes on the Latin American continent, and now we have a quite ordinary dictator. It is difficult to live with for some people who had that opinion”. Bjarne’s account of the heroic images speaks to more general tendencies, often brought up in interviews in relation to the collapse of the Soviet Union. Mariam talks about her experience of knowing what she believed in was wrong:

I had dinner with some old friends from Denmark’s Communist party’s youth, and we talked about the time when Denmark’s Communist party fell apart, the Soviet Union broke down, Putin has invaded Ukraine... Even though it was never Russian socialism we wanted in Denmark, I have defended the system. But as we sit and talk about the fact that we spent our lives on that, none of us regrets it. It helped shape us and give us meaning in life and an outlook on life we still enjoy. It is funny to look back afterwards and say, “I was wrong but I am, nevertheless, happy I carry it with me” (Mariam)

Jeg spiste middag med nogle gamle venner fra DKU, og vi snakkede om, da DKP bryder sammen, Sovjet går i opløsning, Putin har angrebet Ukraine... Selvom det aldrig har været en russisk socialisme, vi ville have i Danmark, har jeg jo forsvaret det system. Men når vi sidder der og snakker om, at det har vi brugt vores liv på, er der faktisk ingen af os, der fortryder. Det har været med til at forme os og give os et livsindhold og et livssyn, som vi stadigvæk lever højt på. Det er jo sjovt, at man kan kigge tilbage og sige, ”der tog jeg fejl, men jeg er alligevel glad for, at jeg har det med i bagagen.” (Mariam)

Christoffer talks about the time in Denmark’s Communist party and what happened after the collapse of the Soviet Union. After some time, he says, “you cannot let the foundation of your worldview crumble from one day to another. It is too much”. Both Mariam and Christoffer point out the ambivalence in the view of the Soviet Union; both having defended a system they perceive differently now, but acknowledging that adaption is difficult and not regretting being wrong. That speaks to Bjarne’s frustrations about heroic imaging in international politics which is connected to what Christoffer understands as an illusion about the flat structure’s democratic significance. One way to

understand the conflicting sentiments on international politics and flat structure is superficially as political disagreements and opposing opinions. I will argue that the conflicts are rather grounded in killing narratives and different ways of handling cracks in ideological faith that lead to heroic images or, contrary, antagonism.

Contradicting discipline, enemies and stigmatizing: A fractionated party unit

In Panebianco's "teleological prejudice" (Panebianco, 1988, p. 4) the party measures inconsistencies between political goals and the party's behavior. But when the party is fractionalized, the political goals and hence the organizational behavior might differ, resulting in contradicting norms and policing of those norms. Several interview persons talk about political schooling. Mariam approaches the political schooling she experienced as a "moral upbringing" and argues that she expects diligence and behaving well "is a part of the moral upbringing we all preferably had. It was important back then":

If you wanted to be respected, you needed to do a good job because people would quickly know where you come from. Sometimes, I can wonder about how they school today. We were schooled: We read, discussed, met and discussed. (...) We walloped Marx and Engels through, and then we started over from the beginning and from the end. And the moral was a part of it. (Mariam)

Ville man nyde respekt, så skulle man lave et ordentligt stykke arbejde, fordi folk ville hurtigt finde ud af, hvor man kom fra. Nogle gange undrer jeg mig lidt over, hvordan man egentlig skoler i dag. Vi blev skolet. Altså vi læste, diskuterede, mødtes og diskuterede. (...) Vi trynede jo Marx og Engels igennem, så gik vi igennem igen forfra og bagfra. Og der hørte moralen med. (Mariam)

The lack of political schooling and political morality is used as a ground to criticize the younger generations. Bjarne says that one fraction considers other fractions to not be willing to work hard, lack diligence, or behave badly, and another fraction has the image of a third fraction as organizationally paranoid and ideologically dogmatic, dominating, and orthodox. Political schooling is described by the elder interview persons as a matter of discipline. I perceive the functioning as disciplinary power in Foucault's conceptualization of biopower. But the values in political schooling, e.g., diligence and ideological orthodoxy, also served a regulatory function to reinforce party discipline and loyalty. Even though regulatory power in Foucault's account is power the state uses to

control its population, I consider it possible in this case to make an analogy from state to party, and from population to party members.

Christoffer does not share the perception that struggles between fractions take up space, but he does point to fractions sabotaging voting processes that go against the fundamentals of the flat structure: “an organized group that votes the same has a giant power in a flat structure where we all tell ourselves we run for positions on equal terms”. Martin argues that the old parties are still alive in Enhedslisten and can make it difficult for younger members without the experience from before the aggregation. Drawing on Sartori’s terminology and analytical framework, what Martin talks about is the difficulties in obtaining the position as a non-aligned partisan and being expected to adhere to a fraction (Sartori, 1976, p. 75). Also Ulrikke explains suspiciousness around a person that does not “show color” in terms of fractions, and how it often comes down to one’s relationship with people in the party.

Besides the lack of political schooling, some elder interview persons brought forward the conception of political activism as a collective, whereas younger generations described their engagement in more individualized frames. That can be due to the different preconditions for political activism; whereas younger generations have a wide outreach on social media, e.g., elder generations’ experiences and recollections of political activism are rooted in the social and cultural context in the Cold War years. It creates a division between generations and questions the younger generations’ political commitment. Christoffer argues that the idea of mobilizing and spreading awareness on the internet is an excuse and not enough to create collective change. It challenges belonging and identification with a political party that can be seen, according to Christoffer, in the flow of members. “Members of Denmark’s Communist party were members their entire life,” Christoffer argues.

Sub conclusion: A fractionalized party organization

Inequalities at the core of conflicts, narratives, morality, and political schoolings

I was curious to understand – and question – if a flat structure in an organization that works to achieve the political goals of minimizing power imbalances in society is a way of reflecting the political goals on the organizational structures. And if it is possible to limit power inequalities by a flat structure in a political organization that intrinsically will be a space of power struggles? All interview persons were dissatisfied with how the flat structure works in Enhedslisten and most found the informal distribution of power so intransparent and undisputed that they preferred a more hierarchical structure. As Panebianco argues, Enhedslisten's internal system of inequalities regarding accessing decisions, lack of transparency, and informal power centers are catalysts of conflict. Several pointed out how subtle changes in organizational structure already take place but behind the stage and is uncontested. When the party faces regression two opposing poles in response become visible: continuation of Enhedslisten's modernization process/the "necessity" or an extension of the organization's democracy. The conflicts rooted in inequalities also displayed conflicting perceptions of what constitutes power: informal and formal power, and a frustration in not having any means against power that is not formalized.

Dominant narratives and illusions are also considered a ground for conflicts. The narratives foster heroic images or antagonism which become tangible in discussions of international politics. Although the conflicts are often displayed as political disagreements, I argue that they are rather a question of killing narratives and adapting to a changing world with global politics and war and peace in flux. For the elder generations in Enhedslisten, political schooling was a natural part of being a part of a political party and served as a matter of discipline and political morality. When the schoolings are distinguished, it can create contradicting sets of norms and values in the party which lead to antagonism and stigmatizing. Younger interview persons found it difficult to be a part of the party and not adhere to a fraction, and their commitment to the party was questioned by elder members due to both individualized or collective approaches to activism and the lack of (moral) political schooling.

5.2 Feminism(s): What is socialist feminism?

I am entirely done with being told that mine and other women's results are figments of our pretty looks. Fucking done (...) It is not my "pretty face" that got me the third highest number of personal votes at the last election. (...) It was not my age – that, by the way, is stepping towards forty – or my physical appearance that resulted in Denmark's first government agreement that dragged the welfare and economic politics so far to the left (...) Too many people, just like you, still believe that if you are not a white middle-aged man, it is probably not the abilities that fuel the cause (...) So, dear Lasse Ellegaard. Now, I am going to say something to you I have wanted to say to many other people before you: blow me (Skipper, 2022b).

