



FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
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D'ÉTUDES PROGRESSISTES

**FRIEDRICH
EBERT
STIFTUNG**

Edited by:
Eszter Kováts
Maari Põim

Gender as symbolic glue

THE POSITION AND ROLE OF CONSERVATIVE
AND FAR RIGHT PARTIES IN THE
ANTI-GENDER MOBILIZATIONS IN EUROPE

France
Germany
Hungary
Poland
Slovakia



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FEPS in cooperation with the
Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Published in 2015

By FEPS – Foundation for European Progressive Studies,
with the financial support of the European Parliament
and by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung Budapest

Proofreading

Louise Hanzlik

Design

Pellens Kommunikationsdesign GmbH

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European Progressive Studies and the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung.

ISBN: 978-2-930769-18-9

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FOREWORD

This publication is a result of a successful cooperation between the Foundation for European Progressive Studies (FEPS) and the regional gender programme of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) on critically analyzing anti-gender discourses in European far right and conservative party programmes and the role of the respective parties in shaping the discourse and mobilisations. The publication looks at five case studies: France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, and Slovakia with the purpose to comparatively examine the commonalities and divergences of this phenomenon, also offering a chronological overview.

This topic is of high importance due to the current mobilisations rejecting the term ‘gender’ itself. Anti-gender movements want to claim that gender equality is an “ideology”, and introduce the misleading terms “gender ideology” or “gender theory” which distort the achievements of gender equality. The main targets are the alleged “propaganda” for LGBTI rights, for reproductive rights and biotechnology, for sexual and equality education. This phenomenon has negative consequences for the legislation on gender equality.

In the current publication, we are looking at this phenomenon in connection to the programmes and discourses of far right and conservative parties, as well as the overlaps among them. Following the argumentation presented in the papers, these political parties have a stake on the issue.

All the peer-reviewed papers follow a common structure. The authors drafted conclusions and subsequent policy recommendations for the progressive side to stand up against fundamentalist political activism.

We would like to thank our committed research team for the common efforts and dedication to this project. We would also like to forward our special gratitude for Ernst Stetter, FEPS Secretary General, and for Jan Niklas Engels, Head of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung (FES) Budapest office, for making this project possible.

The Editors

CHRONOLOGY

2006. Germany. Volker Zastrow published his article “Gender – the political gender transformation” in FAZ.

2008. Germany. The “marches for life” or so called „thousand-crosses-marches” started for fighting against abortions and to protect unborn life.

2008. Hungary. An education book about the gendered history of Hungary was published by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour of the socialist-liberal government. As a response to the book, anti-gender discourse appeared for the first time by church representatives, rightist politicians and newspapers.

2009. Hungary. A manifesto entitled “From the sexual revolution to the gender revolution” was published online by theologian Ferenc Tomka. Contributors to this paper included Ilona Ékes (MP of Fidesz), Bishop László Bíró and Péter Roska (Catholic priest, translator of Gabriele Kubys’s books). (According to the biography of Tomka it was published officially in 2010 (Távlatok, 2010/1. 76-90)).

2010. Hungary. A decree about gender equality education for kindergartens was implemented by the former leftist-socialist government end of 2009. After a public uproar, the new conservative government changed this part of the decree to a more general, less gender focused format.

September 2011. France. 80 French MPs of the Union for a Popular Movement (UMP) ask the French Education Minister Luc Chatel (UMP) to remove gender studies (considered as “gender theory”) from school books.

November 2011. Slovakia. The government of Iveta Radičová accepts the task of developing a human rights strategy: preparation process for this strategy was subject to a lot of criticism, and was preceded by many disagreements and mutual slander. The strategy also faced a lot of criticism from the KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS, as well as from the Alliance for Family and the Slovak Bishop Conference. For example: Ján Figel', KDH chairman, declares that the strategy of human rights has been inspired by "gender ideology". KDH emphasises, that in order to obtain a strong mandate from the voters in the next general elections, it will enforce the abolition, or rather, the essential revision of this document (SITA 2015).

January 2012. Hungary. The New Constitution (Basic Law of Hungary) has laid down a law that protects the fundamental human right to life from the moment of conception, and declares that marriage should only be between man and woman.

April 2012. Poland. Minister of Justice Jarosław Gowin opposes the Istanbul Convention, initiating the 3-year period of heated debates about the document. The main criticism is targeted against using the term 'gender.'

November 2012. Slovakia. Gabriele Kuby's lecture on state sex education for children, homosexuality, pornography. She has warned of the "excesses of the gender ideology", and warned of the destructive effects of the sexual revolution.

November 2012. France. The first demonstration against "gay marriage" in Paris. More than 120,000 people attend.

2013. Poland. "Gender" becomes the word of the year.

2013. Germany. A sexism debate in Germany due to an incident with the FDP politician Rainer Brüderle (<http://www.taz.de/!109845/>).

2013. Germany. Birgit Kelle published her book “So button up the blouse” (Dann mach doch die Bluse zu) (<http://www.adeo-verlag.de/index.php?id=404&sku=814209>) and set a new milestone in antifeminist discourse.

March 2013. France. The largest demonstration against “gay marriage” in Paris. Almost 1 000,000 people attend this demonstration.

May 2013. Poland. Protests against sex education in schools.

July 2013. Slovakia. The Slovak Bishop Conference issues their stance towards gender equality: bishops stated that the promoters of gender equality wish to promote the breakdown of family life and lead children to alternative forms of partnership. They claim that gender policy implies the possibility to overcome the biologically-determined gender through the possibility of free choice. This would consequently ensure equality among people. The bishops took the view that the promoters of gender equality fight against the notion of a traditional family which is based on a marriage between a man and a woman (KBS 2013).

November 2013. Poland. Church Pedophilia Scandal erupts; archbishop Michalik blames feminism for family crises leading to pedophilia.

December 2013. Poland. Bishops' Conference pastoral letter targeting "gender ideology" read in churches.

December 2013. Slovakia. Pastoral Letter on "gender ideology", translated and read in Hungarian churches, too.

December 2013. Slovakia. Establishment of the Alliance for Family.

2013 - 2014. Hungary. The Lunacek report (LGBT Roadmap) and Estrela report on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights intensified the anti-gender discourse among politicians of Fidesz-KDNP and Jobbik.

2014. Germany. The start of Demonstrations For All ("Demo für alle") targeted against an "early sexualisation" of children in school.

January 2014. Poland. "Stop gender ideology" Parliamentary Commission founded.

February 2014. France. Jean-François Copé, chairman of UMP (France), denounces an educative book entitled "All naked" "Tous à poil".

March 2014. Poland. Head of Wołomin County launches a program called "Family-Friendly School" granting certificates to schools that declare not to teach equality and sex education.

June 2014. Slovakia. The Slovak Bishop Conference announces promoting "gender ideology".

August 2014. France. Laurent Wauquiez, one of the conservative leaders of UMP, denounces new socialist Education Minister Najat Vallaud Belkacem as an “ultra pro-gender”.

November 2014. Slovakia. The government adopts the strategy of gender equality. There has been strong resistance on the part of several NGOs, Slovak Bishops Conference and political parties (KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS) against the gender equality strategy from 2014-2019. The opponents argue that the entire gender equality strategy is from an ideological background which shall not be hugely supported by public funds.

February 2015. Slovakia. Referendum on family. There were three questions voted in the referendum: (1) whether marriage ought only to be a unique union between a man and a women, (2) whether same-sex couples should be banned from adoptions, and (3) whether children can skip classes involving sex education and euthanasia.

February 2015. Slovakia. Adoption of the human rights strategy; the government of Róbert Fico approved the strategy. Miroslav Lajčák, the head of Slovak diplomacy and chairman of the human rights council of the government who coordinated and elaborated the strategies, emphasised that the written material does not impose anything, nor does it aim to decide on matters. There shall be no changes to the current legal situation in Slovakia as a result of the adoption of the strategy. “It represents a contribution to the debate and it is a framework and program document” (Balážová 2015).

February 2015. France. Protest for Everyone (“La Manif pour tous”), the association endorsing the anti-gay marriage movement since 2012, and then the anti-gender agenda, edits a Charter dedicated to departmental elections candidates.

April 2015. Poland. President Komorowski ratified the Istanbul Convention.

FRANCE

Gaël Brustier

The analysis of the use of the concept of gender in the French case has to be linked to the rise of a strong grassroots conservative movement during the year 2012-2013. This movement opposed “gay marriage” and hundreds of thousands of demonstrators took to the streets of Paris and other towns.

The concept of “gender” only appeared to the French citizens after the peak of mobilisation in spring 2013, before the 2014 local elections. If this issue was considered to be important by some conservative intellectuals since the beginning of the 2000’s, it has just recently turned into a political weapon to destabilise the French left and took a long time until it was considered by the masses to be an important issue. For example, since 2012, none of the polls of IFOP (French Institute of Public Opinion) dealt with the so-called perception of “gender theory” by the French.

1. Google analysis of the terms

An analysis of the terms “gender ideology” or “gender theory” (“idéologie du genre” or “théorie du genre”) allows us to establish that they were only lately used in public debate compared to the first book published on this subject by the Pontifical Council for the Family in 2003 [Pontifical Council for the Family, 2003] and the first publications of the French conservatives, based on the 2003 volume [Anatrella, 2011]. The Google research shows that most references about “gender theory” on the French web were published in 2014. This debate is clearly a consequence of the conservative mobilisation against “gay marriage” in the years 2012-2013.

Catholics mobilised¹ a social coalition strongly opposed to this law on marriage in 2012-2013, to President Hollande's commitment to equality between LGBT and heterosexuals concerning marriage and to a law on families in 2014 which mainly dealt with adoption. Catholic intellectuals influencing the conservative movement have been involved in the struggle against "gender ideology" for some years, but for French citizens, this struggle appeared in the public debate for the first time in 2011, in a debate about some school-books. Nevertheless, they did not manage to make the majority feel concerned about "gender theory". With "gay marriage" it was more successful: "gay marriage" was a Trojan horse of "gender" in public debate. After the highest point of the conservative mobilisation, some established a link between "gay marriage" and the so-called influence of "gender ideology" on the socialist government since 2012. As an explanation of what happened with "gay marriage", "gender ideology" became a means to point out that the French government intended to jeopardise the family and the educational system at the same time.

The terms also mainly appear just before the March 2014 local election, at a time when the left was being heavily attacked about not only its national program but also its local governance. While most conservative demonstrators of 2012-2013 did not know much about "gender ideology" in 2012, and felt concerned about "gay marriage", the whole country discovered in 2014 what it was about, despite campaigns like those conducted by the UNI, Union Nationale Inter-universitaire, a right-wing student organisation which had established a "Gender Theory Observatory"² as early as January 2013.

1 For the role of the Catholic networks see for instance <http://leplus.nouvelobs.com/contribution/1246993-manif-pour-tous-derriere-la-com-la-puissance-des-reseaux-catholiques-francais.html> and <http://www.lefigaro.fr/vox/societe/2014/10/03/31003-20141003ARTFIG00397-qui-sont-les-cathos-de-la-manif-pour-tous.php>

2 <http://www.theoriedugenre.fr/>

The anti “gay marriage” mobilisation enabled the anti “gender theory” discourse to develop and to target a larger public audience as the improvement of the term, as the Google research shows.

2. Overview of the parties

Three main parties represent centre-right, right or radical/far right: UDI, UMP and FN. Centre-right UDI, former President Sarkozy’s UMP and Marine Le Pen’s radical right populist FN.

The UDI is a centre-right party, founded in 2012 by former Minister Jean-Louis Borloo. It doesn’t have any strong political line but we may define it a strong supporter of European integration. The UDI is a rally of five right and centre-right political parties. Some of them are real philosophical conservatives, others may be more defined by a moderate view of the economy and the society. For example, it hosts centre-right LGBT movement “GayLib” and, at the same time, a conservative association called “Territoire en mouvement”, led by Jean-Christophe Fromantin, Mayor of Neuilly, the richest suburb of Paris. The Catholic western part of France is also a constituency furnisher for the UDI. This explains why the UDI has to deal with anti-“gay marriage” and anti “gender” activists on the local scale.

The UMP was founded in 2002, on the model of European People’s Party. Its attempt to rally centrists, neoliberals and Gaullists was inspired by President Jacques Chirac [Haegel, 2012]. In 2004, Nicolas Sarkozy became Chairman of the UMP and contributed to change its strategy and ideology. He was the Chairman until 2012 when Jean-François Copé took over, until 2014. Nicolas Sarkozy has been the Chairman again since 2014. Since 2013, the UMP has clearly been influenced by conservative thought and conservative activists. Nicolas Sarkozy’s decision to promote Laurent Wauquiez,

a young conservative leader of the French right, who dedicates his own struggle to the edification of a “Social Right”, whose goal is to give UMP a conservative agenda, and his decision to promote conservative young activists such as Madeleine Bazin de Jessey, are both evidence of Sarkozy’s new commitment to his conservative wing.

Polls after the departmental elections in March 2015 still show a strong commitment of the French Catholics to the right and especially to the UMP-UDI alliance. Since August 2014, one of Nicolas Sarkozy’s main goals has been, to embrace the conservative view of the world to ensure the UMP hegemony on the French right, and in his interview to the conservative news magazine “Valeurs Actuelles” he clearly opposed concepts of “difference” and “equality” [Valeurs Actuelles, August 2014]. Since 2013, the UMP has been challenged by the far right FN. The FN, endorsed by Catholic traditionalists (for example the newspaper *Present*) never managed to attract a significant proportion of French Catholics.

The FN, “National Front”, was founded in 2002 by former-MP Jean-Marie Le Pen and neo-Fascist group “Ordre Nouveau” [Lebourg, 2012]. Marine Le Pen, daughter of the founder, has been the FN Chairman since 2011. Marion Maréchal-Le Pen, the grand-daughter of Jean-Marie Le Pen, member of the National Assembly, leads the FN conservative caucus inside the FN. The FN was never said to be a strong homophobic party. However, since 2010, its strategy has progressively changed. It has embraced the “Wilders model” denouncing the supposed threat of conservatism of Islam on the western way of life. In the Netherlands, Pim Fortuyn and Geert Wilders contributed to make the radical right change by embracing a discourse of defense of “women” and “gays” against a potential threat of Muslim immigrants on liberal values. The FN is also divided on “gay rights”. Certain events revealed this hesitation of the far right party. In 2014, former LGBT activist Sébastien Chenu joined the FN.

The Vice-President of the FN, Florian Philippot, was outed by a news magazine. Another event emphasised the momentum of the far right thesis among the French gay community: “Mister Gay 2015” of the gay magazine *Têtu* revealed he supports Marine Le Pen and is a member of the FN. The goal of the FN was clearly to gain new voters among women, gay, and young and educated Citizens. The conservative momentum made it change its strategic view. The FN and the whole extreme right discovered an ambiguous attitude of the constituency concerning social issues: social conservatism and the Wilders model are two contradictory ways Marine Le Pen hesitates to pursue.

3. Party programs and party discourses

The characteristics of the three centre-right, right and far right parties is that none of them mention “gender ideology” in their programs, while trying to take advantage of the conservative mobilisation. None of them have clearly established a defined position about this issue.

a) Party programs

One should be aware that French political parties publish a program every five years for presidential and legislative elections. This is the very reason why the UDI does not yet have a program, as it did not exist during the last presidential election. This also explains why the UMP and the FN have very small programs between presidential elections. None of these parties have published any programs since 2012.

The UDI programs – local or national – have never dealt with the “gender theory” issue: national programs do not exist, and local

programs do not mention “gender”. Some of its officials, such as Neuilly Mayor Jean-Christophe Fromantin, are strong opponents to the “gender theory”. The UDI has still not developed a social program.

Nicolas Sarkozy’s UMP confronted an internal and crucial political crisis and never managed to publish a clear new political agenda or program. The consequences of Nicolas Sarkozy’s defeat in 2012 was a leadership and ideological crisis. At this very moment, the party changed its view about “gender”.

In 2011, the UMP promoted measures against “gender stereotypes”, and he reconsidered his view. On 1st September 2011, 80 UMP MPs opposed this attempt to “introduce ‘gender theory’” in school books.

Since 2012, the UMP never wrote anything in its (national or local) program about “gender theory”. 2015 is dedicated to conventions in charge of writing a program. Nicolas Sarkozy’s commitment to gay marriage law abrogation is the main point of the conservative agenda. However, none of the local UMP candidates in the departmental elections explicitly referred to “gender theory” in his campaign. A glance at the first candidates signing the Charte allows us to distinguish many FN members.

The FN doesn’t deal with this issue; it’s highly impossible to find anything in its program about “gender theory”. However, the FN, which traditionally opposed gay rights [Mudde, 2007, p. 262] emphasised on antagonisms between Muslim immigrants and gay voters (since 2010) in order to seek the endorsement of gay voters. Its commitment to traditional values doesn’t seem to be contradictory with its attempt to take advantage of some moral panic due to the perception of Islam in some parts of the French constituency.

b) Party discourses

Some declarations of the UDI, the UMP or the FN officials refer to “gender theory”.

The most famous polemic was caused by former UMP President Jean-François Copé, who targeted the choice of youth books and school books in 2014. Jean-François Copé hasn’t been the only one to target “gender theory”. His deputies Valérie Rosso or Laurent Wauquiez also referred indirectly to “gender.”

The UDI member and Neuilly-sur-Seine Mayor Jean-Christophe Fromantin is the only person to refer to “gender theory” in some of his interventions. The first quotation in the UMP discourse is in June 2013 (apart from the 2011 schoolbook debate). Principally, the UMP became a strong opponent to “gender theory” only in January or February 2014. The criticism towards “gender theory” relate to municipal elections, in which the right candidates tried to jeopardise the communist and socialist hegemony in the suburbs, where a lot of French Muslims live.

Comparatively, in some ways, the far right FN seems to adopt a more moderate strategy. One of the leading officials, Alain Avello, criticised “gender theory” (“nothing to do at school”) but also declared he was reluctant to lead a campaign against this “gender theory” because of the “paranoid” style of this campaign, which could jeopardise the professors’ situation³.

If some local candidates do not hesitate to take advantage of rumours about “gender”, political parties are reluctant to target the school system and the professors.

3 Alain Avello, Collectif Racine, <http://www.collectifracine.fr/blog/2014/01/31/31-janvier-2014-communique-de-presse-dalain-avello-secretaire-general-du-collectif-racine-savoir-raison-garder/>

c) Comparing party positions on “gender ideology”

Thus, if none of the three parties openly deals with the “gender ideology” discourse, we may identify different strategies. However, everyone develops their own way of dealing with the grassroots conservative movement born in France during the 2012-2013 demonstrations against gay marriage.

UDI is split into two tendencies: some of its MPs, such as Jean-Christophe Fromantin, strongly opposed the gay marriage law; its western members are more conservative than the Parisian and urban members, but it also develops a strategy of political moderation. Moderates and conservatives oppose each other.

UMP is under pressure from the conservative movement. Nicolas Sarkozy seeks endorsement of the conservative activists in order to win the primary of 2016 and the next presidential election, as the Sens Commun, a conservative caucus dedicated to political struggle in the UMP, a rally in which he promised to abrogate the “gay marriage” law shows.

Marine Le Pen obviously avoids this issue while trying at the same time to take advantage of the conservative momentum [Brustier, 2014].

4. Triggers and actors

On September 2011, 80 UMP members of Parliament protested against references to “gender theory” in school books. Luc Châtel, Minister of Education, a UMP member and strong supporter of Nicolas Sarkozy faced this offensive.

At the same time, François Hollande won the socialist primary and officially ran for the Elysée office, French Republic Presidency. His “proposition 31”, namely to open marriage and adoption to

homosexual couples, inherited from the Socialist Party programmatic work, became one of the symbolic key points of President Hollande's program for the 2012 presidential election. It then led various different social and political groups to build a coalition against gay marriage. Right after his election in 2012, "pro-life" associations and groups increased pressure on the UMP to make this party renounce "gay marriage".

The "gay marriage" debate became an opportunity to coalise a conservative coalition. The anti- "gender theory" unified its promoters [Brustier, 2014] but was much less a significant reason for mobilisation in 2012-2013.