Jeg er helt og aldeles færdig med at finde mig i at få at vide, at mine og andre kvinders resultater er et udslag af vores kønne udseende. Fucking færdig (...) Det er ikke mit "kønne ansigt", der skaffede mig tredje flest personlige stemmer ved sidste valg. (...) Det var ikke min alder - som i øvrigt nærmer sig de 40 - eller mit udseende, der resulterede i det første forståelsespapir, som trak velfærdspolitik og økonomisk politik så langt til venstre (...) Alt for mange, ligesom dig, tror stadig, at hvis man ikke er en hvid, midaldrende mand, er det nok ikke evnerne, der driver værket (...) Så kære Lasse Ellegaard. Nu siger jeg noget til dig, som jeg har haft lyst til at sige til mange andre før dig: rend mig (Skipper, 2022b)

“Blow me”: Young women with power entering a male domain

Skipper left the parliament in 2022. Shortly before the election, she wrote a noteworthy reply to a column by the political commentator Lasse Ellegaard who insinuates Skipper’s success was based on gender, age, and looks (Ellegaard, 2022). Skipper argues that her success was not based upon but rather in spite of her gender. The narrative behind the “Johanne-effect” does not confine to the women in the front of the party. Interview persons brought up devaluation of young women and elder women’s invisibilization in regards to political legitimacy: the narrative legitimizes young women politically in regards to physical appearance and elder men in regards to their political experiences, certain groups lose ground to claim political legitimacy. Berit argues that the narrative is a pleasant explanation when one finds it difficult to get ahead that can intensify a feeling of being treated unjust when young women get elected at the expense of other candidates. Ulrikke talks about the narrative and expands the discussion to experiences of policing young women with power in the party:

In my experience, there are a lot of limitations and norms that confine what is allowed and not allowed. I experience that because I am a young woman in a powerful position, there is a lot of focus on how I speak, how I look and dress, etc. Then you are not allowed to be as direct. Or, I am not allowed to (Ulrikke).

Min oplevelse er, at der er sindssygt mange begrænsninger og normer, der begrænser, hvad man må og ikke må. Jeg oplever, at i det, jeg er en ung kvinde i en magtfuld position, er der ret meget fokus på, hvordan jeg taler, hvordan jeg ser ud og klæder mig osv. Så må man ikke være så direkte. Eller jeg ikke må være det (Ulrikke).

Ulrikke elaborates by talking about a situation where a woman in her early thirties had handled a case, but it was decided that a man needed to present the case, because it was known that an undermining of her authority would appear if she presented. Manne argues that “misogyny’s primary function and constitutive manifestation is the punishment of “bad” women, and the policing of women’s behavior” (Manne, 2018, p. 192). Signe also expresses that her behavior and appearance becomes a matter of policing and finds that it is more important to others how she talks than what she is saying. Ulrikke’s and Signe’s examples do not confine to themselves, but apply to all women in regards to the lack of authority they face in the party, and as a result, in Ulrikke’s case, let a man present instead of a woman, and in Signe’s cases; downplay femininity and act more masculine.

Manne elaborates on misogyny's policing force, "the overall structural features of the account predict that misogyny as I've analyzed it is likely to work alongside other systems and mechanisms to enforce gender conformity" (Ibid.). The question here is how one conforms to gender stereotypes as a woman in politics; a male-dominated sphere. And if the reason why women are subject to more policing is because of their presence in a traditionally male domain. Manne argues that the male claim of moral and sexual superiority is inherent in misogyny. Women who demand a man's "property" will be subject to shame (Ibid., 106-7). A woman going for positions containing political power that formerly was a man's entitlement will, as Ulrikke's and Signe's experience, in many cases be subject to shame as the political sphere is a traditionally male domain.

Defining social justice, oppression, and socialist feminism

The question about how much space feminism is supposed to take in the party appeared in both interviews and observations. Bjarne even had suspicion about the executive committee's decision to allow me access to the party in the purpose of conducting this study:

I have some uncertainties about what this is going to be used for? Is going to be used for moving someone politically – this is also why it is so important to people – is it supposed to be used for moving a political focus somewhere else, somewhere we do not know where is? Or what does it mean? Does it mean that now this is what we should focus on and not the climate crisis? (Bjarne)

Men der ligger for mig også nogle usikkerheder i, hvad skal det her bruges til? Skal det bruges til at flytte nogle politisk – det er også derfor det fylder så meget hos folk – skal det bruges til at flytte et politisk fokus et andet sted hen, som man ikke ved, hvad er? Eller hvad betyder det? Betyder det nu, at nu er det ligesom det, vi skal hæfte os ved og ikke klimakrisen? (Bjarne)

The questions of why Enhedslisten is focusing on gender equality was also shown as a discussion of focus on recognition rather than redistribution. Mariam argued, "if you are already on unemployment benefits, they surely do not distinguish between a man and woman. If they already are after you and sanction you, it is not question about man or woman". What Mariam argues is in line with Fraser's argument about recognition and why to distinguish recognition and material distribution analytically. More generally the objections of talking about feminism and gender equality can be seen as part of what Fraser describes as a constitutive feature of the "postsocialist condition" (Fraser, 1997a, p. 280): a change in terms of the central problem of justice from redistribution to recognition (Ibid., 2).

Christoffer also enters the discussion: “I think my generation will say: ‘you removed yourself from the actual class fight with the oppression of women, and you weakened the fight because you want to sit and discuss all sorts of genders’”. What Christoffer implies by stating “the actual class fight with the oppression of women” is that the “actual fight” is concerning class rather than gender. Butler, conversely, disagrees with Christoffer’s attempt to “bring back” the feminist struggle to the core of the Marxist critique of distribution by arguing material and cultural life cannot be considered a stable division (Butler, 1997, p. 36). Aligned with Butler is Signe, “when I speak about sexual orientation, some people sit silent and wait until we can move onto the “important political matters” of, you know, children living in poverty. But sexual oppression is just as real oppression as poverty is”. Martin also explains a lack of understanding discrimination based on sexual orientation as an inequality, and considers that some parts of the party invalidated any oppression not economic or directly class related. The opinion Signe and Martin are being met with when talking about sexual oppression is what Butler would call neo-conservative Marxism, explained as a “new orthodoxy on the Left work in tandem with a social and sexual conservatism that seeks to make questions of race and sexuality secondary to the ‘real’ business of politics, producing a new and eerie political formation of neo-conservative Marxism” (Butler, 1997, p. 36).

While the feminist political program defines socialist feminist and the interrelation of socialism and feminism as such “economic redistribution and combating inequality are inextricably linked with feminism”, the perceptions of socialism, feminism, and its interrelation varies in the party. Some interview persons found that the party’s practice of feminism was incompatible with socialism in questions of acknowledging group differences but aiming to minimize imbalances societally. Concretely, the gender-divided speaking lists and gender quotas were brought up as a paradox and contradicting the queer culture because it was experienced as reinforcing gender stereotypes and differences rather than abolishing them. There were also questions of the prioritization of socialism and feminism, Bjarne argues that the party need to clarify its stance on both socialism and feminism and: “in that clarification of what socialism is prioritized higher. Because we go to great lengths to be socialists rather than being feminists”.

Although many different understandings of the core of feminism and feminist emancipation and liberation were voiced in the observations and interviews, the question keeps circling back to if gender equality and feminism is a part of the party’s definition of social justice. The focus on redistribution

and material oppression are dominant in the understanding of social justice for the elder interview persons when asked about how they define social justice, where younger interview persons also point to the political struggle for recognition.

“It is amazing that an experience like that can survive, right?”

I was curious to understand the different perceptions of gender, sexuality, and identity in the different parts of the party and how the experiences from the old parties shape the perceptions today. Berit touches on her experiences as a young woman in Denmark’s Communist party and reflects on whether those sentiments about women are present in Enhedslisten, “I can recognize that there are people that have a different idea about if men and women have equal worth. Back in Denmark’s Communist party, it was very palpable. You had to speak up, stand your ground, and assert yourself if you did not want to get overruled, especially in the unions”. Bjarne shares account of the unions being conservative in regards to women but points out that it was also a question of class, “it was maybe more the working class that had a clear distinction in what men and women are good for. As soon as we speak about the academic spheres, men and women were differently equal”. Mariam also reflects upon men’s behavior and masculinity, belonging, and enemies in the communist environment:

During the Land- and People festivals (communist festivals from 1976 – 1989), I helped engage some of our female comrades to be vigilantes at night, because it got completely out of control. The men both got hammered and had an idea that they could give the longhaired hippies a couple of smacks if they felt like it. They definitely did not belong in the crew. And because I was in between being a hippie and politically active in Denmark’s Communist party, I thought it was absolutely unacceptable (Mariam).

Under Land- og Folk festivalerne var jeg med til at samle nogle af vores kvindelige partikammerater for at være vagtværn om natten, fordi det tog fuldstændig overhånd. Altså de der mænd; dels drak de sig hegned, og dels havde de noget med, at langhårede flippere og hippier, dem kunne man godt lige give ind på lampen, hvis det passede en. De hørte i hvert fald ikke til i sjakket. Og da jeg selv lå lidt på grænsen mellem at være hippie og være politisk aktiv i DKP, synes jeg det var fuldstændigt uacceptabelt (Mariam).

The notion of certain forms of masculine behavior and masculinity norms in the communist movement are shared by multiple interview persons who remember the time; they mention violent

behavior against groups the men considered “deviant” in the communist movement, militant, belligerent, and ideologically orthodox. But there was also a male type in Denmark’s Communist party that was considered “softer”, Berit explains. Bjarne points out it was a violent and angry behavior intensified in groups of men rather than actual ideals and beliefs about manhood and masculinity similar to Mariam what expresses in the notion that the men’s behavior “got out of control”. Pinto argues that hegemonic masculinity cannot be confined to an ideal but rather “something that gets under the skin” (Pinto, 2009, p. 105) and consistently takes shape through practices; as a masculinity norm that is created through repetition and limits what is possible to repeat (Ibid.). These kinds of practices and the repetition of masculine behavior might be the case in the men’s behavior at the festivals, Mariam detected, rather than reflecting ideals of masculinity. Pinto also points to enemy images, opposites, and deviants to constitute the masculine norm and masculine combative body that was superior in both physique and moral and self-possessed (Ibid., 123). In Mariam’s experience at the festivals, the enemy image and deviants to the communist men were the hippies. The masculinity norms were also pointed to when explaining why the Left-wing Socialists were considered “the feminists” and Denmark’s Communist party was more conservative and dominated by masculine values. Bjarne points to the idea of women’s entrance on the labor market as a threat to male workers as cheap labor. Bjarne, after some reflections, laughs to himself and states, “It is amazing that an experience like that can survive, right?”

Mulinari and Sandell discuss experiences’ importance for feminist theory by comparing the idea of women’s “personal issues” as effects of the patriarchy on the individual women to a Marxist “notion of social praxis and as such entails the mediation of collectively constructed consciousness” (Mulinari & Sandell, 1999, p. 288), that is comparable to the elder interview persons’ mediation of the *Enhedslisten*’s collective experiences and a collective basis of knowledge produced from those experiences as a “collectively constructed consciousness”. What Bjarne touches upon with Denmark’s Communist party’s outlook on gender equality might trace back to collective experiences from the working class and unions when women entered the labor marked as “cheap labor”, and how that experience can be passed down from generation to generation.

However, the idea of experiences and their political validity predominantly takes a different form today from collective to individual experiences and how that creates legitimacy in entering certain political debates. All interview persons brought up certain political discussion they felt excluded from

based on their lack of personal experience due to gender, age, or sexual orientation such as gender-based violence, sexual violence, and queer politics. The question here might be how the accounts of collective and individual experiences that connect to more collective experiences of oppression work in relation to political validity and limitations on entering political debates. Mulinari and Sandell argue,

Reclaiming experience does not mean turning (back) to homogenizing notions of women's experience, which only reconstitutes the male/female divide, nor an acceptance of difference as fixed and absolute, resulting in an individualized, apolitical notion of experience. It does mean disentangling experiences from conflation with identity and political commitment, while still seeing their interconnections. Only then can we build common political projects, not necessarily built on shared experience (Ibid.).

In Mulinari and Sandell's account, bringing political validity to experiences of an oppressed group is not the same as homogenizing the group's experiences. Mulinari and Sandell argue that the reclaiming of experiences are the interconnections of identity and the political without being a fusion of the two. However, there are differences between questions of knowledge production and of political stances. Fostering a political environment with a heavy emphasis on experiences creating a legitimized position in the debate is a limited ground to enter policy-making. Martin and Jens talked about an eradication of other experiences that is not the common collective experience (men and queer people experiencing sexual and partner violence, e.g.), and making the group responsible for political fights solely based on its identity. The reinforcing of homogenizing groups might be possible to negate in the purpose of feminist research, thus, more difficult in a political context. Returning to Mulinari and Sandell's ending remarks, "Only then can we build common political projects, not necessarily built on shared experience" (Ibid.). I interpret that statement as the political projects do not necessarily have to be fought by and build upon the people who share the experience of the oppression. The political projects might have become political projects in the first place due to the struggle and engagement by people that visibilized how personal experiences are connected to structures of oppression and politicized the private through generations. But it does not have to be driven only by the people who suffer the oppression. That is a paradoxical discussion; it is preferred to speak with instead of about marginalized groups, but at the same time, not making the groups solely responsible for their political struggle. The paradoxes are displayed in *Enhedslisten* as a question of how to practice solidarity politically without paternalizing which was discussed in observation D.

Seeking an understanding between generations

During the observations, tolerance and the lack thereof was discussed. The lack of forgiveness and tolerance between generations was expressed by some members of the elder generations that find some younger members quick to judge and condemn for using the wrong words or tell jokes they found offensive. In interviews this is explained as a frustration for some parts of the elder generations that are insecure around parts of the younger generations because they do not know when they cross a line, and when they do and apologize, they still feel judged and labelled transphobic, victim blaming, sexist, or ignorant. A comment from observation C highlighted the feeling of being targeted with anger:

Us old, we grew up with “mother in law jokes”. The younger ones can become very exasperated about it. We are met with complete and unforgiving condemnation. We have to talk about the differences between being young and old and how it shapes our look upon gender – we need tolerance. Just as we need to tolerate the young ones, they have to tolerate us too (Observation C).

Os gamle, vi voksede op med “svigermor jokes”. Og kommer det ud af vores mund, kan de unge blive meget fortørnet over. Vi bliver mødt af total og utilgivelig fordømmelse. Vi er nødt til at tale om forskellen på at være ung og gammel, og hvordan det gør, at vi ser forskelligt på køn – vi har brug for tolerance. Og ligesom vi tolererer de unge, skal de også tolerere os. (Observation C)

Whereas some members of the elder generations do not feel tolerated in the different understandings of gender and identity, some elder interview persons also point to a lack of understanding between elder and younger women especially in relation to sexism and sexual harassment. Mariam explains that she cannot put herself in the young women’s place because she grew up in a generation where it was necessary to take it into one’s own hands to make sure the men did not transgress their boundaries. Besides Mariam, Berit and Martin problematize the idea that women always were considered the weak part in questions of sexual harassment and gender-based violence. Halley argues that the Injury Triad: injury + women’s innocence + men’s immunity led to unreasonable demands on how the state and law should interfere in women’s subordination (Halley, 2006, pp. 234-6). The same reasoning is found in observation A: “we do not believe here in Enhedslisten that women are “the weak sex””, prompted by discussion on the “male gaze” and how Enhedslisten can prevent it. But the Injury Triad is also helpful to understand why some might question the case discussed earlier

of a man harassing a woman, which eventually led to his exclusion. Here Berit dwelt on the circumstance that the woman held formal power and the man did not and stated, “why do we think that he takes advantage of power he does not have and it is not her responsibility to stop him?” Here Berit goes against the Injury Triad and its underlining assumption that the woman is suppressed and powerless in the injury. Berit acknowledges that the harassment took place but does not acknowledge it is making the woman powerless.