"La Manif pour tous" is a coalition of different movements and NGOs. It was born in September 2012, officially later. Most of its leaders (Virginie Tellenne, Guillaume de Prémare, Tugdual Derville) are Catholic [Brustier, 2014], but were not involved in political life before 2012. This network is a coalition of Catholic associations, conservative think tanks, blogs, intellectuals, and is the main actor of the diffusion of this discourse. On September 5th 2012, 60 groups joined at a meeting point near Saint-Sulpice Church and created "La Manif pour tous". Conservative blogs such as "Le Salon Beige" contribute to diffuse the analysis of conservative thinkers such as Tony Anatrella, a psychologist and Catholic priest who was the first to organise a conservative rally against "gender theory".

Late in 2013, the "gender theory" discourse appeared. Most of the intellectuals (Tony Anatrella, Gérard Leclerc, a Catholic columnist, Remi Brague a Catholic university professor) influencing the conservative movement had promoted this issue as one that explained the so-called socialist agenda.

A kind of competition still exists between the different actors involved in the "pro-life" movement and the conservative agenda, such as de Jérôme Lejeune Foundation and Alliance Vita: they aim to dominate a social field, to develop its influences. Both are NGOs

dedicated to promoting a conservative agenda about bioethics about abortion, family policies, end of life, for instance. Both Lejeune Foundation and Alliance Vita influenced the strategy and the agenda of the conservative movement, committed to different sectors of the French Church.

Without the mobilisation against gay marriage, the anti “gender theory” discourse would not have had such a success. Without the anti “gender theory”, conservative activists would not have built a coalition against “gay marriage”.

5. The role of the EU

The EU is considered by some anti “gender theory” activists, mostly tied to the “Action Française” and Maurrassian tradition and inherited from Charles Maurras, a reactionary and monarchist writer and thinker of first half of the 20th century [Weber, 1985; Brustier, 2014], as a threat for the “natural order” they want to promote or defend, or for others, the EU is considered as an opportunity to promote their view. Thus, this ambiguous attitude towards the EU is the characteristic of the French conservative movement, which unifies different political traditions: former Christian Democrats still support the European integration, while more nationalist and traditionalist constituents still oppose it.

6. National and local politics

The anti “gay marriage” conservative movement in 2012-2013 didn’t emphasise the “gender” issue; the “gender theory” criticism really appeared to the masses in the political field during the local elections campaign of 2014. If this subject only appeared because

of the 2012-2013 mobilisation against gay marriage, it also permitted the opposition parties, mainly from UMP and UDI, and other right-wing candidates to the socialist government, to develop some local strategies leading to local conquests. Neither the UDI/UMP nor FN used “gender theory” in their programs. However, some of their candidates took advantage of the “gender theory” polemics to create rumours, and finally defeated the socialist incumbents. For example, according to left candidates, and checking the turnout in certain neighbourhoods (especially in the Seine-Saint-Denis department, northern and eastern suburbs of Paris), one may assume that the “gay marriage” or the dramatised local polemics about “gender theory” sometimes led the constituency to keep out of the race and to avoid voting.

Because of the grassroots development of the French conservative social movement, much of the discourse opposed to “gender theory” took place on the local scale. Recently, in February 2015, “La Manif pour tous” (LMPT) published a Charter dedicated to promoting its values.⁴ Social anxiety about the educational system was exploited by pointing to the issue of “gender theory”: LMPT tried to tie this to the rising distrust of the population towards the school system (frequently showed by polls and revealed by Pisa school ratings). Ironically, the conservatives endorsed the discourse about parental involvement (traditionally considered by conservatives as a characteristic of “permissive education”). Candidates who sought endorsement of the conservative movement have to promise to struggle against the LGBT and “pro-gender” association, supposed to influence the programs (actually it is still difficult to find out who exactly signed the charter). Parents and candidates are tied into a common struggle for school and have to help to restore traditional values at school.

4 <http://www.chartedesdepartementales.fr/>

7. Role of the state

In 2011, the UMP government introduced “gender studies” in school programs, referring to the equality of women and men and to the struggle against gender stereotypes. It was criticised by 80 of its members of Parliament. The “ABCD of equality” were also introduced in the school system to promote equality between women and men. This program was dedicated to make teachers more efficient in the struggle against gender stereotypes. The paradox is that the French right introduced these programs and, then, while returning to the opposition, opposed them by denouncing the position of the left. Most of the conservative activists forget this fact and believe that the “ABCD of equality” is due to the action of Ministers Vincent Peillon (former socialist Minister of Education) and Najat Vallaud-Belkacem (current socialist Minister of Education, then Minister of Women’s Rights), and think gay marriage and “gender theory” are different elements of a socialist political design.

8. Constitution

Nothing in the 1958 French constitution directly deals with these issues. However, in the 1946 Constitution preamble (considered as a part of the new Constitution) we read: « La Nation assure à l’individu et à la famille les conditions nécessaires à leur développement »: « the Nation will provide the individual and the family with the necessary conditions for their development ». On May 17th 2013, the Constitutional Council said the “gay marriage” law respects the Constitution. This was a defeat for the conservative movement.

The conservatives argue that the 1946 text is a basis for contesting the so-called attempts to promote “gender ideology”.

9. Consequences

Anti “gender theory” strategies are tied to a conservative agenda without any fixed strategic scheme: anti “gay marriage” mobilisation gave the conservatives the opportunity to lead a “war of position” in the Gramscian way [Hall, 1988]: Conservative activists increase the pressure on the government by developing an ideological domination on the public debate. The war of position may be defined as the moment in which classes, or activists, in this case, move to take the vantage points in civil society.

Until 2012, Conservatives lacked this opportunity. Since 2012 however, conservatives have successfully managed to provoke a series of polemics about the ABCD of equality, policies concerning family, surrogacy.

The anti “gender ideology” discourse is tied to anti “gay marriage” movement and is a means to develop offensive tactics in the field of struggle of the civil society. The ties between both movements are due to the action of intellectuals such as Tony Anatrella, by NGOs such as Alliance Vita (led by Tugdual Derville) or former officials from Jérôme Lejeune Foundation, such as Ludovine de la Rochère, now leader of the Manif-movement, and finally reveal the identification of both movements. Conservative activists, members of “La Manif pour tous”, increase the pressure on the government by developing an ideological domination on public debate. The goal of the conservative movement is to increase its “cultural influence” and to enable “ideological consent” of the majority to its morality discourse.

Most of the consequences of this discourse on public policies were related to the “ABCD of equality”. This national program dedicated to promoting equality between women and men was taken back by the government, and was said to be improved but is now, in fact, cancelled.

Another example of the consequences of the influence of this discourse concerns family policy. In February 2014, the socialist government renounced passing a family law, especially one concerning filiation and adoption. Associated with “moral permissiveness”, and accused of jeopardising children’s growth and psychological equilibrium, the law was attacked by the conservatives. Due to a new mobilisation of “La Manif pour tous” supporters, the family law was abandoned.

Moreover, several times the government and socialist officials reiterated that it was out of the question to enable surrogacy, a key point of antagonism on social issues.

10. Language

One may not ignore the main purpose of the UMP. The use of authoritarian themes, such as the 2014 polemic around the schoolbook “Tous à poil” (“All naked”), are more important than the “gender theory” discourse. The UMP never embraced the vision of anti “gender theory” before 2013 or 2014. After the anti “gay marriage” movement, the FN considered that it could also take advantage of a renewal of conservative thought and of its support among constituency.

However, moral panic [Cohen, 1972] lead parties on the right to renew their discourse and to build new coalitions [McCarthy John D., Zald Mayer N, 1977; Mathieu Lilian, 2009] against the socialist government and its supposed political design. Moral panic is temporary but is linked to long-term social anxiety that allows socialist officials to be accused of being committed to a design that jeopardises the future of society. The main characteristic of the French conservative movement is that it’s a grassroots one: it’s locally well organised, dedicated to local implication, to local strug-

gles and lets its members be autonomous. Conservative activists organise mobilisations against supposed “pro-gender” activists, against cultural events, such as in Angers for example, in the western Catholic part of France, where they tried to forbid a festival because they assumed it disrespected the beliefs of certain people.

Catholic Families Associations (“Associations Familiales Catholiques”) a national coalition of 350 local associations and groups led a national campaign “Parents, are you well informed about “Gender” at school” ? on www.afc-france.org questioning parents: “What is gender?” “How to behave as good parents confronted to “gender”?” and so on. “Childhood” and “children’s rights” are emotional references used to oppose the “gender theory” and influence family, educational or social policies. It’s particularly true on the local level. The conservative movement tactically exploited “moral panic” and won public attention. The conservatives rearticulated “parent-power” or parental involvement, traditional themes of the left, into a conservative discourse promoting the parents as actors of the restoration of authority and traditional values at school.

Political parties on the right have difficulties to face due to this conservative activism and are challenged by the mobilisation of grassroots actors, such as Catholic associations, but also new movements such as “Les Veilleurs” (“The Watchmen”), embracing a discourse articulating traditionalism and new themes such as criticism of globalisation, “transhumanism” and intensive agriculture [Bès, 2014]. Parties on the right have difficulties in connecting their political agenda to the empirical experience of ordinary people.

11. Voter mobilisation

Most attempts to use “gender ideology” target immigrant neighbourhoods. Immigrants are said to be strong supporters of the French left, especially in Paris suburbs. Socially conservative, but mainly voting for the left, these suburbs were targeted by the parties on the right (UMP and UDI) and by their local candidates. Some of the other aims concern the situation of parties on the right and far right. All seek to increase or change their membership. The UMP needs to renew its troops: the conservative grassroots movement may provide new activists. Nicolas Sarkozy promised to promote conservative members of Sens Commun in the hierarchy of UMP during a meeting in November 2014. The conservative discourse, the anti-May 68 discourse (which includes an anti “gender theory” agenda) are a symbolic glue unifying different rightist traditions.

The discourse against “gender ideology” was an ideological glue for conservatives, intellectuals and activists in 2012 [Brustier, 2014]. It only recently won public attention, in 2013, and became an opportunity to target a new field of struggle: the school system and education issues. However former activists of “La Manif pour tous” also chose other fields of struggle such as ecology [Bès, 2014, Brustier, 2014].

12. Counter-strategies

The LGBT movements (Inter LGBT, Homosexuality and Socialism) and feminist groups (“Osez le féminisme”) are the most involved in the struggle against anti-gender discourse.

A series of ideological, religious, philosophical, and political polemics has taken place and showed the difficulties for the left to

articulate a discourse using concepts embedded in popular common sense: justice, resistance against every kind of oppression, secularisation. It means that the left, or the LGBT movement, has to “cement and unify” a social block by using a “lived relation” showing an alternative way to the people.

Progressive, left, movement did not lead a public campaign against anti-gender discourse. It is mainly due to the fact that the debate about gay marriage has been considered as a key point by most actors during the 2012-2014 period. The left traditionally speaks about policies and the conservatives; at least in this case it spoke about politics. It could however develop a strategy to gain a moral leadership by exploiting some progressive concepts of the popular common sense.

13. Left parties

Leftist parties (Front de Gauche, Europe Ecologie les Verts, Parti Socialiste) do not react so much to conservative discourse. They strategically hesitate and face a strong conservative offensive. As contestation found its way to the right wing of the society, most leftist parties are hesitating to promote a progressive agenda. Some critiques were developed by socialist members of Parliament such as Dominique Potier, who requested “a true debate” on “gay marriage”. After his defeat for the run for the Marseille Mayor office, Member of Parliament Patrick Mennucci clearly established a link between his defeat and the “gay marriage” law. He advocated a much more moderate line on social issues. None of the members of the Socialist Party spoke about “gender theory” or criticised it.

A mobilisation, on 27th January 2013 supporting “gay marriage” saw a gathering of 120 000 people. This peak of mobilization of progressive citizens in the streets of Paris has to be compared to

the conservative mobilisations: 120,000 on November 17th 2012, more than 800,000 on 24th March 2013, almost 500,000 on May 26th 2013, 120,000 on October 5th 2014.

An anti-“gender theory” strategy has to understand the contradictory structure of “common sense”, which combines different forms of thought [Gramsci, 1975; Hall, 1988; Brustier, 2014] to develop an alternative concept of social life. No progressive discourse is able, for instance, to connotatively articulate a progressive agenda in the concrete experience of ordinary people. Conventional moral absolutes have to be displaced into political issues and antagonisms have to be created. For example, instead of putting the emphasis on “human nature” or “traditional values”, progressive actors have to take advantage of other aspects of “common sense”: us/them distribution of power and wealth. Defining political antagonism is a pathway to hegemony [Laclau, Mouffe, 1985]

14. Recommendations for progressive actors

The main problem faced by progressive actors is defining a new design. Facing the anti “gay marriage” movement, witnessing the rise of an anti “gender theory” discourse, the progressive movements seem to have difficulties building an ideological response to conservatives.

The grassroots conservative movement is a strong 2.0 movement. It is offline and online, it combines both dimensions. The weakness of progressive actors is clearly the main problem in France. The aim of progressive actors should be to articulate a renewal of their message and a renewal of their use of 2.0. Using Twitter, Facebook and other 2.0 applications in order to deliver a message is necessary. But the most important thing is to create a message. It’s the way to rally new supporters to potential initia-

tives. The ability of the conservatives in articulating offline and on-line, mobilising constituents during local elections, and frequently mobilising demonstrators should lead the progressives to modify their way of articulating discourse and 2.0 mobilisation. Taking 2.0 seriously is the only opportunity to act on “common sense” while conservatives constantly dramatise moral panic and some aspects of “popular morality”.

15. Forecast and predictions

More than “gender theory” discourses, the French parties on the right may find in the conservatives political resources to renew their own agendas. A kind of conservative populism was born in France in 2012 [Brustier, 2014]. In the race for 2017 Presidential election, former President Sarkozy seems to run for a new election and seeks conservative endorsement. However, if the conservative agenda really does influence the French right, the anti “gender theory” may encounter more resistance in the constituency than the opposition to “gay marriage”. If it’s an opportunity to beat the far right candidate, Marine Le Pen, the conservative agenda also may jeopardise their program to attract moderate constituents. Thus, if the conservative agenda serves as political fuel for Nicolas Sarkozy, it may also endanger the right road to victory. As Nicolas Sarkozy tries to find an ideological agenda, and faces difficulties in attracting moderates, conservatives and national-populists at the same time, maybe this is a historical opportunity for the French left if they manage to develop a new discourse.

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GERMANY

Alice Blum

The mobilisation against “gender mainstreaming” and the so-called “gender ideology”, which has become more apparent in the media and on the internet, represents a rather subordinate discourse in parties in Germany, though the issue is gaining increasing attention especially in local structures. The term Gender Mainstreaming has fuelled some debate about the interconnectedness of various fields of policies reaching from families, social security and labour market to education, and their relevance for gender issues. Depending on the interest group and the political context of the policy field in Germany, gender is either respected and tackled as a relevant policy criterion by conservatives, or overtly contested as an ideology by far right parties.

Parties analysed in the German case tend to be sceptic towards, or oppose advancing academic gender studies. While some parties simply claim its academic findings as not relevant enough on a broader societal and political scale compared to other issues, and remain largely moderate in their general public declarations, others openly question the validity and transferability of findings, and turn the very foundation of gender studies and gender mainstreaming into polemic “genderism”. Positions towards sexual minorities vary. Youth organisations tend to engage in more radical initiatives.

1. Google analysis of the terms

Such an analysis cannot replace science-based statements; however, it represents the first impression of a public discourse. If you look at the Google hit list for the terminology, it can be observed that

there are mainly right, conservative or Christian groups which recourse to the term “gender ideology”. If you type the term “gender ideology” into Google, the search engine finds 20,500 results.

Other keywords, which are used by right-wing and reactionary groups, result in a significantly higher score on Google. For example the term “poverty migration” achieved 45,500 hits.

It can be seen that the term “gender ideology” cannot be considered as a brand new phenomenon in Germany since it has been circulating and gaining relevance from the year 2006, emerging from small-scale jargon towards a vocabulary with the potential to mobilise masses. At first, the use of the term “*Genderismus*”, coined by small religious communities and antifeminist groups engaged in criticising gender equality programs, was marginal. The first traces in search engines are revealed in connection to the works by freelance Catholic writers and journalists who are often quoted in online discussions.

For instance, a post from 2006 on the homepage Education Trend (Erziehungstrends.de) refers to an article by the US American anti-gender author Dale O’Leary with the title “Gender ideology (part 1)”⁵. In the same year, Volker Zastrow wrote an article in the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ) with the title “Gender Mainstreaming – political sex change” (Gender-mainstreaming – politische Geschlechtsumwandlung). Gabriele Kuby’s publication “The Gender Revolution – Relativism in Action” was published, and continues to be adopted by antifeminist and anti-gender groups until today. While at first glance online religious discussions seem to be independent from the sphere of political parties, it can be found that politicians of conservative and right-wing parties, such as the Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), link to the catholic forums

5 <http://www.erziehungstrends.net/node/49>

on their websites, or are personally involved in these religious organisations and forums for family values that oppose basic findings of Gender Studies as “genderism” (Kemper 2014: 16-18).

Since the term was first heard, German right-wing political parties have included a critique of the so-called “gender theory” in their agendas. In order to trace back this trend, I will firstly give an overview of three relevant parties in Germany and their electoral programs, after which I will aim to contextualise the findings with reference also to European developments.

2. Overview of the parties

I am focusing on the case of the CDU (Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands/Christian Democratic Union Germany), the NPD (Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands/National Democratic Party Germany) and the AfD (Alternative für Deutschland/Alternative for Germany). There are more conservative and right-wing parties in Germany, but these only have local impact. The selected parties play an important role all over Germany, and they are also all represented in the European Parliament. Thereby they lend themselves to a comparative analysis.

The parties analysed here vary greatly in terms of their establishment, political relevance and the way the critique of “gender theory” is communicated and negotiated through their programmes.

The CDU was founded in 1945 by Catholic and protestant Christians, as well as conservative and liberal citizens. It focuses on values of Christian humanity. It forms a constant alliance with the Bavarian CSU (Christian Social Union). The party has been in government since 2005: first in coalition with the SPD (Sozialdemokra-

tische Partei Deutschlands), 2009-2013 with the Liberal FDP, and since 2013 in a major coalition once more with the SPD.

The NPD is known as the radical extreme far right party in Germany; its focus is on a nationalist “völkisch” program based on the ideology of National Socialism / German fascism. It was founded in 1964. The members are composed of neo-Nazis and conservative citizens. There are vocal concerns about the very legitimacy of the NPD, and there have been numerous initiatives to disband the NPD due to suspected violations of the German constitution. However, NPD remains the only right-wing extremist party holding seats in locally elected structures (it currently holds six seats in the parliament of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern) to this day.

The AfD, founded in 2012 as a citizens’ initiative and in 2013 as an official political party, started its political career focussing on financial matters. The first campaign was about a critical position against the euro. As the publicist and sociologist Andreas Kemper said, the AfD was set up by a small group of the establishment. It has not evolved bottom up like other parties. This party was founded and planned by a small intellectual elite, former members of the CDU and some journalists and lobbyists (cp. Kemper 2013: 17-48). Apart from the fact that the party has seven seats in the European Parliament, where it is part of the European Conservatives and Reformists Group (ECR), it is also part of various locally elected structures in Germany.

3. Party programs and party discourses

In their election programmes, all three parties consider the only fully valid version of a “real family” to be a nuclear construct consisting of a man, a woman, and children. The differences between party programmes manifest, however, in the level of acceptance of any

other types of families. The married unit gets to be defined as “the foundation (CDU)/basic (AfD)/smallest (NPD) unit of the community or society” (CDU 2013: 38, AfD 2013, NPD 2013: 47)⁶. A need is seen to promote families “more cohesively as a future investment and part of the generational contract” (AfD) and to assist its fertility (CDU). The NPD argues even further that only the nuclear construct is healthy for perseverance of the German nation, rejecting same-sex partnerships altogether.

However, CDU and AfD are not against equality between men and women in general. In their respective European election programmes (2014), the importance of equality between the sexes is emphasised, especially with regards to reducing gender wage gap and overcoming the “glass ceiling” effect (see: CDU 2014: 24 -25), and for providing equal rights for everyone regardless of their gender or life situation (AfD 2014: 17-18).⁷ The CDU declares the need to provide protection against discrimination, and acknowledges same-sex partnerships, but opposes full adoption rights for homosexual couples. However, the CDU did agree to the request fostered by their coalition partner SPD to allow homosexual individuals to adopt the biological child of their partner (successive adoption).