It is interesting to look upon the belief of the woman as powerless in regards to Ås’ power suppressing techniques. Ås tried as an experiment to use the techniques against a man to see when someone was interrupting her behavior. But to Ås’ surprise, everyone accepted her behavior and it made her reason about who can access the techniques and who cannot. Ås pointed to her own position; she was more educated than the rest of the women and as a professor she held power in her position, and due to her status in the room, any behavior from her side was accepted by the others. “No maids (städerska) could do the same and get the same results,” Ås concluded from her experiment (Ås in Berg & Bohlin, 2017, p. 23, my translation). Berit mentions that she did not experience herself being limited as a woman politically, “well, I am cand.polit (master’s degree in economics) so I do not experience it”. Like Ås, Berit does not experience sexism because she is educated in a male-dominated discipline, thus she is not powerless in that space but holds the same power Ås points to when explaining how other factors gave her a powerful position. In that regard, the Injury Triad can be criticized for not taking intersectionality into consideration when establishing a structure of power and powerlessness. Mariam elaborates on her account of younger women lacking the resilience and sturdiness to stand up to men. She tells a story about harassment in her workplace as a young girl. She told her father about the harassment but he did not believe her:

I can wonder why the mothers do not teach the girls to stand up for themselves. But maybe I cannot put myself in their place. I do remember what it was like and I do remember when I went to my father and complained my distress, he looked at me and said that probably was not correct. That was almost the worst assault I have experienced (Mariam).

Jeg kan jo så undre mig lidt over, at mødrene ikke lærer pigerne at sige fra. Men jeg kan måske ikke rigtig sætte mig ind i det. Jeg kan godt huske, hvordan det var, og jeg kan godt huske, da jeg gik til min far og klagede min nød, at han kiggede på mig og sagde, at det nok ikke er helt rigtigt. Det var næsten det værste overgreb, jeg blev udsat for (Mariam).

I was curious about Mariam's statement about not being able to put herself in young women's place even though she remembered similar experiences from when she was young, and after discussing different public cases of sexual harassment towards young women, Mariam concludes, "well, then, it still exists. Even in some of the same ways as when I was young". Mariam continues to talk about a specific conversation she had with some younger women when a member of another party left his position after public revelations of sexual harassment, and shares her thought process, "I asked them why they accepted it. But what could they even have done?". In this, the shared experiences become a ground on which to seek understanding between generations.

Sub conclusion: Enhedslisten's feminist socialisms in plural

Generational divisions on feminism; perceptions of power(lessness) and lack of tolerance

The narrative of young women attracting votes on their physical appearance contains political consequences past the invalidation of competence, the narrative can become constitutive of grounds different groups claim political legitimacy on. Besides being invalidated politically by the narrative, young women are also exposed to more policing and control by other members of the party, and the lack of authority women in the party face has consequences for their political activities in line with Manne's conceptualization of misogyny's function as a policing system.

The depictions of the dominant masculinity in Denmark's Communist party were rather a behavior that was intensified in groups of men like accounts of hegemonic masculinity than actual ideals of masculinity. Some interview persons confirm those masculinity norms are present in Enhedslisten today but at a small scale, and were pointed to as an explaining factor for why Left-wing Socialists were considered feminists and Denmark's Communist party conservative and dominated by masculine values. The notion of experiences in Enhedslisten takes a different form from being described as knowledge grounded in Enhedslisten's collective experiences to personal experiences that give legitimate grounds to partake in certain debates. That shift has limiting consequences for access to debates and policy-making, but it also raises questions of who can and is responsible for fighting marginalized groups' oppression, and how to practice solidarity politically without wrongfully depicting others' struggles. The lack of understanding between generations lead to feelings of intolerance and is also displayed in questions of younger women's reaction to sexism and sexual harassment. Part of that is the idea of women being inherently powerless, drawing on the Injury Triad, and how power can be constituted of other factors than gender. However, when drawing on shared experiences, it contains a possibility for new understanding between generations.

5.3. Queer culture: from party to body

We probably live a very quiet life in suburbs. There have been situations where we had to do the pronouns round, where the generational clash has been present and where it was important to some young people to do the round and the elders have done it for the sake of peace. And who think... Then, when we have been all the way around and people had the pronouns, one would have guessed they had, it was a little bit meaningless that we did it. (Berit)

Vi lever nok et meget stille liv ude i forstæderne. Der har været sammenhænge, hvor vi skulle tage pronominer runde, hvor generationsclashet har været der, og hvor det har været vigtigt for nogle unge at gøre øvelsen, og der er ældre, der har gjort det for husfredens skyld. Og som synes at... Når vi så har været hele runden rundt, og folk havde de pronominer, som man havde gættet på, de havde i forvejen, så var det måske lidt meningsløst, at vi havde gjort det. (Berit)

“Why is that?”

When talking to the interview persons about queer people in Enhedslisten being more exposed to sexual harassment (Uglebjerg & From, 2022, p. 10), a confusion about why that is the case often appeared. Mariam looks for an explanation not only for the frequency of sexual harassment towards queer people but also for queerness in itself:

The fact that someone is not clear in their sexual orientation, that surprised me when I found out a couple of years ago. And I have given it a lot of thought. What is the reason for that in our society today? Is it poison in our food? Is it air pollution? What causes it? Is it plastic? We have been giving our children baby bottles, they have plastic toys and stuff like that. Is it the phthalates? I would really like someone to investigate it because what is happening? I do not just think it is an awareness. I think it must be some sort of influence. (Mariam)

Det, at man ikke er helt afklaret i, hvilken seksuel orientering man har, det kom faktisk bag på mig, da jeg opdagede det for nogle år siden. Og det har jeg tænkt meget over. Hvad pokker skyldes det i vores samfund i dag? Er det gifte i vores mad? Er det forurening? Hvad pokker skyldes det? Er det plastik? Vi har jo givet vores børn sutteflasker, de har plastiklegetøj. Er det ftalaterne? Altså det kunne jeg godt tænke mig blev undersøgt, fordi hvad sker der? Jeg tænker ikke bare, at det er en bevidsthed. Jeg tænker, der må være en eller anden påvirkning. (Mariam)

While some might consider this questioning and confusion offensive or paternalizing towards queer people, I find Mariam’s questions to be something that she genuinely does not understand nor judge. And while some might interpret the lack of understanding as demeaning, others called for more open and forgiving conversations on gender. A comment from observation A went, “I do not know all sexualities, what words to use, and I do not always remember the things I need to remember. But I do not forget it on purpose. I am just forgetful because I am no longer twenty years old [laughing]”. A person responded to the comment, “but they have to be more patient. It is like they want us to be wrong so they can be right”. Here “they” as I interpret it, are the younger generations and/or queer people. What the last comment called for, “they have to be more patient”, might also be a question of being open to a more tolerant interpretation: it is not on purpose but a question of forgetting, finding it hard to remember, understand, and adapt. Most elder interview persons and various comments during observations stated that they often left the conversation on gender and sexual orientation. Christoffer argued,

They are so harsh and blunt and difficult to handle that some of us stay away. I dare not formulate an opinion on the topic, because I can by mistake walk into a place where I do not want to step on anyone or kick anyone or harass anyone. Then, I have just abstained from expressing myself because I cannot. I cannot even keep track of the language. (Christoffer)

De er så kontante og hårde og svære at håndtere, at nogen af os holder os væk. Jeg tør ikke formulere mig på det her område, så jeg kan komme til i den grad vade ind et sted, hvor jeg ikke har lyst til at træde på nogen, eller sparke til nogen, eller genere nogen. Så har jeg ladet være med at udtrykke mig, fordi jeg kan ikke. Alene sprogbruget kan jeg ikke følge med i. (Christoffer)

Christoffer elaborates on his account by stating that there is a limited access to the conversation on gender and sexual orientation because it tends to become sectarian and leave the rest of the party on the margins: “There are people that become tremendously provoked if someone has not understood the language. And that is not reasonable. Because they presuppose that we have been a part of debate they have in very closed circles. That is a wrong precondition for any political matter”. Here, returning to the statement in observation A, “It is like they want us to be wrong so they can be right” can be perceived as a question of deliberately perceiving the lack of understanding or forgetfulness as intentionally hostile or intolerant as a way of digging ditches deeper and to be confirmed in the assumption of others intolerance. The belief that young people deliberately interpret the elder members as intolerant contributes to the polarization that hinders a willingness to understand and make people leave the conversation.