In the case of CDU and AfD there seems to be a divergence between general written declarations on equality between men and women, and on the position relating to gender mainstreaming, gender studies at universities, and the use of the word gender itself. These are manifested mostly in local level initiatives. For instance,

6 Quotations throughout the paper are translated from German to English by the author.

7 It is noteworthy that in German the word *Geschlecht* refers both to sex and gender. The party programmes use the word *Geschlecht* and not the existing Anglicism “Gender”.

CDU KV Ludwigsburg argued in a petition to end appointing chairs to gender studies academic units in Baden-Württemberg. Furthermore, AfD explicitly rejects the need for “gender quotas” and “gender mainstreaming”, claiming the latter leads towards the “dissolution of sexual identity”. AfD tends to engage less in political declarations, and more in local level fundamental activism. For instance, Beatrix von Storch, an AfD MEP, held well-attended lectures throughout Germany entitled “Civil rights, gender mainstreaming, political correctness”.

While AfD argues for the need to end financial support for “gender mainstreaming”, the CDU’s position is softer than that: although gender equality is mentioned as a general goal, according to their current party program there is no meaningful input given on how that goal should be achieved or measured. Since no tools or indicators are provided, the respective goal remains declarative and no substantial interest is present in investing in it. Also, the CDU party programme clearly argues for traditional Christian family values and ideas. On these grounds the CDU focuses on family and social policies with the claimed intent to support families and married couples, often resulting in blocking attempts to reflect negative effects on women through conservative family policies, e.g. refusing to implement individual taxation for married couples, which commonly tends to reinforce traditional family models.

Unlike CDU and AfD, the NPD presents itself as the only one to be trusted to stand for the well-being of citizens and their families, has gained audience with explicitly homophobic and xenophobic initiatives, such as its youth organisation campaign “Condoms for foreigners and selected Germans!” (2013), which included postal delivery of contraception to selected private mailboxes. The party ideology is rooted in the eugenic concept of “racial purity”, rejecting migrant families and same-sex adoption rights (see: NPD 2015a, NPD 2013: 50). The physical capacity and healthy nutrition of the

ideal family unit is highly emphasised for the sake of preventing so-called “national death”. Instead of a diversity curriculum at schools, NPD stands for family and nutrition classes, putting an effort into collective upbringing as opposed to individualism (cp. Lang 2014: 9).

The party positions on gender equality differ from acknowledging the goal as such (CDU), to a market orientation, focusing on profitability of such a goal (AfD), and no recognition (NPD). While the CDU roots in a Christian traditional humanity worldview implementing tolerance and acceptance – as long as “traditional values” are not compromised – the AfD follows a market-based ideology, promoting equality as long as the “establishment” suffers from no financial losses as a result. The NPD rejects any form of deviation from its racist nuclear family ideal. To this end, they differentiate between equal statuses (Gleichstellung), such as on the labour market or before the law, from equality (Gleichheit) (NPD Hessen 2015) where they refuse the latter. The essentialist and racist arguments that the party represents is particularly clear in this argumentation.

The position on gender studies seems to unite the three parties, at least at the local level: On the local level, as a common feature, all three parties consist of bodies that explicitly reject advancing academic gender studies curricula. At these local level organisations, similar patterns of argumentation and a similar style of reasoning are practiced. For instance, the CDU KV Ludwigsburg anti-gender studies petition suggested that federal research funds should be allocated to other, “more scientific” areas, and equalised “gender theory” pejoratively to “creationist teachings, astrology or alchemy”. (CDU Nordwürttemberg, in: Deutscher Arbeitgeberverband 2014). The local organisation of the AfD in Osnabrück referred to “gender theory” as follows: “Gender theory is by no means scientifically proven, although it tries to appear this way. It fulfils all the

criteria of an ideology. It works in favour of the homosexual and extreme feminist lobby, and is being used as the “theoretical” foundation in their fight against alleged disadvantage, which plays no part of our daily life anymore” (AfD Osnabrück 2015). The NPD also shares the distaste for chairs to gender professorships: “Relevant programs for intentional disorientation of children and adolescents are promoted for years by the EU with a cost of millions of taxpayers' money, and "gender" professorships are there now at all major universities” (NPD 2015b). This communality on the local level plays, in fact, a significant unifying role to anti-gender civil mobilisations that have united people from various backgrounds and classes against the common “enemy” figure – “gender ideology”.

4. Triggers and actors

Engagement in the critique of the so-called “gender ideology” has contributed to the building of alliances between the Christian radical groups, right-wing groups and established parties, which have all joined forces on the streets (cp.: Riedlberger 2015). This concept unifies the otherwise different political formations ranging from Christian humanity to neoliberalism and to radical nationalism. The potential of the anti-gender movement to mobilise over political and class boundaries became evident in the so-called “Demonstrations for All” (Demo für Alle) that commenced in Stuttgart in 2014. The movement, which clearly took its name from the French movement “Manif pour Tous”, carries a motto “Marriage and family! Stop gender ideology and sexualisation of our children!” and continues to mobilise thousands of people.

The trigger for the demonstrations was a working paper for the Education Plan 2015 of the state government consisting of the Green Party (Bündnis 90 Die Grünen) and the Social Democratic

Party of Germany (SPD) (green-red state government) in Baden-Württemberg, which discussed the need for raising the topic of “sexual diversity” in school curricula. The working paper argues for the need to develop in pupils “an open-minded attitude towards their own and other’s sexual identities” and “a sensibility for stereotypes and the ability to look beyond them” (Kultusportal-bw 2013: 9).

Since then, different civil groups have been mobilising against the education plan, most recently on March 21st 2015 in Stuttgart. These groups include, for instance, the Christian initiative “Family Protection” (Familien-Schutz) and the organisation “Church in Need Germany” (Kirche in Not Deutschland). The German demonstrations include the same front figures, all women: Hedwig van Beverfoerde (CDU), Beatrix von Storch (AfD) and Birgit Kelle (CDU, chairwoman of the association “Woman 2000plus” (Frau2000plus eV)). During the marches, Kelle gives mobilising speeches opposing the so-called “gender ideology” and “re-education of an entire country” (Demo für Alle 2015). These are concepts she expands upon in her recent publication “Gender Gaga - how an absurd ideology wants to invade our everyday life” (GenderGaga: Wie eine absurde Ideologie unseren Alltag erobern will) (2015). Interestingly, the leader of the French movement, Ludovine de la Rochère also gave a speech during the 21 March demonstration. Furthermore, the style of the “Demos for all” is very similar to the “La Manif Pour Tous” marches. In addition to the analogy of the motto, the visuality of the mobilisations is identical, including banners, posters, and balloons in the same colour binary: bright blue and pink.

In parallel with the “Demos for all” “Concerned parents”, an NPD supported civil alliance was established to engage with organising protests throughout Germany, which oppose “early sexualisation in day-care centres, kindergartens and schools”, as well as the so-called “gender ideology”. The prominent front figures and speakers of these protests include Béatrice Bourges (again

from “La Manif Pour Tous”), and Jürgen Elsässer, well-known for his conspiracy theories and right-wing populist argumentation (Eiker 2014). The initiative also mobilised in the “Demos for all”.

Aside from the „Demos for all“, there are other arenas in Germany, in which antifeminist or anti-gender polemics are being echoed. These debates preferably take place on the internet and are in most cases not initiated by political parties. A very contested field seems to be the academic discipline of Gender Studies, that is both critiqued as being too scientific and far away from everyday life, and at the same time not scientific enough but a mere ideology. While many of the antifeminist debates online are not necessarily connected to political parties, the controversy surrounding Gender Studies is, as mentioned previously regarding Baden-Württemberg, also fuelled by individuals or sub-groups of political parties contributing to the polemic of “genderism”. While the political questioning of appointing more professorships in Gender Studies may seem relatively innocent, the overall rhetoric this stems from can be seen as attempts to silence feminist and intersectional perspectives in social sciences and in the field of education on a bigger scale.

5. The role of the EU

The “gender mainstreaming” approach was codified for the first time in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1 May 1999 binding on the European Union level. Since the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty in 2008, the EU's commitment to “gender mainstreaming” has been enshrined in Article 8 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union.

In order to implement this, among others, the so-called “Tarabella report” was presented and adopted. The AfD was particularly active in trying to prevent a positive vote. In cooperation

with Hedwig van Beverfoerde, spokeswoman of the “Family Protection” Initiative, who led an anti-abortion campaign, (Familien-Schutz 2015), Beatrix von Storch, an AfD MEP, Member in the Parliament’s Committee on Women’s Rights and Gender Equality, mobilised 205 MEPs to vote against the so-called “Tarabella report” on October 3rd 2013⁸. Also, she opposed the Lunacek Report, which was supposed to combat homophobia and transphobia, and the Estrela Report, which attempted to improve women’s sexual and reproductive rights.

The NPD also took a stand against the plans of the EU policies on gender equality and voted against the Tarabella report. This was done in cooperation with other conservative and reactionary parties, which united in an alliance of “right-wing European Conservatives and Reformists” (ECR). Although a majority could be raised for the report, it remains to be seen what political thrust can achieve hegemony in future parliaments.

6. Local and national politics

The discussion about the so-called “gender ideology”, seems to act as a political tool, especially in the local context. While conscious efforts seem to be made to maintain the relatively open and moderate public image in general written declarations relating to gender equality, the topic of “gender ideology” comes up and is discussed more radically in the local structures. It is noteworthy that this discrepancy receives very little attention in public debates, and does not lead to internal disagreements. For instance, while the CDU European platform enhanced gender equality as a goal, its sub-regional body, CDU Nordwürttemberg, passed a vote against

8 <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/oeil/popups/summary.do?id=1381155&t=d&l=en>

the so-called “gender ideology” (2014). On the other hand, with regard to laws, the CDU rejects the idea of equal marriage rights, and opposes adaptation of the adoption law⁹ in Germany.

There is also a noteworthy difference in the radicalisation of the parties and their respective youth organisations. Young members usually tend to position themselves more radically than their older colleagues in the parties. This manifests in initiatives, for example the condom campaign of the JN (youth organisation of the NPD), the anti-feminist campaign of the JA (youth organisation of the AfD), and the participation of the Pupils’ Union Ludwigsburg and Stuttgart (local youth organisations close to the CDU but not in the party structure) at the “Demo for all” in March 2015 in Germany.

7. Role of the state

In 1999, the legal basis for the introduction of “gender mainstreaming” in Germany was created by a decision of the German Federal Government. Gender equality should therefore be a policy guiding principle. There were also important measures implemented in this direction. For instance, parental leave (Elternzeit, 2001) and the parenting benefit (Elterngeld, 2007) resulted in some improvements, motivating more fathers to take part in care work, and supporting mothers in their attempts to return to their careers after having children. However, these measures remain accessible to certain social groups only, therefore their interpretation as part of an emancipatory gender discourse should be discussed further. Additional legal improvements in this regard have only been implemented quite recently, for instance discussions about gender

9 <http://www.regenbogenfamilien-nrw.de/wissen/politik/>

quotas and initialisation of education plans to increase the knowledge of pupils on sexual diversity in schools.

Although the public image of Germany seems to suggest that the country has a progressive stance in advancing equal treatment, important steps towards de facto equality are missing. For instance, same-sex couples cannot legally adopt children. Gender mainstreaming is not a de facto guiding principle of lawmaking; the lack of truly progressive legislation can explain, that so far little resistance to “gender ideology” has emerged in comparison to other countries.

With regard to the aforementioned education plan in Baden-Württemberg one can state that education is mainly the responsibility of regional “Länder” governments. First, the educational plan was not adopted because various issues had to be re-discussed. However, this is not seen as a success of critics. But it remains to be seen how the government deals with the proposal after the forthcoming elections. Then it will become apparent how much influence the opponents of the pedagogy of diversity actually have, and which discourse will prevail.

8. Constitution

In Article 3 of the German Basic Law, the equality of all human beings is enshrined regardless of gender, race, or creed. This article also helps to eliminate gender inequalities, thus calling for further development of gender mainstreaming.

At the same time, the “Family Protection Initiative” webpage (“Initiative Familien-Schutz”) claims that the so-called “gender ideology” is transgressive towards human rights¹⁰. The anti-gender

10 <http://www.familien-schutz.de/>

groups base their reasoning on Article 6 of the German Basic Law which places marriage and family under special protection. In addition, it declares education to be the duty and right of parents. Based on this, the anti-gender movement argues that compulsory education on sexual diversity in schools would be state intervention into parental rights. The Constitution does not explicitly specify that a marriage may be only between man and woman. However marriage is not legal among same-sex couples; they can have a registered partnership only.

9. Consequences

To this day, the impact of the anti-gender campaigns in Germany can be seen mostly at the local level. This is demonstrated by the well-attended AfD events on “gender and political correctness”, and reception in society, which is visible in a harsh public discourse and hate-speech towards Gender Studies and feminist campaigns. In addition, anti-gender propaganda finds new audiences, as media invites anti-feminists and anti-gender activists to speak on television talk shows and publish their opinions. Simplistic statements about the cause and effect of discourse cannot currently be made. It remains to be seen if the mobilisations cause changes in electoral behaviour in the future, and whether established parties, in order not to lose votes, respond to the demands of opponents of the so-called “gender ideology” by modifying their programmes.

10. Language

The discourse of the “early sexualisation” of children is a key rhetoric of German anti-gender actors. For instance, the NPD-supported civil alliance “Concerned parents” organised protests against “early sexualization in day-care centres, kindergartens and schools”. Other key anti-gender rhetoric includes warnings against “dissolution of sexual identity” as the outcome of the so-called “gender ideology”. This construct seems to point out that divergence from “normality” is sick, playing on the semantic level with figures of the “Other” and the “Enemy” with the potential of triggering outbursts of fear and anger.

The language of the key anti-gender actors is typically moralising, severe and dramatic, and includes warnings about grave dangers (dreadful worst case scenarios), which people should avoid through investing their private time to raise others’ awareness. Protests call on the sense of responsibility of parents and the broader society, the alarming predictions of the forefront speakers of the protests, as well as key authors of the movement, such as Kelle, result in the fear of a so-called “national death”, as the NPD formulated.

It also seems that there is an element of both Eurosceptic and anticommunist fear included in the rhetoric that plays on nationalism, as the term “political re-education” causes emotional outbursts in the audiences.

11. Voter mobilisation

It seems too early to predict changes in electoral behaviour; however, it can be seen that opposing the LGBT community and the return to traditional family values, disguising a backlash in gender equality holds the potential to mobilise conservative voters. How-

ever, the discussion of the topic in party programs can also be read as an attempt to win votes with the topic. This is not surprising considering the history and orientation of the parties. The CDU, in particular, wants to address its traditional voters and uphold conservative and Christian values.

AfD has been drifting further to the right for some time. Internal party conflicts often go out of favour with right orientations. There seems to especially be the racist argumentation with which the AfD is positioning itself and is fishing for votes with anti-Islamic slogans and inciting fears about “foreign infiltration”. Again, the party’s arguments are mostly neoliberal and market based. These categories of nationality or gender are naturally not intended to be exclusively separated from each other, but with many others, they are intertwined and are seen as being very effective in social relations of power and domination.

Alternatively, the far right (NPD) could win votes by pursuing the implementation of the idea of a “community” as opposed to individualism through its anti-gender activism. Nevertheless, this requires further research into the electoral motivation of citizens.

12. Counter-strategies

Since the increased volume of reactionary positions in the public, new groups have addressed the issue. For instance, progressive groups, like LGBTI activists, antifascist and feminist groups, mobilise against anti-gender marches via social media and blogs (for example www.queer.de) in order to oppose these views.

In addition, established political parties have taken the issue onto their agendas from the perspective of developing counter-strategies. For example, the Alliance 90 of the Greens (Bündnis 90 die Grünen) has held discussions to identify strategies against anti-feminism and homophobia.

In addition, anti-gender mobilisation has started to receive more academic attention. Recently, new critical social research has emerged about the discourse of anti-feminism and so-called “masculinists” in subcultural structures (for example Claus 2014; Kemper 2012), in connection to the developments of emergence of a “new” right-wing extremism and forecast of a global crisis.

13. Other parties

The SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands/Social Democratic Party Germany), together with the CDU/CSU, forms the current German government. The social democrats were able to push through some significant changes in the field of family and women’s issues, passing, for instance, a quota for women in management positions. On the federal level they are also trying to push a new agenda for time politics envisioning a model of two-breadwinner households, “Familienarbeitszeit”, which has not found support with their coalition partner CDU/CSU so far.

In Baden-Württemberg, it was also the SPD that introduced the Education Plan 2015 in cooperation with the Greens and tried to raise awareness of sexual diversity. The SPD also attempts to open marriage to homosexual couples, who are only allowed to form a civil union.

Similarly, the Green Party, currently in opposition with 63 seats, is committed to renewing care work and fostering men’s involvement in parenting just as much as women’s. Unlike the SPD, they have not pushed a specific model to promote this idea but call for better child care and equal chances at the labour market for all sexes. They also focus on supporting reproductive rights for hetero- and homosexual couples. With a long tradition of promoting diversity they try to strengthen LGBTI rights.

The party “the Left” (die Linke), which has 64 seats in the German Parliament, is explicitly committed to advancing gender equality and demands for example in their federal programme “gender equality politics for women” in various spheres, such as in business, politics, and education. They aim for equal media coverage protecting women from discrimination and gender-based violence (die Linke 2013). The Left seems to formulate a broad understanding of the term “gender mainstreaming” in their gender policy agendas, including transgender and intersex citizens.

However, as the discussion about gender issues mainly takes place on the local level, there are primarily extra-parliamentary progressive groups that stand up for the rights of women and the LGBT community. Judging by low efficiency of the counter-mobilisation efforts, it can be concluded that emancipatory groups, despite their long experience in party politics and non-parliamentary discussions, seem to be taken by surprise by the reactionary backlash.

14. Recommendations for progressive actors

Simplistic explanations about social contexts and blaming the progressives for the uncertainty and global crisis has so far proved its capacity to mobilise conservative audiences. Thus, progressive, and feminist groups including scholars, activists, and politicians, have to respond in an organised and meaningful manner to anti-gender mobilisation, because the lack of a comprehensive response helps anti-gender activists and reactionary groups to find new audiences whom to convince with their agendas.

In order to prevent further mobilisation, relevant programs need to be initiated, developed and supported which would engage in a sustainable manner to educational activities.

A comprehensive counter-strategy should involve confrontation at all levels and enhance joint forces of progressive political actors and civil society to take a stand for social diversity, and support for gender equality. That means that, in order to oppose the critics, it is necessary to have an addition to a political position of the federal government in the form of good education for and from teachers and social workers and local stakeholders who are committed to consistently fight against homophobia and for diversity.

15. Forecast and predictions

Two possible scenarios can be outlined to analyse how the major parties will deal with anti-gender mobilisation in the future. Either emancipatory movements take the challenges posed by the anti-gender movements pointing to structural crises of the progression seriously, and respond in a comprehensive way – then they can prevail and contribute to greater equality and recognition of women and the LGBT community. Or, the anti-gender movements take up increasingly more space in the public discourse and in the positions of the conservative and far right parties, which can lead to grave consequences not only to women's and LGBT rights but to the emancipatory promise of the Left altogether.

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HUNGARY

Anikó Félix

In Hungary, anti-gender discourse and the mobilisation against the so-called “gender ideology” has not intensified at the same level as the other analysed countries. Still, there are several triggers, actors and documents relating to this issue that would make a more intensive mobilisation possible in the future.

1. Google analysis of the terms

In order to have a general overview of how anti-gender discourse has appeared and developed in the Hungarian case, a brief analysis of Google search hits on that particular expression can help us. The first relevant results originated from 2008, when anti-gender discourse was triggered by some measures by the leftist-liberal government relating to gender equality. In 2009 the hits mainly included documents that explain what “gender ideology” is and why it is dangerous such as the translation of Kuby’s book or theologian Ferenc Tomka’s manifesto, whose article is one of the most referred to documents among the hits. There is a large amount of hits connected to the year 2010, when politics really entered the discourse with the issue of an implemented and subsequently modified document on education for kindergartens. In the following years the hits varied by different topics, but a weak concentration could be detected again in 2013-2014 around the Lunacek and Estrela reports of the European Parliament. On the other hand, Google Trends depicted that except for the period from 2013 to 2015, “gender ideology” was not researched on Google, which can prove that anti-gender discourse has not yet intensified.