Speaking lists: Men and non-men

One incentive in Enhedslisten's organizational practices to increase gender equality is gender divided speaking lists. However, such lists have recently been subject to debate due to a list with the categories "men" and "non-men". The latter category has been interpreted as an eradication of the female gender once it was brought to the public's attention. Journalist and editor, Anne Sofie Allarp, writes:

When such an indignation is raised against Enhedslisten Aarhus, it is because of a trend of this time on the political Left in the direction of neutralizing womankind and women's lives through ritualized language codes, peer pressure, and social control. Consequently, it is no longer women who menstruate and give birth. We have become neutralized to persons, or in the case of Enhedslisten Aarhus: non-men. And just like that, a Trojan horse has been driven directly into the environment that historically most persistently has promoted women's rights (Allarp, 2022a, my translation).

Når der rejser sig sådan en forargelse imod de århusianske medlemmer af Enhedslisten, er det naturligtvis fordi, der i tiden er en trend på den politiske venstrefløj i retning af at neutralisere kvindekønnet og kvinders liv gennem ritualiserede sprogkoder, gruppepres og social kontrol. Således er det ikke længere kvinder, der menstruerer og føder. Vi er blevet neutraliseret til personer, eller i tilfældet Enhedslisten Aarhus: Ikke-mænd. (...) Og således er der blevet kørt en trojansk hest ind i det miljø, der historisk mest håndnakket har fremmet kvinders rettigheder og vilkår (Allarp, 2022a).

Allarp's account of the "Trojan horse" in the Left resonates with some interview persons accounts of a third gender category on the speaking lists. Mariam asked why a "third category" had to be merged with women, and if it is reasonable that they "fill" in the women's speaking list. In observations it was also questioned whose time a third category is going to take as rather a principal than logistic matter. Mariam brings up the case and argues that she finds the placement of nonbinary people on the women's list problematic: "Nonbinary people were placed on the women's lists which, *ceteris paribus*, means that women get less space. Why is that? We could place them with men so men got less space". Berit talks about the feminist conversation being "hijacked" by the younger members who promote identity politics and shut down the conversation on gender equality. Berit's account of hijacking the conversation is in line with Halley's argument that "hijacking" is a problem for feminism, because it only leaves two possible solutions: feminism either includes and embraces all kinds of sexual politics, or feminism is "burned alive" (Halley, 2006, 12). According to Berit, gender

equality “ends up in the box with other identity-political issues: sexual orientation and fatphobia”. Berit, then, proceeds to argue that there are members of the party that want identity politics to take up more space, and that is “a purely political battle that can have the expression that then we will not talk about gender equality at all”.

Signe, who disagrees with both Mariam and Berit, seeks to understand their standpoint:

Some of the elder women say it eradicates the women’s struggle if we make everything more fluid. I think they experience an invisibilization of their political struggle. And for that reason, it is important for them that the nonbinary speaking time is not taking from women. And I understand that even though I do not agree. But I think we should understand them instead of believing that they want to hurt nonbinary people because that is not the case. But it hurts them to watch what they have fought for are becoming invisible (Signe).

Nogle af de ældre kvinder siger, at det udsletter kvindekampen, hvis vi bare gør det hele flydende. Jeg tror, at de oplever en usynliggørelse af deres politisk kamp. Og det er jo derfor, at det f.eks. er vigtigt for dem, at den nonbinære taletid ikke går fra kvinderne. Og det kan jeg forstå, selvom jeg ikke er enig. Men jeg synes, man skal forstå dem fremfor at tro, at de vil nonbinære noget ondt, for det vil de altså ikke. Men de gør jo ondt på dem at se, at det de har kæmpet for, nu bliver gjort usynlig (Signe).

Returning to Allarp who argues in another text that “the second sex”, referring to de Beauvoir, is no longer the woman but the “othered minoritized person” and the language instead of the (woman’s) lived life has become the battlefield (Allarp, 2022b). Central to the shift is, according to Allarp, the neutralization and invisibilization of womankind, which is problematic because “women’s lives’ bloody reality does not disappear when we are invisibilized in the language. We just cannot shed light on it when we no longer have access to the words” (Ibid., my translation). Allarp is not a member of Enhedslisten but still relevant to touch upon because she publicly articulates many sentiments present in Enhedslisten that due to fear of being considered transphobic or intolerant have a difficult time finding a voice. Jens finds shaming in the debates on identity politics problematic of the party culture, “we need to have a serious conversation about shaming other people until they shut up as a way to dominate the political debates on identity politics”.

Pelle Dragsted, parliamentarian politician, has also has stated doubts about identity politics publicly. Firstly, Dragsted finds that identity politics tend to be sectarian, and has objections to the focus on minorities to drive political change since, according to Dragsted, “changes in a democratic society are driven forward by the majority” (Dragsted in Redder, 2018, my translation). Another reason is that Dragsted finds that the American Left’s focus on recognition is overshadowing the focus on redistribution, which he believes is one of the main reasons for Trump’s victory in 2016. He argues that the political Left needs to seek a common ground for both minorities and the majority: “you might be transgendered but you are probably also employee or pensioner. Thus, you have some class interest that transcends your gender identity and we have to focus on that if we want to change society” (Ibid., my translation). Dragsted states that gender equality, climate and rights to minorities are important, but believes they are best won by focusing on the economic structures of our society that the problems are based on. However, it is not clear what exactly Dragsted considers identity politics to be, considering his examples of driving political change such as the Socialdemocratic party. The worker’s movement is considered one of the best examples of identity political struggles in modern Danish history, according to Mikkel Thorup (Thorup in Mørk, 2022). Thorup understands identity politics as the mercy of political interest for a specific societal class just as Dragsted defines his political project on anti-capitalism.

When Dragsted criticizes the Left’s focus on identity politics it is due to two different factors: a) when he talks about societal change, the driving force is the majority, and b) his societal analysis on injustices all comes down to economic structures that, then, constitute the base of the oppression, thus, the Left put their focus there. Young offers a different approach to both. First, Young defines social justice as “the elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression” (Young, 1990, p. 15) that is, according to Young, mistakenly reduced to only being an issue of distribution by the distributive paradigm of justice (Ibid., 16). Secondly, Young present two ideals of liberation, the liberal assimilationist and the pluralist group-conscious ideal, and argues that oppression continues if group differences are ignored in public policy (Ibid., 169). What Dragsted implies by the first part of his statement, that “you might be transgendered but you are probably also an employee or pensioner” is that the recognition of being transgender is secondary to the class interest of redistribution. The second part, “we have to focus on them if we want to change to society” implies that democratic change requires a majority, thus, the majority must be able to see themselves depicted in the class struggle, but that will, following Young’s reasoning, not end oppression, and the goal of social justice

defined as “elimination of institutionalized domination and oppression” will not be reached. Thus, the conflicting political stances on identity politics can be perceived as questions of how to drive political change and what constitutes social justice and oppression.