2. Overview of the parties

There are three rightist parties who are the main political actors in the anti-gender discourse with their statements, policy agendas and their legislative acts.

Fidesz – Hungarian Civic Alliance was founded in 1988 as a liberal, anti-communist party. In 1995 the party had a conservative turn and won the election in 1998 in a coalition with two small right parties¹¹. In 2010 it could form a government with the Christian Democratic People's Party and they were re-elected in 2014. Both times they had a two-thirds majority in Parliament¹². The president of the party has been Viktor Orbán right from the start, Prime Minister of Hungary in 2015.

Christian Democratic People's Party, KDNP had a historical forefather, but it was re-founded in 1989 as a Christian democratic party. It had been in Parliament from 1990 to 1998. From 2010 it has been the small coalition partner of Fidesz, whose support cannot even be measured without Fidesz. The president of the party is Zsolt Semjén, who is also the Deputy Prime Minister.

Jobbik *Movement For a Better Hungary*, founded in 2003¹³ is a far right party, whose ideology is based on the anti-establishment, nationalist, anti-Semitic and anti-Roma attitudes (Kovács 2013). Jobbik's electoral breakthrough¹⁴ was in 2009 and in 2010 when they entered the European, then the Hungarian Parliament¹⁵. In 2014 they got 20.3 percent in the national election, and according

11 The Hungarian Democratic Forum and the Independent Smallholders' Party.

12 In the end of February in 2015 the leftist opposition won a seat in the constituency of Veszprém, whereby the government lost its two-thirds majority in the Parliament.

13 It was formed from an already existing Right-Wing Youth Association.

14 Support of Jobbik has started to rise from 2006, when big demonstrations were held against the former Prime Minister, Ferenc Gyurcsány. Jobbik appeared there as a significant voice initially.

15 They had 14.47 per cent in the European election and 16.67 per cent in the national election.

to polls in March, 2015 Jobbik is the second most supported party with 18 percent in the whole population¹⁶.

3. Party programs and party discourses

One of the Prime Minister's speeches can be defined as party program¹⁷, where he summarised the goals in ten points. At the eighth point of this speech, demographic decrease was marked as "the most important challenge" nowadays. Orbán declared that the "magical triangle" of work, performance and family has to be supported. He stated that the government has to try to enforce demographic criteria in every decision, including economic decisions such as low taxes to support the formation of more families. The ruling coalition declared "family friendly politics¹⁸", which in practice means that instead of implementing the idea of gender mainstreaming, the idea of "family mainstreaming" is promoted, presenting the two in contrast (Juhász 2012). According to the rhetoric, the aim of the ruling parties is to provide the opportunity for women to stay at home with their children¹⁹. However, these policies affect poor and better off families differently, putting the latter in a more favorable position²⁰.

16 <http://ipsos.hu/hu/news/tovabb-erosodott-jobbik>

17 Fidesz – KDNP did not issue any election manifesto either before the national or before the European Parliamentary elections in 2014. This speech was held at the Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Economic Season Opener and analysts defined it as a party program. http://www.portfolio.hu/gazdasag/itt_van_orban_viktor_10_pontos_programja.196711.html

18 http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20140925_retvari_a_nepesedes_i_adatok_is_igazoljak_a_csaladbarat_politika_sikereseget

19 The government brought back the 3-year-long child care allowance called (Gyermekgondozási Segély, GYES) and the 2-year long parental leave (Gyermekgondozási Díj, GYED). Furthermore, mothers who are on "GYES", and whose child is older than one can work maximum 30 hours a week for payment.

20 The introduction of 16 percent flat personal income tax combined with very generous child tax credits are policies that are supposed to boost fertility rates differently targeting better-off families (Juhász 2012).

Jobbik deals with women's politics in a separate paragraph in its national election program in 2014²¹. It defines men and women as equals, but not as being similar. According to the program, the conception of biological determinism does not mean that women work only in the household; at the same time it declares that the most beautiful job is motherhood²². Jobbik also identifies demographic decline as one of the main problems that would be resolved with "consequent social and family policy"²³. The party would help the return of women to work²⁴, because it can "significantly" boost the fertility rate. To this end, nurseries, kindergartens and family daycares are promised for every settlement in its municipal election program²⁵. Jobbik would stop the "tendency" to have children for money and would not give any allowance to mothers younger than eighteen years old, which are explicit racist messages toward the Roma community²⁶. In the discourse of the party there are more

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- 21 <http://jobbik.hu/hireink/kimondjuk-megoldjuk-valasztasi-program-2014>
- 22 They would replace eventually the existing benefits and provide women to a fee for being "full-time" mothers (calling it Stay-at-Home Mothers' Subsidy), till the smallest child enter to 18.
- 23 https://jobbik.hu/facebook/programunk/csalad_es_nepessegpolitika.html
- 24 In order to help the return of mothers who are willing to work Jobbik would implement a 20% reduction-per-child in the tax due from job providers in the form of the Employer's Contribution. https://jobbik.hu/facebook/programunk/csalad_es_nepessegpolitika.html
- 25 http://jobbik.hu/sites/default/files/cikkcsatolmany/kimondjukmegoldjuk2014_netre.pdf
- 26 They would give the family allowance in cash only until the third child and then in tax credits. The party worries about the "overpopulation" of Roma many times, Gábor Vona the party leader defines it as one of the most important aspects of the demographic decline. http://jobbik.hu/rovatok/orsz%C3%A1gos_h%C3%ADrek/%E2%80%9Eha_a_b%C3%B6lcs%C5%91kben_zajl%C3%B3_h%C3%A1bor%C3%BAt_nem_nyerj%C3%BCk_meg_v%C3%A9g%C3%BCnk_van%E2%80%9D_n%C3%A9pesed%C3%A9si_konferenci%C3%A1t_rendezett_a_jobbik When the first baby born in the country whose name was Péter Rikárdó Rác that can sound like a Roma name, Előd Novák posted a picture of his own family on Facebook with this comment: "Besides Rikárdó, the first baby born in 2015 as the third child of a 23-year-old mother, Hungarians also happen to be breeding here and there" <https://www.facebook.com/novakelod/photos/a.159541990795117.40105.112879632128020/762687637147213/> The post was followed by huge media attention and public outcry.

controversial points regarding women and gender issues. Besides the idea of strong fetus protection²⁷, Krisztina Morvai often highlights the importance of the prevention in her speeches²⁸. Morvai also stands up also for the protection of victims of domestic violence, and prostitutes²⁹. The quota in politics also made a debate inside the party³⁰. Both parties focus on demographic growth, but they define differently who should have to have children. As a common part, “traditional rightist-Christian values” are often referred to in their argumentations³¹, but their position in such questions is often negotiated by their current interests. As a result, ruling parties as well as Jobbik often use a double-speech strategy with a radical anti-gender and a less radical, more “gender sensitive” wing inside the parties³².

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- 27 Recently, the party abstained the ratification of the Istanbul Convention, Dóra Dúró, MP of Jobbik stated that because it did not contain the protection against the biggest domestic violence, abortion. <http://444.hu/2015/03/02/a-jobbik-nem-tamogatja-a-nok-ellen-iranyulo-eroszak-elleni-europai-egyezmenyt-mer-t>
- 28 At the debate of Tarabella Report in 16th March, 2015, she explained that she voted for those parts that support the equality between men and women but rejected that part the “declares the right for abortion of women, but do not help them to prevent it.” <http://www.morvaikrisztina.hu/>
- 29 <http://jobbik.hu/videoink/morvai-eu-s-pazarlasokrol-es-prostituciorol>
- 30 Gaudi Nagy handed in an amendment to the new election bill together with the Green party in order to double the number of women in Parliament. His party disagreed with him. http://nol.hu/belfold/a_jobbik_elhatarolodott_gaudi-nagy_tamastol_a_noi_kvota_miatt_-1290555
- 31 Jobbik: <http://veol.hu/belfold/a-jobbik-szerint-kozossegellenes-a-melegfelvonulas-1295181> Fidesz-KDNP: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpAqxcbPurg>
- 32 In Jobbik Morvai speaks often about domestic violence and prevention, meanwhile Dúró about fetus protection. In Fidesz-KDNP the coalition voted down the Istanbul Convention; in the meantime one MP, Ildikó Pelcz Gál expressed that she did not understand why her party voted down the proposal. http://hvg.hu/itthon/20150304_Pelczne_nem_erti_miert_szavazta_le_a_part Katalin Novák also had an interview recently where she explained how the government helps women to work and have children at the same time: <http://www.origo.hu/itthon/20150316-senkire-nem-akarjuk-rabeszelni-hany-gyereke-legyen.html>

4. Triggers and actors

The main statement here is that anti gender mobilisation has not yet emerged in Hungary as it has in some other European countries (Balogh 2014). However, the topic has appeared several times in the last few years with more or less intensity. The first time was in 2008 following the publication of a history book for secondary schools about the gendered history of Hungary.³³

Rightist politicians made their voice heard as well as some rightist newspapers concerned about “gender ideology” in some articles³⁴. In 2010, a decree on kindergarten education of gender equality was followed by a public outcry³⁵. The new conservative government who came into power in the second half of 2010 changed the debated paragraphs into a more general form. According to the former Education Secretariat, Rózsa Hoffman, the first version would have influenced the children’s mental and moral development in a controversial way and the so-called “gender ideology” would have appeared³⁶. The anti-gender discourse emerged again at the debates of Estrela and Lunacek reports, where politi-

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- 33 The book was written by Andrea Pető. (Pető 2008) Fidesz MP, Ferenc Tóth questioned the Minister of Social and Labor Affairs in Parliament about whether they did a scientific dissemination with this book arguing that EU wanted to force the ideology of social determinism of sexes into its member states with this measures. <http://szavastok.hu/inditvanyok/tudomanyos-ismeretterjeszttest-folytat-e-az-onok-tarcaja>
- 34 http://kecskemetiv.hu/sa_hirek/i_kecskemet_2/i_genderideologia_az_oktatasban_15680/t_Genderideol%C3%B3gia%20az%20oktat%C3%A1sban/index.html http://mno.hu/migr_1834/nokrol_es_ferfiakrol_egy_kicsit_maskent-305202 <https://kuruc.info/r/6/41953/> Ferenc Tomka mentioned this history book as an example of how homosexuality “is propagated” by the government (Tomka, 2009, 9).
- 35 The amendment: 255/2009. (XI.20.) and the original decree: 137/1996 (VIII.28) Article about the measure in a rightist newspaper http://mno.hu/migr_1834/semleges_nemunek_kell_nevelni_az_ovodast-254593
- 36 “There is no place for any kinds of prejudices, either social, gender or any other forms of it.” http://hvg.hu/itthon/20100730_nemi_sztereotipak_ovoda

cians of Fidesz-KDNP³⁷ and Jobbik³⁸ as well as church representatives³⁹ stood up against “gender ideology”. In 2013 female members of Jobbik Youth Division connected to the Polish movement “Kobiety dia Narody” creating a common Facebook page titled “Christian women against Femen”⁴⁰. Kuruc.info, which is the biggest far right news site, has also had huge role in the anti-gender discourse publishing articles about “gender ideology”⁴¹.

5. The role of the EU

According to the rhetoric of the ruling parties, “Hungarians” are fighting for their independence when they are trying to act on their own way and not accepting pressure from “outside”⁴². This pressure can be described as a “worldwide conspiracy” where international bodies and “domestic liberals” are planning to take away the freedom of Hungary, making a colony from the country. According to

37 <http://www.csaladhalo.hu/cikk/hatter/lunacek-jelentes-titkos-kuldetese>

38 http://alfahir.hu/az_alaptorveny_ellen_szavaztak_a_kormanyparti_eu_kepviselok

39 <http://farkasretiplebania.hu/content/vall%C3%A1sellenes-t%C3%A1mad%C3%A1s-az-eur%C3%B3pai-parlamentben-%E2%80%93-20140113-cse%C3%BA-7>

40 <https://kuruc.info/r/6/112812/> They elaborated together why women do not need Femen and what the real essence of women and motherhood is. Around Jobbik one emblematic figure of the far right subculture, Edda Budaházy also created a movement called Hungarian Women Movement in order to respect the mothers “against the nowadays fashionable women movements.” <http://betyarsereg.hu/a-haboru-a-szuloszobakban-fog-eldolni-interju-budahazy-eddaval/>

41 <https://kuruc.info/r/7/128005/>, <https://w3.kuruc.info/r/57/128305/>, <https://kuruc.info/r/21/112420/>, <https://kuruc.info/r/4/131767/> <https://kuruc.info/r/6/123450/> One independent blog has to be mentioned entitled “Man Voice- the anti-feminist magazine” (ferfigang.hu), which constantly stands up against feminism and has articles about the “threat of “gender ideology””.

42 One speech of the prime minister, where he stated: “We won’t be a colony.”http://index.hu/video/2012/03/15/orban_nem_leszunk_gyarmat/

Zsolt Semjén, the main problem with “gender ideology” is that “it got a huge support from Brussels” and these “tiny, but loud lobby groups” want to “force their deviant view to the world”⁴³. Regarding the Estrela report László Surján from KDNP, vice president of the European Parliament, described it as something that the liberals could not achieve at the domestic level, whereby they try to force it to the nation as a European norm⁴⁴. He expressed his pleasure that the report was followed by huge public protest and encouraged everybody to join in with the petition against the report organised by an online community called Citizengo⁴⁵. At the debate of the Lunacek report Orbán even asked the European Parliament why somebody wants to limit Hungary’s right to preserve the tradition of marriage that was written in the Hungarian Constitution as a union between one man and woman⁴⁶. As the examples show, anti-gender discourse of the government is embedded to the “freedom fighter” rhetoric, where the freedom of Hungary is articulated as a chance to preserve “our traditions”⁴⁷.

43 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2W06DjiYTHI>

44 <http://www.csaladhalo.hu/cikk/hatter/lunacek-jelentes-titkos-kuldetese>

45 It is an online petition platform, where petitions are sent to international and domestic bodies and circulated online. They had success with the petition as the SRHR and on sex education in schools stayed a competence of the Member States. In January, 2015 they also organised a petition campaign against the Tarabella Report defining it as a new effort of the European Union “to support” abortion. <http://www.citizengo.org/en/19722-eu-parliament-vote-right-abortion> The campaign is in 7 languages, including Hungarian and it has a Hungarian coordinator. http://www.hetek.hu/hatter/201501/meleg_csaladokat_akar_az_ensz Concerning the Estrela report Katalin Novák State Secretary for Family and Youth Affairs explained something similar when argued that Western European countries want to change the definition of family through these documents. <http://www.orientpress.hu/130722>

46 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpAqxcbPurg>

47 *Ibid.*

Jobbik also uses the “freedom fighter” rhetoric against the “colonization” of the country and often accused the government that does not act effectively enough in this “bottle”⁴⁸. In the discourse of the far right EU is also a part of a “worldwide conspiracy”, but the main actors are the “background powers” that are aiming to destroy the nation⁴⁹. In 2014 this view was represented well when Tamás Gaudi-Nagy, MP of Jobbik, wrote an open letter to the Prime Minister and to the current Speaker of the Assembly to reject the Lunacek report because it “attacks the bases of our traditional values, and it is the manifestation of the global sexual revolution”⁵⁰. “Gender ideology” is interpreted as a negative consequence of the battle between the ideologies, and a “culture war” is proclaimed by Jobbik against it⁵¹. Anti-gender discourse is formulated as the preservation of “our” traditions against these “transnational values”, whereby the country has to fight for its freedom.

6. Local and national politics

Anti-gender discourse also appeared at the local politics of the examined parties. In 2012, Fidesz MPs proposed an amendment in the General Assembly of Budapest that would have banned “anti-social events that aim at portraying sexual deviance” and “marches that are obscene or cause public indignation”. The proposal was

48 Although Jobbik calls itself as a euro-realist, rather than Eurosceptic party, it urged Hungary to quit EU many times and plans to hold a referendum about the country's membership. http://mandiner.hu/cikk/20130413_jobbik_nepszavazast_az_eu_tagsagrol

49 <https://kuruc.info/r/7/128005/>

50 <http://www.parlament.hu/irom39/13951/13951.pdf>

51 http://jobbik.hu/rovatok/orsz%C3%A1gos_h%C3%ADrek/a_jobbik_kult%C3%BArharca_a_j%C3%B6v%C5%91_%C3%A9rdek%C3%A9ben

later rejected by the assembly⁵². In the same year, Jobbik also submitted a proposal to the General Assembly of Budapest to make “the portrayal of same-sex sexual relations as socially acceptable, normal sexual behavior with the aim of propagating it for a large audience” punishable with a fine. The proposal was also turned down by the Assembly in April⁵³. Jobbik made similar proposals for amendments to other local ordinances as well⁵⁴. It has shown how homophobic discourse, one key element of the anti-gender discourse, was implemented also at the local politics by the rightists.

7. Role of the state

The Fidesz-KDNP government with its two-thirds parliamentary majority took over many legal reforms in a very short period from 2010. Experts state that it was possible only with the limitation of the functions of the Parliament as a legislative actor which eliminated the barriers from the executive powers (Szikra 2014). The rights of the Constitutional Court were also limited gradually through various measures (Szikra 2014). These changes hugely corresponded to the successful implementation of those juristic

52 I have the information and the document from the organisation Háttér Társaság. They made an annual report about legislative proposals banning pride events and the “propagation of homosexuality” in Hungary in 2012, which includes this issue. The proposal is available at: <http://infoszab.budapest.hu:8080/GetTirFile.aspx?id=100982>

53 I have this information and the document also from the organisation Háttér Társaság. The proposal was available in this link, but not any longer: <http://infoszab.budapest.hu:8080/%0BGetTirFile.aspx?id=100858>

54 http://www.bekescsaba.hu/download.fcgi/20120_0_0_k130525_jkv.pdf <http://eugyintezes.pecs.hu/static/tempPdf/11-11-4082-2m.pdf> According to the report of Háttér Társaság Mayor Mihály Orosz proposed a local ordinance to ban the propagation of sexual deviances in Érpatak.

reforms that will be explained below transforming the state and redefining citizenship.

8. Constitution

The new Constitution was adopted in 2011 entitled the new Basic Law of Hungary, which came into force in 2012⁵⁵. The “General Principles Guiding Hungary’s Constitution” includes one part that protects the fundamental human right to life from the moment of conception. This strong pro-life conception resonates with the anti-abortion discourse of the rightists and can ensure the possibility of a more rigorous legislation (Császár 2012). In 2013, in its Fourth Amendment⁵⁶ the new Constitution defined marriage and family restrictively as a union between man and woman⁵⁷ and put down that “family ties are based on marriage” outlawing same sex spouses as well as many other forms of cohabiting families⁵⁸. Furthermore, sexual orientation is excluded from the protected grounds of discrimination in the Basic Law. These two parts present how anti-gender discourse is implemented even into the Constitution⁵⁹.

55 The Preamble of the Law contains a statement that stresses the role of Christianity in “preserving nationhood” and explicitly refers to Catholicism (Szikra 2014). It represents well how the government wants to legitimate its measures with a religious argumentation.

56 Four amendments were implemented up until 2015 since the Basic Law came into force in 2012. http://www-archiv.parlament.hu/fotitkar/alkotmany/alaptv_modositasai.htm

57 Literally is: “the family shall be ... based on the marriage of a man and a woman” (Juhász 2012).

58 It excludes from the definition of a family non-married heterosexual couples without children, as well. http://www.amnesty.eu/content/assets/Doc2013/AI_concerns_about_the_Fourth_Amendment_to_Hungarys_Fundamental_Law_March_2013.pdf

59 Both mentioned parts provoked a large public uproar where women NGOs and international bodies also protested (Juhász 2012).

9. Consequences

In 2010 the aforementioned amendment of the decree on education in kindergartens about gender equality was one concrete policy consequence of the anti-gender discourse started by the new Fidesz-KDNP government. At the same year Gender Equality Department was disbanded and merged into the Division of Equal Opportunity under the Ministry of Human Resources (Juhász 2012). Similar to the Constitution, the new Family Protection Act which came into force in 2012 reiterates fetus protection from conception and that the family is composed of a marriage of a heterosexual couple and their children, or relatives in direct line. The Bill suggests that preparation for family life should be part of the school curriculum and recommends to media services broadcasting such programs that “respect the institution of marriage and family”⁶⁰. The new Civil Code which came into effect in 2014 does not include the registered same-sex civil partnership, which is regulated in a separate Act, thereby does not define them as “families”⁶¹.

Jobbik supported the implementation of the Family Protection Act and even called for a stricter fetal protection law⁶². At the same time, the party submitted an amendment to ban “homosexual propaganda” in order to protect “public morals and the

60 <http://www.complex.hu/kzldat/t1100211.htm/t1100211.htm>

61 The New Criminal Code also includes a provision on domestic violence, which came into effect in 2013. It defines violence against family members or a former spouse or partner as a stand-alone crime. Although the new Law contains significant gaps, according to the experts it may still be failing to fulfill its obligations to appropriately respond to domestic violence.

62 <http://kdnf.hu/kdnf/tudositas/csaladpolitika-celja-tarsadalom-egeszseges-szerkezetenek-biztositasa> However, according to a proposal they would also include cohabiting heterosexual partnerships into the definition. <http://www.parlament.hu/irom39/05128/05128-0012.pdf>

mental health of the young generations”⁶³. The proposal would introduce a new crime of “propagation of disorders of sexual behavior” into the Criminal Code punishable for three years, or even eight in certain cases⁶⁴. As a consequence of the anti-gender discourse Budapest Pride Parade was banned by Budapest Police Headquarters in 2012. The Budapest Metropolitan Court overturned the decision when the organisers with the support of Hungarian Civil Liberties Union (TASZ) challenged the ban. The Pride was held in June among massive security⁶⁵. Strong fetus protection, definition of marriage and discrimination of same sex couples are the policy consequences of the anti-gender discourse that appeared even at the legislative level creating a common platform for the rightist parties.

10. Language

Rightist parties use a strong emotional and fear managing language against “gender ideology”, describing it as a threat to Hungary. According to Fidesz-KDNP Hungarians have to preserve the definition of marriage as a relation between men and women⁶⁶. Using

63 <http://www.politics.hu/20120412/jobbi-submit-amendment-aimed-at-banning-gay-propaganda/>

64 About the proposal: http://hvg.hu/itthon/20120411_jobbi_tervezet Parliamentary Committee on Constitutional and Legal Affairs did not support the inclusion of the proposals on the Parliament's agenda.

65 In 2014 Regional Court of Appeal of Budapest upheld the decision declaring that the Budapest Police committed direct discrimination and harassment based on sexual orientation when banned the Budapest Pride March in April 2012. <http://en.hatter.hu/news/court-reaffirms-that-police-discriminated-when-banning-the-budapest-pride-march-in-2012>

66 For instance, Mónika Keresztes Róna, lawmaker of Fidesz said that “Marriage is made by two yes and two sexes.” http://hvg.hu/itthon/20140210_A_boldog_hazassag_titka_Ket_igen_es_ket_n

emotional religious language Viktor Orbán talked about the protection of a 4000 year-old tradition of marriage which is built on 2000 years of Jewish and 2000 years of Catholic tradition at the debate of the Lunacek report⁶⁷. At the same year, in 2014, regarding the marriage of same sex couples, Zsolt Semjén used fear managing language when he highlighted the “natural order” of sexes and raised the question whether what the next step is if same sex marriage will be allowed. He envisaged that this “far liberal madness” has made an aberrant world that would even lead to the collapse of the economy, and eventually to the end of democracy⁶⁸.

In 2010, a similar “Trojan horse-effect” (Kováts and Soós 2014) was articulated by Katalin Gömbös, MP of Jobbik, who stated that gender mainstreaming could lead to the “elimination of (...)motherhood and fatherhood and the appreciation of family and marriage(...)”⁶⁹. She also adumbrated that registered partnership for same sex couples would lead to the allowance of adoption for them. In the vision of the far right “gender ideology” is a part of some bigger plans of the background powers. According to an article on kuruc.info⁷⁰ “gender ideology” was created by the Zionist oligarchy to legitimate homosexuality and create a gay identity. This identity turns against the national identity, whereby it corresponds to the collapse of the nation. According to the theory it causes the further decrease of fertility that is also a goal of the oligarchy, whereby they can prove why countries need immigrants. As a result, “gender ideology” appears as a threat to the traditional values, and even to our society in the fear managing language of Fidesz-

67 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dpAqxcbPurg>

68 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2W06DjiYTHI>

69 <http://alfahir.hu/node/49804> Similar to Orbán Gömbös also includes God into her statement.

70 <https://kuruc.info/r/7/128005/>

KDNP as well as in Jobbik's case. Both parties envisage that beyond the propagation of the so-called "gender ideology" further goals are hidden that endanger society and lately correspond to its collapse.

11. Voter mobilisation

In the rightists' discourse "gender" is shown as something that the "outsiders" want to force into the country. International bodies and the "domestic" liberals who are cooperating together in the line of "gender ideology" are represented as enemies and used for counter-mobilisation. Thereby supporters can be gathered through anti-EU, anti-liberal attitudes, as well as through the protection of "traditional values". Furthermore, as gender equality and emancipation is associated with state socialism and forced emancipation in society (Balogh 2014) rightists use the anti-communist attitudes for mobilisation against "gender ideology" as a communist idea. It can even legitimise for the public why gender equality policies are not implemented by the government (Balogh 2014).

According to the far right, family and national cohesion is attacked by the "gender revolutionists", whereby "we" have to resist⁷¹. In order to stop the background powers in this activity Fidesz-KDNP is not enough, the radicals are needed here⁷². In this sense, with the threat of "gender" Jobbik can mobilise voters through the anti-EU, homophobic, anti-Semitic and anti-immigrants attitudes and through the worry about the demographic decline of the nation⁷³.

71 <https://kuruc.info/r/6/58415/>

72 <https://reakcio.wordpress.com/2014/03/09/>

73 One example from a blog that calls itself a Jobbik supporter: <https://scallfast.wordpress.com/2014/03/09/liberalizmus-a-szabadsag-ellensege-es-az-ellenseg-szabadsaga-hogy-arthasson-nekunk-ahol-csak-tud-sos-e-bizatok-cion-kigyoban-mindig-hamis/>

Gender as a symbolic glue integrates anti-EU, anti-liberal, anti-communist and homophobic attitudes, which can produce voters for the rightists. In the case of far right anti-government, anti-Semitic and anti-immigrants attitudes are also included into the discourse of “gender”.

12. Counter-strategies

Currently, there is no comprehensive strategy against the anti-gender discourse in Hungary. Firstly, it is explained by the weak civil society in the country (Kováts and Soós 2014)⁷⁴. Secondly, it links to the fact that women’s organisations are separated into three umbrella organisations (Pető and Vasali 2014) that makes a common counter-act more difficult. In the last decade the numbers of human rights based women NGOs were decreasing and they have gradually lost their impact. On the other hand, the numbers of conservative women’s organisations were growing (Pető 2014). These circumstances basically define the limited possibilities of an effective strategy against anti-gender discourse. However, there are some initiatives that aim to start a dialogue between different actors, also with church representatives⁷⁵. Even inside the churches some female theologians are trying to make a platform for dialogue (Balogh 2014). These initiatives could be important forces to avoid the intensification of the anti-gender discourse.

74 Although they used this fact to prove why anti gender mobilisation has not started, it is also true for the counter-mobilisation.

75 I have to mention here the activity of the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung who tries to seek a dialogue and make a platform, for instance in conferences about the issue: <http://www.fesbp.hu/common/pdf/Programm20141002HUN.pdf>, <http://www.fesbp.hu/common/pdf/Programm20140619.pdf>

13. Left parties

During the social-liberal coalition many initiatives were implemented to enforce gender equality⁷⁶. Concerning the Estrela report, Zita Gurmai, the chair of Women Division of MSZP, strongly criticised the rightist parties who turned down the proposal⁷⁷. In March, 2015, at the debate of Tarabella report, István Újhelyi, Member of the European Parliament from MSZP, named himself as an MP who radically stands up for gender equality⁷⁸. The Green Party LMP (Politics can be different) has also proposed amendments regarding the topic of quota, violence against women and domestic violence⁷⁹. In conclusion, gender equality measures are on the agenda of the leftist parties, but they do not question the rightists enough about their anti-gender discourse and practice.

14. Recommendations for progressive actors

In order to achieve their goals progressives should explain what gender equality really means today, what the exact problems are and disconnect the notion with state socialism. Progressives should

76 In 2009 former chair of MSZP (Hungarian Socialist Party) reflected to the importance of women's politics, especially during the period of crises, where conservatives would send women "to the kitchen". <http://www.hirextra.hu/2009/12/11/lendvai-a-nopolitikai-program-is-fontos/>

77 Gurmai said that it revealed again the different values of right and left and how the conservatives tried to turn against progress. http://mszp.hu/hirek/a_fidesz_es_a_jobbik_kepviseloi_egyutt_szavaztak_a_nok_egeszsegenek_megorzese_ellen

78 He asked what the rightists European MPs think about the fact that Hungarian rightist parties turned down the ratification of Istanbul Convention recently. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m7AE3_-CUN4

79 <http://www.nokert.hu/index.php/jogok-eselyek/jogok-eselyek/1343-2014-10-13-19-18-15> Katalin Ertsey, former lawmaker of LMP has had many statements regarding gender equality reflecting also on the anti-gender discourse, for instance here: http://hvg.hu/velemenypublicisztika/20150209_Conchita_Semjen_szemebe_nevet

communicate that gender equality is not only a “women’s issue” (Põim 2015) and gender problems are embedded in wider social problems. These forces should be reflected more on those areas that could be possible topics of a bigger anti-gender mobilisation⁸⁰. It needs well-structured, detailed arguments against the rightists’ discourse and clear communication of the statements. Progressives should question the rightists continuously about particular topics to challenge their anti-gender discourse⁸¹ and confront them with their internal contradictions related to gender issues, asking them for clear statements. In order to effectively confront anti-gender discourse, progressives should go back to the real leftist values. Progressives should focus on those social groups who are ignored, disadvantaged or discriminated by the rightists and as a consequence have gendered problems⁸². Furthermore, it is necessary to figure out a counter-language, which reflects the emotional-fear language of the rightists. It also has to connect to the real leftist values, using the language of solidarity. In this work parties should strongly connect to grassroots organisations, local and individual initiatives⁸³.

80 After this analysis it seems that these issues would be the abortion and LGBTI rights.

81 Recently the debate on ratification of the Istanbul Convention was an opportunity, where leftists were active at the proposal.

82 The needs of these groups should be communicated after comprehensive measurement of the local and regional gendered problems inside the country.

83 Moreover, they should build a new political subculture with symbols, slogans, common traditions based on leftist values that can support the parties in their goals (Scheiring 2015).

15. Forecast and predictions

The real appearance of the anti-gender discourse has not started yet; however, it will probably happen in the future around certain issues. These issues could be the anti-LGBTI and anti-abortion discourse that rightist parties have already added to their agenda, as previous examples have shown. Although rightists are not interested in cooperation, Fidesz-KDNP and Jobbik are on the same platform regarding these questions which can lead to a common mobilisation in the future. Possible anti-gender mobilisation activity would be supported by several civil organisations around these parties as well as some churches that would be also active in a mobilisation. A key element will be the position of Christian, conservative women's movement and whether they will cooperate with the far right (Pető 2014) or make a dialogue with the actors of gender equality as it has already started. If a real discourse is to start around gender issues, mobilisation against "gender ideology" can be avoided. Still, giving the current situation, the culmination of the discourse recently around the Estrela and Lunacek, and marginally around the Tarabella reports, there is a bigger chance of the other scenario, namely that the anti-gender discourse will be intensified in the future.

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POLAND

Weronika Grzebalska

The recent wave of the anti-gender campaign in Poland began unfolding in the years 2012-2013, and evolved around three specific triggers: the Istanbul Convention, Pedophilia Scandal in the Polish Catholic Church, and WHO recommendations for sex education in schools. In 2014, “gender ideology” was directly addressed in the programs of three parties – Law and Justice, United Poland and the National Movement – and pictured as a foreign-imposed threat to traditional family and national identity. In their statements, right-wing politicians often used fear-arousing language conflating gender equality with deviations and pathologies. While the campaign addressed transnational organisations and drew from strategies employed by mobilisations in other countries, it was predominately carried out on the national and local level, and served as a means of building networks between Church officials, politicians and activists, as well as mobilising voters during both the local and European elections. The counter-campaign involved various actors and employed versatile strategies, and proved effective in both convincing the public opinion and pressuring the executive to support the Istanbul Convention.

1. Google analysis of the terms

While Polish commentators generally agree that the anti-gender outbreak began in the years 2012-2013 (Grabowska 2014, Graff 2014, Korolczuk 2014), additional insight into how the term “gender ideology” originated in the Polish context and when it was put into wider circulation can be provided by conducting a basic analysis of Google search hits. The first instances of the usage of

the expression “gender ideology” can be traced back to articles published on Polish Catholic websites in the years 2005-2008, where interestingly, the term appeared almost exclusively in the context of interviews with and reviews of foreign Catholic anti-gender authors like Lucetta Scaraffia, Dale O’Leary, Christine de Marcellus de Vollmer or Gabriele Kuby. In the years 2009-2011, the expression gradually started appearing on religion-based websites in isolated texts written by Polish authors, until a considerable increase in its Internet presence in the year 2012, which reflected a wider campaign initiated at the time by Church officials. It was not until 2013, however, that “gender ideology” entered the public discourse, after it had been picked up by right-wing politicians and mainstream media. According to data provided by Google Trends, first google searches of “gender ideology” appeared in January 2013, but the peak interest in the term was observed in December 2013, when the number of searches was almost 20 times higher than in the proceeding months. Analogically, the relative interest in the term “gender” remained stable and relatively low throughout the years until it experienced a sharp rise in October 2013 and reached its highest point in January 2014.

2. Overview of the parties

Ever since the victory of the right in the 2005 elections, followed by a crushing electoral defeat of SLD (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, Democratic Left Alliance) in 2011, the Polish political scene has shifted to the right, and polarised between the centre-right PO (Platforma Obywatelska, Civic Platform), and the mainstream right-wing PiS (Prawo i Sprawiedliwość, Law and Justice). As of 2015, seven right-wing parties are active either in the Polish or the European Parliament, and dozens more are registered by the National

Electoral Commission. For the sake of this article, I will discuss the parties that were particularly vocal in the “gender ideology” campaign.

PO is a moderate right party which was founded in 2001 and has been in power since 2007, forming a coalition with the centrist, Christian and agrarian PSL (Polskie Stronnictwo Ludowe, Polish People’s Party). In the Europarliament, both parties belong to the EPP Group. While at its inception, PO positioned itself as a liberal, pro-market force, it has gradually abandoned its ideological profile and has been criticised for turning into a “catch-all” post-political party replacing politics with technocracy. The party tends to combine economical neoliberalism with social conservatism, and is internally divided between a liberal and a conservative faction headed by Jarosław Gowin until 2013.

Founded in 2001 by Lech and Jarosław Kaczyński, PiS briefly came to power in 2005 and has been the main opposition party since 2007. PiS is a clericalist, socially conservative and nationalist party and belongs to the ECR group in the European Parliament. The party is disproportionately supported by voters from rural areas, as well as those without higher education. While it has been known for its populist and nationalist rhetorics, as well as cooperation with radical parties like LPR (Liga Polskich Rodzin, League of Polish Families) and Samoobrona (Self Defence), since 2011 PiS has gradually been softening its image in order to appeal to more moderate voters. PiS currently has two breakaway parties active in the Polish or the European Parliament, which nevertheless form common electoral lists with their mother party: SP (Solidarna Polska, United Poland) and PRz (Prawica Rzeczpospolitej, Right Wing of the Republic). Both are Christian-conservative in ideology and very vocal in their opposition to reproductive rights and sex education. In 2014, SP’s MP Beata Kempa formed a Parliamentary Committee “Stop gender ideology”.

Before forming a political party in December 2014, RN (Ruch Narodowy, National Movement) used to be an alliance of far right organisations. NM draws on the pre-war national democracy movement Endecja (Narodowa Demokracja) and keeps informal contacts with the Hungarian Jobbik and other European radical right organisations. While it only received 1.4% total votes in the European elections and 1.57% in the local elections, the NM has strong local structures and is based on the young population.

3. Party programs and party discourses

a) Party programs

“Gender ideology” is directly mentioned in the 2014 programs of three parties – PiS, RN, and SP. Women voters and “women’s issues”, in turn, are directly referred to in all programs but the one of RN, albeit, predominately or even exclusively in the sections dedicated to family politics.

Out of all discussed parties, only PO mentioned women in their program in the section dedicated to economy. Nevertheless, even though PO’s program pledges to increase women’s employment and provide equal pay, it does not propose any concrete solutions. Significantly, while the party dedicates a considerable part of its program to overcoming the demographic crisis, most proposed solutions to low fertility rates - e.g. higher child benefits, more day care centres - are formulated as gender-neutral rather than women-focused, and are addressed to both married and single parents. However, unlike its left-wing counterparts, PO does not address any human rights issues like reproductive rights, gender equality within the family, gender based violence or civil partnership.

PiS identifies the “family crisis” as one of the main political challenges and, thus, attaches great significance to family politics. Typically for nationalist, pronatalist discourses, the party makes a strong commitment to protecting “life from conception”, traditional family, as well as “strengthening the special role of mothers and respect for motherhood which should be treated not as a burden but rather as an honor and privilege” (PiS 2014: 14). This focus on traditional family-oriented politics and the symbolic elevation of motherhood thus privileges heterosexual marriages and leaves other care relationships unrecognised. Interestingly, unlike in its 2011 program, the party also mentions women’s equality in their program’s opening section called “Our principles and values”. “Gender ideology” is discussed twice – first in the opening section which presents the values underlying the program, and then in the chapter assessing the current socio-political situation – and is portrayed as a foreign-imposed threat to families and national values.

SP addresses women in their 2012 program exclusively in the section dedicated to family politics. Even when it proposes certain solutions in the field of employment policy or the pension system, it nevertheless perceives women primarily as mothers, who sometimes happen to work. In fact, some of the proposed policies are even designed as a reward for women who had children, as in the case of the guaranteed pension for women who raised three or more children. Additionally, in their brief 2014 program for the European Elections called “Ten European Commandments”, the party addressed “gender ideology” directly in the point criticising “leftist propaganda for EU money”. The 2009 program of PRz called “Strong Poland for the Civilization of Life” voices the need to base politics on the social teachings of the Church. The party takes a strong stand against abortion, euthanasia, homosexual marriages, as well as pornography and prostitution – which it regards as a violation of human rights.

RN does not directly mention women in its brief 2014 program, but underscores the need for strengthening the position of traditional families and family values. Gender issues are addressed in RN's program in a separate point, meaningfully titled "Protection of traditional values. Stop homo propaganda and gender ideology". There the party pledges to remedy the crisis of family by returning to the moral principles of natural law and Christianity, as well as blocking the spreading of "gender ideology" responsible for the "depravation of children" and "distortion of masculinity and femininity" (RN 2014: 12).

b) Party discourses

While "gender ideology" was only directly mentioned in the programs of three right-wing parties, the issue was ubiquitous in the statements made by politicians in the years 2012-2015. In April 2012, the then Minister of Justice Jarosław Gowin criticised the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) for its constructivist definition of gender and famously called it a carrier of "feminist ideology". Gowin's stance was soon backed up by the Church and right-wing politicians who, like the leader of PiS Jarosław Kaczyński, opposed the Convention on the grounds that it defined masculinity and femininity in cultural rather than biological terms. While Kaczyński made a conscious effort not to directly participate in the heated anti-gender campaign, his MPs more than fulfilled the task for him. One especially vocal opponent of "gender ideology" has been MP Krystyna Pawłowicz, former judge of State Tribunal known for her fierce anti-gay comments. In one of her local media interviews she famously pointed to gender as an ideology "undermining natural principles of life", and ultimately "leading to the relationship between a human being and a monkey" (Korsak 2014).

In January 2014, SP's MP Beata Kempa created a Parliamentary Committee "Stop gender ideology" in which she presides over 15 male members. While the committee was often ridiculed by the mainstream media, we should not underrate its influence on the popularisation of the anti-gender campaign in smaller cities, as well as the general polarisation of views on gender politics which Kempa famously compared to Marxism, Leninism and Nazism all at once (Jastrzębowski 2014). In turn, the leader of PRz Marek Jurek predominately engaged in the campaign by opposing sex education in schools, which he described as a means to "sexualize children" and "encourage them to masturbate" (Jurek 2013).