Political projects of sexual liberation and the body

Some interview persons pointed to a hypersexualization of queer people in certain parts of Enhedslisten and the affiliated youth parties. This hypersexualization contains a duality in regards to ideas about the political struggle for sexual liberation. During the interviews, an ambivalence appeared because of a pressure to act in certain ways sexually without necessarily wanting to politicize one’s personal sexual practices. An interview person pointed out that there was a certain suspiciousness directed towards pan- and bisexual women if they were actually queer and attracted to women. The sexual norms around queerness create a certain sense of queer normativity, explained by the interview persons, that bisexual women break when they have sex with men, and that can lead to policing and a certain sense of social controlling of one’s sexual life. Ulrikke explains: “In my early and mid-twenties when we partied together and went home together there was stuff like: ‘are you actually into women? Because you went home with that man that day, and that other man that day’”. Halley claims that “a gay-identity approach fosters specifically gay culture and gay ghettos, and engages in loyalty projects like “outing” and denunciation of homosexuals who “convert” to heterosexuality” (Halley, 2006, p. 113). It is possible to approach some of the uncomfortability with the explicit sexual culture and liberation as a form of “loyalty project”:

There is a strong ideal in being sexually repressed. And that becomes everyone’s responsibility to resist through actions. Am I repressing my queer friends when I do not go to a gay bar, and hook up with a guy because I believe that sexuality is not static and I might find myself one day liking a guy? As things stand, I have no desire to have sex with men. But I cannot just say that when people ask me if I only ever hooked up with women. Yes, some people do ask that. And I cannot answer (Jens).

Der er et stærk ideal i at være seksuel undertrykt. Det bliver alles ansvar at gøre modstand gennem handlinger. Undertrykker jeg mine queer venner, når jeg ikke tager på en homobar, finder en fyr og knalder ham, fordi jeg mener, at seksualitet er flydende, og jeg en dag også kan blive forelsket i en fyr? Jeg har intet ønske om at have sex med mænd, som det er nu. Men jeg kan ikke bare sige det, når folk spørger om mig, om jeg kun har sex med kvinder. Ja, folk stiller det spørgsmål, og jeg kan ikke svare (Jens).

Here, Jens touches upon perception and conception of sexuality and how that – at the moment – is not something he wants to practice, yet feels a pressure to because of the expectation and queer norm of having a sexual behavior that aligns with the sexual liberation project of certain parts of the party. This expected behavior can be seen as the “loyalty project” in Halley’s account. Returning to Panebianco’s argument that the “teleological prejudice” of a party having been “assigned” certain political goals that serve as the party’s justification of existence can have two possible outcomes, and the last monitors the inconsistencies between the political goals and the party’s behavior (Panebianco, 1988, p. 4). I suggest to extend “party’s behavior” to the behavior of the members that, in this case, feel pressured to take the sexual liberation upon themselves and embody the sexual liberation as an individual as well as collective political struggle. Then, as Panebianco points out, there is a risk of policing and controlling of members’ embodiment of the sexual liberation.

Here, Foucault’s notions of how norms function in the circulation from body to population is helpful. Using Foucault to understand how the political goals in certain environments in Enhedslisten of sexual liberation for women and queer people become a matter of individual sexual behavior, it is beneficial to understand Foucault’s account of the “privileged position” of sexuality. When Foucault calls the position “privileged”, it is because sexuality is between the organism and population; general phenomena and body (Foucault, 2003, p. 252), and sticking to the analogy from state to party, and population to member base, the political goals transcend to the body and become a matter of embodiment due to the sexuality’s very position at the intersection of body and population.

Signe explains the pressure of embodying the political goal as such:

Maybe I am just the sippy one. I mean – I do believe queer sex or females having orgasms should not be a taboo. Like I get that politically. But personally... Personally, I really do not want to talk about my own orgasms (Signe).

Måske jeg bare er sippet. Altså jeg mener – jeg mener jo ikke at queer og kvinder, der har orgasmer, skal være et tabu. Det gør jeg jo ikke politisk. Men personligt... Personligt har jeg faktisk virkelig ikke lyst til at tale om mine orgasmer (Signe).

The interview persons’ descriptions of the sexual culture and sexual norms are characterized by a boundlessness. The “boundless space” and boundless behavior with the intent and political aim to resist norms sometimes have the effect of being experienced as sexually transgressive both for

younger people engaging in the behavior but also for elder people. In the interviews, it was questioned why sexual experiences are brought up at meetings as an example of inappropriate behavior. Berit mentions that it is misunderstood to bring private matters to political meetings, and the distinction of what is private and what is political varies in different parts of the party: the younger generations see sexual practices as rather political than private, and elder generation's look upon sexual practices as solely private. I found the latter paradoxical and I was curious about how to understand that in regards to the Radical Feminist Movement's parole "the private is political". Historical examples of the Radical Feminist Movement's transcendence from the political to the private, or in the younger generations' case, the embodiment of the political, is displayed in Clarke's accounts of Lesbianism as an act of resistance and rebellion against the patriarchy (Clarke 1996 [1981]). And when Federici states, "we might not serve one man, but we are all in a servant relation with the male world" (Federici, 2012 [1975], p. 18), and hereby argues that the relational is structural and the private is political. Berit mentions "boxes for different things" when talking about politicizing the private in the 1970-80s: "It had its own specific spaces. And that might be a generational difference. The elder generations have boxes to put it in".

Interesting about Federici's feminist critique of Marxism is that the same notions reoccur in the debate in *Enhedslisten* today. Federici comes up with several proposals for why Marx failed to recognize the importance of women's reproductive labor in the capitalist accumulation, but interesting for this discussion is the notion that Marx was already imbedded in capitalist criteria for what constitutes work and that waged industrial work "was the stage on which the battle for humanity's emancipation would be played" (Federici, 2021, p. 95), referring to Marx's thoughts on the historical development. Waged industrial work as the battlefield reoccurs in Dragsted's argumentation, "you might be transgendered but you are probably also employee or pensioner (Dragsted in Redder, 2018), meaning that the struggle for liberation must start and end with labor, because, according to Dragsted most oppression comes down to economic structures. Contrary is Signe's statement that sexual oppression is "just as real oppression as poverty is" aligned with Martin's feeling that oppression is diminished in the party if it is not material. Signe argues that, "it is privileged to only see economic oppression. We get it – class fight. But if you are a white straight middle-aged man, how can you say that stigmatizing and fear is not oppression? And it is everywhere – I joked with a friend about it, and we asked each other; is it because Marx was not queer?". Signe's question might go to the root of the division on the invisibilities and blind spots in what discursively constitutes oppression in the party.

The feminist Marxist critique of invisibilization of women's subordination is reoccurring today but it takes a queer form in Signe's question: Marx (to our knowledge) was not queer, thus blind to sexual oppression just as Marxist feminist critique argue Marx was to gender. They could ask the equivalent question: is it because Marx was not a woman?

Sub conclusion: “Is it because Marx was not queer?”

Digging ditches deeper, eradication and inclusion, and embodiment of sexual liberation

Some of the generational clashes stem from a lack of understanding queerness and the interrelation of gender, sexuality, and identity. While some people from elder generations feel that the younger dig ditches and seeks to confirm an assumption of the elders as intolerant, the result is that they leave the debate and do not seek to better understand, and that obstructs the initial attempts to avoid polarization by a mutual understanding. The polarized political debates on identity politics extends to the organizational practices displayed in gender-divided speaking lists. While some consider a “non-men” category as an attempt to include people that do not identify within the gender binary, others perceive it as an attempt to eradicate the female gender. The political debate on identity politics is, besides divisions in approaches to feminism within the party, also a question of varied opinions on what is constitutive of social justice, oppression, and the means to drive a political change.

The political project of sexual liberation and normalization of female and queer sex transcends the political goal and constitutes a queer sexual normativity that expects members to, through personal behavior and embodiment of the political project of sexual liberation, act in ways that are deemed sexually transgressive and uncomfortable to some. To understand how certain political beliefs and attempts to normalize female and queer sex lead to expectations of a normative sexual behavior, Foucault’s account of the “privileged position” of sexuality at the intersection of body and population serves as an explanation to some extent. However, the varied perceptions of what is deemed private and political in different parts of the party is a reoccurring theme, considering the legacy of the Radical Feminist Movement’s parole of the political is private and accounts of lesbianism as an act of resistance. The feminist Marxist critique of Marx being blind to gender reappears in Enhedslisten today in a different form of sexual oppression that displays the different understandings of what constitutes oppression: economic structures, solely, or lack of recognition.