RN leaders have taken a stance against "gender ideology" on numerous occasions during the recent elections, and RN members have been known to interrupt lectures of feminist and left-wing intellectuals. Nevertheless, the daily ideological reworking and popularisation of such issues as reproductive rights, family politics and feminism lies mostly in the hands of the female members of the movement active in the Women's Sections, who organise anti-feminist and pro-life pickets, as well as manage the many social media profiles gathering women nationalists. RN's views on gender issues are similar to those of PiS and its breakaway parties, but they are much more vocal about their anti-feminism.

c) Comparing the party positions

In their campaign against "gender ideology", all right-wing parties discussed above, with the exception of the liberal faction of PO, took a robust stance against three separate but interrelated issues, which were deliberately conflated into a generalised, foreign-imposed threat to family and Polish national values: equality policies based on a constructivist definition of gender, sex education, and the influence of transnational institutions (e.g. EU, WHO, UN) on

Polish law. It is important to note that while the right-wing is definitely anti-gender, these parties are also trying hard to portray themselves as pro-women: supporting the equal treatment of women, improving the situation of mothers, and opposing violence against women. Even when objecting to the Istanbul Convention due to its constructivist definition of gender, politicians like Kaczyński declared their dedication to punishing acts of violence against women and protecting its victims.

4. Triggers and actors

The anti-gender discourse is by no means a new phenomenon; in fact, its anthropological foundations have been laid by social teachings of the Catholic Church (Buss 1998, Paternotte 2014), and used as a basis for anti-sex education mobilisation by the American Christian Right in the 1990s (Irvine 2002). While certainly drawing from these discursive and organisational practices, the current anti-gender campaign in Poland evolved around three distinct and context-specific triggers, and involved a plethora of actors: the Catholic Church, right-wing politicians both on the local and national level, parliamentary committees (e.g. “Stop gender ideology”), conservative academics (e.g. Marta Cywińska, Warsaw University of Life Sciences), Catholic and pro-life NGOs (e.g. Healthy Family Association) and internet platforms (e.g. stop-seksualizacji.pl).

The first trigger was the Istanbul Convention, brought to public attention in April 2012 after being publicly opposed by the then Minister of Justice Jarosław Gowin. The second factor was the Pedophilia Scandal in the Catholic Church. After numerous reports on acts of pedophilia perpetrated by Polish priests, Archbishop Józef Michalik spoke out in October 2013, shifting the responsibility for sexual violence from priests to broken families, and blaming

feminism for the crisis of family values (Day 2013). WHO recommendations concerning sex education in schools were another focal point. Concerned parents backed up by Catholic NGOs and Church officials created an internet website stop-seksualizacji.pl which serves as a platform for disseminating information and mobilising support for petitions and protests. After the WHO conference “Standards for Sexuality Education in Europe” held at the Polish Academy of Sciences in April 2013, parents were joined by PRz politicians who organised protests outside education offices around the country. In the wake of the moral panic that followed, the smear campaign also took its toll on the Foundation of Pre-School Education which runs dozens of kindergartens around the country. A handbook “Equality Kindergarten” written in 2011 by a group of feminist educators and made available on Foundation’s website was criticised by academics from the Elementary Education Team of the Polish Academy of Sciences and demonised in conservative media.

The strong involvement of the Catholic Church in the anti-gender campaign, carried out through lectures on Catholic universities, Masses offered in parishes, and statements in the media, led some commentators to see it as a cover-up of the pedophilia problem in the Polish Church (e.g. Sierakowski 2014, Kuisz and Wigura 2014). However, the fact that mobilisations against gender equality, sex education, and the influence of transnational organisations are neither a recent occurrence nor one limited to Poland suggest that the anti-gender campaign should rather be perceived as a long-term, transnational and multi-faced phenomenon (Korolczuk 2014).

5. The role of the EU

The anti-neocolonial, Eurosceptic rhetoric used by the right played out loudly throughout the recent anti-gender mobilisation. In statements and discussions that accompanied the campaign, the discursive figure of the EU as a cultural coloniser, corrupting innocent Polish children and suppressing the Polish national culture, was used ubiquitously. An analogous outburst of anti-EU anxieties projected onto the sphere of gender and sexuality was acutely observed by Agnieszka Graff (2007) around the time of Poland's accession to the European Union in 2004. While the Polish government managed to implement some EU regulations on gender equality since that time, the implementation was usually done minimally and often at the last moment, under threat of financial penalties imposed by the EU (see eg. Grabowska 2014: 5). This lack of political will to implement equality policies can be argued to have thus further contributed to the feeling of hostility and alienation from the EU on the part of some citizens.

6. National and local politics

That the local level is a crucial battleground of the anti-gender campaign became acutely clear after several Municipal Councils around the country issued official statements against “gender ideology” or even objected to certain programs on the grounds that they contained a passage about gender equality, as was the case with the Regional Operational Program for Śląskie Voivodeship, opposed by Wodzisław Municipal Council members in 2014 for containing the term “gender”. In March 2014, the head of the Wołomin County administration even launched a program “Family-Friendly School”, obliging schools holding its certificate to oppose sexual and gender

equality education. While during the recent mobilisation, feminist academics and educators could count on mainstream media to provide the platform for presenting their arguments, anti-gender campaigners had disproportionately greater access to local institutions, and carried out their campaign of “winning the hearts and minds” of people through events in city councils, county boards, parishes and schools. For example, only in the first half of 2014, meetings with members of the “Stop gender ideology” Committee were hosted in twelve medium and small towns. While the current conservative mobilisation has national and even transnational targets, it is increasingly being played out on the local level, with conservative activists (e.g. Mariusz Dzierżawski of the PRO Foundation) even running for seats in the 2014 local elections under the aegis of the anti-gender campaign.

7. Role of the state

On the national level, state institutions generally acted very cautiously on both the Istanbul Convention and sex education, calling for dialogue and pointing to social controversies as a reason for not taking a definite stand on the matters. One notable exception was the letter of the Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment issued in December 2013, which opposed the Church-led campaign, and underscored the need for equality policies. Another exception was the pressure put by PM Ewa Kopacz on her MPs to vote for the Istanbul Convention under threat of not being put on electoral lists. Eventually, after an almost three year delay, on 13th April 2015 President Bronisław Komorowski ratified the Istanbul Convention. On the other hand, as of 2015, no sex education curriculum in schools has been introduced, and recently a draft bill supported by left-wing deputies was rejected by the lower house of the Parlia-

ment. The role of state institutions is even more ambiguous on the local level. While some city or county councils managed to ward off the challenges posed by anti-gender mobilisation (e.g. in Gdańsk a crusade led by a PiS councilwoman to not extend the rent agreement with a feminist NGO was turned down in voting), others have been successful in introducing anti-gender programs, as was the case with the anti-gender certificates granted to schools in Wołomin County.

8. Constitution

The 1997 Polish Constitution guarantees all people equal treatment, and contains a general statement that discrimination based on “any reason” is prohibited in political, social or economic life. However, no specific grounds for prohibited discrimination are spelled out, making the rule rather broad and vague. Additionally, Article 33 grants equal rights to women and men in family, social, political and economic life. On the other hand, Article 18 calls for the state to protect marriage “being a union between a man and a woman”, family, motherhood and parenthood. While some lawyers (e.g. Pudzianowska 2013) claim that the special protection of heterosexual marriage does not rule out the introduction of same-sex partnerships, right-wing circles have insisted that they are impermissible under Polish law. Hence, Article 18 has often been brought into debates on civil partnerships and non-stereotyped gender roles as evidence of their alleged incompatibility with the Constitution, e.g. by Jarosław Gowin during both the voting on civil partnership law in January 2013, and in the discussion about the Istanbul Convention in April 2014.

9. Consequences

While it is too early to properly assess the consequences of the anti-gender campaign, one ongoing and particularly harmful process is the gradual subordination of educational institutions to Christian conservative worldview, carried out by local authorities in cooperation with the Catholic Church and religion-based organisations. As of April 2015, the number of Polish kindergartens and schools which hold the anti-gender certificate issued by a pro-family NGO Center for Initiatives for Life and Family reached a number of 187 and is still growing. While education institutions run by local governments are subject to state control, the situation is even more alarming in case of non-public schools which are run by parents associations or NGOs, many of them religion-based.⁸⁴ These schools do not have to adhere to the Teacher's Charter⁸⁵ which leads to the precarisation of work, threatens the quality of education, and in rural areas also results in limiting the right of access to secular education respecting different worldviews.

10. Language

As noted by Rafał Pankowski (2012:3), in Poland it is hard to clearly distinguish between mainstream right-wing parties and the populist or far right factions, due to the personal and organisational ties between them, as well as their ideological overlaps. This

84 I am thankful to Elżbieta Korolczuk for making me aware of this side effect of the privatisation of education.

85 The Teachers Charter is a statute adopted in 1982 (with subsequent amendments) which defines the rights and duties of the teaching personnel. It stipulates, a.o., that schools should be neutral in terms of worldview.

observation proved correct also in case of the recent “gender ideology” campaign. In their statements, both mainstream right and far right politicians deliberately conflated gender equality and sex education with deviations and social pathologies, and used fear-arousing and hyperbolic language to mobilise political support. At the peak of the campaign, it was not unusual to hear gender studies being equated with Nazism (Beata Kempa, SP), and its theorists called “perverts and pedophiles” (Krystyna Pawłowicz, PiS). As observed by Elżbieta Korolczuk (2014), both the use of “evocative vocabularies”, and the centrality of the figure of a child in danger to the current mobilisation, bear a striking resemblance to the American battle over sex education in the 1990s (see eg. Irvine 2002), and point at a transfer of knowledge and strategies between these movements.

11. Voter mobilisation

In 2014, “gender ideology” was ubiquitous in both the European and local election campaigns, and SP even made the demand to “stop leftist propaganda for EU money” one of their campaign slogans. But it is not just the mainstream and far right parties that mobilise electorate around gender issues. In the past, centre-right PO has been known to bring up women’s and minority rights right before elections, as a means of polarising voters and mobilising liberal electorate with fear of the “backward” opposition party. After the elections the issues were abandoned and no laws were passed. Recently, the government’s resumption of work on the in vitro law interestingly overlapped with the launching of PO’s new slogan for the 2015 presidential campaign, which divides voters along identity lines between the “rational” and “radical Poland”.

As observed by David Ost (2005), the exclusion of anti-capitalist discourse from public debate in post-1989 Central and Eastern Europe led to socioeconomic conflicts being articulated predominantly as identity conflicts. It can be argued that in Poland, which is deeply homogenous in terms of ethnicity and religion, notions of gender became the key dimension for producing these identity divisions (Kenney 1999: 400), and women's and minority rights have often been the stake of these identity battles.

12. Counter-strategies

The Polish counter-campaign involved different progressive actors – activists, academics, media personalities, politicians, social movements and NGOs – and simultaneously employed various strategies. One particularly popular counter-strategy saw the anti-gender campaign as resulting from lack of sufficient knowledge, and attempted to provide the public with concrete information about gender studies and policies through academic conferences, articles and statements from gender experts. Another strategy was to put pressure on state institutions to take a stand against the anti-gender campaign through various civil initiatives (e.g. lobbying by the Congress of Women, various petitions), NGO reports (e.g. a report by Ponton Group of Sex Educators on the state of sex education in Poland), public protests (e.g. the March of Pandas – Together Against Violence), and even official complaints, such as the one filed to the Supreme Audit Office by former Vice-Marshall Wanda Nowicka, demanding the control of whether the Church and Catholic institutions that were beneficiaries of EU grants complied with gender equality requirements. Quite another strategy was the attempt to initiate dialogue between supporters and

opponents of the campaign, e.g. through open letters (from Plenipotentiary of Equal Treatment to the bishops and from the Congress of Women to the Pope) or debates between feminist and Catholic circles (e.g. one organised by the Dominican Order in October 2013). On the other side of the spectrum was the strategy of ridiculing the anti-gender campaign, employed for example by activist Jaś Kapela who promoted Political Critique's 2014 guidebook about gender wearing a dress and a Darth Vader mask, or by former PM Donald Tusk who compared the anti-gender campaign to a cabaret. All in all, the counter-strategies proved effective in pressuring the executive to ratify the Convention, as well as convincing the public opinion - according to a poll conducted for "Rzeczpospolita" daily in February 2015, 89% of Poles support the ratification of the Istanbul Convention (Ferfecki, Pieńkowski 2015) – but did not exactly succeed in overcoming the language of cultural wars and building bridges between the adversaries.

13. Left parties

There are currently three left-wing parties in the Polish parliament: SLD (Sojusz Lewicy Demokratycznej, Social Democratic Alliance) with 27 seats, TR (Twój Ruch, Your Movement) with 12 seats, and Zieloni (Partia Zieloni, the Green Party) with one seat. All aforementioned parties voted in favour of the Istanbul Convention and sex education, and have taken a definite stand against the anti-gender campaign on numerous occasions. One widely publicised case was the decision of the first openly transgender MP Anna Grodzka (then in TR) to join the conservative "Stop gender ideology" Committee in order to facilitate discussion about gender. Other than this, the counter-reactions of leftist parties to the anti-gender mobilisation were rather one step behind those of extra-parliamentary forces, further revealing the crisis of the Polish parliamentary left.

14. Recommendations for progressive actors

While scholars (e.g. Korolczuk 2014, Paternotte 2014) have only recently started to reflect on the transnational character of the anti-gender campaign – the common ideological foundations and discursive strategies of these mobilisations and cooperation between them – more attention should also be paid to the way in which the campaign is carried out on the local level and used for building networks between conservative politicians, religious activists and Church officials. The lessons from the recent “gender ideology” mobilisation serve as a reminder that progressive actors cannot afford to either give up on local politics and concentrate on national level instead, or hold a technocratic belief – voiced by some urban activists during the recent local elections in Poland – that local politics is about “getting practical things done”, and can be dissociated from bigger ideological battles of our times.

Even though the work on redefining the meaning of nationhood and gender roles is undoubtedly an important one, it is also crucial to transgress the framework of cultural wars which has dominated Polish political life since 1989. Strategies aimed at ridiculing or demonising adversaries, as well as educating them in gender politics from the position of the enlightened few, are ultimately counterproductive, as they only deepen the already existing and futile identity divisions. More promising are the strategies which address the current disputes in terms of conflicts of interests and not of identity, as well as acknowledge the need to overcome the ongoing neoliberalisation of citizenship, by calling for the state to not so much protect individual liberties but rather guarantee the provision of public services crucial for social reproduction of democratic society, such as neutral public education. As the ongoing handover of schools and kindergartens to associations already alerts us, the rolling back of the state in favour of the voluntary sector can ultimately lead to undermining the right

to secular education respecting diversity and human rights. While in the realm of Polish social movements this “leftist turn” from the critique of culture to the critique of socioeconomic issues has been gradually occurring since the years 2006-2007 (Erbel 2008), it is time for these demands to finally find their parliamentary representation.

15. Forecast and predictions

While the battle over the Istanbul Convention might be over – it was finally ratified in April 2015 but only time will show how far its regulations will be implemented – the broader processes of neo-liberal dismantlement of state, the turn from politics to policies, and from liberal to illiberal democracy are well under way. In the near future, we can thus expect to witness further attempts of Christian Conservatives to profit from these processes, and mobilise electoral support around the contested issues of sex education, reproductive rights and civil partnerships. Addressing these issues beyond the framework of identity politics is a big chance for the left to reclaim its position on the Polish political scene, but one that requires it to critically review its own entanglement in these broader processes.

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SLOVAKIA

Petra Ďurinová

“Gender equality seen as public policy aimed at ensuring a real equality between men and women is an integral agenda of not only EU member states, but also of other developed countries of the civilized world. The term “gender ideology” is not at all a coined term in Slovakia, nor is it coined on an international level. It may be surprising how often it has been misinterpreted”

(Ján Richter, The Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic, 2015).

This statement, from January 2015, proves that gender equality is currently a frequently discussed and monitored topic. Moreover, it is a topic that polarises society. After the pastoral letter was published by the Conference of Slovak Bishops in December 2013, the politics of the country was polarised in relation to the idea of gender equality and “gender ideology”. The process of polarisation reached its peak during the referendum of February 2015, when the country literally split into two opposing camps. The topic of gender equality and “gender ideology” made families quarrel and led to harsh and rude comments and statements. These tendencies are even confirmed by a Google analysis.

1. Google analysis of the terms

A Google analysis of terms was used to find out how often a certain term appears on the internet. In 2009 it appeared only twice – once in the blog of Mrs. Olga Pietruchova, Director of Gender and Op-

portunity Equality at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of Slovakia (since 2011), in relation to gender mainstreaming in Slovakia. The second link led to the webpage of the Civic Association Forum of Life, an association wishing to protect human life from conception to natural death. During the year 2010 the term gender “ideology” appeared five times, whilst the following year the number increased to sixty-five. Most of the links led to Life News Slovakia, a portal of news stories about pro-life issues, human life and the natural family, a webpage concerning the Istanbul Convention of the European Council, “*which defines the gender as a social construct rather than a biological distinction*” (Life News, 2011). In 2012 this number increased to 100, due to German sociologist Gabriele Kuby and her lectures on state sex education for children, homosexuality and pornography, which took place in November 2012. In 2013 it increased more than twice to 240; this increase was mainly due to the pastoral letter which the Conference of Slovak Bishops (KBS) addressed to believers at the beginning of December 2013, and that raised questions about the respective meaningfulness of the danger of promotion of gender equality. The pastoral letter suggested that it is the promotion of “gender ideology” which leads the country and the nation into ruin. In 2014, the term occurred 417 times. This increase is believed to be directly associated with the aforementioned pastoral letter, human rights strategy, gender equality strategy and, predominantly, with the referendum. During the following year, 2015, the term has appeared on the internet 389 times up to 31.3.2015. This high number is largely due to the referendum of February 7, 2015.

2. Overview of the parties

The Christian Democratic Movement (KDH) is a Slovak conservative, parliamentary party since 1990 which was established after the fall of the communist regime in 1990. *“The values of KDH are based on Christian inspiration which centers around a human being with its social, spiritual and material dimension which is a part of family, national as well as world community”* (KDH 2015a). Ján Figel’ is the chairman of the party with one female vice-chairman – Miroslava Szitová, four male vice-chairmen Július Brocka, Ján Hudacký, Miloš Moravčík, Pavol Zajac (KDH 2015 b) and seventeen MPs in the national parliament. Their activities in parliament are focused on family (paternity leave on the birth of a child to his wife, and to increase the amount of tax relief for taxpayers depending on the number of dependent children in the family), the financing of primary and secondary schools, and employment.

Common People and Independent Persons (OĽANO) is a Slovak centre-right wing conservative political party established in November 11, 2011. The party presents itself as a movement which creates space for independent persons and professionals. Their policy is well represented by conservatism and Christian-democratic elements. The party has fourteen MPs in the National Council of the Slovak Republic, Igor Matovič being the chairman. Erika Jurinová, a member of OĽANO, is the vice-chairman of the parliament at the same time. MPs vote according to their beliefs and not by party discipline; they want to repeal parliamentary immunity, definitively separate business from politics, and improve employment (OĽANO 2011).

The Slovak National Party (SNS) is *“a nationally-oriented, conservative, center-right party relying on the Euro-Christian value system with three program pillars – National, Christian and Social”* (SNS, 2006-2015). Its foundation dates back to June 6, 1871. The

modern SNS was reestablished in March 7, 1990. Currently, it is a non-parliamentary party, however, it is an influential one. Its chairman is Andrej Danko. SNS (2006-2015) promotes political, economic, cultural and social shaping of Slovakia as a sovereign nation-state, and the development of traditional values (hometown, family, religion, national pride, responsibility, self-sufficiency).

The People's party, Our Slovakia (ĽSNS), is an extreme right wing, non-parliamentary party which was established in February 2010, with its area of influence mainly in the region of Banská Bystrica, where its chairman Marian Kotleba became the highest representative of the Autonomous Region. In their manifesto the party claims to *"be based on national and Christian traditions and values. The Party asserts the Slovak national and state interests over the Brussels dictation. Furthermore, it is the only party that uncompromisingly advocates the review of strategic enterprises privatization, withdrawal from the criminal pact NATO, and reintroduction of Slovak Crowns"* (ĽSNS 2010). Their party program focuses on economic and social topics and issues related to minorities, the rule of law, defense, justice, education and the EU.

3. Party programs and discourses

a) Party programmes

I chose these parties (KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS) because they are considered to be conservative parties –all four of them advocate Christian values and principles – and as I will show below, they have adopted the same attitude towards the idea of "gender ideology".

KDH perceives the family as a natural, principal community. *"Therefore, one of the cardinal cornerstones of KDH is the promotion of a "healthy family" as a prerequisite of managing the moral*

crisis of society. Only natural and healthy families can form a healthy country, thus, the protection of life from its conception until natural death, a marriage between a man and a woman, the parental right to raise children and material support of families form a significant part of our manifesto” (KDH 2012). The objective of their policies is a healthy, functional family. The family policy of KDH consists of two basic aspects: family protection and support. *“Every healthy society protects the institution of marriage, thereby protecting the wellbeing of a man and a woman as well as their children. That is why we they propose a constitutional law on the protection of marriage” (KDH 2012).* In this party program, KDH asserts that the family institution the is under a serious threat these days.

OŁANO does not define the notion of a family, neither marriage. However, family is referred to in the context of children raised in orphanages: *“We shall support the idea of placing the children from orphanages into families, based on a flexible adoption system, or placing them into professional families. As a consequence, it will be possible to demolish orphanages” (OŁANO 2012).*

SNS declares that family is the foundation of society and its future. *“We shall propose an amendment to the Constitution, so that the term marriage is clearly defined as a partnership between a man and a woman” (SNS 2012).*

The ŁSNS always perceives marriage as a union of a man and a woman. *“Decent families shall be supported by interest-free loans and the possibility of obtaining a flat to rent. We refuse civil partnerships, adoption of children by homosexual couples and promotion of sexual deviations. Education shall be built on traditional national and Christian values and principles” (ŁSNS 2012).*

One would expect political parties to include proposals leading to equality between men and women on their agendas, but if gender is regarded as equality in terms of the equality between

men and women, KDH only wants the elimination of the discriminatory nature of the new pension scheme aimed at women who have been providing long-term care of dependent children (e.g. calculating the personal wage point when estimating the insurance period for retirement age). (KDH 2012) OĽANO wants to support the measures which motivate employers to increase the number of jobs suitable for mothers with young children, in this way facilitating their return to work – employment and wages for women (OĽANO 2012). The SNS and ĽSNS party programs do not refer to anything like this

b) Party discourses

KDH has been expressing its opinions on the importance of a traditional family and marriage for a long time. At the beginning of 2014, they managed to enforce their long-term agenda – a constitutional protection of a marriage between a man and a woman. Christian democrats supported the referendum and took a positive view on it. Ján Figel', KDH chairman, stated: *“Voting three times yes is an expression of support for marriage, and children upbringing as a parental duty. Christian Democrats (KDH) will vote three times yes for the family and the future of Slovakia”* (SITA 2015a). Ján Figel', KDH chairman, also declares that the strategy of human rights has been inspired by “gender ideology”. KDH emphasises that in order to obtain a strong mandate from the voters in the next general elections, it will enforce the abolition, or rather, the essential revision of this document (SITA 2015b).

OĽANO members have supported the constitutional law on family and took a positive view on it (except for Mr. Ján Mičovský). OĽANO has been planning a referendum on corruption, and even before the referendum on family took place, Richard Vašečka promised that a part of the aforementioned referendum would be

on issues related to family protection, marriage definition and the wish of citizens to allow only heterosexual partners to adopt children (OĽANO 2014). The Deputy Chairman of Parliament Mrs. Erika Jurinová has taken a stance in the issue of human rights strategy as well. She believes that too much time and attention is paid on the issues of LGBTI, and too little on the issues associated with the majority (Jurinová 2014). Twelve out of thirteen OĽANO members have supported the referendum on family (OĽANO 2015).

SNS, like KDĽ, has put the emphasis on traditional family and marriage for a long time. They also wish marriage to be constitutionally defined as a union between a man and a woman. SNS members even helped to collect signatures for the February referendum, as the party identified with it completely (TASR/HSP 2015). SNS called for the citizens to take part in the referendum of February 7, 2015 and *“express clearly their relationship to their fathers’ inheritance, and in this way, respond to those who could not care less about listening to their opinions”* (Goriščák 2015).

ĽSNS is primarily dedicated to Roma issues, even though members of ĽSNS encouraged the public to participate in the referendum on family as well. The leader of ĽSNS, Marian Kotleba, appealed to the public to participate in the referendum on family protection (ĽSNS 2015).

Based on the party discourse, it can be stated that all of the mentioned political parties (KDĽ, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS) consider the traditional family as an important part of society, and they reject gay marriage and sex education.

c) Comparing the positions

All of the four aforementioned political parties advocate Christian values and principles, and have adopted the same attitude towards the idea of “gender ideology”. The terms of gender and “gender

ideology” are associated, in the context of Slovak conservative and far right parties discourse, with LGBTI movement and the notion of traditional family. The parties (KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS) agree that family is the basis of society and its future. They look on marriage as an exclusive union of a man and a woman. Similarly, they refuse civil partnerships, homosexual couple children adoption, and sex education at schools.

4. Triggers and actors

The main trigger of the debate on “gender ideology” and anti-gender discourse is considered to be the Pastoral letter addressed to the believers by Slovak Bishop Conference of December 1, 2013. There were, of course, some debates on this issue previously connected with German sociologist, Gabriele Kuby, and her lectures on state sex education for children, homosexuality and pornography. The term “gender ideology” was used in a Pastoral letter dedicated to believers at the Conference of Slovak Bishops; the pastoral letter referred to the concept of “gender ideology” as the “culture of death”, and the promoters of gender equality as *“the followers of the culture of death”*. *The Bishops assert that “the followers of the culture of death bring a new gender ideology. On behalf of which, they want to enforce so called “gender equality”. When hearing the concept for the first time, one may think that the main objective is to ensure equal rights and dignity to both males and females. However, when referring to “gender equality”, the promoters of gender equality mean something totally different. Promoters of gender equality want to convince the public, that none of us has been created as a man, or a woman; and therefore, they aim at taking away the man’s identity as a man, and the woman’s identity as a woman, and the family’s identity as a family, so that a man does not*

feel like a man, a woman does not feel like a woman and marriage is no longer that god-blessed partnership possible exclusively between a man and a women. On the contrary, promoters of gender equality want the partnership of two men and women to be equal to a marriage between two people of different gender” (KBS 2013).

The Civic Initiative – Alliance for the Family was established soon after the Pastoral letter so as to support the family and marriage values (AZR 2013). It was the Alliance for family that decided to carry out the referendum on family protection. In April 5, 2014 the alliance started to collect the necessary signatures. During 2014 SNS members helped to collect the signatures, as mentioned above, whilst all the other aforementioned parties (KDH, OLANO, ĽSNS) also supported the referendum and the activities of the alliance. Andrej Kiska, a philanthropist, a former businessman and current President, obtained a civil petition with more than 408 000 signatures concerning the implementation of a referendum on family protection in August 28, 2014. Finally, the referendum took place on February 7, 2015. The referendum was invalid, due to a low turnout, conservatives failed to cement the gay marriage ban in the referendum.

5. The role of the EU

The strategy of human rights and the gender equality strategy are closely linked with the emergence of the anti-gender discourse. The European Union enforces the policy of gender equality via the EU Gender Equality Law. The Treaty of the European Union obliges Member States to promote equality between women and men. This is the reason why Slovakia as a Member State is supposed to reflect the principles which the universal European approach to the protection of human rights of the 21st century is built on. The

preparations of a national strategy for human rights lasted for three years. The government of Iveta Radičová accepted the task of developing a human rights strategy and the government of Robert Fico finished it. The process itself was subject to a lot of criticism, and was preceded by many disagreements and mutual slander before it reached its present version. Although numerous professional events and discussions on the topic took place, there was a failure in reaching consensus in all the points discussed (Balážová 2015). The strategy also faced a lot of criticism from the KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS, as well as from the Alliance for Family and the Slovak Bishop Conference. Robert Fico, the Prime minister of Slovakia, took the view that the government had approved a balanced strategy, and everyone, including those who provided comments, was given the opportunity to give their opinions on the issue (Balážová 2015). Miroslav Lajčák, the head of the Slovak diplomacy and the chairman of the human rights council of the government who coordinated and elaborated the strategies, emphasised that the written material does not impose anything, not does it aim to decide on matters. There shall be no changes to the current legal situation in Slovakia as a result of the adoption of the strategy. “It represents a contribution to the debate and it is a framework and program document” (Balážová 2015). The process of preparing the strategy was long, full of mutual accusations and after the adoption of the Strategy, the opponents are still dissatisfied.

6. Role of the state, Constitution

In June 2014, the Parliament of Slovakia approved changes in the constitution relating to family and marriage protection, which is why Parliament is associated with the topic of a traditional family. The change to the Constitution is supposed to protect the

institution of marriage. The constitution used to refer to marriage as: *“Marriage, parenthood and family are protected by law”* (Constitution of the Slovak Republic, 460/1992 Zb., 232/2012 Z. z.). After the change it asserts that: *“Marriage is a unique partnership between a man and a woman. Slovakia comprehensively protects the marriage and promotes the “well-being” of it”* (Constitution of the Slovak Republic, 460/1992 Zb., 161/2014 Z. z.). All the members of SMER and KDH who were present voted for the constitutional change, so did a part of OĽANO, SDKU and Alojz Hlina. All the members of Most-HID and SAS, Ján mičovský (OĽANO) and a part of the non-affiliated members voted against (SITA, Pravda 2014).

There was a strong resistance on the part of several NGOs and of the Slovak Bishops Conference against the gender equality strategy for the years 2014–2019. The resistance was formerly held against the action plan for gender equality; however, it was approved by the government in November, 2014. Both the written materials were submitted by the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, and were drafted by the department for gender equality and equal opportunities MPSVR (Aspekt 2014). The opponents argue that the entire gender equality strategy is from an ideological background which shall be hugely supported by public funds. As already mentioned above, a few months later, in February 2015 the Government approved a draft National Strategy for the protection and promotion of human rights in Slovakia too.

7. Consequences

The main effect of the anti-gender movement in Slovakia is considered to be the change of the Constitution relating to the institution of marriage in June 2014. As mentioned above, the Constitution sees marriage as a unique union between a man and a woman,

which is comprehensively protected by law of the country (Constitution of the Slovak Republic, 460/1992 Zb., 161/2014 Z. z.). Another important consequence of the anti-gender movement was the referendum on the family, which took place in February 2015. Questions appearing on the referendum were related to the issues whether marriage ought only to be a unique union between a man and a women, or, on the other hand, whether same-sex couples should be banned from adoption, and whether children can skip classes involving sex education and euthanasia. All the analysed political parties (KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS) promoted participation in the referendum and voted yes three times.

8. Language

Emotional language and fear-managing language have been used more often by the Catholic Church than by the political parties. The Catholic Church has in its pastoral letter called the concept of “gender ideology” “the culture of death” and the promoters of — gender equality as “the followers of the culture of death” (KBS 2013). Although, the fear-managing language may also be found in several politicians’ speeches, namely in the ones of those being members of the aforementioned parties. For instance, in February 2015, a member of SNS, Pavol Gorisak urged people to participate in the referendum saying: *“Let’s support naturalness, let’s support referendum on the family. I say three times yes, since I am a parent myself, and I see how the male and female gender contributes equally to the upbringing of my son. I am not capable of providing him with what his mother is, and vice versa. If we want it or not, the nature established it this way, and therefore, it is natural. I think it is about time we stood up for natural values, protected them, and hold our grounds against the extravagancy of today. As we try hard*

to protect the society from pedophiles, let's protect it from other unnatural influences. Democracy is not about anarchy, certain rules have to apply". In his statement, he compared homosexuals to pedophiles. Another example of emotional language and the fear-managing language used by a member of ĽSNS Stanislav Mizik, who together with the editorial board of "Voice of Gemer calls – ĽSNS" (community of ĽSNS supporters on Facebook) (2015) stated that: *"Family is the foundation of society! Our European civilization, our life, our cultural values are built on the values and traditional ways of lives in Europe that have been established thousands of years ago. These values of ours are systematically destroyed by the criminal activities of the New World Order representatives, and the Bilderberg. They want to destroy the institution of family! They want to destroy the fact that a family consists of a man, a woman and their children. To participate in this referendum seems to be the last opportunity for us to save our society from these unnatural values. Let's stop them brothers!"* Based on these quotes it can be stated that the parties (SNS, ĽSNS) as well as the Church used emotional language to intimidate and manipulate people and urged them to participate in the referendum.

9. Voter mobilisation

Slovakia is perceived as a conservative, Christian country in the EU. According to the last census carried out in 2011 more than 70 % of its citizens are Catholics, out of which 62% belong to the denomination of Roman Catholic Church. The Roman Catholic Church dominates in all the regions of Slovakia. Based on this fact, one may argue that the parties which expressed their support for the referendum wanted to attract voters in the next election taking place in 2016. It is apparent that the chosen political parties declare

themselves to advocate the principles and values of Christianity that do not contradict the assumption that by their outspoken announcements supporting traditional family they did not expect to obtain more votes though. Furthermore, word has gone round in Slovakia that the Alliance for the Family, the referendum organiser, plans to establish a political party based on the referendum. The alliance still denies the rumours. One of the alliance's representatives, Anton Chromík, proclaimed that: *"We are civil activists, and we want to stay like that"* (TASTR 2015a). Time will tell how the situation will develop, and whether a new party will be established for the next elections.

10. Counter-strategies

Scientists from the Institute of Social Communication SAV rejected the manipulation of public opinion on gender equality. The need for a responsible discussion on the topic was presented at a press conference in Bratislava in January 29, 2015. A great deal of information was provided by Gabriel Bianchi, the director of the Institute of Social Communication SAV; Ivan Lukšík, his colleague from the same department but from the Faculty of Education of the Trnava University; Zuzana Kiczková, the head of the Center for Gender Studies at the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University; Mariana Szapuová, head of the department of philosophy in the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University and Darina Sedláková, the Director of the Office of the World Health Organization in Slovakia (Aspekt 2015). The Minister of Labour, Social Affairs and Family, Ján Richter, in his letter to MD. Alojz Rákus – the author of the initiative on the impact of "gender ideology" influence on the children's mental health, writes: *"Gender equality seen as public policy aimed at ensuring a real equality between men and women is an integral*

agenda of not only EU member states, but also of other developed countries of the civilized world. The term “gender ideology”, that has recently occurred among the laic population in Slovakia is not at all a coined term in Slovakia, nor is it coined on an international level. It may be surprising how often it has been misinterpreted” (gender.gov.sk 2015b).

Within the scope of the national project of the Gender Equality Institute, an e-learning course on the basis of gender equality has been formed. The course target group is predominantly the state administration staff, students, but also the general public. The basic course consists of five interlinked modules. The start of next module is subject to completion of the previous one and passing a test. After completing the entire basic course lasting 5-6 hours, the successful absolvent will obtain a successful completion certificate via e-mail (gender.gov.sk 2015a). Although there are some strategies against anti- gender discourse, it is still not enough; we need to do more conferences for the general public on the topic of gender equality and put the people’s attention on the aforementioned e-learning course because a lot of people do not know about it.

11. Left parties

The attitude of the only parliamentary and at the same time ruling party – SMER-SD towards “gender ideology” is well-described by their evasive attitude to the February referendum. The executives of SMER party expressed their stance to participate in the referendum no sooner than January 14, 2015. The executives of the party announced that they would participate in the referendum, but would not recommend how to vote (Pravda 2015). As SMER is a left-wing party, a critical stance was expected from their part. They,

however, remained reticent. The chairman and Prime Minister of SMER, Robert Fico, gave his initial opinion on the referendum February 5, 2015, only two days before its implementation. According to Robert Fico, the duty of the government is make life more practical and easier for same-sex partners. During the hour of questions in the government, Robert Fico stated that the amendment to the constitution cannot prevent institutions from dealing with issues related to the cohabitation of same-sex partners such as access to their medical records or inheritance procedure (SITA 2015c). Even in spite of this statement, it ought to be noted that more should be expected from a left-wing party whose duty it is to promote freedom and equality. One can speak about an ideological left-wing deficit in Slovakia.

12. Recommendations for progressive actors

The progressive actors ought to create a sophisticated society-wide dialogue, which would tap into the topic of gender equality, its importance, and its need. As I have already shown above Slovakia is lacking such a dialogue. It is vital to start the offensive to gender equality. The public should be informed about the objectives of gender equality, as well as about the promotion of a gender equality policy associated with gender-sensitive education. The latter does not represent a change in the sexual identity of a man and a woman, but rather the removal of the stereotypical view and prejudice towards the roles and capabilities of men and women within society. It is essential to consider the real experience from abroad, such as from Scandinavian countries. It is well-known that countries emphasising the promotion of gender equality and modern policies aimed at synchronising the family and work life show a more favourable demographic development and more stable social

systems; again, some really good example are Scandinavian countries (gender.gov.sk 2015b).

The NGOs fighting for human rights and gender equality ought to support one another and create a network, not only within the state, but also within the EU member states. It is also important to exchange best practices from other countries and advise one another. It is equally important to elaborate a step-by-step strategy for supporting civil partnerships, not only because of homosexuals but also because of heterosexual partners, so that they obtain the status of partnership not only in marriage but also in ordinary relationships, because many heterosexual couples don't want to marry, but they want to live together, have children and live as family.

13. Forecast and predictions

The unsuccessful referendum initiated debates over whether Slovakia is in fact such a conservative country. Most of the people believe that it is not, because the turnout failed to surpass the required 50-percent quorum as only 21.41 percent of eligible voters went to the polling stations. It was the third lowest of the eight referendums already held in Slovakia. Andrej Kiska, the President of Slovakia, stated that after the referendum, our society owes more understanding towards the LGBT minority. He also noted that if the Prime Minister and the government think that the debt can be cancelled by a speech presided by the President, he is more than willing to help (TASR 2015b). The Prime Minister, Robert Fico, also noted that one of the duties of the government is to make the practical elements of life easier for same-sex couples. Juraj Droba, the member of Freedom and Solidarity (SAS) is currently negotiating with the parliamentary parties about supporting a bill on civil partnerships (SITA 2015d). Based on the above, it is clear that Slovakia may

expect a debate on civil partnerships. However, when it comes to adoption of the law, it looks unrealistic due to the present situation. It might become a little bit more optimistic with gender equality education, as an e-learning course on the basics of gender equality has been created within the framework of the national project of the Institute of Gender Equality. The European Commission has launched an offensive for gender equality, which may be helpful. Kristalina Georgieva, a European Commissioner, set gender equality as one of her five-year mandate priorities (Euractiv 2015). Party programs of political parties in the 2016 election are going to be interesting. Today it is certain that SAS will support registered partnerships, conservative parties (KDH, OĽANO, SNS, ĽSNS) will be clearly against it, and it is doubtful how SMER will act, but they will probably not mention anything about civil partnership in their program.

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EPILOGUE: “ANTI-GENDER” MOBILISATIONAL DISCOURSE OF CONSERVATIVE AND FAR RIGHT PARTIES AS A CHALLENGE FOR PROGRESSIVE POLITICS

Andrea Pető

“Gender ideology ignores the existing scientific knowledge.” This surprising statement by Jan Figel, former EU Commissioner for Education and Culture (quoted in Kuhar 2014), shows that the “gender ideology” debate opens up a new chapter in the political, cultural and social landscape of Europe questioning previous political chasms. The five chapters in this volume analyse a new political phenomenon: tens of thousands of people are demonstrating on the streets, collecting enough signatures for referendum controlling rights of a group of citizens in their own country, petitioning to change the curriculum in higher education (See more in Pető-Vasali 2014). While on the one hand the popular appeal of democratic politics is decreasing – less and less voters are participating in elections and traditional parties have problems recruiting young members – this new movement seemingly solves these problems of participation. Is this phenomenon really new or has progressive politics just been unprepared for these developments accepting the consoling thesis by Fukuyama about the “end of history” therefore labelling it as “new” and covering up its unpreparedness?