Conclusion

In order to answer the research problem: in what ways do Enhedslisten's members articulate diverging perceptions around power, gender, and party culture, prompted by the party's attempts to practice socialist feminism, I divided the problem into three sites of conflicts: A) different perceptions of socialism(s) and how the political aims of decreasing power imbalances societally reflect in the organization of power; B) what main conflicting stances on feminism are displayed in the attempts to work with a more feminist and inclusive party culture? And lastly; C) how the queer culture and its political aims is reflected in Enhedslisten and how it affects the party culture. As the questions and sites of conflict are complex, the conclusions are not unambiguous, ultimate, or unified for all parts of Enhedslisten.

Enhedslisten's party organization has a flat structure. However, the organization of power is experienced as opaque rather than flat and distributed into informal power centers rather than formalized ones. That is affected by the inequalities Enhedslisten produces in its own structure, becoming a ground for intraparty conflicts. When Enhedslisten faces regress, such as the parliamentary election November, 2022, the organization of power is renegotiated and framed as a "modernization process" or a "necessity" but without transparency, the changes become intangible and a frustration appears from the reinforcement of the inequalities in accessing decisions. Whereas the frustration about the informal distribution of formal power is unequivocal, the perceptions of what constitutes a dynamic of power varies greatly. And the opacity of the distribution of power generates conflicts and conflicting sentiments about power on small and large scales within the party; from the distribution of power between the organizational organs to perceiving cases of sexual harassment as manifestations of power. While certain accounts of power are solely formal, others conceived that informal power goes beyond and above formal power in a case of sexual harassment which creates conflicts on how to understand certain types of behavior; as power suppressing techniques or as lack of manners. The conflicts come down to what constitutes a power dynamic, and how power cannot be revoked if it is never formally given.

In the question of whether a flat structure has the opposite effect: increasing power imbalances, illusions of the democratic implication of a flat structure, and the informal power centers it potentially creates, it was seen as more harmful than a hierarchical structure drawing on lessons from various organizations from the autonomous Left in Denmark in the 1970s. Lessons from BZ (squatters) and

Tvind were brought up as examples of how previous organizations had an extremely authoritarian culture, top-down management, and raised the collective above the individual to a harmful extent. The consequences of illusionary narratives are also displayed in the political conflicts on international politics. However, I do not consider the conflicts to be stemming from ideologically conflicting opinions similar to the divisions in the Danish Left in 1970s – 90s. It is rather a question of heroic images and antagonism that stem from the narratives and attempts to bury them. Enhedslisten's foundation of being an aggregation is displayed in several ways in the party today, and the fractionalization creates different set of norms, values and behavior for different parts of the party. Some members have recollection of political schooling in the 1970s – 90s in the Danish Left that varied based on the position on the Left. The schooling in Denmark's Communist party were described in regards to moral and commitment, thus, questioning of others' political schooling and lack thereof, centered around questions of political morality that, together with different sets of norms and values across the party, lead to stigmatizing within the party. Morality and commitment are also questioned as a generational difference in how political activism is articulated in regards to individualism and collectivism.

Enhedslisten's attempts to practice feminism organizationally are challenged by conflicting perceptions of and stances on feminism such as radical feminism and intersectional feminism, but they are also challenged by practices and sexist narratives dominating the party culture, outlook on gender, and its implication on political work. A narrative of young women getting elected because of an assumption that they attract votes based on their physical appearance has consequences beyond invalidating young women; at certain times it becomes a ground on which different groups can claim political legitimacy on, young women on their looks, elder men on their experiences, that not only fosters a suspiciousness directed towards young women as being undeserving of their political positions, but also invisibilizes other groups as potential politicians. The narrative feeds into a more general experience of lack of authority for young women as a technique of shaming because the women enter a male domain and claim what is traditionally seen as male "property". Besides the divisions on different approaches to feminism, divisions on whether or not feminism is needed come down to conflicting perceptions of what constitutes oppression and what gives oppression legitimacy.

The diverging perceptions of feminism, gender, and sexual orientation can be traced back to the founding parties' varied outlooks on gender and how it was expressed in the party. The depictions of Denmark's Communist party's conservative outlook on feminism and gender are related to the

dominant masculinity as belligerent, violent, ideologically orthodox, and angry, but depictions of “softer male types” in Denmark’s Communist party also appeared. The presence of those masculinity norms in *Enhedslisten* today are limited, yet, present. The behavior should be perceived as violent behavior against groups of people associated with the communist environment but not considered “real” communists, such as hippies, rather than ideals of masculinity. That distinction corresponds with interpretations of hegemonic masculinity as being consistently created through repetition and shaped through practices. The masculinity norms can serve as an explaining factor of why Left-wing Socialists were perceived feminist whereas Denmark’s Communist party was perceived conservative and dominated by masculine values. However, the memory of women being considered a “scab” in the working-class struggle when they entered the labor market was also accounted for in a “collective experience” of the working class. Experiences are a vital generator of knowledge in *Enhedslisten* but the approach to experiences has altered. From collective experiences and the knowledge emerging therefrom to personal experiences legitimizing positions in certain debates. That is experienced as a limit in accessing certain political topics but it also raises dilemmas of practicing solidarity politically.

The polarization in the debate of identity politics goes beyond the political debates and enters the organizational practices in a case of gender-divided speaking lists with the categories “men” and “non-men”. The intention was inclusion of nonbinary members but it was perceived by some as an eradication of the female gender. The political debate on identity extends to questions of what constitutes social justice, oppression, and how to make political change happen. Even though there are distinguished perceptions of differences, inclusion, and what constitutes oppression and social justice, I find the debate rather raises the question of how a Left party can make space to include some political struggles and identities without eradicating others. The polarization and polemic enter when one part experiences an invisibilization due to another part’s attempt to shed light on a political struggle which tends to lead to experiences of exclusion, transphobia, erasure, and hostility. However, the opposing poles do not necessarily focus on one another in the debate, rather they are claiming the importance of their own struggle.

While the queer culture among younger members of *Enhedslisten* and affiliated youth parties can be considered an aspect of the party culture, I found it more useful to change the approach to it as a political project that manifests itself in the party culture. When the political project of sexual liberation transcends from political goal to individual behavior it constitutes a certain queer sexual

normativity that can be perceived as sexual norms in a social culture but can also – and should be – viewed as an embodiment of the political project that shapes both sexual norms, political goals, and bodies. I applied a Foucauldian understanding of biopower to understand how the political beliefs of normalizing female and queer sex diverge into a sexual normativity with a reciprocity between the political goal and the body. Foucault’s account of sexuality’s “privileged position” as the intersection of body and population can be one way to approach it. But the varied perceptions of the political and private do not confine to sexual behavior; rather, there is a conflated distinction that is being renegotiated in *Enhedslisten* today in various discussions. A parallel can be drawn to the Marxist feminist critiques that often have one thing in common; it comes down to questioning if economic structures are fundamental in all oppression, and if so, how does *Enhedslisten* view identity?

Concluding remarks

In the introduction, I state: “Enhedslisten aim and work to create a more inclusive culture, and my aim is not to prove how difficult that might be”. My aim is to dig into some of the conflicting perceptions to display how they present themselves in the party and what causes them and by that, hopefully, present a potential for a new understanding. I do not present opinions to promote them nor expose them. I am not trying to partake in the debates. But I think it is important to present. Some might question what flat structure and conflicts around the distribution of power in Enhedslisten have to do with the party’s practice of socialist feminism which is a valid question. I consider socialist feminism as essentially power-critical. And it requires an extension of our perception of power and what kinds of power and authority, we are critical of; macro structures and institutions such as capitalism and the state, but also the power constituting inferiority and superiority among people, and that is what makes flat structure as an attempt to decrease such power interesting to study; both the dangers and the potentials.