1. A new/old movement: gender as “symbolic glue”

The political developments described by the authors from France, Germany, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia in this volume also warn us about our own limits of understanding regarding this anti-gender movement. This is really a new rhetoric of identity formation which

is outside the previously universal human rights framework where gender found its comfortable space. At first sight, these movements are anti-gender, but as the careful analysis in this volume proves, this type of argumentation based on its positionality regarding gender offers a wider alternative to different spectrums of life and gender is only the symbolic glue. It is a strategic question for progressive politics how this new political, electoral, social and cultural trend will influence traditional conservative politics which itself has been a product of human rights consensus in Europe. Conservative politics varies along national contexts, accordingly the positioning of anti-genderism in the different countries covered in this volume as far as their position to anti-genderism is concerned.

The representatives of these anti-gender movements only use these gender policy arguments as a cover up for fostering a deeper and profound change in the European political and value system. That is only possible as the promise of gender equality either has not led to the expected changes (in the case of “new Europe”) or it led to too many superficial changes (in the case of “old Europe”). The case studies are from Europe but this anti-gender movement is a global phenomenon. Its global appeal is due to the fact that different countries are questioning the universal human rights framework of politics based on their “cultural” exceptionalism. There are several cases of governments framing aid promoting reproductive rights as imposing “gender ideology” on their national context in an anti-colonialist “freedom fighting” framework. The popularity and massive appeal of these anti-gender movements warn us that if progressive politicians want to understand this new major political trend they need to have a new framework of understanding. These anti-gender movements do not pursue the utopian character of gender equality achieved in the near future, but rather they focus on the political temporality of the Now. Different temporalities highlight that these movements have been

built on the fundamental weaknesses of progressive politics and their promise of the fast-changing world of globalisation.

2. Reactions

Reviewing the references of the papers proves that the phenomenon and also scholarly and political reflection as well as counter strategies are very recent, which makes this volume very timely. Papers in this volume convincingly argue that anti-gender mobilisations are hegemonic fights in the Gramscian sense for control as they redefine human rights and the progressive European tradition of equality. The closing section of each paper in this volume discusses possible strategies progressive actors are using against the anti-genderism. In this section of my paper I analyse some reactions as far as their impact is concerned.

The first reactions are traditional enlightened offensive reactions which question the ability of others to understand what gender is, and gender activists started educational campaigns.

The second reaction is a defensive reaction to use gender equality policy language to trench the fortress of already existing policy provisions. Korolczuk pointed out that those scholars who are use the term “backlash” when characterising the anti-gender movement are assuming a non-existent wide consensus about what gender means and what it should achieve. (Korolczuk 2014)

The third reaction, parallel with entrenchment, is an offensive reaction of blogging and using new social media for monitoring the developments inside the movement. This went parallel with spotting problems in the Catholic Church which is believed to be the major initiator and institutional organiser of this campaign. (Paternotte 2014)

3. Counter-strategies

The main battleground for “gender ideology” turned out to be science as the opening quote of this paper proved and, as Roman Kuhar convincingly argued, comparing the Slovenian and Croatian developments: The anti-gender movement’s use of “scientific” evidence against “gender ideology” means a paradigm change in science as we know it. Kuhar called this strategy the “secularisation of the discourse in order to clericalize society” (Kuhar 2014). The post-modern turn of modernity, which introduced a politically informed, critical and interdisciplinary way of studying science claimed the construction of new knowledge, whereby unacknowledged actors needed to be acknowledged from a critical perspective – with gender being one of these critical perspectives. In this context, science became a moral and normative category acknowledging the positionality of the knower. This approach also questions the subject-object division and brings in new symbols, new myths and redefinitions. This positionality – what Eric Hobsbawn referred to as “my truth is as valid as your truth” – signals an anti-universalistic approach leading to new scientific paradigm which is now appropriated by anti-gender forces. However the visibilisation of anti-gender forces, “naming and shaming” strategies, as far as debating what is scientific according to whom, are only partly successful. It only deepens the chasms without really understanding the depths of the threat and especially without offering new methods, rhetoric for not only protecting what progressive politics believe it has achieved but how to move forward.

The first step for formulating counter strategies is to create an independent strategy, not only one that reacts to the attack. It should be accepted that progressive politics is a result of the enlightenment and therefore it has a clear cut vision of normativity

which always creates minorities categorising them into a position of “other” and into “private” realm. The European tradition of enlightenment is working with normative positions. Therefore this anti-gender campaign is just appropriating the old tools as a unifying attempt with targeting LGBTQ groups to strengthen European Christian cohesion. Magdalena Środa, the Polish feminist philosopher said this fight against “gender ideology” is an “alliance between church and the stadium”. This statement implies that this anti-gender movement is just a renewed form of neoliberalist governability based on consumption and massive control. But not only that. This is a fight to redefine neoliberal representative democracy and this process is creating new political chasms and progressive politics should be active in this process.

By now it is clear that the anti-gender movement is a new phenomenon in European politics which requires new methods and frameworks of thinking for meaningful reactions by the progressive forces. If progressive politics forgets its value and innovative grass-root origins, then only using the already invented gender equality policy measures will not prevent this new anti-genderism phenomenon to prevail in the long run. The bravery and the originality of those historical political actors who dared to question previously unquestionable dogmas of society and political life should be applied. The “disenchanted” progressive politics should be “re-enchanted” (Pető 2015: 139-145). The papers in the volume prove that the most successful mobilisational force of these movements is the new language they are using for political mobilisation. Using the concept of gender as a technical category in the long run can be more self-destructive than useful while encountering this new political challenge. The real and new challenge is that after 1945 anti-modernist alternatives have never received so many votes in democratic elections as viable alternatives. The rise of the far right is a fact and in their electoral success anti-

genderism works as a symbolic glue. After reading this volume I hope it is clear that no more time should be wasted in thinking of alternatives by progressive forces.

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TRANSNATIONAL ASPECTS

In the context of anti-gender mobilisation, there are several transnational, travelling practices being repeated from country-to-country. The following list presents some of these practices/ crossings:

1. Common triggers, opposition to the EU developments

Protests against sex education in schools, as well as the influence of transnational organisations (EU, UN, WHO etc.) on national law in the form of, for example, the Istanbul Convention (Poland, Hungary).

Hungarian MPs of Fidesz and KNDP MPs envisaged that the Lunacek Report could lead to the recognition of same-sex marriage. Gay marriage was articulated partly as a “Trojan-horse” which was declared to lead to surrogacy and the artificial insemination of lesbian couples. (Hungary, France).

2. Common social media space

Anti-feminist campaign supported by shared social media platforms, pages and tools of the young female members of the Hungarian Youth Division of Jobbik, the Polish Kobiety Dla Narodu, and the Youth Division of AFD (Alternative für Deutschland). For instance, they shared an anti-feminist text table from the side of the Christian Women Against Femen.

3. Similar language

Hyperbolic, fear-arousing language, equating gender equality with pathologies and deviations, used by anti-gender and anti-sex education campaigners around the world (all countries).

4. Same rhetoric and intellectual foundations of the mobilisation

Social teachings of the Catholic Church (e.g. “Letter to Women” by John Paul II) and neo-conservative discourse co-opting and rewriting the discourse of human rights – for example, through the use of the “unborn citizen” category whose rights have to be protected, as an anti-abortion move (Janine Holc 2004) (Poland).

As in the case of Poland and Slovakia, the Church and transnational Catholic NGOs were the source of anti-gender rhetoric.

5. Personal ties between the movements, mutual participation in demonstrations

In Slovakia, Poland, as well as in Hungary, a translation of the German author Gabriele Kuby’s books has been published – *Gender revolution and Global sexual revolution*. Kuby has also delivered lectures covering the topics of state sexeducation of children, homosexuality, and pornography. She is often cited by Catholic conservatives and invited to public lectures in Poland. Excerpts from Kuby’s texts are translated and cited in Christian fundamentalist pages on the Internet in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic States.

The president of the French movement *La Manif pour tous* Ludovine De la Rochère held speeches in Spain (November 2014),

Slovakia (February 2015) and Germany (March 2015), informing audiences about developments in France. She encouraged participation in the Slovak referendum: “Go and vote for three times yes on the 7th February referendum. Become a great encouragement for the French nation” (tkkbs.sk, 2015).

In addition, the “La Manif pour Tous” has ties with American fundamentalist NGOs such as the Center for Bioethics and Culture Network. (France) The French movement also contributed to the development of “La Manif pour tous Italia”.

6. The same visual symbols and concepts of demonstrations

The pink logos of a nuclear family as well as the slogans and concept of demonstrations known from the *La Manif pour tous* movement (i.e. manifestation for all – derived from the name of the law “Marriage for all” imposed by the French government despite numerous protests in 2013) appear in the “Demo für Alle” in Germany, in the Slovak case as well as in the demonstration opposing the gender neutral civil partnership law in Estonia in the Fall 2014.

QUOTES

„Gender – a word that hardly anyone knows, although “gender mainstreaming” has become the “guiding principle” and the “cross-sectional task” of politics. The term is used to resolve the gender roles of men and women. It assumes that any sexual orientation is equivalent and must be accepted by society. The gender ideology has crept behind the backs of the public by the EU through the state institutions, universities and training institutions up to the base of the schools and kindergartens. It destroys the foundation of values in our society. The root of this development is the dictatorship of relativism.” (Besorgte Eltern 2015)

“I’m shocked by the gender theory” (Jean-François Copé, UMP former President).

“The denial, the final occupation of the culture of death, the remonstrance against the fact that we are created has started” (Ilona Ékes, former lawmaker of Fidesz).

“Let’s support naturalness, let’s support referendum on the family. I say three times yes, since I am a parent myself, and I see how the male and female gender contributes equally to the upbringing of my son. I am not capable of providing him with what his mother is, and vice versa. If we want it or not, the nature established it this way, and therefore, it is natural. I think it is about time we stood up for natural values, protected them, and hold our grounds against the extravagancy of today. As we try hard to protect the society from pedophiles, let’s protect it from other unnatural influences. Democracy is not about anarchy, certain rules have to apply.” (Pavol Gorisak, member of SNS)

“Too much of space, and attention is paid to the issues of LGBTI, and too little to the issues associated with the majority (– in the human rights strategy). The fact is that one can easily read on the need of the rights of homosexuals to be addressed, however, one can hardly find something about the freedom of speech, thought, expression, freedom of religion, life protection, or the aforementioned victims. I would expect a balanced approach to all the groups of people, without an inadequate emphasis on gender principles, especially in the areas where they seem not only illogical, but also artificial.”
(Erika Jurinová, Vice chairman of the National Council of Slovakia)

“The negative consequence of the bottle between ideologies and the influence of extremely liberal views is the forefront of “gender ideology.” (Dániel Z. Kárpáti, Jobbik MP).

“Gender ideology raises a justified anxiety, as it diverges from the natural law (...) It has been entering kindergartens and schools with an instruction to destroy the sense of embarrassment in a child from an early age, and teach the child about possibilities of taking bodily pleasures despite the moral ethics, and even about possibilities of manipulating sex up to a free and repeated choice of sex”.
(Archbishop Józef Michalik).

“Family is the foundation of society! Our European civilization, our life, our cultural values are built on the values and traditional ways of lives in Europe that have been established thousands of years ago. These values of ours are systematically destroyed by the criminal activities of the New World Order representatives, and the Bilderberg. They wish to destroy the essential attribute of our society! They want to destroy the institution of family! They want to destroy the fact that a family consists of a man, a woman and their children. To participate in this referendum seems to be the last

opportunity for us to save our society from these unnatural values. Let's stop them brothers!" (Stanislav Mizik, member of LSNS, together with the editorial board of "Voice of Gemer calls").

"Just like years ago Moscow wanted to forcibly impose communism with bayonets and tanks, today Brussels, New York and Strasburg want to enforce on us gender ideology, using legal and media violence" (Polish pastor Fr. Dariusz Oko).

"Gender theory is by no means scientifically proven, although it tries to appear this way. It fulfills all the criteria of an ideology. It works in favor of the homosexual and extreme-feminist lobby and is being used as the "theoretic" foundation in their fight against alleged disadvantage, which plays no part of our daily life anymore. With this action the lobby tries to disguise their actual interests and growing influence on society" (AfD Osnabrück 2015).

"Gender is a rule in which everyone decides if they are a woman or a man. It can even lead to intergenetic relationships, like a relationship between a human and a monkey" (Krystyna Pawłowicz).

"The negation of sexual differences is a cause of sufferings and inequalities" (Valérie Rosso, UMP official).

"Gender ideology (...) got a brutal support from Brussels. Tiny, but loud lobby groups want to force this, I think deviant view to the world" (Zsolt Semjén, Deputy Prime Minister and the chairman of KDNP).

"The funds for gender mainstreaming mainly go to those investments that fit with the ideology. Only those got support (...) that are accepted by the moral gender-courtesy. Hence those who think

differently can be easily selected out without real confrontation. Different views are labelled as old-fashioned in better case, in bad case as a harm that endangers the peace of the society” (Ferenc Tomka, theologist).

“The madness is often under the guise of “equality” and therefore leads in practice to headbirths as an obligatory quota for women in business and management levels. Also the supposed right to abortion, the installation of a anti-male vulgarmfeminism and a third sex (!) in the mainstream of society are at the top of the wish list of gender ideologies” (Udo Voigts).

“Najat Belkacem is an ultra pro gender” (Laurent Wauquiez, UMP official).

INDEX

B

Frigide Barjot (Virginie Tellenne)

France

Former member of a satiric group and singer, and former member of the Gaullist party in France, she became the first leader of the Protest for Everyone (“La Manif pour Tous”).

C

Anton Chromík

Slovakia

One of the spokesmen of the Alliance for Family: it was the Alliance for Family that decided to carry out the referendum on the protection of family in Slovakia. In April 5, 2014 the alliance started to collect the necessary signatures. The president, Andrej Kiska obtained a civil petition with more than four hundred and eight thousand signatures concerning the implementation of a referendum on family protection in August 28, 2014. Chromík is a lawyer and deals with the provision of legal services in the areas of worker’s rights representation and the representation in civil and commercial law. He was also against the strategy of human rights, gender equality strategy, and supported a referendum on the family.

Jean-François Copé

France

Chairman of the UMP (2012 -2014) in France, former member of RPR (post-Gaullist Rally for Republic), removed from office in 2014 because of a scandal. In February 2015, he led a campaign against some youth books, especially “All naked” (“Tous à poil”).

D

Madeleine Bazin de Jessey

France

Leader of the Protest for Everyone (“La Manif pour Tous”) in France, founder of “Common Sens” (“Sens Commun”), a conservative caucus dedicated to political struggle in the UMP.

Ludovine de la Rochère

France

Current leader of the Manif-movement in France: She appeared in the demonstrations of other European anti-gender movements, for instance in Spain, Slovakia and Germany.

Dóra Dúró and Előd Novák

Hungary

Hungarian lawmaker couple of Jobbik. Dúró is the head of the Committee on Education and Culture, Novák is the vice president of Jobbik and the chair of Committee on Social Welfare in the Assembly. They are the main responsible actors in Jobbik for the issues regarding women, family and demography politics.

E

Ilona Ékes

Hungary

Former Hungarian lawmaker of Fidesz, and former member of the Committee on Human Rights, Minority, Civic and Religious Affairs, made her voice heard many times connected with gender issues as abortion, prostitution, domestic violence, homosexuality, and talked against the so-called “gender ideology”.

F

Ján Figel

Slovakia

The Deputy Chairman of the National Council of Slovakia, the chairman of the KDH party. He was strongly against the strategy of human rights, the gender equality strategy, and supported a referendum on the family. He declares that the strategy of human rights has been inspired by “gender ideology”.

G

Jarosław Gowin

Poland

Polish Christian conservative politician, and Minister of Justice between 2011 and 2013. In April 2012 he opposed the ratification of the Istanbul Convention calling it “the product of feminist ideology”.

H

Rózsa Hoffman

Hungary

Former Hungarian Secretary of State for Public Education referred to the so-called “gender ideology” relating to the decree on education for kindergartens about gender equality.

J

Jobbik Youth Division

Hungary

One of the key actors in Hungarian anti-gender mobilisation that has a connection with the Polish movement against “gender ideology”.

Erika Jurinova

Slovakia

The Vice chairperson of the National Council of Slovakia, a member of OLANO. She was also against the strategy of human rights, the gender equality strategy, and supported a referendum on the family.

K

Birgit Kelle

Germany

CDU member and chairwoman of the “woman 2000plus” association (Frau 2000plus). Among other things she has published in the new right weekly newspaper “Junge Freiheit”

(in Germany) and in the “Kopp-Verlag” publishing house publicly associated with conspiracy theories, but also in the German periodicals “Focus” and “die Welt”. She is seen on talk shows and has reached larger audiences with her criticism against feminism and gender. She recently released her new book “Gender Gaga” from the publishing house Adeo.

Beata Kempa

Poland

United Poland MP, Chair of “Stop ‘gender ideology’” Parliamentary Committee, famously wrote a letter to Meryl Streep about the “threats of gender”.

Kuruc.info

Hungary

Main far right news site in Hungary, where many articles were published about the so-called “gender ideology”.

L

Miroslav Lajčák

Slovakia

Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, the Chairman of the Council of Human Rights, national minorities and gender equality of Slovakia. He coordinated and elaborated the human right strategy.

M

Igor Matovič

Slovakia

The chairperson and a co-founder of OLANO, Member of Parliament in Slovakia. He was also against the strategy of human rights, the gender equality strategy, and supported a referendum on the family. He appealed to the referendum saying: “Children should have fathers and mothers” (Matovič 2015).

O

Fr. Dariusz Oko, Ph.D

Poland

Polish pastor, assistant professor of philosophy at the Pontifical Theological Academy of Cracow, media personality, and a stark opponent of the so-called “gender ideology”; he is famous for supporting his views with alarming graphs and statistics.

P

Krystyna Pawłowicz

Poland

Law and Justice MP in Poland, famous for her offensive statements about gender and gay marriage, has been reprimanded on numerous occasions for her behaviour by the Sejm Ethics Committee.

S

Zsolt Semjén

Hungary

Hungarian Deputy Prime Minister from 2010, leader of the Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP). He had made strong anti-gender statements many times.

T

Ferenc Tomka

Hungary

Hungarian theologian, author of the manifesto entitled "From the sexual revolution to the gender revolution".

V

Hedwig Freifrau von Beverfoerde

Germany

The spokesperson of the "Family Protection" initiative ("Familien Schutz") which she founded in common with the campaign network "Civil Coalition" ("Zivile Koalition"). She is also the German spokeswoman for Citizens' Initiative "One of Us" which presents itself as the European Citizens' Initiative for the protection of life in Europe, committed to preventing abortions. She fights against mandatory child care and for an increase of child care hours in kindergartens.

Beatrix von Storch

Germany

Was involved in founding of the party AFD in Germany (“Alternative für Deutschland”). She has had a seat in the European Parliament since July 2014 where she fights against “gender-mainstreaming”, for example against the so-called “Tarabella-report” which promotes access to abortion as a fundamental right and as part of sexual and reproductive health and rights. In Germany she lectures on the topic “civil rights, gender-mainstreaming, political correctness”.

W

Laurent Wauquiez

France

Former Sarkozy Universities Minister in France, also one of the politicians most involved in the dialogue of the conservative movement. He endorses the conservative agenda, commits himself to the conservative activists inside the UMP, and supports Sarkozy’s campaign for 2017.

Z

Eric Zemmour

France

French conservative columnist. Author of “The French Suicide”, a bestseller in France. One of the first to criticise on TV the so-called “gender theory” on his TV-broadcast.



**FRIEDRICH
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“Gender as symbolic glue”

The position and role of conservative and far right parties in the anti-gender mobilization in Europe

This publication aims to critically analyse the emergence of anti-gender mobilisations in European far right and conservative party programmes and the role of the respective parties in shaping the discourse and mobilisations. Five case studies – France, Germany, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia – are looked upon. Common chronological overview and transnational commonalities are introduced.

The authors argue that “gender” serves as “symbolic glue” for agenda setting for conservatives and the far right political forces. However, anti-gender forces have a deeper roots in crisis of neoliberalism. The publication offers policy recommendations to progressive actors to stand against fundamentalist political activism.

Publishers:

- FEPS – Foundation for European Progressive Studies
- Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung

Editors:

Eszter Kováts, Maari Põim

Budapest, May 2015

ISBN: 978-2-930769-18-9

This Book is published with the financial support of the European Parliament.