Although Enhedslisten in many ways can be perceived as a fractionated and divided party with political disagreements leading to polarization and antagonizing, I believe Enhedslisten is a party of many different political aspirations, ideals, and hopes and have a large potential of finding common ground in the main sites of conflict. I do not believe all elder or younger members share sentiments when I look at generational differences but I identify patterns in generational divisions. Neither do I believe that questioning of morals in political schooling, e.g., is a reflection of certain members lacking moral but rather questions of how moral was an intertwined part of political schooling thus create different sets of norms, values, and experiences with political activism across the party. I am certain that some members of Enhedslisten will not find themselves and their beliefs represented in the analysis. I approach the debates from positions on the opposing sites, hence, the center positions are not consistently present in the analysis but the opposing and contradicting positions are.

The divisions on feminism, socialism, oppression, social justice, identity, differences, and means to drive change are not unique to Enhedslisten. It appears in Left environments both nationally and globally. Enhedslisten in this thesis can be considered a case study. A case study that does have a specific cultural, historical and geographical context, but connects to the wider tendencies and patterns in socialist feminism globally. I do not have the answers on how to overcome the division. But I hope this thesis can be one step closer to approaching the different positions.

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Appendix

Translations

English	Danish	Abbreviation(s)
Political parties and other organizations		
Officially: The Red-Green Alliance, here: Enhedslisten	Enhedslisten	EL/Ø
Denmark's Communist Party	Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti	DKP
Left-wing Socialists	Venstresocialisterne	VS
Socialist Workers' Party	Socialistisk Arbejderparti	SAP
Communist Workers' Party	Kommunistisk Arbejderparti	KAP
International Socialists	Internationale Socialister	IS
Denmark's Communist Party/Marxist-Leninist party	Danmarks Kommunistiske Parti/Marxistister-Leninistister	DKP/ml
Socialist Peoples' Party	Socialistisk Folkeparti	SF/F
Communist Association Marxists-Leninists	Kommunistisk Forbund Marxistister-Leninistister	KFML
Marxist-Leninist Unity Front	Marxistisk-leninistisk Enhedsfront	MLE
Communist Party	Kommunistisk Parti	KP/R
Communists	Kommunisterne	N
Socialist Youth Front	Socialistisk Ungdomsfront	SUF
Red-Green Youth	Rød-Grøn Ungdom	RGU
The Slum Stormers	Slumstormerbevægelsen	N/A
The Squatters	BZ-bevægelsen	BZ
The Alternative	Alternativet	Å
The Socialdemocratic Party	Socialdemokratiet	S/A
The Left Party (Sweden)	Vänsterpartiet (Sverige)	VP
Organizational and political structure		
Executive committee	Hovedbestyrelse	HB
The parliamentary group	Folketingsgruppen	FTG
Steering committee	Forretningsudvalget	FU

Annual national meeting	Landsmøde	LM
Woman+ committee	Kvinde+ udvalget	N/A
Woman committee	Kvindeudvalget	N/A
Flat structure / decentralization of power	Flad struktur/ basisdemokratisk/ decentralisering	N/A
Political program	Principprogram	N/a
Titles		
Spokesperson	Politisk ordfører	N/A
Chairman	Formand	N/A
Member of the parliament	Medlemmer af folketinget/folketingsmedlemmer	MF
Members of executive committee	Hovedbestyrelsesmedlemmer	HB-medlemmer/ HB-members
Members of city councils/ local politicians	Byrådsmedlemmer/ kommunalbestyrelsesmedlemmer	BR-medlemmer
Members of European Parliament	Medlemmer af Europa- parlamentet	MEP

Appendix

Overview of a selection of the parties and party organizations affiliated with and associated to Enhedslisten

Founding parties

Socialist Workers' Party (SAP)

Enhedslisten (Ø)

Socialist Peoples' Party (SF)

Denmark's Communist Party (DKP)

Youth organizations

Socialist Youth Front (SUF)

Left-wing Socialists (VS)

Red-Green Youth (RGU)

Flow of members

International Socialist (IS)

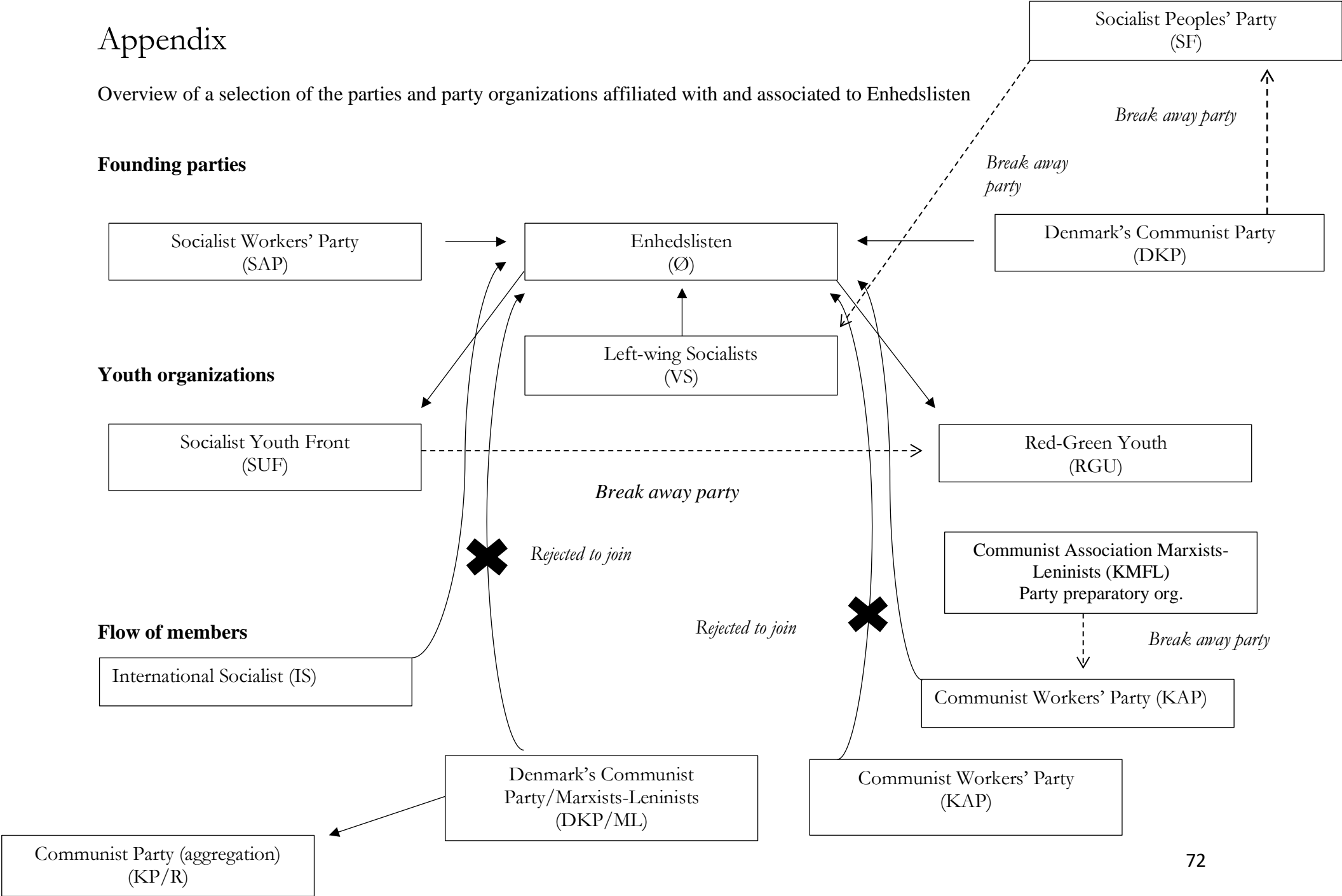
Communist Association Marxists-Leninists (KMFL)
Party preparatory org.

Communist Workers' Party (KAP)

Denmark's Communist Party/Marxists-Leninists (DKP/ML)

Communist Workers' Party (KAP)

Communist Party (aggregation) (KP/R)



2. Axis of the current Danish political landscape of political parties represented in the parliament after the parliamentary election 2022

